

**SUASTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT VERSUS TRADITIONAL  
NORMS AND RELIGIOUSE VALUES: THE ROLE OF  
TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUSE LEADERS IN  
PARTICIPATORY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study identifies key power brokers in Afghan society, including traditional and religious leaders, and explores the impact these actors have on the development process in Afghanistan. It examines how these leaders influence the development of interventions confronted by a background of unemployment, insurgency, injustice, corruption, poppy cultivation, and human rights abuses. Interviews were conducted with a range of Afghan people who were directly or indirectly impacted by the development processes including, public beneficiaries, and traditional and religious leaders.

The study provides an analysis of the interviewees arguments and statements about the development process, and proposes an effective alternative approach to participatory and sustainable development in the country. The study does not aim to examine the specific policies or strategies applied by the multitude of development agencies in Afghanistan, but rather, it focuses on grounded realities by understanding the common perceptions of beneficiaries of the development process

This study argues that the role of traditional and religious leaders as mechanisms to promote Afghan owned and Afghan led development should be utilized more in the whole cycles of the development process (from identification and planning to implementation and maintenance) in Afghanistan.

**KEY WORDS: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT/ TRADITIONAL NORMS/  
RELIGIOUS VALUES/ ROLE/TRADITIONAL AND  
RELIGIOUS LEADERS/ PARTICIPATORY/ LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT.**

129 pages

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AIEC	Afghanistan Independent Election Commission
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Funds
ALP	Afghanistan Local Police
CDC	Community Development Council
CDD	Community Driven Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
DDA	District Development Assembly
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IDA	International Development Association
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JICA	Japanese International Corporation Agency
JSDF	Japanese Social Development Fund
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MOWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan
NSP	National Solidarity Program
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PC	Provincial Council
UN	United Nations
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

**LIST OF ACRONYMS (cont.)**

UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drug and Crime
US	United State
WB	World Bank

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

After 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the shape and mode of power changed in Afghanistan. Existing sources of power that had been hardly noticeable in society became significant political and social players and major power holders. Due to a highly centralized, dictatorial government system based on kinship, freedom of expression, particularly in the minor and marginalized societies had been limited. Minor groups and tribes that had been invisible in political and social decision making have gained a presence from this new situation in Afghanistan. Twenty eight out of thirty respondents (FGDs and Key informant interviews) argued that minority groups and marginalized members of society have been mobilized to participate in decision making process. This has resulted in having their voices heard and problems addressed. The multi ethnic government system, including the members of parliament and provincial councils appointed or elected are the best examples of diversity and the dynamics of local power in Afghanistan.

However, the respondents argued that ministries and other key positions have been divided amongst players based on level and rate of the influence of power brokers that they control in the government. In light of above arguments, respondents that subscribed to this train of thought further argued that the appointment of people to key positions based on personal and family interest and personal relationships has increased the rate of corruption in Afghanistan. As noted by a religious leader interviewed *if the culture of personal interest and family relationships in appointment of people to key positions is not changed to the culture based on merit, honesty and love towards country, corruption will play a disastrous role in increasing the current insurgency*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Logar Province: 2013.

In the past, the Government of Afghanistan and influential leaders (religious and traditional) were the main power players in society. These leaders were not themselves interested in occupying governmental positions to maintain their influence on society. However, a parliament member noted *these leaders have been empowered by the public to influence and challenge the government if development was not in line with religious or traditional values*<sup>2</sup>. Hence, the revolution in 1978 is perhaps the best example of these leaders' influence in society, and the collapse of this regime demonstrates the support for these local leaders. In other words, while the leaders have not had any physical mechanisms (i.e. weapons), their messages have had the influential power to mobilize and empower whole swathes of Afghan society against a common enemy because their messages and directions are hold such value among communities. Respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that the leaders and their messages are cordially welcomed and highly valued in society because people believe these religious leaders are the heirs of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the only source that preserves their religious values. Therefore, people have been obedient to their advice and messages, even if they were invited for to wage war<sup>3</sup>. Finally, peoples believe that disobedience of their advice and messages is disobedience towards God and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH<sup>4</sup>). The call of Jihad (Holy war) against British and Soviet forces is the best evidence for this. The source of such religious calls can be only religious faith and spiritual believes of these religious leaders.

Like religious leaders, traditional leaders also preserve the cultural and traditional norms in society<sup>5</sup>. Like religious leaders, traditional leaders have been playing an influential role in social and political decision making. Respondents in Logar province argued that even though religious and traditional leaders have separate lines of authority and responsibility in society, the values and benefits of the leaders are interconnected. In other words, their common benefits are complementary of each other. Consequently, in light of the above statement, it is argued that disagreement

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<sup>2</sup> Confidential Interview with a current member of parliament in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Because people believe that they are the only source maintaining and protecting their religious values in society.

