



Where every man is a soldier

Analysing security provision by non state governance mechanisms in Afghanistan

Photo Courtesy of U.S. Army

LTZ 3 Ward van der Leemputte
3704742
Utrecht University
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Ward van der Leemputte

3704742

Name of Supervisor:

Mario Fumerton

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Safety Office
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ANP	Afghan National Police
AP3	Afghanistan Public Protection Programme
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CDI	Community Defense Initiative
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
COIN	Counterinsurgency
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
FM	Field Manual (Military Doctrine)
HTS	Human Terrain System
HTT	Human Terrain Team
HQ	Head Quarters
ICG	International Crisis Group
ISAF	International Military Forces
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
JP	Joint-Publication (Military inter-service document)
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
MP	Member of Parliament
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoI	Ministry of Interior
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDU	National Defense University
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OEF-A	Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
SF	Special Forces
TA	Transitional Authority
TE	Tribal Engagement
TLO	Tribal Liaison Office
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNSCR	United Nation Security Council Resolution
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republics

Glossary of Afghan Terms

<i>Arbakai:</i>	Tribal Police
<i>Jirga:</i>	Traditional Council
<i>Khan:</i>	Leader
<i>Lashkar:</i>	Tribal Militia
<i>Loya Jirga:</i>	Grand Assembly
<i>Mullah:</i>	Religious leader
<i>Pashtunwali:</i>	Pashtun Tribal code
<i>Shura:</i>	Local council

Abstract

The struggle for centralised rule has dominated Afghan politics of power. The balance between local and central rule was upset by the drive for centralisation and the imposition of social changes without delivering material benefits. Collaboration with foreign empires created the resource base for central governments to strive for centralisation.

The State-building project after the U.S. invasion set up a highly centralised state and imposed social changes while structurally disregarding the prevalence of non state governance. Although initially welcomed it failed to provide material benefits to the population which steadily delegitimised the government. The Taliban was able to resurge in this environment by addressing the feelings of alienation and fuelling perceptions of foreign co-option of the government.

ISAF has learned in light of the dysfunctional government that it can only counter the Taliban by winning the popular support and thus by engaging non state governance mechanisms. These mechanisms are systemic to Afghan governance as they provide public goods, such as security, to the population in light of state collapse and a violent environment.

Public good provision is conducted through patron-client structures following a transactional model. Cooperation and interaction of local communities with military actors in the provision of security is therefore likely to resemble to a transaction. In this sense transactionalism provides a way of explaining social action in Afghanistan. However this thesis does not assume that social action is solely and adequately described by transactionalism as social life cannot be simplified into a game theoretic calculation.

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1. Research Design

1.1 Introduction

Violence in Afghanistan is spiralling upwards despite international state building efforts and counterinsurgency operations. The highly centralised state set up by the international community seems to be incapable of providing security to many Afghans. The war weary Afghans initially welcomed development efforts in hope of long awaited stability, economic progress and enhanced quality of life. They even condoned the arrival and deployment of international military forces in a country that is known to unify under arms when faced with external aggressors. A diversion and lack of international funds and the ineffective and corrupt national government have not met the expectations of the Afghan public and squandered their goodwill. The disillusionment with national government and international actors is strong because the government, after almost a decade, has failed to deliver security and stability in many rural and urban areas. Instead it has created a highly centralised patrimonial state dependent on foreign funds. The limited authority of Kabul in rural areas and its inability to deliver governance have created a power vacuum granting the Taliban and other insurgent groups the possibility to return. Moreover the diversion of funds and attention away from Afghanistan to other theatres, such as Iraq, gave the state building project far too little funds. The quickly ousted Taliban thus had the opportunity to come back and set up a shadow government. The small NATO force present to support the new Government of Afghanistan expanded to Southern Afghanistan in 2006 where it quickly recognised that it had a full blown insurgency on its hands. Ever since, violence in Afghanistan has been on the rise and is spilling over into the secure areas of the North, West and Central regions (Trofimov, 2010). This threat was recognised in 2006 but international politics forestalled an effective military and civilian response by the international community. The election of Obama put Afghanistan back on the U.S. foreign policy agenda and shifted considerable resources to the Afghan conflict. This surge, based on a similar strategy in Iraq, hoped to shift momentum back to International forces and the Afghan government.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) as part of the state building project set out to support the newly created Afghan government (GoA) but slowly realised that GoA's authority

was very limited outside government controlled urban areas. A rediscovery of old counterinsurgency principles made ISAF realise that a counterinsurgency operation evolves around winning the popular support in a direct competition with insurgent forces. As the Afghan government had not the required authority and had alienated much of the rural population, direct ISAF support of the government was not going to grant them victory. Instead they turned to the past. Old colonial practices of indirect rule and pacification based on anthropological research were updated for twenty-first century use. Programmes such as the Human Terrain System (HTS) set out to 'map' Afghanistan's 'human terrain'. U.S. Special forces use this knowledge to create village defence units to combat the insurgency.

Centralised rulers from Kabul have, despite numerous tries, never been able to fully implement government control in these mostly rural areas. Today government officials cooperate and interact with local communities in a hybrid political order. Local communities in Afghanistan outside governmental control govern through non state governance mechanisms. These vary wildly from warlord controlled communities to traditionally governed Tribes in Eastern Afghanistan. The empowerment of local structures to combat the insurgency is feared to exacerbate alternative power structures capable of challenging the stability of Afghanistan as a democratic state. However non state solutions for governance and the provision of public goods are a reality when a government has no de facto control and therefore not the monopoly on violence. Besides, current governmental governance is perceived to be anything but democratic and incapable of providing basic resources to the communities.

In this thesis I research how non state governance mechanisms facilitate security and stability in the context of military engagement, the insurgency and its relation to the government and other development actors.

1.2 Relevance

Attempting social change in Afghanistan has been a major catalyst for conflict throughout Afghanistan's history (Barfield, 2010: 170). The state-building programme was initially welcomed as Afghanistan desperately needs peace and stability despite the objectives of social change. Yet, as the government and international community have not delivered in the eyes of many, opposition against state building and social change has grown. Insurgents are making use of these perceptions and attempt to taint the state-building programme as western and un-Islamic. To counter this threat in light of a dysfunctional government, international military forces have devised a strategy that directly interacts with local communities. The empowerment of local village defence groups by U.S. special forces is considered highly contentious as it uses anthropological data to support military operations.

Understanding how security is facilitated through non state governance in a context of interaction with the government, military and insurgents requires us to enter the academic debate of transactionalism. The debate looks at social change through individual choice, action, and strategies of manipulation (Vincent, 1978:178). Transactionalism is part of applied anthropology and is defined as "a field where political actors vie for power, in terms of strategies, goals, resources, and rules through maximizing, decision-making, interacting, competing, fighting, dominating, encapsulating, and other actions" (Turner, 2006). Using transactional analysis hands us the tools to understand "complex society" and specifically the impact of governmental policies and social change (Vincent, 1978:178).

Effecting social change on the national level is encapsulated in the theoretical and instrumentalist debate regarding hybrid political orders. The relevance of research concerning non state governance is found by the use of the Weberian State concept as the blueprint for a state-building. This model is proposed by the international community as a template for Afghanistan. Both theoretical as instrumental arguments exist that claim that these efforts are counterproductive in providing security, creating stability and in the defeat of the insurgents because the current Weberian state structure of GoA misconceives the governance arena of Afghanistan. The highly centralised gov-

ernment presupposes a distinction between modern government and the local governance while in fact, local governance is a systemic part of Afghan society and provides the link to the rural population. Alienation of these structures structurally disenfranchises parts of the population. Moreover, state rule does not represent democratic notions as is governed through patrimonial structures (Barfield, 2010:272).

Local self organisation when state authority is lacking “may produce more beneficial development outcomes than formal governance by predatory or corrupt central authorities” (Brick, 2008:2). By using instrumentalist and largely empirical data on governance and interaction between governance modes we gain an understanding how non state is governance conducted in Afghanistan in relation to security and stability. Although the hybrid political order debate is saturated with research regarding local versus central government, I believe a niche in knowledge exists on how mechanisms of governance by non state actors in Afghanistan facilitate security in light of a dysfunctional government and engagement by military forces. Researching this phenomenon will add to conflict studies literature and the state-building debate in light of security provision by local communities.

1.3 Analytic Framework

This Master's thesis sets out to answer the following research question:

What are the non state governance mechanisms that facilitate security and stability in Afghanistan?

The objective I pursue in the process of answering this question is to *describe* the mechanisms at work in Afghanistan that are conducive to security and stability in order to better *understand* these processes which might lead to *ideas* for further study. The mechanisms are analysed in light of dysfunctional government and misconceptions regarding non state governance mechanisms in Afghanistan's governance arena. It does not offer definite prescriptive answers to Afghanistan's problems.

Research Context

The contextual arena in which this research takes place is the interaction between the central State, the international community, international military forces and local communities and tribes. It focuses specifically on Pashtun local governance owing to the lack of governmental governance, prevalence of tribal communities, and high participation in the insurgency. Although the insurgent forces have a rightful place in these relationships, actual research on insurgent interaction proved problematic through lack of data. Therefore interactions between international, local and centralised governance efforts are analysed.

Analytic frame

This thesis researches the facilitation of security by non state governance mechanisms in Afghanistan. The fundamental components of my research are non-state *Mechanisms* of governance and the *Facilitation* of security and stability. The research is centred around Bailey's concept of structure as consisting of rules and roles (1969). Through Bailey's concept of structure this thesis cre-

ates an understanding of how Hybrid governance, or the interaction of two systems of rules and roles manage or not manage to reconcile with each other. This offers a fresh perspective for looking at issues like interaction and collaboration and tribal encounter in the Hybrid Political order debate. F.G. Bailey's theories can be ascribed to the anthropological theory of Transactionalism that was first coined by Barth in 1959 (Encyclopedia69, 2011). Transactionalism looks at social interactions and processes in understanding social life. The theory argues that:

Social forms like kinship groups, economic institutions and political alliances are generated by the actions and strategies of the individuals deployed against a context of social constraints. By observing how people interact with each other, an insight could be gained into the nature of the competition, values and principles that govern individuals' choices, and also the way resources are allocated in society (Encyclopedia69, 2011).

The interactions between actors are "seen as manipulations to gain power" (Encyclopedia69, 2011). This theoretical framework guides the research as it points to interactions as a transaction, moreover it looks at the allocation of resources based on these interactions. This fits the research puzzle as it specifically looks at how interactions facilitate public goods and therefore security. In the transactional sense, security, a public good and resource is facilitated through (non state) governance mechanisms which are open to questions about relative cost (Bailey, 1969:36). It describes these myriad interactions as transactional relationships. The major premise of this theory is therefore that man is rational and profit maximising (Vincent, 1978:180). Vincent refers to Baileys theory as all relationships "are transactional and dyadic in nature. Political action was the art of manipulating dyadic relations to create corporate followings" (Vincent, 1978:184). Although Bailey refers in *Stratagems and Spoils* to political action in Western political and corporate arenas it can be exported to the Afghan context as his work can be seen in light of fellow transactionalists such as Barth, who researched Pashtuns. He claims that Pashtun governance is of a maximising nature (Yale, 2011).

The origins of transactionalism can be found in turn of the century applied anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski. In 'Practical Anthropology' he argues "that anthropological knowledge should be applied to solve the problems faced by colonial administrators, including those posed by savage law, economics, customs, and institutions" (Malinowski, 1929:23 in McFate, 2008:28) for it was useful "in understanding the power dynamics of traditional societies" (McFate, 2008:28). He suggested that transactional analysis could be used to describe primitive society through the principle of reciprocity which entails "bonding through giving and taking within these societies" (Worsfold, 2011). The principle of reciprocity forms the basic premise of patron-client structures that guides governance in Afghanistan as interactions are based on a transaction that should be beneficial to both sides.

Malinowski's theoretical foundation was Durkheimian functionalism which focused "on the role of social objects or actors [...], on what they do" (Shortell, 2011). Post WWII British anthropologists were dissatisfied with "isolable, concrete social identities" (Turner, 2006) of pre-world war two anthropology. By incorporating the rationality concept of Max Weber into classical functionalism, the analytical focus shifted "from social norms, to strategic rules and individual tactics" (Turner, 2006). Social action was explained by them as guided by "strategic, non-normative and individualist" instead of "abstract and static notions of normative social structure" (Turner, 2006) Hence, transactionalism also known as action anthropology or transaction anthropology (Vincent,1978:175) was born.

Transactionalist theories of Bailey, Barth and Mair stress competition, power maximisation, the ability to influence others (Turner, 2006). Although this profit maximising approach seems to represent a rather simplified model of social action, the important notion of 'enlightened self interest' is mentioned which raises "questions of overt and covert motives" (Worsfold, 2011). Bailey elaborates on this notion of Malinowski in his structures of political followings. The most of powerful of political followings is the 'Moral' Structure as he claims that "the leader of a moral group has a higher credit rating than the leader of a band of hirelings" (Bailey,1969:40). A political leader is able, according to Bailey, to both influence and direct the actions of his followers as he expends resources. A transaction based on 'morality' either overt or covert might digress into a 'lower' form

of transaction when inadequate resources are dispersed. Inadequate resources can even refer in the Afghan context to lack of religious authority.

Understanding the facilitation of security in non state governance through public good delivery in a transactional frame is found within the simple definition of governance. Governance is defined as the provision of public goods, which as the theory proposes, contains a transactional relationship. Within the hybrid political order debate arguments sway back and forth whether centralised government is essential for this process to happen effectively. Bailey argues that public goods can be aptly delivered without “governmental oversight or leadership”(Bailey, 1969:35). His research showed “that teams can work effectively without leaders (Bailey, 1969:35). Therefore analysis of interaction between governance actors is essential when analysing mechanistic processes leading to security. The Analytical framework of transactionalism understands social change (development, military engagement) in the Afghan context as individual choice, action, and strategies of manipulation (Vincent:1978, 178) of the various governance actors in the field. The analysis of non state governance through transactionalism is interesting as the engagement of local communities by military forces and transactionalism share the same heritage of applied anthropology.

Units of Analysis

Units of analysis are usually individuals, societies, ethnic groups et cetera. The major entity that is studied in Transactionalism, is not a unit as a community or tribe it is, according to Ted Llewellyn, “the sociopolitical arena” in its entirety:

A field where political actors (individuals or small groups--action sets, cliques, factions, quasi-groups, interest groups, coalitions, parties) vie for power, in terms of strategies, goals, resources, and rules through maximizing, decision-making, interacting, competing, fighting, dominating, encapsulating, and other actions” (Vincent, 1978:176 in Turner, 2006).

Mustafa Emirbayer in Useful Durkheim finds “ties and transactions” to be the fitting unit of analysis, “not preconstituted entities such as ‘the individual’ ’society” (Emirbayer, 1996:111).

1.4 Research Objectives and Methodology

Research objectives

The objectives of my research are based on the goals of social research of Charles Ragin in *Constructing Social Research*. The goals of social research cannot always be as distinctly classified into Ragin's classes as the determination whether a situation is typical or atypical cannot be easily defined, indeed it is a goal of doing research to understand if notions can be generalised.

My research primarily aims to interpret cultural and historically significant phenomena and identify general patterns and relationships. Furthermore it also aims to test and refine theories but this is a secondary objective.

The research puzzle *what are the non state mechanisms of governance that facilitate security and stability in Afghanistan* contains the following objectives:

- Interprets cultural and historically significant phenomena because it takes an in-depth look at the misconceived state and local differentiation in political traditions by State-builders in Afghanistan and looks at phenomenon of security provision through local governance in the context military engagement. These phenomena are useful in determining whether they are a-typical or generalisable.
- Identifies general patterns and relationships because it asks how non-state governance mechanisms have changed over history and endured until today, this question endeavours to determine whether the analysed events are socially significant and whether this knowledge is generalisable. It does not presume to definitively answer these goals. The question how local governance mechanisms interact and cooperate with Kabul and how local governance provides public goods in absence of the state both endeavour to describe whether this data is generalisable. The question that asks why there is contention in the use of non state governance mechanisms to provide security in Afghanistan endeavours to describe whether this contention is socially significant.

- Test and refines theories because the analysis of local governance dynamics, especially the operation of patron-client structures in the provision of security through a transactional lens hopes to expand the pool of ideas on using transactionalism in this context.

Thesis Structure

The research puzzle that tries to understand the facilitation of security and stability through non state governance mechanisms in Afghanistan is answered in four chapters.

Chapter two tries to understand the current importance of non state governance in light of state-building by asking how non-state governance mechanisms have changed over history and endured until today, and based this question asks in the latter part of the chapter why is it difficult or misleading to attempt to make a state versus non state differentiation in political traditions.

Chapter three describes non state governance by asking how local governance mechanisms interact and cooperate with Kabul and how local governance provides public goods.