<sup>4</sup> Peace Be Upon Him.

<sup>5</sup> Full definition of traditional and religious leaders is available in chapter III. For more detail, please refer to that chapter.

between traditional and religious leaders is rare because their benefits are interconnected. Hence, they wished to maintain good relations to sustain their mutual benefits<sup>6</sup>.

This study is intended to identify key power brokers, including the traditional and religious leaders, and to map and analyze the impact of their influence on current development interventions in Afghanistan. The study will also focus on how these leaders can influence development in Afghanistan in the context of serious issues that exist in the country such as insecurity, insurgency, injustice, corruption, narcotics and the violation of human rights. Furthermore, the way that traditional and religious leaders maintain and project their power will be discussed. The study provides a summary of the overall arguments respondents have about the current development environment and proposes an effective, alternative approach contributing to the participatory and sustainable development in the country<sup>7</sup>.

The study does not aim to illustrate the policies and strategies applied by national and international parties for the development of Afghanistan; rather, it focuses on common perceptions of the general public and beneficiaries of the current development initiatives taking place in the country. In other words, this study will not illustrate the international community's multitude of development agencies' visions, goals and objectives, but instead will highlight the impact of their interventions on the ground as the perception of beneficiaries of current development interventions is key to this research. As a civil society representative noted *many good things may have been written in the policies and strategies applied by the international community for the development of Afghanistan. However, the ground realities are often different from written policies and strategies*<sup>8</sup>.

This research goes a step further to explore whether or not the current Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) is still applicable, effective and appropriate within the context of such poor and marginalized people, as those living in Afghanistan. As noted by a traditional leader, *a professional and inclusive*

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<sup>6</sup> The benefits could be both, hard (kind and cash) and soft (ideologies and social goals).

<sup>7</sup> This approach is community owned and community led approach. It will outline how the traditional and religious leaders will contribute to mobilize people to equally participate in the whole cycle of development.

<sup>8</sup> Confidential interview with a member of civil society in Balkh Province: 2013.



*development strategy shouldn't be developed based on political interests. It should meet, represent and address the real needs of the people*<sup>9</sup>. Interviewees in the rural areas argued that this strategy lacked real professionalism and required improved levels of inclusiveness<sup>10</sup>. They further argued that the majority of people, particularly in the most remote, marginalized and insecure parts of the country were excluded during the preparation of this strategy<sup>11</sup>. They further argued that, from their point of view, improvement of the education system, renovation and establishment new irrigations systems, investment in agriculture systems as well as explorations of mines and energy, will all create much need jobs for the welfare of communities. Establishment of long-term projects for the self reliance of the nation should be the main indicator for sustainable development and improvement of quality of life of people. The above discussion anticipates that nationwide, fundamental and long-term development projects for self-reliance and the welfare of people are required to directly contribute to the creation of employment and poverty alleviation to improve the quality of life of people, particularly in the most remote, marginalized and vulnerable communities.

Looking at the concept of effectiveness of current development interventions in Afghanistan on the ground, this study also found that the exclusion or low level of inclusion of traditional and religious leaders from development processes has had an overall negative effect on development in Afghanistan. It is argued that as an effective entry point to communities, these leaders have not been utilized effectively by development players despite the fact that involvement of these leaders would most likely not only sustain the interventions, but also improve the legitimacy of interventions because their messages and directions are highly valued by communities. It is also argued that these leaders are in functional positions to be able to facilitate useful services for the rest of their communities. Therefore, traditional and religious leaders were defined as influential leaders who have prior local legitimacy and are in prime positions to take on governance and local development roles.

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<sup>9</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Balkh Province: 2013

<sup>10</sup> Professionalism means that the policy makers developed the ANDS is lacking the deep understanding of rural contexts and needs.

<sup>11</sup> More detail is available in Chapter V.

Finally, this thesis does not aim to introduce any new or alternative model of development. However, as a new and alternative approach for the sustainable development of Afghanistan, this study argues that traditional and religious leaders, if used as mechanisms for development, will improve inclusive participation to ensure Afghan owned and Afghan led development interventions in Afghanistan. In other words, this research is not intended to describe what model of development is more or less effective in Afghanistan, but instead explores which roles are more or less significant in improving inclusive participation in development and what role traditional and religious leaders can play to empower local communities and strengthen social cohesion.

## ***1.2 Research Problem***

Inclusive and systematic participation in the entire cycle of development is a critical challenge in Afghanistan. Despite huge international investment in the development of Afghanistan, a systematic, culturally rooted, Afghan-owned and Afghan-led development approach that contributes to participatory and inclusive development has not been proposed and applied to sustain the current development of Afghanistan. Like National Solidarity Program (NSP), inclusive participation of local beneficiaries in development requires service providers to ensure and be dedicated to bottom up planning processes and downward accountability, which is a key to transparency and ownership of development initiatives<sup>12</sup>. The inclusive participation of service receivers and commitments of the service providers ensures common and mutual understanding which can be a path to peace and conflict resolution. By improving solidarity and unity that directly contributes to transparent and sustainable development, change can be brought to the pattern of conflict in Afghanistan. Inclusive participation and transparency contribute to the reduction of violence and to the promotion of alternative social and cultural practiced dispute resolution techniques.