Section one of the chapter looks at the prevalence of non state governance and their interaction with Kabul. Section two looks at the interaction of Tribal and Pashtun governance with Kabul and zooms in to understand governance dynamics. Section three analyses these dynamics through a transactional lens.

Chapter four looks to the insurgency in relation to non state governance mechanisms and state building and will distinctly look at the provision of security by local governance mechanisms. The central question of this chapter asks why there is contention in the use of non state governance mechanisms to provide security in Afghanistan. It generates an answer by two subquestions. First, what is the relation between state-building and the insurgency. Second, how counterinsurgency efforts interact and cooperate with local communities. From these questions the chapter will describe the contention regarding the engagement of local communities. In the end this helps us understand how local governance mechanisms facilitate security and stability in Afghanistan

Chapter five concludes this thesis by asking how non state governance mechanisms facilitate security and stability in Afghanistan it generates an answer by combining the findings of the previous three chapters.

Methodology

The research conducted to answer the research puzzle and subquestions consisted of *qualitative research* by conducting a literature study. It had been the intention to conduct field research but due to some unfortunate circumstances this never materialised. The exact reasons why this never happened are taken up in the concluding remarks in chapter five because they influenced the research design. Because the data is gained through literature study it usually was presented through some form of analysis, this influences the data. Moreover the 'current' nature of the Tribal Engagement debate meant that data was rather scarce and all data was made through Western institutions signifying a possible bias as insurgent data could not be attained.

The qualitative methods used in this thesis consist of naturally occurring data and more specifically the use of documentary analysis. The major part of research entailed the study of "existing documents to understand their substantive content" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2009:35). The major part of data consisted of accounts of field research in Afghanistan made by (non) governmental organisations, international organisations, think tanks, media outlets and the military. Discourse analysis is only used to describe notions of the theoretical framework formed by Transactionalism.

Generated data was used to supplement and add meaning to the naturally occurring data. Data from biographical methods consisted of accounts and analysis of the events I describe. They were derived predominantly from university and institutional papers. Military analysis of events not originating from military research institutes are considered institutional papers here, such as papers from the Tribal Wars Journal.

Data Collection

The collection of data within the literature study consisted mainly of searching for relevant data guided by the research puzzle through open sources on the internet, in libraries and through contacts. Therefore data collection is solely done through written documents. I did conduct interviews through email with relevant actors at ISAF but they returned written documents.

The primary sources of field-research data used in this thesis originate from the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit and the Tribal Liaison office and is complemented by ISAF obtained Human Terrain Analysis data and the United States Institute of Peace. The academic literature used can be found the bibliography.

Primary sources of 'field-research' data

AREU: Afghan Election 2010, Alternative Narratives AREU: Case Study Series Governance Structures in Nimroz Province

AREU: Afghanistan's New Democratic Parties: A Means to Organise Democratisation?

AREU: Gender and local level decision making: Findings from a case study in Mazar-e Sharif.

AREU: Connecting with Kabul The Importance of the Wolesi Jirga Election and Local Political Networks in Afghanistan.

AREU: Developments in Local Government: A View from the Ground

AREU: Losing Legitimacy? Some Afghan Views on the Government, the International Community, and the 2009 Elections

AREU: Parliamentarians and Local Politics in Afghanistan Elections and Instability II

AREU: Patronage, Posturing, Duty, Demographics Why Afghans Voted in 2009

AREU: Peace at all costs? Reintegration and Reconciliation in Afghanistan.

AREU: Proceedings of a Roundtable Discussion on Subnational Corruption

AREU: Subnational State-Building in Afghanistan

AREU: Toward an Afghan Democracy? Exploring Perceptions of Democratisation in Afghanistan

AREU: Transcript Future of Democratisation

HTS: Afghanistan RAMT Product IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS Zadran Tribal Unity

ISAF: ALP Discussion Paper

USIP: ADST Afghanistan Experience Project Interview #17 Executive Summary

USIP: Afghanistan's Police The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform

USIP: Many Shuras Do Not a Government Make

TLO: Afghanistan border-district exploratory assessment

TLO: Policy brief No3

TLO: The Dutch Engagement in Uruzgan: 2006 to 2010

TLO: Linkages between State and Non-State Justice systems in Eastern Afghanistan. Evidence from Jalalabad, Nangarhar and Ahmad Aba

Critiquing Transactionalism

The use of a transactional approach to social life is critiqued both theoretically and context specific. These critiques are important to bear in mind as they reflect on the validity and reliability of the conducted research.

The most important critique towards transactionalism is its premise of rationality and the maximising man (Turner, 2006). Its emphasises on "rationality and voluntariness of individuals' actions" (Asad, 1972 in Coyle, 2011) disregards the notion that outcomes might be "unpredictable" and "unexpected" (Asad 1972, in Coyle, 2011). After all, more factors might influence outcomes than a game theoretic perspective. Both "history" and "historical transformation" are ignored due its 'methodological Individualism', which refers to the power of individuals' agency (Turner, 2006). Asad critiques this stance as he argues that a history of past action comes to restrict present choice (Coyle, 2011). He does take into account the equal and variable power of present action in relation to history.

The critique of ethnocentrism is as much context specific as it is theoretical. Transactionalism is called ethnocentric because the process of tracking interest-inspired rational choices supposedly is culturally inspired (Coyle, 2011). Context specific, a transactionalist approach is ethnocentric as Ahmed explained in his critique of Barth's *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* be-

cause western rational thought cannot be transferred one to one to pre-industrial Pashtun (Vincent, 1979:185). Barth uses the “those who are able to exercise significant political choice and those who are not” (Vincent, 1979:12). Asad argues that “bonds of solidarity” exist between “those who are able to exercise significant political choice and those who are not” (Yale, 2011). He finds them “quite different from contractual relations which partly define a pure market system” (Yale, 2011).

Notwithstanding these critiques, transactionalism offers a unique tool to understand interactions in the sociopolitical arena. The critiques function to generate analytic questions based on transactional analysis.

2. History of Governance and State-building

This thesis tries to understand security facilitation through non state governance mechanisms.

To understand the current importance of non state governance in light of state-building this chapter asks how non-state governance mechanisms have changed over history and endured until today. Considering this question it asks in the latter part of this chapter why the differentiation between state versus non state governance is difficult and possibly misleading when looking at the political traditions in Afghanistan.

This chapter discusses the struggle for centralised rule in Afghanistan in the context of domestic power struggles and the interplay with great empires. These issues resonate in the problems today. This analysis lays bear the dynamics between local and central governance and their importance in the political events of the last three hundred years. Although the historical analysis does not assume a conscious historical connection between current social action and events in the past, current political traditions have transformed through events in the past.

2.1 Historical Background

It is the purpose of this section to describe formers modes of governance and government in Afghanistan. Its turbulent past shows many likenesses to contemporary challenges. A basic understanding of Afghanistan's history is deemed essential in explaining the endurance and transformation of local governance mechanisms to today.

This section will look at the major political events of the last 300 years by describing the power struggle for centralised rule. Social change in Afghan society was strongly affected and caught up in great empire politics throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The power competition between central and local governance was systemic and endemic to the feudal Afghan society, imposed social changes undercut the traditional balance in Afghan relations between the tribes and its rulers.

The Durrani Empire

Afghanistan was founded as an independent state by the creation of the Durrani empire. A Pashtun warrior named Ahmed Khan established not just the Durrani confederation but the entire Pashtun tribe as the ruling group in Afghanistan and its empire. The empire is seen as the harbinger of the modern Afghan State as it brought notions of centralised rule to the country. Rule by Ahmed Shah was autocratic but his resource base depended on tribal cooperation. This “natural friction” (Barfield, 2010:105) between a ruler's claim to authority and its tribal power base did not lead to conflict as long as a balance was struck between the central ruler and the tribal partners (Barfield, 2010:109). The exchange of resources between them followed traditional patrimonial structures in what Rubin describes as a “patrimonial state” (1988:1191). The interaction between Ahmed Khan and the tribal regions is described as “a series of overlapping obligations of solidarity. Village communities, clans, tribal groups and religiously defined local communities formed the most important reference point for political identity and action” (Wimmer & Schetter, 2002:10). The empire's resources were generated by yearly military campaigns in its conquered areas (Barfield, 2010:101). The tribes delivered military conscripts for these campaigns, administration of the tribes was in the hands of provincial governors (Barfield, 2010:101) who enjoyed a great measure of autonomy because of their importance in revenue generation for the empire.

Strong centralised rule demonstrated by Ahmed Khan was not to last, his death heralded violent power politics as succession to the throne by Ahmed Khan's offspring would “characterize and debilitate the Afghan State for more than a century” (Barfield, 2010:117). As political competition was constrained to the Durrani elite, these struggles had little backlash on the population in comparison with wars to come. Effective authority of the Durrani leaders did not reach to the local level who were commonly ruled by their own traditional authorities. Wimmer & Schetter therefore claim that because Durrani power did not really “extend state structures beyond the few urban centres of power [...] the state represented an external entity, even a hostile one (2002:8). The concept of a direct hostile relation between ‘the state’ and ‘the tribe’ is pervasive in writing on Afghanistan's history (see: Wimmer & Schetter). Although power struggles between ‘central’ and ‘local’ were common, they did not in my mind describe an overt dichotomy. The power competition between

central and local was systemic and possibly endemic to the feudal society, it was an inherent part of governance. As Barfield notes, “even potentially powerful groups never effectively challenged their right to rule even when they revolted against them” (2010:109). The rural population might have found growing central power something to rebel against but the notion of their legitimate rule was not questioned because their rulers were seen as an integral part of society.

In the end, Ahmed Shah’s empire engrained the belief in Afghan society that Durrani rule was a-given. The balance struck between tribal and central government was to be shaken by events in the Great Game.

The Great Game

After the death of Ahmed Shah the empire crumbled and fell into divisive tribal wars. The unstable political landscape remained to govern Afghanistan to the 1820s when Afghanistan became the caught up in ‘the Great Game’ between British India and Russia. The British invaded Afghanistan in 1839 to preempt a Russian invasion.

Afghanistan was still a feudal society before the outbreak of the first Anglo-Afghan war. Durrani leaders held the exclusive right to power. Both Anglo-Afghan wars provided the catalysts of change that would gradually change the politics of power. As the British invaded they set about changing the structure of the Afghan State in order to increase military effectiveness. The British had found the traditional system of patronage and clientelism corrupt and therefore created a governmental controlled force instead of the tribal levies (Barfield, 2010:118) This endeavour increased governmental power by undermining traditional autonomy of the chiefs (Barfield, 2010:119). The call for centralisation would repeat itself often in Afghanistan’s history and its herald usually failed to understand that the patrimonial system they undercut was and is systemic to a feudal society and that by eradicating ‘corruption’ they undermined the structural workings of the society. It diminished Durrani power and prestige (Barfield,2010). Moreover the war caused a great influx of British resources in the country which in turn undermined the power of traditional authorities (Barfield, 2010:120). These changes in the conservative society spawned uprisings against the British. These uprisings saw mobilisation along religious lines as these had the power to unify and

incorporate the tribes (Barfield, 2010:122,123). This mobilisation technique was to be recurring throughout Afghanistan's rebellions. The Afghans managed to oust the British but the old balance between the central state and the tribes had changed. Afghan politics were now open to non elite groups as they had proved necessary in the ousting of the invaders. It made the government vulnerable to non elite competition (Barfield, 2010:130), something that had previously not been an issue.

In the years that followed Afghanistan's ruler, Mohammed Dost, was able to construct a strong army and balanced Afghanistan between the empires of Russia and Britain. The fragmented and autonomous nature of regional governance remained intact and would remain so until the second Anglo-Afghan war provided a new catalyst for social change. The reign of Sher Ali introduced some notions of modernisation by introducing a centralised administrative system but these reforms never had a deep impact on rural society (Barfield, 2010:138).

Renewed Russian influence proved a justification for a new British invasion of Afghanistan whom took direct control of the country after the invasion. The absence of Russian support made Sher Ali's successor and son, Yaqub, make peace with the British. Direct British rule spawned conflict in which Yaqub abdicated. His brother Ayoob opposed the British but was eventually defeated in 1881 by Abdur Rahman, a grandson of Sher Ali who had struck a deal with the British whom recognised him as Amir of Afghanistan. The war had profound effects, it "centralised political and economic power in Kabul" and recognised Abdur Rahman as the "undisputed ruler of Afghanistan" (Barfield, 2010:151) The consolidation of his rule caused forty disturbances, including ten major rebellions, four of which he called civil wars."(Rubin,1988: 1194). The Amir centralised rule in Afghanistan funded by foreign subsidies. This independent resource base came at the cost of alienating the tribes and evoking resistance. Especially among the Pashtuns because they felt that their former base of power and special place within Afghan governance was being undercut. With power vested in the monarch based on a centralised army, the amir set out to impose "a bureaucratic system of territorial administration over, if not entirely in place of, the segmentary system of relying on tribal chiefs" (Rubin, 1988:1194).

Twentieth century Governance

Before the twentieth century started, the rule of Abdur Rahman had transformed the country. He had implemented a vast centralisation scheme that shattered the balance former rulers had struck with the local elites. Abdur Rahman destroyed or subjugated the local elites leaving them with not a shred of pretence towards national policy making. In a sense he modernised the state by centralising state power. Although the power of regional communities had been violently repressed, actual modernisation only occurred in the Kabul region leaving the rural communities as subsistence based as they had been (Barfield, 2010:161). Importantly, Barfield argues that the state structure was altered radically but no actual transformation took place in the rural areas (2010:161). The social structures of local communities remained intact. Power was transferred to Kabul making it the “leading political and economic” centre (Barfield, 2010:161). The system that emerged has, according to Barfield, been a source of the destructive politics of power between central rulers and rural communities that have plagued Afghanistan ever since (2010:166). Conflict became systemic to a system where government sought social change by centralising power and economic resources while rural communities sought a restoration of the balance between centralised and regional power and resources.

Habibullah and Amanullah Khan succeeded Rahman Khan consecutively. Amanullah sought to redress some of the harsh policies of Abdur Rahman by ending absolutist rule and the system of patronage (Ruben, 1988:1196). He implemented a constitution, institutionalised government, reformed tribal customs, introduced equal rights and citizenship (Ruben, 1988: 1197). This modernisation sought to achieve social change and extend central government (Barfield, 2010:183). His reforms and his fathers legacy of violent politics, centralisation and antipathy towards government sparked a civil war in which the tribes and clergy mobilised “as if he were a foreign occupier himself” (Barfield, 2010:191).

His abdication heralded the end of modernisation and a return to old tribal ways of governing. Southern and Eastern Pashtun tribes played a pivotal part in the deposition of Amanullah and his family. They installed Nadir Shah, a Durrani ruler, who was elected King at a *Loya Jirga* by

tribal *Lashkars* in an attempt to historicise his legitimacy as ruler, for he had no legitimate claim to the throne. For the next forty years the Nadir Shah's Musahiban dynasty would rule the country. Their rule was marked by "preserving the internal stability" (Barfield, 2010:198). They did seek social change, but having learned from previous uprisings, brought "gradual social change accompanied by economic development" (Barfield, 2010:198). Having identified the causes for rebellion by the state's imposition of social change and demand for resources. They marginalised both the tribes and the clergy, who together had instigated most rebellions, by becoming less dependent on them. In this process it tacitly recognised the village and tribal non state governance structures (Barfield, 2010: 221). In order for Kabul to work independently of the rural areas it sought new sources of income. It found them by engaging in Afghanistan's age old politics of collaboration with great powers. Afghanistan was first supported by the British but in a post world war II world played out U.S. -Soviet cold war competition in acquiring resources (Barfield, 2010:208). This independent resource base was founded on foreign trade and international aid instead of tribally collected taxes (Rubin,1988:1196). By the 1960s the state institutions were modernising, creating a greater modernist class of people. Daoud, the former prime minister staged a coup in 1973 with help from the military and he disenfranchised "leftist educated urbanites" (Barfield, 2010:214). Afghanistan became a republic. Daoud modernised the army in a response to regional, cold war aligned threats and started other projects of modernisation. As Afghanistan missed the skill to implement these projects of modernisation foreign advisors were called for, mainly from the USSR (Rubin, 1988: 1204).

Daoud's power base was rooted in his Musahiban family roots (Rubin, 1988:1206). Local governance became deeply entrenched during the period of Musahiban rule and became alienated from Kabul as rule was directed at maintaining stability, not at engagement. The social changes that were to come with socialist rule were to upturn this balance once again.

Soviet Invasion

The Saur revolution ended Musahiban rule in Afghanistan. The People's Democratic Alliance (PDPA) was Afghanistan's communist party and they assassinated Daoud Khan in response to the murder of a prominent PDPA member in an alleged government assassination. The objective of the PDPA was "to bring the system of tribal and local autonomies to an end and to turn Afghanistan rapidly into a modern state through radical reforms" (Wimmer & Schetter, 2002:9). Opposition to this scheme was dealt with violently as the targeting of "traditional landowners, the old military establishment and the Islamic clergy" showed (Barfield, 2010:24). The traditional politics of collaboration by Afghan rulers in balancing great power rivalry was thrown aside by engaging in an alliance with the USSR.