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<sup>12</sup> For more understanding about NSP, please refer to literature review section.

The dilemma for Afghan society and development practitioners is not that the public theoretically does not understand the significance of participation in development, but instead the problem is that governments and scholars have not yet proposed a socially acceptable framework to promote inclusive participation in development to society that includes the participation of the traditional leaders. Furthermore, literature to date does not distinguish between theory and practice of inclusive participation in development<sup>13</sup>. People know the concept and theory of participation, but they do not see any space or mechanisms allowing them to participate in decision making, particularly in the most remote parts of the country. Therefore, this participatory research study is intended to address this problem and provide overarching findings, and to propose alternative, socially applicable and systematic recommendations and approaches to participatory sustainable development in the context of Afghanistan.

### ***1.3 Research Objectives***

Based on this rationale the research objectives of this study will be:

1. To map the key Power Brokers and classify the impact of their power on Development Interventions in Afghanistan;
2. To identify the most effective power holders in terms of improving inclusive participation which contributes to sustainable development in Afghanistan, and the reasons for their power and influence: Is it because of resource mobilization? Social acceptance as a key entry point to the community? Community mobilization for collective action and public contributions? Cost and time effective tools for public awareness about development? Effective tools to improve the Sense of community ownership of development and to re-Build the culture of volunteerism in society?

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<sup>13</sup> It happens because most of the researchers rely on the reports produced by either donors or implementers. Such colorful reports rather focus on the successes and achievements than the challenges. Therefore, the realities on the ground are often kept hidden.

3. To analyze the key factors behind the accumulation of power of traditional and religious leaders at the local and national level in Afghanistan: Is it their legitimacy? Social acceptance? Imposition of power? Use of military instruments? Skills? Religion?

4. To outline the common perceptions of beneficiaries regarding the current development intervention in the country: Is effective and assessable transparency and accountability mechanism in place? Is public aware and involved in the whole process? Is it cost effective? Does it meet the real need of beneficiaries? Is there public contribution to ensure sustainability of the projects/ programs in future?

### ***1.4 Research Questions***

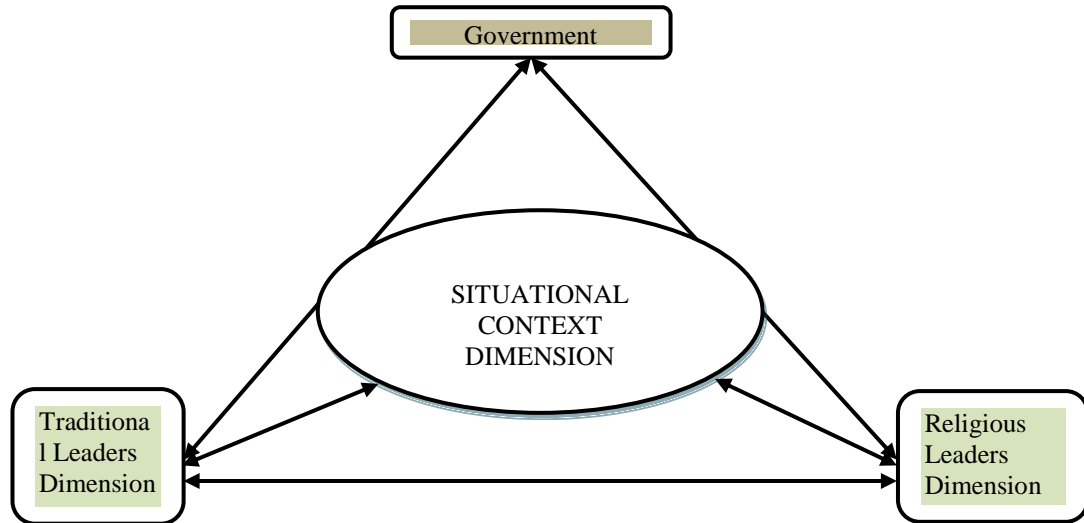
To achieve these research objectives, the following questions will be asked in this study:

1. Who are the key power brokers and what is the impact of their power on development interventions in Afghanistan?
2. Who are the most effective power holders in terms of improving inclusive participation which contributes to sustainable development in Afghanistan?
3. Why do traditional and religious leaders have power at the local and national level in Afghanistan?
4. What is the common perception of beneficiaries regarding the current development intervention in Afghanistan?