The foremost reason that led to an insurrection against the PDPA which spawned the Soviet Invasion was the nature and extent of social changes imposed. Opposition to social changes seems a recurrent phenomenon in Afghan society. Notwithstanding the supposed historical relation, the act of changing deeply engrained social and economic customs evokes opposition when seen through a transactional lens. Both legitimacy and actual authority of government rule were deeply undermined due to this opposition (Barfield, 2010:227). Even Soviet advisors, sent in support of the PDPA, advised against "such far reaching changes so rapidly" in a "socially conservative" country (Barfield, 2010:229). A tacit agreement with Kabul had allowed rural communities to live in relative isolation for years. New PDPA policies aimed to break down this political system "without weighing the consequences" (Barfield, 2010:229). The government had "lost even the limited legitimacy [...] when it attacked Islam and tried to transform local society" (Rubin, 1988:1208). Rural communities responded by a nation wide insurrection.

To counter this threat and keep Afghanistan under the Soviet sphere of influence, the Soviet Union decided to invade Afghanistan and support the Kabul based government. Whereas the PDPA had spawned nationwide uprisings, the presence of Soviet troops brought a full blown insurgency to bear. The war against the foreign Soviets had a unifying effect on the Afghan population. Tribal and ethnic relations, important they are, can be considered subsidiary when in defence of Islam (Barfield, 2010: 235). Therefore the politics of labeling a conflict as Islamic Jihad is an impor-

tant and necessary tool in the mobilisation against a foreign invader. The PDPA government lost its last shred of legitimacy when it was conceived to be in the hands of a foreign, non Islamic power. It was the Muslims duty, in this respect, “to rebel against it” (Barfield, 2010:231). These factors explain the sudden unification and overall power of the insurgency. The durability of the insurgency against the Soviets can be explained along the lines of the politics of collaboration with great powers. As the PDPA had picked sides in the cold war, the insurgents could now receive support from anti communist and pro Islamist benefactors such as the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. This cold war alignment gave the insurgents the resources to continue its war.

The ensuing war against the Soviets resulted in widespread destruction and affected local governance. It created a patchwork of different allegiances and relations between local communities based on tribe, ethnicity, warlords and Islam. Many traditional structures were not able to aptly protect their communities marking a shift that replaced “the old elite of landowning khans and elders [...] by young military commanders who could offer their communities protection or simply demand more respect because they had guns” (Barfield, 2010:243). Local governance became so complex that loyalty and allegiance reached to local military commanders, who were considered to be “independent agents”, but no further (Barfield, 2010:255). Loyalties and relations shifted quickly when payoffs were better somewhere else. Despite ethnicity or other ties, commanders “[defected] to another resistance party or even to the PDPA if they felt abused or were attracted by a better deal” (Barfield, 2010: 243). This anarchic situation can be described by the notions of transactionalism that ascribes political competition to through game-theoretic calculations.

The Soviet war gave rise to transnational Islamism in Afghanistan. Islamism is still important in the current Afghan conflict and it has influenced the dynamics of non state governance. Islamist support made the war one in the defence of Islam bringing with it “the vanguard of transnational Islam”(Barfield, 2010:258). Despite the weakening of traditional structures the Islamists had to engage “existing kinship based local political institutions” (Rubin, 1988:1209) to gain a foothold. The Islamist influence gave a new dimension to already murky local governance institutions.

Soviet forces had completely withdrawn by early 1989. With the Soviets gone a Jihad in name of Islam was no longer justified (Barfield, 2010:241) removing the unifying incentive spawning a civil war between the various mujahideen factions.

Conclusion

This section described the major political events of the last 300 years by focussing on the struggle for centralised power. Social change in Afghan society was strongly affected by great empire politics throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Durrani elite control was inherent to Afghan governance but foreign invasions called for rural rebellions which in time questioned the legitimacy of elite control. As did the notion that the defence of the nation and the protection of Islam were intertwined. State authority by exclusive elite groups was no longer taken for granted. The power competition between central and local was systemic and endemic to the early feudal Afghan society as it was based on interdependent exchange of resources.

Abdur Rahman's centralisation scheme shattered the balance with the local elites but no actual transformation took place in the rural areas. Conflict became systemic to a system where government sought social change by centralising power and economic resources while rural communities sought a restoration of the balance between centralised and regional power.

Nadir Shah' Musahiban dynasty would rule the country for forty years. Having learned from previous uprisings, they brought social change gradually "accompanied by economic development" (Barfield, 2010:198). They played out U.S. -Soviet cold war competition in acquiring resources (Barfield, 2010:208) to establish an independent resource base. Local governance became deeply entrenched and alienated from Kabul as the government made no attempts to incorporate the local communities.

When PDPA came to power they set about creating a modern state and tried to impose rapid social change by breaking tribal and local autonomies. The rural communities responded by a nation wide insurrection. To keep Afghanistan under the Soviet sphere of influence, the Soviet Union decided to invade, unifying the Afghan population under the banner of a Muslims duty to rebel against the invader. Cold war alignment gave the insurgents the resources to continue the war.

Effect on traditional governance was detrimental as old elites were replaced by military commanders who could control resources by force. This anarchic situation can be described by the notions of transactionalism that ascribes political competition to through game-theoretic calculations. The Soviet war gave rise to transnational Islamism in Afghanistan, but the Soviet withdrawal removed the unifying incentive spawning a civil war between the various mujahideen factions.

2.2 State-building

This section describes governance during the rise of the Taliban and subsequent international state-building effort. It asks why is it difficult or misleading to attempt to make a state versus non state differentiation in Afghanistan's political traditions because the State-building project seems to built around this misunderstanding.

The Taliban and State Collapse

Circumstances in the civil war period after the Soviet pull out are of great importance in understanding how the Taliban was able to rise to power. Moreover it gives an insight into the transformation and dynamics of non state governance in circumstances of civil war.

The fall of Najibullah's communist regime sparked a civil war which was distinctly different from former power struggles in Afghanistan (Barfield, 2010:251). In general, power struggles in Afghanistan were fought between claimants to power who had a "recognized claim of political legitimacy" and or aid from foreign powers (Barfield, 2010:251). Both conditions were absent (Barfield, 2010: 251) as the Soviet war had upturned the traditional social hierarchy of Afghanistan. Previously marginalised people were now in positions of power but had no traditional legitimate claim to power. Traditional legitimacy, as in "recognised tribal lineage" was still important among the population (Barfield, 2010: 250). This implied that power had to be presented as a *fait accompli* in order to inherit some traits of legitimacy. The historical dependence on foreign support had aided claimants to power in the past to subdue other competitors. The fall of the USSR had ended the great game (Barfield, 2010: 251) and Afghanistan's concomitant ability to draw funds from great power competition. In these conditions no party or faction was able to "establish political legitimacy or military hegemony" (Barfield, 2010: 255). Although the Islamic State of Afghanistan was founded, it received no legitimacy and its leadership was contested. With no centralised governing power and the civil war raging, regions in Afghanistan "grew ever more autonomous" (Barfield, 2010: 253). Governance started resembling "nineteenth century patterns of rule that were well adapted to such conditions" (Barfield, 2010: 253). Nineteenth century governance was marked for its loose and patrimonial relations between Kabul and other regions where tribal leaders pledged support in return

for resources. Whether this historical analogy is a conscious act remains to be seen as the divulsion of power seems systemic and rational when governance and security is not delivered by a centralised power.

Pervasive infighting and the absence of centralised authority made the country a target for coercion and influence in light of Bailey's theory on political power (Bailey, 1969:35). This vulnerability to opportunistic attacks was the primary reason for the Taliban's ascendance to power (Barfield, 2010:255). The Taliban, a Deobandi fundamentalist group, was able to reestablish "control over coercion" (Rubin, 2002:180). Coercion had become pervasive due to militia and warlord rule in the autonomous regions. A power that could reestablish stability, peace and "security of life and property" was widely welcomed by a population lacking these basic human needs (Barfield, 2010:257). The Taliban ruled from 1996 and imposed a centralisation project not seen since Abdur Rahman. Radical social change had a history of invoking opposition when it was felt that a traditional and conservative way of life was at stake (Barfield, 2010:344). Taliban governance was seemingly based on Sharia' law, the Muslim legal code but in practice adhered to many traits of Pashtunwali, the Pashtun tribal code, used by the rural population (Barfield, 2010:262). Therefore opposition to radical change was centred in the urban areas. The centralisation programme effected non state governance as the myriad governance mechanisms were subdued. Traditional and tribal governance in the Pashtun areas were sidelined as Taliban 'religious' rule provided an overarching structure (Barfield, 2010: 263).

State-building

In this paragraph the immediate aftermath of the U.S. invasion is read. The structure of State-building in Afghanistan drawn up after the invasion has guided Afghan politics and governance ever since. The debate on state building is discussed here in relation to non state governance. It tries to contextualise the state-builders attempt to make a state versus non state differentiation in political traditions in Afghanistan. Non state governance dynamics can be described in light of this contextualisation.

The Taliban regime did not last, in 2001 it was ousted by a combined invasion of the U.S. and the United Front, commonly known as the Northern Alliance. A mere four months after the U.S. backed invasion, a conference in Bonn was convened to discuss and outline the future of the Afghan State. It called for commissions to draft a constitution, set up the legal and judiciary systems. Meanwhile a Transitional Authority would provide stewardship of the country until elections could be held. An emergency Loya Jirga would be held within six months after the signing of the Bonn agreement. A military force under U.N. auspices would support the nascent government.

The Bonn agreement saw the rise of a state building project wherein national development goals were set for Afghanistan relying on international funds. Any proposed structure for the new state would be of great importance as it would decide Afghanistan's governance future for the years to come. The Bonn agreement and international donor aid signaled the start of the "political and technical process of democratisation" (Larson, 2010). The structure decided on would house a "presidential system of government, a bicameral parliament, provincial councils and an electoral cycle" (Larson, 2009:1). This structure, which seems to be a standard democratic model, represents the outcome of a debate choosing between federal or central government (Barfield, 2010:298). The federalists proposed a measure of autonomous power for Afghanistan's regions. The federal model was disliked by the international community as incoming U.N. officials saw pervasive regionality as the main problem to democratisation (Barfield, 2010:303). A federal power-sharing model between Kabul and the regions was dismissed under the guise of warlord mongering. Regional power pockets were seen to have created Afghanistan's current problems. Thus, they were seen as a danger to centralised democratic institutions. Therefore both the U.N. and the

U.S. government backed a centralised government model for Afghanistan. According to Barfield the state-builders had made a classical mistake as most pushes for highly centralised rule had evoked strong opposition (Barfield, 2010:302).

The state structure seems to be based on a false distinction of local versus central. Western ethnocentric notions of statehood explicitly define Afghanistan's problems as a dichotomy between central and local as if Afghanistan's political tradition can be defined by these two different entities. The notion misconceives Afghanistan's political tradition because western ethnocentric ideas regarding the state are not valid in a system wherein a power struggle between higher and lower levels of government is systemic to the system itself.

Achieving social change by the imposition of foreign and alien structures had in past evoked resistance. People tend to oppose radical change, whether historically inspired or not. Surprisingly to many observers and historians the U.S. invasion and state-building project did not evoke a general insurrection (Barfield, 2010:275). On the contrary opinions and perceptions found that Afghans were "eager to cooperate" and supportive of U.S. plans (Barfield, 2010:275).

Despite a rather positive outlook, the centralised structure of the new state had significant-problems with "leadership, functionality and legitimacy" (Barfield, 2010: 272) which undermined the entire state-building process over time. These inherent problems to a partly misconceived system became apparent in the early days of state-building as Karzai implemented a patrimonial model of state interaction (Barfield, 2010:273) in what was intended to be a democratic and accountable state. This patrimonial model, although in itself not alien to Afghan culture, encouraged corruption and disenfranchised an initially welcoming population. Karzai appeased and integrated warlords and militias in his culture of patronage, he rearmed the very power-holders "who had previously dominated the country" (Ruben, 2002:180).

The population had hoped the state building project would increase security and quality of life. Anne Larson, who researched the process of democratisation in Afghanistan concluded that people indeed supported the idea of democratisation but have been "disillusioned by the manifestation of the process" (Larson, 2010).

Conclusion

The Mujahideen civil war was distinctly different from former power struggles in Afghanistan. The Soviet war had upturned the traditional social hierarchy placing formerly marginalised people in positions of power who had no legitimate claim to power. Moreover the end of the great game withdrew the ability to gain an advantage by drawing on foreign funds. With no clear political or military leadership, governance started resembling the “nineteenth century patterns of rule that were well adapted to such conditions” (Barfield, 2010: 253).

As the war drew on pervasive infighting and the absence of centralised authority made the country a target for coercion. Afghanistan’s vulnerability was the primary reason for the Taliban’s ascendance to power. The Taliban could reestablish stability, which was widely welcomed by the population. They ruled from 1996 and imposed a centralisation project. Social change had a history of invoking opposition. Non state governance mechanisms were subdued by the Taliban in this process.

The Bonn agreement outlined the future of the Afghan State. The federal model was disliked by the international community because pervasive regionality was seen, ethnocentrically, as the main problem to democratisation. Therefore a highly centralised model was chosen disregarding the regions need to a certain amount of autonomy. The state-builders had made a classical mistake because highly centralised rule in combination with social change had evoked strong opposition time and again, whether historically conscious or not.

The state-building programme seems to be based on a false distinction of local versus central. Ethnocentric notions of statehood and state building explicitly define Afghanistan’s problems as a dichotomy between central and local as if Afghanistan’s political tradition can be defined by these two different entities. The notion misconceives Afghanistan’s political tradition because western ethnocentric ideas regarding the state are not valid in a system wherein a traditional power struggle between higher and lower levels of government is systemic to the system itself.

Although social change by the imposition of foreign and alien structures had in past evoked resistance the U.S. invasion and state-building project did not evoke a general insurrection. However, the centralised structure gave problems in “leadership, functionality and legitimacy” (Barfield,

2010:272) undermining the entire state-building process over time creating widespread disillusionment with the state-building project.

2.3 Conclusion

Early Afghan history is defined by power politics over centralised rule. This competition led to friction between rulers and their tribal power base but balances struck between rulers and tribes prevented conflict and tended to be mutually beneficial. Friction between central and local governance was systemic to the feudal Afghan society as the interdependence between both challenged conflicting objectives.

Afghanistan became caught up between large empires in the nineteenth century. Both Anglo-Afghan wars provided catalysts of change that would gradually change the politics of power. Imposed social changes undercut the traditional balance in Afghan relations between the tribes and its rulers. Politics of collaboration within the Great Game saw international resources fund Afghan regimes calling for centralisation and upsetting the interdependence with the Tribes and therefore the structural working of society itself. The presence of non Islamic invaders created mobilisation along religious lines in defence of the State with the power to unify and incorporate the otherwise unruly tribes.

The wars centralised both political and economic power in Kabul and established a ruler who vigorously centralised the country creating the destructive politics of power between centralist and rural forces that seem to have plagued Afghanistan ever since (Barfield, 2010:166). Conflict became systemic in a system where government sought social change by centralising power while rural communities sought a restoration of the balance between centralised and regional power and resources. Rulers in the mid twentieth century understood this contention and sought a balance through moderate modernisation and social change by slowly transforming the Afghan economy. Non state governance in rural areas was left to itself and Kabul alienated from the rural areas by modernisation dependent on cold-war resources.

A communist revolution sought rapid social change supported by the USSR. Social change was opposed and presence of foreign forces inspired mobilisation through defence of Islam and state. The politics of collaboration brought in cold war resources sustaining the war for a decade. The Soviet war upturned local communities making governance resemble nineteenth century patterns adapted to centralised powers struggles by autonomous rule (Barfield, 2010:253). The war

transformed after the Soviet pull out in a civil war of pervasive infighting and the absence of centralised authority. This made the country a target for coercion. The Taliban could re-establish stability, which was widely welcomed by the population. Non state governance mechanisms were subdued by the Taliban through its centralisation programme spawning opposition from urban areas. The 2001 U.S. invasion marked the end of Taliban rule.

The Bonn agreement outlined the future of the Afghan State. The federal model was disliked by the international community because pervasive local autonomy was seen as the main hurdle to democratisation. Therefore a highly centralised model was chosen which disregarded the need for certain amount of autonomy to rural regions. The state-building programme based on Western, ethnocentric notions of statehood and state building led to a false distinction of local versus central governance in Afghanistan's political tradition. The dichotomy is false as Afghan governance can't be defined by these two different entities as they are inherent to one another, the balance and competition between them having defined governance structures.

Although social change by the imposition of foreign and alien structures had in past evoked resistance, the U.S. invasion and state-building project did not evoke a general insurrection. However, the misconceived centralised structure gave problems in "leadership, functionality and legitimacy" (Barfield, 2010:272) undermining the entire state-building process over time.

3. Local Governance

Last chapter established that a perceived dichotomy between centralised and local governance is based on western ethnocentric notions which has guided state building into a structural form unsuited to non state governance in Afghanistan. Non state governance mechanisms are systemic to Afghanistan and have become important actors in the insurgency.

This chapter describes non state governance by asking how local governance mechanisms interact and cooperate with Kabul and how local communities provide public goods in absence of the state. Section one look as the prevalence of non state governance and their interaction with Kabul. Section two looks at the interaction of Tribal governance with Kabul and zooms in to understand governance dynamics. Section three analyses these dynamics of public goods provision through a transactional lens.

3.1 Governing Areas of limited Statehood

This section will show that despite highly centralised state building efforts that seem to alienate local governance, the state is in effect either completely absent or holds only a small shadow of hierarchy in many areas. In these areas governance conducted is detached from Kabul because the state never effectively established governmental authority, backed by an administrative system.

Afghanistan's governance traditions granted systemic governance autonomy to many areas, and contextual circumstances such as the civil war and Taliban rule never established a viable state structure in traditional autonomous areas. The establishment of a democratic centralised state presupposes governmental authority in these very areas. Local governance conducted through traditional patrimonial systems is seen as an impediment to good governance while they are in effect the current reality and endemic to the Afghan context.

This section asks how local governance mechanisms interact and cooperate with the Kabul government. It uses the possible ethnocentric state-builders notion of 'limited statehood' on purpose as this allows us to identify analytic questions regarding the state building project and non state governance mechanisms.

Flawed State-building

State-building in Afghanistan was set up to create a liberal democracy in Afghanistan. The proposed state structure turned out to be flawed as it was misinformed on Afghan realities. Although problems with the centralised state structure could be identified from its inception it is primarily the materialisation of flaws that have turned the Afghan population away from the state-building project.

In hindsight one can claim that the IC has imposed unrealistic goals in Afghanistan by expecting that a weberian democracy is the thing to strive for in the short to medium term. In this sense, non state governance mechanisms were considered contradictory (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:61) to the appearance of a true democratic state. These unrealistic expectations and goals had not always been so unrealistic because the opportunity was there, but was squandered by the structural problems of state-building that materialised in the years after. Barfield explains this opportunity as an eagerness of Afghans to cooperate, even with U.S. forces (2010:275). At the same time refugees returned and the political process had accommodated the Pashtun without returning to violence. Anne Larson's research found "the tacit assumption that [democracy] is a good thing" and "People support the idea of democratisation but are disillusioned by its manifestation (2010).

The Afghan National Development Strategy is the UN endorsed road map for state-building in Afghanistan. Its objective is to create "a stable Islamic constitutional democracy at peace with itself and its neighbours, standing with full dignity in the international family [...] based on a strong, private-sector led market economy, social equity, and environmental sustainability" (ANDS, 2008:5). Some goals derived from this statement relate to governance, rule of law, and human rights, and aim to "strengthen democratic processes and institutions, human rights, the rule of law, delivery of public services and government accountability" (ANDS, 2008:5). The war weary Afghans were prompted by the chance of improving the quality of life to embrace, despite radical social changes and presence of foreigners, the state building project. High ended objectives as these fuel expectations. The return of refugees from abroad brought with them heightened expectations

of state service delivery (Barfield,2010:275). Even the presence of foreign military forces was welcomed to provide much needed security (Barfield, 2010:277)

Over the years that followed it became clear that the State was not up to the task as benefits did not materialise. International development aid was wholly inadequate (Barfield, 2010:316), the proposed centralised state structure did not reflect realities on the ground and was co-opted by patrimonial exchanges while disregarding needs of local communities by embracing former warlords and militias (Barfield, 2010:303). Afghans judge on actual outcomes (Barfield, 2010:302), and the outcomes were far from satisfactory which steadily crumbled the state's legitimacy.

In western opinion democracy is the norm for state governance, no other system will suffice. As it is so highly regarded it is put on a pedestal and becomes "value laden" (Larson, 2010). The more state-building and democratisation delegitimised for failing results, the more connected notions as democracy became stigmatised as western or foreign imposed contraptions (Larson, 2010). Secular and liberal notions were attached to the failings of the international community and state. It was noted during field research by the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit that: "democracy was condemned as embracing western values and moving away from tradition, reflecting more widespread concerns with the meaning of democracy in Afghanistan" (Coburn & Larson, 2009:3). This represents an Afghan perception that is fortified by different AREU research linking perceptions of democracy as being synonymous to immorality (Coburn, 2009:4). A respondent said the following: "I think democracy is good for the Afghanistan government but we don't want government which is in others' hands applied by foreigners" (Larson, 2010). This represents research findings that the respondents are not against democracy but perceive the process of democratisation as imposed Western democracy. The Afghan Islamic democracy was widely welcomed by respondents but realities concerning its imposition make them very wary. One respondent had this to say:

Government should be chosen by people not by outsiders. A Lady can't get an operation in Kabul because she is blocked by foreign troops. This is the democracy we see is brought by foreign troops. Innocent Muslims are being blown up and weddings bombed while the international community makes no inquiries (Larson, 2010)

AREU analysis of these perceptions concluded that GoA democracy is seen as deeply flawed because of two main reasons: equity and money. There were “many complaints about there being no level playing field” and “that money is above the law” (Larson, 2010). People feel excluded from governmental services because bribes ensure “access to services” (AREU, 2010:1). When one hasn't got the money one is excluded (AREU, 2010:1). These reasons are likely to be related to the problem at stake, the flawed nature of the centralised state and the way in which it is operated.

Importance of Local Governance

The Government of Afghanistan is highly centralised despite the need for a direct choice in governance by local communities (Barfield, 2010:303). The local communities, in fact, were alienated by the state structure. Yet, as local governance is systemic to governance in Afghanistan and endemic in the current context of absent state authority in a pervasively violent environment, non-state governance is and was the reality in delivering governance to the population.

As both the international community and the government of Afghanistan lack legitimacy the population is forced to revert even more to non state governance mechanisms. The absence of state authority is illustrated by the following example wherein people “no longer view the current government as a meaningful partner in areas of governance and security neither in the districts or provincial centres” (TLO, 2010:2). This notion is underlined by the increased dangers of association with the government by tribal leaders (TLO, 2010:3). Research by the TLO regarding the Dutch military operations in Uruzgan reached a rather similar conclusion stating that the weakness or absence of “sub national governance” by GoA led to a situation where successful Dutch-tribal relations were not recognised and left out of state building efforts (TLO, 2010a:27). In the Paktika province in Eastern Afghanistan the state was all but present because of “size, remoteness, inse-

curity and political divide” (TLO, 2010:7). Yet other research concluded “for the vast majority of rural Afghans, local governance, security and justice administration was and is provided through non state bodies” (TLO, 2009:5).

The reality of non state governance cannot be ignored as it is manifest. Ignorance can also imply a misunderstanding of Afghanistan’s political traditions and current governance arena. This field research evidence, despite being snapshots, support the argument by Schmeidl and Karokhail that state building efforts “cannot be seen independent from traditional structures altogether [...] The Afghan state is [...] highly dependent upon the collaboration with traditional structures in order to rule” (2006:59).

The argument that ignores local governance for fear of undermining the modern state is deemed artificial by AREU analysis “The positing of a national policy choice between formal or informal systems is an artificial one, as both will invariably co-exist” (Nixon, 2008:57). Overall, local governance in Afghanistan at this moment “remains largely informal and varies widely across the country” (Nixon, 2008:10). This reality is further underscored by the fact that “80 to 90 percent of all civil disputes and criminal offences in the country are dealt with through informal institutions” (TLO, 2009:1).

Consolidating Local Governance

The state structure favours governmental over local governance, as do western ethnocentric notions on state-building. However the failing state is confronted by the fact that they cannot bypass local governance. Local communities themselves are confronted by a State that intends to expand its reach. Moreover, just as non state governance is systemic to governance in Afghanistan so is some sort of centralised authority. Therefore creating an understanding of non state governance dynamics is only possible by asking how both governance mechanisms interact.

Local governance structures hold sway in many areas in Afghanistan. This fact has had many academic publications on hybrid political orders proclaim that the interaction between government and other structures should be consolidated (TLO, 2010:8) Schmeidl & Karokhail argue that the state building process could be better off by integrating these structures (2006:59). These

notions imply the integration of local governance structures into the state structure, something initially proposed in a federal model for the Afghan State but dismissed as dangerous. Furthermore it is argued that non state governance could be integrated into a framework endorsing the modern Afghan State when it is complementary instead of parallel to the system (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:59) This symbiosis between the supposed modern and traditional structures is said to create acceptance for the state in the areas of limited statehood (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:64).

These statements seem to dismiss the causes why the Afghan State has been delegitimised and it sketches a Western ethnocentric premise of a modern versus traditional dichotomy in current Afghan governance. The Afghan State has been delegitimised because they have not delivered, this appears to be due to state structure and patrimonial politics of power disenfranchising large parts of the population. The dysfunctional and patrimonial, but 'democratic' state structure represents, in the eyes of Wimmer and Schetter 'modern' governance (2002:26), whereas local governance by tribal, warlord and other power holder alike represents traditional governance. These structures should be integrated into the modern structure as if they represent a fixed, unchanging structure in opposition to the state. Rather 'non state governance' appears to be systemic manifestation of social life in absence of a better trade off delivered by the state or other actors.

Interaction between the State and Local Governance Mechanisms

Non state governance mechanism are found all over Afghanistan and interact with the state in various ways. As the central state tries to expand it comes into direct contact with local governance mechanisms. The State lacks power to expand its authority, development is therefore unable to penetrate some areas creating discontent with the State. This lowers expectations in the eyes of the population. This quagmire is described by a respondent in a Human Terrain System interview as: "national government has not provided many services because of the poor security environment, and the people do not ask the government for assistance because they do not have confidence in the government to provide it" (HTS, 2010:8). Another respondent in this study named the main impediment to state-led development as "the intimidating presence of the Taliban and the di-

version of funds by officials” (2010:8). We can derive from these statements that the main impediment, as perceived in HTS research, to expanding governmental reach is security and corruption. Corruption seems to result from Kabul’s patrimonial politics (Barfield, 2010:303). Evidence to support this argument is found in the statement of “diversion of funds” which in the context of the interview relates to lack of funds and the misuse of these funds by government officials (HTS,2010:5). Another respondent in this study described lack of government reach in his village “because the officials that work in the provincial and district offices are corrupt. They take the money for themselves and do not use it to provide services for local people” (HTS, 2010:7). The research endorses the wide held perception of governmental corruption and underscores the patrimonial nature of interaction between government and local communities.

Local governance mechanisms usually cooperate to a certain extent with the government. The level of interaction differs from the state level to the provincial, district and community levels. An AREU paper on subnational governance describes the interaction of these governance levels as “a mixture of informal and formal gubernatorial powers over expenditures, coordination, appointments and control of access to state bodies and functions. This system has had important roles in managing the influence of local power-holders” (Nixon, 2008:57). In the current system, lower level government officials are not seen as public goods providers, for this is provided by non state mechanisms, but more as conduits between the non state governance and higher level government (HTS, 2010:10). Research showed that the preference for local level dispute resolution is “by asking tribal and village elders to adjudicate problems” (HTS, 2010:6). The governmental judiciary is only called upon “when local tribal leaders and village elders fail, or are unable to reach a desired outcome” (HTS, 2010:6). In contrast, governmental judiciary is much stronger in some urban areas than the non state system. In Jalalabad, in Eastern Afghanistan, most “serious criminal cases are dealt with by state courts” (TLO, 2009:5), which is rather surprising as the rural areas in Eastern Afghanistan are the one with least government influence. At the same time, in the rural Ahmadabad district in Eastern Afghanistan, most cases are dealt with through traditional *Jirgas* (TLO, 2009:5)

Local governance mechanisms are found to cooperate with state structure to various degrees of interaction. Government district level administrators are seen as conduits between governmental and non state actors (HTS, 2010:10). The direct link between the population and these government actors is made by village or tribal elders. Research showed “Tribal elders [to] have a good relationship with the provincial governor” and “Tribal elders play an important role in conveying the wishes of the people to the district governor” (HTS, 2010:10). These governance structures are acknowledged by the government officials and represent the manner in which governance is provided in many areas in Afghanistan, particularly where tribal structures are still strong and intact. Schmeidl and Karokhail name this a “participatory approach to state-building” that is defined “by agreements among tribes and between the tribes and the government” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:62). These agreements are usually limited to security arrangements but are found to cover more topics.

Elders represent the needs and wishes of ‘their’ communities to the relevant higher echelon of power in the region by linking with the government. Therefore this link is not one of government and local governance but one of local governance and the environment. If the environment is dominated by insurgents, or any other better ‘trade off’ a similar link with local power holders emerges in a transactionalist approach. It was noted by the HTT study that “half of the respondents state that cases of theft are brought to the Taliban for resolution” (HTS, 2010:14). Both the government and the Taliban work together with local structures in what seems to be an interconnected mechanism of governance. In any case, the population needs to be governed especially in areas where security is tense. It seems that communities govern themselves and align themselves in a way most beneficial to them. The fickleness of governmental governance, and yes, Taliban governance, has made sure that “traditional structures still hold power at the grass root, tribal and sub tribal level” (TLO, 2008:67).

Conclusion

The state is absent in many areas. Therefore it is important to ask how local governance mechanisms interact with the Kabul government. The proposed state structure turned out to be flawed as it was misinformed on Afghan realities. The materialisation of these flaws have turned the Afghan population away from the state-building project. They seem to support the idea of democratisation but are disillusioned by its manifestation (Larson, 2010). The more state-building delegitimised for failing results, the more connected notions as democracy became stigmatised as Western or foreign imposed contraptions. The problems points towards the flawed nature of the centralised state and the way in which it is operated.

The absence of state authority is illustrated by perceptions of GoA not being a meaningful partner in the area of local governance, therefore non state governance cannot be ignored by state-builders. Academic publications on hybrid political orders proclaim that the interaction between government and other structures should be consolidated (TLO, 2010:8) if state building is to succeed. Consolidation dismisses the causes why the Afghan State has been delegitimised if it is not attached to structural change. Non state governance mechanism are, perhaps, a systemic manifestation of social life in absence of a better trade off delivered by governmental other actors.

Local governance mechanisms cooperate to a certain extent with the government, local elites form the conduits between the non state governance and higher level government. The link of elders and power-holders with government is one where they represent the needs and wishes of 'their' communities to the relevant higher echelon of power in the region, whoever that is.

3.2 Tribal Governance.

This thesis looks at mechanisms of non state governance throughout Afghanistan but it focuses on on the Pashtun dominated areas in this section for the following reasons: Tribal structures are considered strongest in Pashtun regions, government reach is lowest, violence is highest and insurgent activity is strongest. For these reasons the Pashtun tribal structures represent important examples of actual non state governance mechanisms, especially in relation to the facilitation of security and stability.

The apparent misrepresentation of Afghan governance in the centralised State structure appears to have led to alienation of local structures both structural and instrumental. Yet, the realisation that state governance was flawed led to a renewed interest in local governance. State-builders proposed to work with local governance mechanisms to kick start development. The U.S. governments' HTT analysis found "positive relationships within the tribe and with the national government are seen as the surest way to secure development projects that will improve quality of life" (HTS, 2010:16). The U.S. military in particular realised that fighting an increasingly deadly war in the Pashtun regions asked for a "[circumvention] of dysfunctional national institutions" (Barfield, 2010: 338). They do so by engaging local power holders in what is called an "indirect approach" (Barfield, 2010: 338, which is in direct contrast with the U.S. endorsed direct approach of 2001. This section analyses Pashtun tribal structures and governance mechanisms in order to describe non state governance dynamics in relation to state-building

Pashtun Tribal Structures

A note is deemed necessary on the use and analysis of tribal structures because a live debate exists within academic and operational circles regarding the use of the word 'tribal' to certain governance structures in Afghanistan.

Using the word tribal implies the existence of tribes and tribal social structures. Many anthropologists argue however that tribal structures in Afghanistan have long since disappeared (TRADOC, 2009:2), and that policies based on this erroneous understanding results in wrong courses of action if these structures are engaged in the state-building project along these assumed

tribal lines (TRADOC, 2009:24). The use of the word tribe is deceptive (TRADOC, 2009:2) as their structures are malleable and changeable. TRADOC states that tribes “[change] the form of their social organisation when they are pressured by internal dissension or external forces. Whereas in some other countries tribes are structured like trees, tribes in Afghanistan are like jellyfish” (2009:2). The motivation for Pashtun identity “including whether or not to support the Afghan government or the insurgency—are flexible and pragmatic. Tribe is only one potential choice of identity among many, and not necessarily the one that guides people’s decision-making” (TRADOC, 2009:2). Of course, much current data supports this stance. Dr Seth Jones concludes that tribal structures indeed have “evolved over the past decades because of [...] war, drought, migration patterns and sedentarization” (Jones, 2010:10). Yet, he also argues that “the tribal structure remains strong in many Pashtun areas of western, southern, and eastern Afghanistan, and *Jirgas* and *Shuras* remain instrumental in decision making at the local level” (Jones, 2010:10). TLO research stresses “the continued importance of the tribe as the main social unit and the role of traditional leadership in the Southeastern border districts” (TLO, 2008:79). Tribes are said to represent “cohesive and strong traditional structures” (TLO, 2008:79). Although local structures in many places might not adhere to a strict definition of tribe in an anthropological sense, multiple sources confirm the importance of these structures.

The distinction between whether tribes indeed fit an exact definition that allow ‘labelling’ is false to my mind. The exact distinction is laid on the notion whether structures are ‘fixed’ or ‘change according to need’ in which the former represents the ‘correct’ use of the word tribe. Pashtun tribal governance has endured over the years but has adapted to its environment to accommodate changing realities. Tribal governance for that matter has always adapted to its environment in Afghanistan, a prerequisite for survival in a violent environment. The notion of ‘tribal’ is used as it denotes the continuing leadership, decision making bodies, and an ethnic base that has endured over the years, more so than other local governance mechanisms depending on less traditional leadership.

Alienation of the Pashtun

The Pashtun have historically been central and instrumental to politics in Afghanistan. Notwithstanding their central role in Afghan politics, interaction with Kabul governments has always seemed to be marked by the search for a power equilibrium. This systemic struggle has been the “determining shaping factor” in Afghan politics of power (Oberson, 2002:51). The Pashtun leaders were and are seen in Afghanistan as the traditional elite (Oberson, 2002:7). They have come to dominate Afghan politics because the Pashtun themselves were instrumental in the creation of the Afghan State, back in the Durrani empire days, in return for “extensive autonomy” (Oberson, 2002:66). Currently, the Pashtun belt is volatile and Pashtuns are strongly represented in the insurgency while they perceive themselves to be alienated from the State (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:61)

The state-building project seemingly failed to grasp the contentious nature of policies directed at social change in the rural areas (Barfield, 2010:340). Those policies created opposition, especially when benefits from the state-building programme did not materialise. Perceptions of foreign imposed change grew opposition towards the Karzai government (Barfield, 2010:340). Especially the continuing support by the international community for the centralised government, one that is “ill adapted to the country’s need” has been a “major problem” in quelling opposition (Barfield, 2010:340). These problems lay at the heart of Pashtun opposition to the central state. The state did not answer the Pashtuns need for better governance, development and security. Moreover the governments ill adaption to governance realities gave rise to perceptions of being alienated by the “expanding influence of non-Pashtun armed factions” (ICG, 2003:9). This dread was not wholly unfounded as Pashtuns outside of the Pashtun belt were persistently violently targeted and dispossessed by Tajiks (ICG, 2003:13). These attacks fuelled the perception of Pashtuns of being alienated in the new political process.

Continuing violence in the Pashtun belt fuels the alienation as the government and international community have not been able to bring promised development to these areas. The whole “region is rather inaccessible for humanitarian and development organisations, leading to uneven development” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:61), which can “seriously threaten the state-building

exercise" (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:61). The alienation of the Pashtuns, whether only perceived or not, is proving to be detrimental to state building as the opposition to the state is drawn towards the Pashtun-originated Taliban who offer an alternative to state governance and appeal to Pashtun "in-group identity" (Haring, 2010:7). In the end, alienation, whether perceived or real consisting of forty-two per cent of the population raises questions about the durability of the central government.

Pashtun Tribes

The Pashtun ethnicity consists of multiple confederations, tribes, sub-tribes, clans and even smaller units. The largest Pashtun confederation is the Ghilzai followed by the Durrani and the Karyani. The Durrani have been the most influential while Ghilzai cooperate with the Durrani to achieve political power in Kabul. Overall, the Durrani who inhabit southern, more easily cultivable land have over time detached from their equal social stations and 'warrior' traits. Their richer, more fertile land has made them more risk-averse than their poorer Ghilzai cousins who have retained more of their fighting, risk seeking spirit (Barfield, 2010:287). This is perhaps reflected in the Taliban originating in the Ghilzai rather than Durrani confederation.

The tribal liaison office concluded that tribal structures can be identified throughout the Pashtun belt but are generally more intact in the Southeast region of Paktia, Paktika and Khost. (2008:67). Their cohesiveness was retained in spite of the power vacuums created by warlords, alienation and other woes that befell the area. To explain why these structures retained their traditional governance structures is outside the scope of this thesis. It establishes the notion that tribal non state governance is an important actor in Afghanistan.

The strength of tribal structures is demonstrated by the Taliban who apparently weren't able to implement the full extent of Sharia law in these areas, a conclusion drawn from (TLO, 2008:67). However other research has shown that despite the Taliban's Islamist nature they are still strongly rooted to their Pashtun past (Barfield, 2010:325) explaining the continued importance of Pashtunwali. Large remnants of Pashtun tribal structures still exist outside of the Southeastern region.

Categorising Non State Governance

Non state governance mechanism of Afghanistan can be broadly categorised into “individual actors, collective decision-making bodies, and behavioural norms and customs” (Nixon, 2008:11). These broad categories hand us a methodical way of describing Pashtun and other important non state governance mechanisms in Afghanistan.

The behavioural norms and customs of the Pashtun are mainly defined by the tribal code Pashtunwali. Pashtunwali is not solely a code of conduct, it encapsulates what it inherently means to be a Pashtun. Central to Pashtunwali are certain concepts such as honour and dignity (Ober-son, 2002:37) that comprise of virtues as courage in battle and self sacrifice. Pashtunwali is enforced, or regulated in this spirit through the institution of the *Jirga* which acts as a collective decision making body (Nixon, 2008:11). The *Jirga* is the foremost method that provides governance, through collective decision making in Afghanistan’s tribal areas. The *Jirga* represents the main way in which decisions are made and governance is conducted. Its analysis will therefore increase understanding how the *Jirga* contributes to security and interacts, as a mechanism, with other actors in the state building effort.

The *Jirga* pertains so much importance because it is plays, according to academic literature, and research evidence, a “central role in strengthening solidarity among Afghans and contributes significantly to the maintenance of social order in Afghan society” (Wardak, 2003:1). Empirical evidence drawn from AREU and TLO research give clues to the widespread use of the *Jirga* as a governance mechanism. For instance “The majority of criminal cases is resolved through *Shuras*, often with the tacit knowledge of local government officials” (TLO, 2009:5). In Ahmad Aba “almost all civil disputes are resolved by *Jirgas* at the village level” (TLO, 2009:5). Research by Seth Jones concluded that “there are at least five traditional Pashtun institutions for organising local security forces. In each case, they implement decisions of tribal *Jirgas* or *Shuras*” (Jones, 2010:11). Last, the U.S. army HTS concluded that “Tribal and village elders, either as individual mediators or convened together in a *Jirga*, are the preferred source of dispute resolution, far more so than appeals to government officials and courts” (2010:13).

The goal of a *Jirga* is defined as: “The *Jirga* regulates life through decisions ranging from the location of a mosque [...] to larger issues such as regulating foreign relations with other tribes and even conveying decisions of the tribe to government” (Oberson, 2002:42). The set up of a *Jirga* usually entails the get together of the village or tribal males elders wherein they hear one others council before resolving a dispute or making a decision (Nixon, 2008:11). These decisions are usually founded on Pashtunwali principles when concerned with a Pashtun tribe. It might also be inspired by some other form of customary law (Nixon, 2008:11) when other non Pashtun communities are involved.

Another important collective decision making body that merits mentioning is the *Shura*. Some argue that the *Shura* is simply the non-Pashtun equivalent of the *Jirga*. Others attest some subtle differences between the two collective decision making bodies. It is clear however that both are widely used throughout Afghanistan. Wardak explains the *Shura* as being an equivalent “informal mechanism of conflict resolution” (2002:1). He tells us that it is widely found in rural areas dominated by Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbaks (2002:4). He finds striking “similarities between the Pashtun *Jirga* and the non-Pashtun *Shura*” (Wardak, 2002:4). Both the *Jirga* and *Shura* are formed on an ad-hoc basis and are assembled when there is a need for it. Where the Pashtun use Pashtunwali very similar codes are found among Hazara (Wardak, 2002:4) that emulate Pashtunwali.

An American Military researcher points to the political nature of the *Shura* in contrast to the *Jirga*. It is not just a gathering of village or tribal elders but a “political assembly that consists of government officials as well as security forces” (Gant, 2010:3). The *Shura* is a governance mechanisms that has been uprooted through years of war, it has been militarised according to Wardak (2002:5). In its contemporary form it is used as a “short-term advisory council of landlords, khans, and more recently by warlords and military commanders” (Wardak, 2002:5). In line with Wardak’s reasoning is USIP’s research on Shuras who claim that reasons of “poor security, forced displacement targeted assassination and local corruption has eroded the functioning of Shuras” (Coburn & Miakhel, 2010:10). Yet, they seem to have endured to today because they have adapted to a changing environment possibly explaining the militarisation and militia rule. Transactionalism as-

cribes the endurance of these governance mechanisms to a better bargain offered by commanders in a changed environment than landlords and khans could.

Command of Resources

Governance can be defined by the ability to provide public goods. Non state governance mechanisms are, in light of a dysfunctional government, “the primary source of order in Afghanistan [because they can] extract and redistribute resource from villagers” (Brick, 2008:1) Moreover the constraints on this ability provided by “the separation of village powers and local checks and balances facilitate local predictability despite national-level chaos”(Brick, 2008:1). Both the *Shura* and *Jirga* are instrumental to these processes. Service delivery ranges from the distribution of resources, the application of justice to the provision of security. The provision of public goods has traditionally been a responsibility of the local elders in *Jirgas* or *Shuras*. They have access to resources and “their ability to provide services and [...] access to Kabul” is a yard stick to determine their power and hence their “political base” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:69). Command of resources therefore is essential within non state governance mechanisms.

Because thirty years of war has eroded much of ‘traditional’ local governance structures. The emphasis has shifted from traditional leaders to local elites that command power. The “old elite of landowning khans and elders were replaced by young military commanders who could offer their communities protection or simply demand more respect because they had guns” (Barfield, 2010:243). The power to provide resources, and thus provide governance was “the ability to control arms and alliances and successfully fight enemies” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:65). This notion links non state governance and security provision.

Tribal governance mechanisms have traditional ways of providing security. Pashtun tribes know five different institutions related to defence. The most important ones are the *Lashkar* and the *Arbakai*. The *Lashkar* are tribal militias that act upon “binding decisions on Jirga arbitration” (Oberson, 2002:66). The *Arbakai* acts on a smaller scale than a *Lashkar*, and is more regarded as police force whereas the *Lashkar* could be compared to a small military unit.

The notion that non state governance provides security is problematic in the state-building debate as it is said to undermines the central Weberian notion that a democratic state should have the monopoly on violence. In much of the research armed local units were regarded as a serious threat to the central government (Moore, 2010:1). Theoretically the 'monopoly on violence' is a defining factor of proper statehood (Risse, 2010:4). This argument in the Afghan context goes two ways. Indeed, armed militias and warlords have undermined security and stability (Barfield, 2010:283), therefore unchecked, local militias pose a danger to Afghanistan's security. However armed local groups are indispensable to communities if they are to subsist in the pervasive violent environment. Moreover the contradiction that 'local governance' undermines the 'modern state' is based on the erroneous premise that this distinction is valid in the Afghan context.

Conclusion

This section analysed Pashtun tribal structures in order to describe non state governance dynamics in relation to state-building. It elaborated on how Pashtun governance mechanisms interact with the state and asked how local governance provides public goods.

Using the 'tribal' label for certain Pashtun social groups is contended because structures have altered and do not exactly fit a tribal definition. The tribal label is used throughout this thesis as it denotes the continuing leadership, decision making bodies, and an ethnic base that has endured over the years. Tribal structures are found to have endured in Afghanistan's Southeast regions.

State-building failed to grasp the contentious nature of policies directed at social change in the rural areas creating opposition when benefits failed to materialise. Perceptions of being alienated grew among Pashtuns drawing it closer to the Taliban who offer an alternative to the state.

The foremost local governance mechanism among the tribes is the *Jirga*, a collective decision making tool that strengthens solidarity and helps to maintain social order (Wardak, 2003:1). The *Shura* is a non-tribal equivalent of the *Jirga*. The *Shura* has a similar function but has in many cases been uprooted or militarised by warlord and militia rule. The primary function of non state governance mechanisms is to provide resources to communities, in which *Jirga* and *Shuras* are instrumental. Therefore the ability to provide resources is central to governance. The violent environment in Afghanistan has equated resource provision with the ability to provide security. This notion resembles a competition for resources through a transactionalist lens offering possibilities in explaining the endurance and changing nature of local governance.

Contention exists regarding security provision by non state governance mechanisms. It is feared to undermine the government and exacerbate warlord governance. Unchecked militias pose a danger to the population. However armed local groups are indispensable to community if they are to subsist in the pervasive violent environment. The contradiction that local governance undermines the modern state is based on the erroneous premise that this distinction is valid in the Afghan context.

3.3 Transactional Governance

So far this chapter has argued that local governance mechanisms are endemic to Afghanistan and that the contradiction between modern centralised governance and local governance is false and based on misconceptions. The interaction between local and central governance was analysed in light of a dysfunctional government. It found that local communities interact closely with actors in their environment, whether governmental or insurgent. Moreover local governance was found to be the primary source of order on the local level. Public goods are delivered to the population by local elites and depends on their command of resources. Therefore command of resources is central to resource provision. This section will zoom in on these interactions between local communities and their environment in their ability to provide public goods and hence security. It will describe the prevalence of patron-client structures in the exchange of resources and ask whether transactionalism suffices to describe these interactions of social life.

Patron-Client Structures

Non state governance is conducted through decision making bodies as the *Jirga* and the *Shura*. Decisions and disputes are resolved by elders, or local elites, based on Pashtunwali or other forms of local law. The elders or elite that govern have a political base that endorse their status as elite. This support from the political base is derived from the elite's effectiveness to provide resources. Therefore power, as being in control of resources, is based on the command of resources. Command of resources is thus essential in winning the competition as explained by Bailey: "Insofar as a leader is able to influence and direct his follower's actions, he does so by expenditure of resources" (Bailey, 1959:36).

By looking at the exchange of resources in explaining governance we attempt to describe social action through "face-to-face competition and manoeuvrings, aiming to maximise power, the ability to influence others" (Vincent, 1990:341-353). This framework for social action is named transactionalism (Turner, 2006), or action anthropology. When looking at command and exchange of resources by patron-client structures through a transactionalist lens we focus on "the field where political actors vie for power, in terms of strategies, goals, resources, and rules through maximis-

ing, decision-making, interacting, competing, fighting, dominating, encapsulating, and other actions” (Turner, 2006).

Resources must be expended by the elite to retain their political base. Wars have exacerbated this system because commanding resources became synonymous with commanding arms brokering new and different allegiances among local communities. Nevertheless these patrimonial structures are anything but new in Afghanistan and seem to have endured and carried over into the twenty-first century as local communities and the central government are seen to interact through structures of patronage. One can ask whether these systems of patronage are historically inspired or whether they are endemic to stateless and violent environments. As Afghanistan’s political history is marred by struggles for centralised rule and tribal insurrections, systems of patronage therefore might be coping mechanisms responding to the environment rather than a historical inspired social action, however a definitive answer cannot be given. In a “extremely insecure situation these networks provide the best means of social and economic security” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:66). This notion would render patron-client structures an endemic manifestation of its environment to sustain security.

Despite its structural origins, the prevalence of patron-client structures in Afghanistan is undisputed. Analysis of AREU, HTT and TLO research repeatedly point to structures of patronage, as does Barfield. It is however the interpretation of these structures that proves problematic.

Patron-client structures are seen as an obstruction to transparent state building. For instance: Democratic elections were found to be decided by patron-client contractual loyalty (Coburn, 2010:15). Elections increased local tension because the political competition was concerned with how to manipulate a victory rather than being voted into office (Coburn, 2010:28). In line with different conceptions of democratic institutions is what it means to be a successful MP to a constituency. To Tribes being a successful parliamentarian entails using tribal structures to “reinforce patronage ties” (Coburn, 2010:8). In areas where tribal structures are not as strong the use of “service provision to gain support across tribal lines” was considered an effective way of being an MP (Coburn, 2010:8). Both notions are directly linked to governance through patron-client structures, standing oppositely to supposed democratic ideals.

Patron-client structures are not inherently anti-state building. Patrimonial relations in local governance mechanisms cannot be considered 'wrong' as they merely represent how governance is conducted. Patron-client structures in Afghanistan are, to many, considered wrong because a lack in knowledge treats these structures as homogeneous throughout the country. Patronage, or corruption by the Karzai government, in the guise of democracy does indeed strongly undermine the government as these examples showed. Although a lack of democratic experience in a dysfunctional democratic structure should not be confused with inherent antidemocratic sentiment. Members of the population in HTS research were found to acknowledge governmental corruption as a limiting factor (2010:5) but this does not equate governmental corruption with local patron client structures who seem to be instrumental the continuation of governance.

Patronage in Local Communities

Elites are instrumental to the domination and manipulation of patronage networks (Oberson, 2002:20) therefore *Jirga* and *Shura* governance are connected to patron client structures through the actions of elites.

The *Jirga* uses traditional Pashtun values and customs, as described by Pashtunwali. Membership of the *Jirga* is based on the ideal of the "free person" which embodies "independence" (Oberson, 2002:45), but in a society where power is traditionally based on landownership, a free person is one who is not bound by serfdom but one who has the means to support himself. Therefore independence is based on landownership, or wealth. This embodies the patron client relationship in general because the wealthy elite, being a member of the *Jirga*, acts as a patron for his less wealthy clients who provide the political support base in exchange for representation and resources. Once one enters in such a contractual relationship one is politically bound to the patron by "implicit agreement" (Oberson, 2002:56). The implicit agreement is, in theory, mutually beneficial as political support is maintained through the distribution of rewards (Oberson, 2002:56). Therefore clients want their patron to be successful as it generates rewards.(Oberson, 2002:56). The Pashtun individualism expressed by membership of the *Jirga* is a way of describing differences in status between members of a tribal society (Oberson, 2002:45) and this social stratifica-

tion paves the way for commitment to contractual relationships as one accepts someone to be a patron when he is of clear higher standing in society and thus has the ability to command resources.

The relations between patron and client can be described as contractual relationships (Oberson, 2002:49) because the elites vie for power through resource based transactions. The transaction is clearly visible in the distribution of rewards handed to the political base comprising of “bribes, payments, gifts and hospitality” (Oberson, 2002:57). This is supported by analysis from AREU field research concluding that “patronage, non-monetised goods and services, remittance relationships, debt and credit structures, and involvement in informal or illicit economic activity are very important shaping incentives” (Nixon, 2008:7). These activities of patronage produce “complex relationships of social control and economic opportunity” (Nixon, 2008:7). The effect of patron-client exchanges is to “cement ties of lineage and political support [which] influences the practices of the [*Jirgas*] and [*Shuras*]” (Nixon, 2008:7).

Local governance structures in Afghanistan appear to change according to need explaining possibly their endurance. As such, patron-client relations shift according to need, which is foreseen by transactionalism because all transactions are seen as a trade off. Oberson found the current environment of violence eroding the longevity of the patron-client contracts. According to him contractual relations “have no lasting political implications” (2002:56) and “can be suspended any time” (2002:56). He found this due to the current position of the elites in patron-client structures far from secure resulting in permanent competition (2002:56). In effect, the violent Afghan environment is corroding the continuity of governance and the nature of the interaction is exacerbating the situation according to Oberson (2002:56). This notion compares the transactional relationship within non state governance to the past, where the transactional relations supposedly had more durability. Transactional relations will choose the best offer available, under more stable governance breaking the contract might prove a worse tradeoff than discarding the contract. It is therefore to be expected that governance relationships in Afghanistan come under stress in the current environment.

Local Governance in a Violent Environment

Violence and political instability appear to influence governance as they directly impact social life. The influence of violence and instability on local governance is seen throughout the country, although I do not argue that violence is new to Afghan governance for clearly Afghanistan has seen its share of conflict, I do argue that current violence appears to have an impact on governance as shown by the following examples. Local power holders were found to fuel violence in other provinces to increase their own power and political base (Coburn, 2010b:2). A Tajik provincial governor “was indirectly assisting insurgents in several Pashtun districts” (Coburn, 2010b:3) he did this as the closure of their polling stations would enhance his chances (Coburn, 2010b:3). Violence is used to gain the advantage in the trade off. Therefore even the distribution of aid can spawn violence as this example portrays: “negotiations with tribal elders have in some places incited violence between local groups, particularly when groups feel as if funds and power are not being distributed equitably” (Coburn & Miakhel, 2010:2).

Local communities are vulnerable to coercion in a violent environment. The security of local communities can be threatened by outside forces if the community is not part of some larger comprehensive security network. Therefore non state governance can be prone to exploitation by powerful actor as Bailey explains in this sentence: “the absence of normative rules allocating authority or even the presence or rules explicitly rejecting authority leaves room for pragmatic rules which enable some men to coerce or influence others” (Bailey, 1969:35).

Strong traditional tribal structures, as we can still observe in Southeastern Afghanistan, hold normative rules which are enacted by tribal institutions. The majority of communities where non state governance is conducted have lost strong traditional institutions leaving them more vulnerable to coercion and influence by others.

U.S. and British forces have rediscovered indirect rule in Afghanistan due to the dysfunctional direct rule government in Kabul (Barfield, 2010:315). These forces are vying for the support and allegiance of local communities in a direct competition with insurgent forces. As these communities are open to coercion and influence they are objectives for both the ISAF and the insurgents.

Engagement can be rather dangerous to the communities, Coburn & Miakhel research found that elites, that govern through *Shuras*, are assassinated by the Taliban when interaction and cooperation with international elements was discovered (2010:2).

Transactional nature of Local Governance

Social action by local governance mechanism can be explained through a transactional lens, but can we claim that the nature local governance in Afghanistan is of a transactional nature?

Oberson claims that “Pashtun culture might be supportive with its predisposition in favour of pragmatic, profit-maximising decisions, person-centred politics” (Oberson, 2002:69). He describes Pashtun patron-client structures as decisions based on free choice, calculation and objective oriented rationale [...], Pashtun politics appears to be pragmatic” (Oberson, 2002:68). This so called ‘profit maximising’ nature of Pashtun governance has also been observed by Frederik Barth, a transactionalist, who argues that the Pashtun political organisation can be examined by use of Game Theory (Yale, 2011). He observes that solidarity arises from “calculated advantages which persons obtain” (Barth, 1981:72-81 in Oberson, 2002:31). This solidarity is systemic to patron-client structures where patron support is indispensable to survival. Clients are after all in this structure “not only [reliant] on a chief’s hospitality and gift giving, but also on his assistance in conflicts” (Oberson, 2002:67). When one is thus reliant on elites that it involves security against violence a culture evolves where allegiance is based on the trade-off. The transactional framework explicitly explains this notion. “No disgrace attaches to the man who changes sides. It is merely the sensible and rational thing to do” (Bailey,1969:40). Of course, shifting allegiances are not just present on the village level. Oberson ascribes to transactionalism as he claims that new coalitions arise when the need is there (2002:30). Barth adds by saying that politically active Pashtuns choose private advantage over group advantage “demonstrated by the way in which members of any group may secede and attach themselves to another when this is to their advantage” (Barth, 1959:1-2 in Yale, 2011).

By describing social action as simply a calculation in trade-offs might render the theory rather materialist. Bailey claims however that the trade off is not constrained to purely materialist

resources. The resources can be anything present within the transaction. Therefore spiritual and moral resources, such as Islamic support for instance are part of the transaction. Even moral and spiritual resources “are open to questions about relative cost” (Bailey, 1969:36), therefore they can be considered resources open to contractual agreements. Spiritual coercion, dictated by Taliban might prove a better bargain to an Afghan peasant than cooperation with ISAF for quick monetary gain. Bailey in his theoretical treatise argues that “the leader of a moral group has a higher credit rating than the leader of a band of hirelings” (Bailey,1969:40). This higher credit rating, in transactionalism, dictates that when calculating costs, a strong moral leader can have an advantage in the contract.

Patron client structures define governance interactions among the Pashtun, as such, they follow transactional premises. However the notion that ‘Pashtun’ are ‘profit maximising’ by nature cannot be assessed because determining a fixed and unchanging nature of a particular ethnicity in Afghanistan seems a tall, if not impossible and misconceived order. Moreover determining whether social action among widely differing groups loosely related under a Pashtun banner is governed solely by profit maximisation discards many other possibilities, such as historical consciousness. This thesis cannot determine the extent ‘transactionalism’ accounts for social action. The transactional notions regarding local governance in Afghanistan hands us an imperfect lens through which social action might be observed.

Conclusion

This section analysed the interactions between local communities and the environment in their ability to provide public goods and hence security. It described the prevalence of patron-client structures in the exchange of resources through the lens of transactionalism.

The ability to command and disperse resources provides elites with a political base. These interactions resemble patron-client structures which appear guided by game-theoretic calculations. Patron-client structures are prevalent throughout Afghanistan as they provide continuity of governance in a violent environment.

Patron-client structures are seen as an obstruction to transparent state building but this does not exclude local communities from interacting through patron client structures as a successful means of providing resources.

The durability of governance is under stress in Afghanistan and local communities find themselves vulnerable to coercion in a violent environment. Both ISAF and the insurgents try to capitulate on this weakness by vying for local support through influence and coercion. Engagement of local communities by ISAF represents in-direct rule and can prove dangerous to local communities. These interactions are claimed to be of a 'profit maximising' nature wherein the trade off is not constrained to purely materialist resources because moral and spiritual resources "are open to questions about relative cost"(Bailey, 1969:36). Although it offers a different perspective we cannot claim that Pashtun governance is of a purely transactional nature because claiming that social action is governed solely by profit maximisation discards many other possibilities, such as historical consciousness.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter asked how local governance mechanisms interact and cooperate with the Kabul State and how they provide public goods.

The prevalence of non state governance and hybrid political interaction cannot be ignored. The call for consolidation of non state governance in the state structure seems to dismiss the causes of state delegitimation when it is not attached to structural change.

Interaction between non state governance and the state takes place mostly between local elites who form the conduit between the government and the population. Perceptions of alienation among the Pashtuns have created possibilities for the Taliban to offer alternatives to Kabul, severing interaction with the State.

Patron-client structures are prevalent throughout Afghanistan as they provide continuity of governance in a violent environment. They are also seen as an obstruction to transparent state building but this undermines the notion of patron client structures being systemic to providing resources in local communities, despite negative experiences with patronage at the State level and lower levels.

The primary function of non state governance mechanisms is to provide resources to communities in which *Jirga* and *Shuras* are instrumental. Therefore the ability to provide resources is central to governance. The violent environment in Afghanistan has equated resource provision with the ability to provide security. Contention exists regarding security provision by non state governance mechanisms. It is feared to undermine the government and exacerbate warlord governance. Unchecked militias pose a danger to the population. However armed local groups might be indispensable to the community in order to subsist in a pervasive violent environment. The contradiction that local governance undermines the modern state is based on the erroneous premise that this distinction is valid in the Afghan context.

Local communities find themselves vulnerable to coercion in a violent environment. Both ISAF and the insurgents try to capitulate on this weakness by vying for local support through influence and coercion. Engagement of local communities by ISAF represents in-direct rule and can prove dangerous to local communities. These interactions are claimed to be of a 'profit maximising'

nature wherein the trade off not constrained to purely materialist resources because moral and spiritual resources “are open to questions about relative cost”(Bailey, 1969:36). Although it offers a different perspective we cannot claim that Pashtun governance is of a purely transactional nature because claiming that social action is governed solely by profit maximisation discards many other possibilities, such as historical consciousness.

4. The Insurgency

Last chapters elaborated on the dynamics of non state governance in the context of state building. Misconceptions regarding Afghanistan's mechanisms of governance treat local governance as harmful to the central Afghan State. The same misconceptions have created a structurally flawed central government that has proven dysfunctional. Lacking development and corrupt governmental governance have delegitimised the state and alienated parts of the population. Local governance mechanisms are open to coercion and influence and dissatisfaction with the government have created opportunities for insurgents to reemerge.

The previous chapter established how governance is provided by local communities. This chapter looks to the insurgency in light of non state governance mechanisms and state building and will distinctly look at the provision of security by local governance in light of the insurgency. The central question of this chapter asks why there is contention in the use of non state governance mechanisms to provide security in Afghanistan. It generates an answer by two subquestions. First, what is the relation between state-building and the insurgency. Second, how counterinsurgency efforts interact and cooperate with local communities. From these questions the chapter will describe the contention regarding the engagement of local communities. In the end this helps us understand how local governance mechanisms facilitate security and stability in Afghanistan

4.1 The Insurgency and the State

Donald Rumsfeld declared major combat operations over save some "pockets of Taliban & Al Qa'ida resistance" (Dao, 2009) on May the first 2003. The resource intense nature of the war in Iraq diverted attention away from Afghanistan sidelining the conflict. The intermediary time gave the Taliban time to regroup and rearm in spite of government and international development efforts. Violence has been on the increase ever since and 2011 is proving to be the most deadliest yet (Lee, 2011:1). The U.S. and British militaries are directly cooperating with local communities to counter the insurgency because the state framework has proven to be ineffective. However this

indirect approach is subject to contention as it thought to undermine long term government viability, change social structures and exacerbate warlord rule.

To understand the contention in using non state governance mechanisms to provide security we first need to understand the relation between the insurgency and the internationally backed state.

The Resurgence

The Taliban has reemerged in force since 2005. Researchers from the Naval Postgraduate School link this resurgence to three fundamental problems that haunt state building. First, lack of state formation and inability of the national government to establish a significant presence throughout the country (Johnson & Mason, 2006:2). Second, the state fails to secure the rural areas leaving them devoid of development and international money. Third, high hopes of any “meaningful improvement in quality of life” have not materialised (Johnson & Mason, 2006: 86). These problems have been created by the lack of an adequate military follow up after the initial invasion (Barfield, 2010:325) and insufficient development funds when compared to the tasks set (Barfield, 2010:316). The government itself, although not very well suited to the needs of the local population, lacked therefore the resources to provide security and improve the quality of life. Misgovernance of the government exacerbated these problems. Kabul’s failure to “provide economic benefits and justice made the Taliban look like an attractive alternative” (Barfield, 2010:328)

The insurgency consists of more actors than solely the Taliban, the Southeastern insurgency hosts Al Qaeda, Hizb-i Islami, Haqqani (HiK) networks, the Mansur network and even criminal elements (TLO, 2008:47). The Taliban has reorganised among the lines similar to the soviet insurgency (Barfield, 2010:325), the same commanders as in the Soviet war have reestablished their armed militias and the insurgency itself is framed as “god fearing nationalists instead of Islamic zealots” (Barfield, 2010:327). The framing of this conflict as national struggle based on Islam comprising of the mujahideen commanders of old is likely to have a mobilising influence on the alienated population. Barfield adds that the insurgency gained a foothold in the Pashtun belt and did not immediately materialise in non-Pashtun areas (Barfield:2010:322).

The Taliban, whose religious roots can be found in Pakistan's tribal border areas, ascended to power in the 1990's because they were able to fill the power void left by state collapse. Of course, the Taliban as strict followers of Deobandi Islam, are foremost a religiously inspired group, led by a modern 'Mad Mullah' named Mullah Omar, who wants to impose a "Salafist egalitarian model that seeks to emulate life and times of the prophet mohammed"(Johnson & Mason, 2006:75). This model, in the extreme Taliban context, implies some inherent antigovernment sentiment as it "oppose[s] social castes" (Johnson & Mason, 2006:76) leaving allegiance to monarchy and state secondary (Johnson & Mason, 2006:76). The imposition of these ideas on Afghan society created opposition, foremost in the urban areas. The current resurgence therefore has initially been focussing on expanding their power base in their home country, the Pashtun belt. Moreover the framing of the insurgency has shifted to a 'traditional' Islamic justified uprising against a foreign invader and an appeal to a perceived in-group identity of Pashtuns (Haring, 2010:7). These notions seem to have caught on due to the failure of the government to improve living conditions and a perception of alienation among Pashtuns. The central government is blamed for what Johnson & Mason call discrimination against Pashtun (2006:74). These notions also explain why the insurgency is so fierce in the Pashtun belt, and, notably fiercest in Ghilzai domains (Lee, 2011:10).

The power base of the Taliban is vested in Pashtun tribal areas but this does not confine them from entering Non-Pashtun areas. The Taliban has, since its resurgence, slowly but steadily been building parallel governance structures in virtually every district of Afghanistan, including non Pashtun districts. These structures are known as a shadow network. Johnson & Mason conclude that Kabul's control is receding from certain parts (2006: 72) while, according to ICG research, the Taliban is gaining in influence in "central-eastern provinces by installing shadow governments" (2011:25). The Taliban is using the hybrid political nature of governance in Afghanistan by "colluding" with "corrupt government officials in Kabul and the nearby provinces" (ICG, 2011:2). This observation implies that the Taliban is even gaining strength in Kabul, the seat of the government. They conclude that "it appears doubtful that President Hamid Karzai's government will be able to contain the threat and stabilise the country by [2014]" (2011:i).

Insurgent forces have been able to gain strength in the direct vicinity of the Kabul with an objective to capture the capital “psychologically” (ICG, 2011:i). From this observation, the ICG concludes that it will be too costly for international actors to remain in Kabul over the longer term (2002:i). This trend is seen throughout Afghanistan. The province of Waygal has lately been abandoned and are effectively governed by the Taliban (Lee,2011:10).

To counter the rise of the Taliban the Afghan government is building up security forces such as the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) and relies for a big part on ISAF. Afghan security institutions are weak. U.S. military observations found the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) “very weak” as they were “undertrained”, under equipped, unpaid and corrupt (Clukey, 2009:23). Others were “disappointed” with GoA because they had “delivered little” (HTS, 2010:5). Especially in the realm of security the respondents from Paktika found the government’s actions completely unsatisfactory. Next section will deal with military responses to the insurgency.

Conclusion

To understand the contention in using non state governance mechanisms to provide security we need to understand the relation between the increasingly violent uprising against the internationally backed state.

The Taliban has violently resurged due to a lack in state formation, the inability to extend its reach and the lack of security it could provide. Therefore hardly any improvements have been made in the quality of life. These problems have been created because inadequate international aid and a proper military follow up have exacerbated misgovernance which created opportunities for the Taliban. The insurgents have used the old mobilising technique of framing the struggle as an Islamic Jihad in defence of the nation against a foreign invader. This framing is strengthened as Mujahideen commanders of the Soviet war have mobilised their former networks (Barfield, 2010:325) especially as Pashtuns perceive themselves to be alienated. The resurgence therefore spawned solely in Pashtun regions but has been expanding creating shadow governance struc-

tures throughout the country. The government has been increasing ANSF presence but are considered inadequate by the ISAF.

4.2 Fighting the Insurgency

This section elaborates on how the insurgency is being countered and focuses on the role of non state governance mechanisms in this process. It describes why interaction with non state governance is subject to contention.

Counterinsurgency strategies state that the key is winning the popular support of the people. As government influence is low in many violent areas the only way to gain popular support is to engage these people outside a state framework. Certain programmes have been set up to engage the local population to combat the insurgency. Transactionalism is used as the lens to look at interaction of local communities when faced with engagement.

Counterinsurgency

Soon after toppling the Taliban, the U.S. sought to increase legitimation for its military presence in Afghanistan by making it an international effort through the U.N. The U.N. adopted security council resolution 1386 establishing the International Security Assistance Force. ISAF was to be NATO-led and its objective was to support the Afghan Interim Authority which later became the Afghan government. ISAF's mission objective is to support the Afghan government by conducting operations:

To reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population (NATO, 2011)

In effect, the U.S invasion to topple the Taliban and destroy Al Qa'ida had turned into an intervention that sought to install and develop a democracy in Afghanistan. The ISAF plan to support and extend the reach of the internationally backed Afghan government consisted of four stages. ISAF would go into an area, establish security creating conditions for the Afghan government and international actors to start development, and create time for the Afghan Security Forces to build up and eventually take over. ISAF had expanded into the entire country by mid 2006, but by then, it

had already become clear that the Taliban was re-surg-ing increasing the need for ISAF and ANSF to step up 'counterinsurgency' (COIN) efforts.

Counterinsurgency has been rediscovered by military circles in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Kilcullen, 2007). The challenges of the Iraq war and a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan demonstrated the need for an adequate answer. Mounting costs and casualties gave need to the redevelopment of counterinsurgency strategies that had been developed during colonial wars and wars of decolonisation. Central to insurgencies is the competition between the insurgents and the government over popular support (Fumerton & Quinn, 2010:6). In military and popular circles this is known as winning the hearts and minds.

An insurgency is defined by the U.S. Army field manual on counterinsurgency as:

"An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict" (JP 1-02, 2010). It is a "protracted politico military struggle designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control. Political power is the central issue in an insurgency" (FM 3-24, 2006: 4-1). The objectives of the insurgents entail: "to mobilize human and material resources in order to form an alternative to the state" (FMI 3-07.2, 2004:1-1). The re-surg-ing Taliban delegitimises the government, establishes parallel government structures and use violent means, quite fitting to the definition of an insurgency.

To counter the Taliban the U.S. conducted a 'surge' of troops in an analogy to a successful 'surge' operation in Iraq where a great increase of troop numbers brought levels of violence markedly down. In coherence with the 'surge' tactic is research by the RAND corporation noting that the number of 'boots on the ground' can be a defining factor in winning an insurgency (Paul, 2011). As of March 2011 ISAF force numbers consist of 132.000 personnel and about a 140.000 Afghan National Army troops. Growing troop numbers have been met with an increase in violence but this might be endemic as a more proactive counterinsurgent stance will seek out the fight, leading to more resistance. Others however, argue that a "co-evolutionary relationship" (Lee, 2011:8) exists "wherein counterinsurgency actually strengthens and exacerbates the insurgency" (Lee, 2011:8). The end state in this scenario is one of "perpetually escalating stalemate until one side or the other transitions out" (Lee, 2011:8).

The view of the negative impact by military counterinsurgency is shared by many NGOs. The Tribal liaison office concluded that the impact of the ISAF has “often been negative” (2010:8). AREU research in Nimroz found that “infrequency and generally small scale nature of attacks in the area” was probably down to the absence of ISAF and small scale presence of ANA (Larson, 2010b:6). As the presence of ISAF is contentious in itself, Dutch military actors in Uruzgan found that “being less public” by use of third parties made “their work less contentious and less visible to Taliban actors” (TLO, 2010a:x). Ambivalence shown towards military development, in contrast to civilian development is justifiable but does not completely address the right problems for both civilian as military development is aimed conjunctly at supporting the state-building project, which created the opportunities for the insurgency to resurge in the first place. The presence of international military forces is highly contentious among the Afghan population. Kinetic kill or capture missions exacerbate this contention. International development itself, although to a lesser extent, is contentious because it originates from the same problem of a misinformed state building structure. Barfield concluded that: *Perhaps it is because no one requires more than a charming illusion of action in the developing world [...] few care about policy failure when the effects are felt only in Afghanistan [...] Of course the Afghans noticed, and neocolonialists got no more respect from them than their forbearers gave to true colonialists* (Barfield, 2010:318)

Changing Strategy

The Taliban and other insurgent groups began putting up a stiffer fight from 2005. The international military forces were confronted with this problem as they had to reinforce their presence and combat the growing insurgency. The violent war that ensued endangered popular support even further due their growing violent footprint. The Taliban fuelled the discontent and directly coerced or influenced communities. It was the reality of facing a strong opponent and subsequent realisation that the government was not delivering that started the military debate on changing tack in the Afghan war rather than a realisation that state-building itself was structurally flawed. This notion is based on calls for consolidation of new programmes into a state-framework and strengthening of the state

framework without asking questions whether this framework is in need of structural change (TLO, 2010a:2).

Military operatives called for a strategy to directly counter the threat of the Taliban taking over communities because they learned that development and COIN can only effectively happen by directly engaging local communities (Gant, 2009:25). In 2009, Dr Seth Jones, professor at the NPS called for the U.S.' COIN strategy to "better incorporate working with tribal and other community forces in Afghanistan, with a direct link to the Afghan government" (Jones, 2009:1). TLO research regarding Dutch forces in Uruzgan in 2010 concluded that the Afghan government is "considered too weak, corrupt, and non-representative to be able to take control of the province on its own. This means [...] engagement with all communities is necessary that seeks to strengthen the state and sidelines spoiling political influences" (TLO, 2010a:2).

The notion of engaging local communities for development and security reasons has sparked a violent debate in academic and military communities. A supporter of engaging local communities is Major Tim Gant who explains that counterinsurgency up until 2009 was predominantly aimed at supporting the Afghan government. To his mind this "disenfranchises the very fabric of Afghan society" (Gant, 2009:10).

Conclusion

A discussion exists whether military forces improve or exacerbate the conflict in Afghanistan but this discussion might forego the option that it is state-building itself that is contentious. Lessons learned and escalating violence due to the Taliban resurgence and the ISAF surge have made military actors realise or believe that engagement of the local population, is the way forward to counter the Taliban. This does not say that the military has understood the misinformed state structure to be a root cause. It is merely an instrumentalist lesson learned, however, it is therefore no less a powerful tool. Currently efforts are made by the military to stem the Taliban by engaging local communities. Next section will zoom in on this new strategy, how local communities facilitate security and stability by interacting with international military forces.

4.3 Engaging Communities

This section looks at the contention regarding the engagement of local communities by analysing the interaction between counterinsurgency efforts and local communities in light of security provision.

Indirect Rule

Development and state-building efforts are aimed at directly supporting the government of Afghanistan. The highly centralised structure misconceives local governance. Development in support of this government has been inadequate to address important issues as improving quality of life and providing security. These mistakes have alienated the population and created opportunities for the Taliban to resurge. The detrimental effects of this policy are clear to military actors as they have been engaged in an ever-worsening insurgency. Lessons learned from counterinsurgency efforts and doctrinal dogmas have pointed towards the population as the centre of gravity in the Afghan insurgency. The realisation that not the government but the population is key has aimed the fight at winning popular support. To win popular support despite a dysfunctional government, the military aims to create local defence forces outside the government's security infrastructure. Engagement of local communities by military forces resembles 'indirect' rule as communities are instructed to do the international communities' bidding. Communities are engaged "by combining direct military enforcement with indirect regulation of both local governance arrangements and the relationship between local and national [actors]" (Hameiri, 2010:12). Hameiri defines the objective of engagement strategies as "a localisation approach [...] to defeat the insurgency by giving a political role to local actors [...] regulated by actors affiliated with coalition military forces" (2010:12). Barfield too points to these strategies as resembling an indirect approach (2010:338) and finds them politically 'highly divisive' because the alliance with one community will breed an enemy in another "regardless of ideology" (Barfield, 2010:315).

The military strategy to engage local communities was first devised by Major Tim Gant, an officer in the U.S. special forces that was sent to Afghanistan and established close ties to an Afghan tribe and ended up creating a village defence force. This model has caught the attention of

American military planners. Tribal Engagement seeks to emulate successes created in Iraq by a programme called 'the Sons of Iraq'. This programme entailed using Iraq's tribes and other governance mechanisms to counter the insurgency and increase security which proved rather successful, creating the conditions to allow a U.S. pull out. In accordance with this exit strategy is the Tribal Engagement strategy that seeks to emulate these successes as it superimposes Iraq's tribal model as a strategy for Afghanistan's tribal areas (Dao, 2009). Criticism on this approach refers to the use of a general tribal template on local communities. It is "unrealistic to think that [one] model can simply be replicated in other areas" (Fumerton & Quinn, 2010:26). This idea endangers the programme of making the same mistakes it tries to resolve, by relying on simplistic ideas of Afghanistan's governance arena.

History has shown us that engagement affects social structures whether adverse or not. British colonial practices implemented indirect rule, which resemble the new 'indirect approach (Barfield, 2010:338). Lord Lugard in 1929 formulated the challenge posed by indirect rule: "The whole problem, he says, is how to exercise this control, which is indispensable, without destroying the prestige of the permanent officials, which is equally indispensable" (1929:227). The anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski researched cultural change and social problems (Weaver, 2002:19) in traditional societies and sought for policy solutions in colonial administration. He argued that "Indirect rule did not mean the preservation of the traditional structure, especially the power structure [...] It led to the questioning of the validity of their position and it lowered their prestige" (Ellen, 1988:155) This 'practical anthropology' was aimed at enhancing colonial rule, not the preservation of social structures. In fact he "argued that anthropological knowledge should be applied to solve the problems faced by colonial administrators [...] especially in understanding the power dynamics in traditional societies" (McFate,2005:6).

These old colonial notions have found their way back into contemporary (military) thinking. Both operational arguments, given by Major Gant as more theoretical notions given by Montgomery McFate and her Human Terrain Analysis argue that anthropological understanding is key to engaging the local communities. This modern-coated indirect rule strategy might prove effective to

military objectives, as it was a hundred years ago. Many, however, find fault with it. Hippler argues that:

Imperial nation building that focuses on military security [...] often provides a great incentive to use local power structures, militias, warlords and even criminal gangs as auxiliary troops without considering their overall representation within society, the impact on the local population, and further political development (2005:7 in Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:60).

The 'security-policy-dominated nation-building' (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:60) argues that the political choice of employing the military for development operations will inevitably choose security-policy-dominated strategies as these hinge upon the militaries' core business. Moreover, military organisations are hierarchical, objective oriented organisations therefore clear-cut policy recommendations for security and development objectives offered by a modern variant of indirect rule can be expected to be widely welcomed. After all, the objective is to bring security, not to preserve cultural and traditional traits. These arguments touch upon the discussion whether military forces, in general, should be used for development and state building. Moreover it touches upon the discussion whether "anthropological expertise" should be used "for making complex situations governable for military commanders on the ground" (Hameiri, 2010:17). It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an answer but it does reveal that these policies are theoretically and operationally highly contentious.

Tribal Engagement

The strategy of tribal engagement is not a singular operation with an objective, dedicated resources and an order of battle. Tribal Engagement is an idea that seeks to use local communities to combat the Taliban. Security "depends on the consent and participation of traditional elders" (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:63). This is to be achieved by a number of different programmes. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) programme is the largest effort in this respect and is government

aligned. Non governmental tribal institutions such as the *Arbakai* and *Lashkars* are also used. Next section will elaborate on these actual programmes.

Tribal Engagement entails using local defence forces under the guidance of small military units to defend local communities. Their primary goal should be the provision of security in contrast to conventional offensive operations (Jones, 2010:13). Jeff Moore, assistant Professor at the National Defense University has researched the use of local defensive forces. His research found that “Village security [...] is essential to separating the people from insurgents, no matter what the war” (2010:1).

Chapter three argued that security in local communities is provided through governance that relies on transactional patron-client structures. Through this lens, the engagement of local communities can be packaged as a transaction about the provision of security. A simple template cannot be devised that corresponds to profit maximising incentives in the governance structures of Afghanistan’s local communities but considering engagement as a transaction might present a different outlook.

Seth Jones finds that such a programme “must be perceived by the local population as defending their own interests, organized and run exclusively by the local *Jirga* and *Shura* and not beholden to any outsiders” (Jones, 2010:13). Perceptions of foreign co-option are found to delegitimise programmes, therefore this notion is important. It counters insurgents’ tactics to play out Afghan antagonism against foreigners by referring to the “foreign occupation” (Jones, 2010:13). Karokhail describes this competition as a “zero-sum game of tradition and religion vs. modernity and non believers” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:73). This description captures the insurgent’s conscious framing of the conflict. Jones’ notion that village defence must be perceived to be in the villagers’ own best interest can be theoretically explained by patron-client structures and profit-maximisation.

From its inception there have been reservations with the programme in direct relation to state-building. TE is feared to exacerbate warlord power and militias and as such will undermine the government. President Hamid Karzai has been “wary” of tribal engagement “initiatives” (Green,2011). He has warned that these initiatives might empower militias “in a country already

plagued by warlordism” (Lawrence, 2011). Tribal Engagement undermines the government to the extent that it does not presuppose a highly centralised governance model for Afghanistan. That said the arming of local villages can have implications on the long term, but this has to be juxtaposed to the alternative of possible Taliban rule.

The same article points to contrasting views by General Petraeus arguing that the programme is “vital in enlisting the support of locals” (Green,2011). He was quoted in the financial times saying the programme seeks to “mobilise not just individuals, but communities” (Green, 2011). The disconnect between Afghan government and U.S. leadership views signal a difference in objectives. It is suspected, and recently partly confirmed by Obama announcing drastic reductions in U.S. troops numbers, that tribal engagement in the form of the ALP programme is a “quick fix” solution (Green, 2011) to allow the U.S. and other international military actors an exit strategy that generates enough political backing for a withdrawal but leaves long term implications up to any Afghan Government. The ANSO analysed the ALP programme as a way for the ISAF to “[establish] the conditions for their exit” (Lee, 2011:1). Next section will take a look at actual local defence programmes that have been set up. Moreover it will look at the interaction of non state governance mechanisms in cooperation with local defence initiatives seen through a transactionalist approach.

Tribal defences

This section will focus on actual local defence programmes, both traditional and governmental. The analysis of local defensive mechanisms will help us understand how security is facilitated by local governance mechanisms. The interaction between actors regarding the provision of security is analysed through the transactional lens.

Notions of indirect rule and counterinsurgency tell us to “harness local actors” if insurgencies are to be quelled (Hameiri, 2002:1). This nineteenth century jargon is employed today as if old colonial notions on social action resemble modern societies one to one. The instrumentalisation of this notion is visible as the U.S. military has been encouraging traditional tribal institutions to provide local security to combat the insurgency.

Many Afghan communities have lost the ability to effectively use traditional institutions as these have eroded over the years of state collapse. The, mainly Southeastern, Pashtun tribes that have retained their tribal structures are known to use the tribal defensive institutions *Arbakai* and *Lashkar* to provide for their own security. Human Terrain Team analysis attests security created by tribal institutions to “tribal unity” (HTS, 2010:16). Members of a tribal community contest outside threats by “[operating] as a cohesive unit” (HTS, 2010:17). The Human Terrain team specifically remarks the difference between *Arbakai* and warlord militias as the *Arbakai* only operates temporarily under *Jirga* or *Shura* jurisdiction (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:63). The distinction is important because a major fear in tribal engagement programmes is that they will fuel the warlord problem.

Arbakais are most effective when instituted by the proper tribal authority (Jones, 2010:13), represented by the elites in the *Jirga* or *Shura*. As the *Arbakai* directly represent their tribe, the area of operations is usually confined to the tribes’ “limited realm” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:63). Moreover they consist of volunteers from and paid by the tribe or community they represent (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:63).

Cooperation between *Arbakai* and military forces has proven successful in a few instances. In 2005 U.S. military forces had positive experiences with the *Arbakai* in Khowst province. A State Department officer stated that cooperation went “extremely well” (USIP:2005) because the strength of the *Arbakai* is local knowledge so outside threats were easily identified, and when committed to a task it was “personal tribal community pride” (USIP:2005), to provide security for the local elections. Governor Taniwal of Paktia tried to create a hybrid political order by engaging the local tribes. He did so by granting them political power in return for their “guarantee [of] security” (TLO, 2008:37). The TLO concluded that the *Arbakai* employed in this scheme provided successful “security for the presidential and parliamentary elections” (TLO, 2008:37). In Loya Paktia security is mostly delivered through these tribal police institutions. Of course, when tribal security institutions consider the transaction in their favour and cooperate with ISAF or governmental forces they expose themselves to potential insurgent violence, although it is part of the bargain. Governor Taniwal was assassinated by a suicide bomber in September 2006. The Salarzai, a Pakistani Pashtun sub-tribe mobilised the tribal *Lashkar* to cooperate with the Pakistani army. The local militants “slit the

throats of four Hilal Khel tribal leaders from the Charmang area of Bajaur who had organized a lashkar against militants, dumping their bodies along a road” (Jones, 2010:13). Although this happened in Pakistan it represents an analogy to tribal cooperation with security forces in countering insurgent movements. By employing armed groups to counter a threat, escalation of violence can be expected.

In many respects tribal institutions are the preferred way of engaging local communities as they originate from the communities themselves housing indispensable local knowledge. It is however problematic to import the tribal model to other areas as tribal structures are not intact. Without viable legitimate authority the set up of armed groups might have negative side effects. The use of this tribal model outside of tribally administrated areas evokes high contention as it “may lead to empowering warlords and their militias” (Schmeidl & Karokhail, 2006:63). The lack of actual tribal defence institutions among local communities is the foremost reason that this template is not enforced all over Afghanistan. Furthermore, the government is afraid of empowering structures that prove capable of challenging the government as opposition is already strong. The empowerment of local communities might detach them even further from Kabul, something the centralists dread but perhaps an endemic response to failures of the highly centralised state structure. Communities seek the best trade off possible in supplying governance and security, detaching from a dysfunctional structure might prove to be an option.

Afghan Local Police

Local defence programmes have been fitted into a government framework because they are dreaded by GoA. Under control of the Ministry of the Interior is some hint of control retained.

The first of many programmes within a government framework that was aimed at engaging local communities was the Afghan Public Protection Programme (AP3). It was developed by ISAF to counter insurgent forces who coerced the “unprotected rural Afghan population to provide refuge, subsistence and supplies” (Clukey, 2009:80). Certain frustration with “slow progress of the ANSF on national level [...] logistical problems with the Ministry of Defence, corruption of national, provin-

cial, and district leaders” (Afghan-Bios, 2011) led to the creation of multiple village defence programmes who try to emulate “the concept of *Arbakai*” (Afghan-Bios, 2011).

The ISAF inspired AP3 programme was officially set up by the Ministry of the Interior (Moi) to create an Afghan government connection. This way the threat of undermining the government diminished somewhat. The AP3 programme was not to last. General McKiernan, the ISAF commander who set up the programme was succeeded by General McChrystal who found the programme an unworkable solution to the problem of alienating communities and a re-surgng Taliban. In effect the programme was “very resource-intensive” (Boone, 2009) and was considered “too slow” (Boone, 2009) to have a marked effect in the time constrained environment the U.S. military operates in.

The concept of tribal engagement was not lost with the closure of the AP3 programme, it was replaced by the Local Defense Initiative which encapsulated the founding of village defence units supported by U.S. special forces. This U.S. inspired programme reminds of the CIA and SF inspired Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) programme in Vietnam which, in its early days, established Area Development Centres to train local village defence groups by special forces. Other special forces elements provided overwatch. The programme eventually failed due to a shift to kinetic and conventional kill or capture missions.

Although initially feared by the Afghan government, the CDI programme was endorsed by Kabul after negotiations with General Petraeus and was hence known as the Afghan Local Police (ALP). The Afghan Local Police, as with previous initiatives, was based on the assumptions that Afghan Security Forces are not capable to effectively provide security in the country and that local communities can, with due support, defend themselves from the insurgents (Afghan-Bios, 2011). Members of the ALP are, just as with CIDG, be “advised and trained” by U.S. special forces who live and work in the engaged villages and communities (Afghan-Bios, 2011). The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for supplying and paying the ALP. Moreover the ALP reports directly to the Moi “through local district headquarters” (Afghan-Bios, 2011).

The major difference between the ALP and *Arbakai* is that the ALP is not solely recruited and commanded by one ethnicity, which was deemed a mistake in the past (AP, 2011) as it kept

these militias outside of government control. The ALP will be under government control but its commanders are chosen by local elders through *Shura* governance (Fumerton & Quinn, 2010:26) granting the ALP, in theory, the necessary legitimacy and safeguarding the local character of ALP forces, which after all is why these initiatives are set up.

Evidence on successes and reception of the ALP can as yet not be given but experiences with and perceptions of the programme give indications of some problems. Recruits into the ALP “are not consistently vetted for ties to criminals and warlords” (AP, 2011) exacerbating the fear that the ALP will endorse “private militias or create new ones” (AP, 2011). These fears have partly become a reality according to Herat’s district governor as he stated that the recruits in Shindand , lacking a proper vetting system, are the ones that should have been “kept out” (AP, 2011). Even villagers “refused to participate out of fears who would be recruited” (AP, 2011). These perceptions were countered by the head of the programme and by a local councillor pointing towards a strong vetting system and increased security due to the ALP. (AP, 2011).

It is still too early to adequately analyse the successes or failures of local defence groups in Afghanistan without doing actual field research. The expected pull out of ISAF forces and strong Insurgency make me wonder if we will ever know.

Conclusion

The engagement and set up of local defence forces resembles indirect rule and is found to be highly divisive in inter-community relations. More criticism to the programme refers to the use of a simplistic tribal model on communities which is in danger of making the same mistake again of relying on misinformed ideas on local governance.

Tribal engagement is based on the premise that anthropological understanding is key to interaction with local communities. This reminds of indirect rule practices of the colonial era, therefore it is highly contested. The debate is raised whether military forces should be used for development and state-building. The question is asked in light of this debate whether anthropological expertise should support military operations.

Operationally, tribal engagement sets up village defence groups under guidance from special forces. The interaction between these actors can be analysed by framing it as a transaction where military forces should provide the best trade-off to local communities to incentivise cooperation.

There are instrumental reservations with the actual set up of village defence groups in relation to state-building. It is feared to empower warlords and militias undermining the central government. Tribal Engagement undermines the premise that the state should have the monopoly on violence. Whether this premise is a viable critique considering dysfunctional government that never controlled this monopoly and the prevalence of non state mechanisms is, to my mind, not very likely. The arming of local villages might have implications on the long term, but this has to be juxtaposed to the alternative of possible Taliban rule, the outcome determined on a trade off presents a way of looking at this quagmire.

A disconnect arises between GoA and U.S. leadership in strategic objectives when looking at TE for it is argued that that it is a strategy to allow the U.S. an exit strategy leaving long term implications up to the Afghans.

Actual village defence groups initially constituted traditional tribal institutions such as the *Arbakai* and *Lashkar* but lack of tribal unity in many local communities and the lack of governmental control hindered their implementation. Programmes were set up under control of the Ministry of the Interior such as the Afghan Local Police who are locally elected but government paid and controlled. Their 'success' cannot yet be determined but local fears have arisen that the programme will create private militias aligned to warlords. Other perceptions with the programme claimed it was facilitative to security.

4.4 Conclusion

The Taliban was given the opportunity to regroup and come back in force. This happened because the Pashtun, who initially welcomed development, became disillusioned as the Afghan government turned out to be a corrupt centralised entity unresponsive to their needs. International aid proved wholly inadequate. The created antipathy and alienation created opportunities for a regrouped Taliban who appealed to the perceptions of alienation and mobilised through in-group identity (Haring, 2010:7) of the Pashtuns.

Increased fighting between military forces and the Taliban opens the discussion whether military forces improve or exacerbate the conflict in Afghanistan as their presence is highly contentious in the perception of Afghans. Their presence is contentious in light of internationalised state-building whereby the international connotation is contentious in itself.

Military actors have learned that sole support of GoA will not effectively counter the Taliban and have turned towards engaging the local population. Whether this implies enhanced understanding of the root causes of the resurgence remains to be seen.

The programme to counter the Taliban is derived from colonial in-direct rule supported by anthropological research used in an operational setting. This notion evokes questions whether anthropological understanding, can and should be used as a military tool. Moreover the imposition of simplified tribal models might rely on similar misinformed ideas of local governance.

Tribal engagement sets up village defence groups that under the supervision of special forces should take up arms against the insurgents. Transactionalism provides a way of guiding interaction but has shortcomings in its explanation of social action. An actual programme designed along the notions of tribal engagement is the Afghan Local Police which operates under government control but is still feared it might undermine the central government. The question emerges whether it can undermine an already delegitimised and misinformed government. However other questions arise what long term the implications of arming of local communities will be.

5. Conclusions

What are the non state mechanisms of governance that facilitate security and stability in Afghanistan?

5.1 Main Findings

- *Non state governance is systemic to Afghanistan therefore a distinction between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ governance is false. The prevalence of non state governance and patrimonial governance by Kabul underscore this notion.*

- *Security is facilitated through non state governance mechanisms as a structurally flawed central State fails to deliver governance and alienates the local population.*

- *Security is facilitated through local elites who command resources and who govern these through transactional patron-client structures.*

- *Therefore Military interaction and cooperation with non state governance mechanisms regarding the provision of security can be described through a transaction as it is open to questions about relative costs.*

- *Transactionalism provides a way of explaining social action in Afghanistan but has limitations as social life cannot be simplified into a game theoretic calculation.*

5.2 Summary

Political Traditions

The current state-building project seems to resemble previous attempts to centralise rule in Afghanistan. Imposed social change spawns conflict when a centralised system disregards the needs of the regions. One can classify the current conflict in Afghanistan, historically conscious or not, as a political struggle over centralised rule as parties are vying for control over the country.

Afghanistan's political history is defined by the politics of power over centralised rule. The friction between central and local governance was systemic to the feudal Afghan society as the interdependence between both prevented conflict despite conflicting objectives. This balance, in the interplay between the central ruler and the tribes, was upset by the imposition of social changes. The politics of collaboration between Afghan rulers and large empires gave the central government the resources to undermine the traditional balance with the tribes. Whereas before, they had been dependent on resources supplied by the tribes. With the interdependence gone, central government could start imposing social changes. The independent resource base and increased power of central government established Kabul as the power and economic centre of Afghanistan. This centralist model was seen as a template for the Afghan State despite the constant friction it would incur when the imposition of social changes would spawn conflict. Friction and conflict became systemic as rulers were never able to completely break the autonomy of the rural areas.

The extremely violent nature of the Soviet war managed to uproot tribal governance. The state collapsed in the subsequent civil war. Regions reverted to autonomous rule but local governance was affected as militias and warlords, for being able to deliver security, took over control from more traditional leaders. State collapse and civil war made these autonomous regions vulnerable to coercion. The power vacuum that materialised in this context created the opportunity for the Taliban to come to power.

State-building

The state-building programme that started after the U.S invasion in 2001 aimed social change at improving the quality of life by setting up a democratic state. This project was initially welcomed despite the presence of foreign troops in the country. Concluding that historical consciousness connects the past to present is not assumed here. It does mark out similarities in Afghanistan's challenges which might precipitate similar responses.

The welcomed reception of state-building underscores a missed chance as both the initial set up and the consequent manifestation of the state-building project were marred by Western ethnocentric misconceptions and governmental misrule. The state-building project created a democratic but highly centralised state which disregarded the call by autonomous regions for participation in the government. This call was ignored as state-builders saw federal structures as dangerous to the modern state. The dichotomy labeled local governance as traditional and dangerous while Kabul was modern and democratic. This betrays a misunderstanding of Afghanistan's governance arena as non state governance mechanisms were and are instrumental to governance to much of the population. It is the interplay between both central and local rule that describes the Afghan nation, not the imposition of one singular structure singling out the other.

Non state governance is systemic to Afghanistan, not in the least because of the important functions in social life it has, especially as it brings order to a war-torn country. The primary function of non state governance is to provide public goods to the population. The provision of public goods is guided by patron client structures through institutions as the Jirga and Shura. The ability to provide resources is therefore central to governance. Interaction in patron client structures can be explained through transactionalism but has its shortcomings in explaining social action. Although transactionalism offers a different perspective we cannot claim that local governance is of a purely transactional nature because claiming that social action is governed solely by profit maximisation discards many other possibilities, such as historical consciousness, something this thesis cannot prove nor dis prove.

Security

The violent environment in Afghanistan has equated resource provision with the ability to provide security making security provision an important public good in non state governance. The debate claiming that security provision by local governance undermines the modern state is based, to my mind, on the erroneous premise that this distinction is valid in the Afghan context as both are found to be structural to Afghan society.

Local communities remain vulnerable to coercion and influence in light of uprooted tribal structures, weak government and the insurgency. Both ISAF and the insurgents try to capitulate on this weakness by vying for local support through influence and coercion. The resurgence of the Taliban has increased fighting dramatically which opens the discussion whether military forces improve or exacerbate the conflict in Afghanistan as their presence is highly contentious in the perception of Afghans. To my mind their presence is contentious, because the international connotation is contentious in itself as research evidence found.

ISAF interacts with local communities because gaining popular support is central to counterinsurgency operations. The way in which they interact with these communities is quite similar to colonial strategies of indirect rule. To effectively interact the U.S. military uses anthropological data in an operational setting. This notion evokes questions whether anthropological understanding, can and should be used as a military tool. Moreover the imposition of simplified tribal models might rely on misinformed concepts of local governance which could further alienate local communities.

Tribal Engagement sets up village defence groups that take up arms against the insurgents under the supervision of special forces. An actual programme designed along the notions of tribal engagement is the Afghan Local Police which operates under government control but is feared to undermine the central government. The question emerges whether it can undermine an already delegitimised and misinformed government. However other questions arise what long term implication the arming of local communities will have.

Transactionalism gives us a way of dealing with these local communities as interactions regarding public goods, as security, can be described through relative costs calculations. Transactionalism therefore presents an alternative to fixed social templates or weberian notions of state-

hood that seem to guide interaction between international actors and local governance. Local communities provide security to protect themselves but are caught up between a misinformed state-building project and violent Islamists. Offering a local community a better trade off through transactional notions might temporarily win its allegiance but will probably not resolve the balance in the politics of Afghanistan.

5.3 Concluding Remarks

This thesis had the goal of doing field research in Afghanistan. Understanding Afghanistan solely from literature has proven to be a trap for many a scholar.

The greater part of the research was done with a high likelihood of me going to ISAF HQ in Kabul. Contact with ISAF and the MoD, and due help from Mario Fumerton, showed willingness to facilitate this field research. However a lack of cooperation at ISAF eventually cancelled the plan shifting my research to literature study. I was able to ask questions and attain some data via email contact with ISAF.

In the final days of my literature research yet another chance emerged to go to Afghanistan as the NGO 'Cooperation for Peace and Unity' were willing to facilitate my research. This time, constraining military rules prevented me going. The opportunity offered, to enrol in an NGO on location should have provided great in-depth knowledge regarding the conflict. Arguably a lot better than research at ISAF HQ would have granted me.

Within my literature research I set about finding first or second hand data from sources operating in the theatre. Therefore most evidence is derived from the Afghan Research Evaluation Unit and the Tribal Liaison office. Because these organisations are of Western origins data might be biased towards a Western ethnocentric outlook. The incorporation of military data, as this thesis had to have a connection to actual relevant military debates, might exacerbate any Western bias.

Feedback and conversations with my supervisor kept me from too much prescriptive and biased conclusions and refocussed my thinking towards debates and questions rather than positivist answers.

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