### ***1.5 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework***

This section presents a conceptual perspective for understanding traditional and religious leaders' roles in Afghanistan from a multi-dimensional angle categorized into participatory governance, followers, and situational context (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007; Popper, 2001; Vardi & Weitz, 2004). In this regard, leadership scholars and social psychologists such as Dotlich & Cairo (2003), Kets de Vries (2006), Luban (2006), Kellerman (2008), Offerman (2004), and Zimbardo (1969, 2006, 2007) have

presented conceptual frameworks that include a confluence of factors. The section will highlight the conceptual basis for the role of traditional and religious leaders as predicated on a framework punctuated by characteristics of traditional and religious leaders, followers, and situational context, along with related mediating variables.



**Figure1.1: Conceptual Model**

## 1.6 Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework presented above, depicts the overarching relationship that exists amongst government, traditional and religious leaders in Afghanistan. The framework is premised on the general understanding that legitimacy and authority is claimed differently by each institution. While Government claims authority along democratic and constitutional legality, historically, during the pre-colonial period, traditional leaders claimed political authority as they were seen to represent ‘indigenous people, society’s values and authority’<sup>14</sup>. Religious leaders, on the other hand claimed their authority based on their links to the divine, whether a God, a spirit or ancestors. Studies elsewhere associate traditional and religious leaders with modeling moral integrity and ethical standards not only in their personal lives

<sup>14</sup> They claimed their authority because they represented authority. The constitution gives full legitimacy and authority to the government. While traditional and religious norms, values and acceptance of traditional and religious leaders among public empower them to claim their authority in different level in the society.

but also in their professional lives (Barnard, 1968; Bowie, 2005; Ciulla, 2001; Price; 2008; Wren, 1998). As Burns (1978), Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), and Trevino, Hartman, and Brown (2000) pointed out, the character of traditional and religious leaders, more than anything, provides the foundation of their leadership role in society. Furthermore, ethical leadership earns them the confidence and loyalty from their subjects (Aronson, 2001), and positions them as present and future role models within their communities.

The relationship between the tripartite becomes more articulate around roles, as traditional leaders, religious leaders and the government work collectively to bring about peace and development. The roles here, more often than not, are described through specific societal functions of production of goods distribution, collective security and reproduction, which are different from those of modern societies. Unlike the state, the legitimacy of some traditional leaders and religious leaders is not rooted in constitutions and electoral processes, but in inheritance or other historical mechanisms of leadership selection. The relationship is further explained by models where traditional structures function as local government and are vertically linked to the central government. There are also many forms of formal inclusion such as parallel structures and houses of traditional leaders at the national and sub-national level, or reserved seats for traditional authorities in some local government bodies. The relationships build on government's leading role in distributive, redistributive and administrative functions, which traditional and religious leaders may not be prepared to fulfill in some given context. Drawing on their good performance, government can give traditional leaders a role different from their traditional one, in a different context. Most importantly, the tripartite relationship is influenced by functions and resources. For instance, changing functions and the way resources are distributed across the tripartite can result in changed roles of traditional and religious leaders. The tripartite relationship is further strengthened through participatory governance, where the role of traditional and religious leaders has become more prominent in Afghanistan's situational context, to influence followers and meet public citizens' needs for sustainable development and peace at local, district, provincial and national level. Often, people quickly fall back to traditional and religious leaders whenever

the central government fails to institutionalize effective functioning systems and structures at the local level<sup>15</sup>.

In post conflict zones, traditional and religious leaders play an important role, as they often take the lead as a functioning form of social organization after many years of civil war. Here, traditional and religious leaders can help to stabilize a country in post-conflict situations because they are often the only structures that remain continuous and available after others have collapsed. Crook and Sverisson (2001) conclude that decentralization meets its goals when central governments have a commitment to pro-poor policies in order to broaden their support among the poorer population. In this case, governments are prepared to actively engage in local politics, both to challenge the local elites and ensure the implementation of such policies. This tripartite framework will be used as a lense through which to analyse the current development process in Afghanistan as reported by those interviewed for this study.

### ***1.7 Research Methodology***

Balkh and Logar are the two provincial case studies selected to highlight the structure of local and international interest groups playing an important role in the development of Afghanistan. The provinces represent areas in which the international sponsored community is making efforts to use development and humanitarian assistance to achieve security objectives. The relatively secure province of Balkh, located in northern Afghanistan, is included in the study to provide something of a counterpoint to the more insecure province of Logar, located in southeastern Afghanistan. Differences can be seen between the two provinces development due to the Swedish and Finnish Governments' policies of maintaining clear lines of separation between development aid and military activities in Balkh, in contrast to the

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<sup>15</sup> Experience shows that traditional and religious leaders have taken the lead in mobilizing grassroots support for local development projects and democratic processes; contributed to improved governance, administration, legitimacy, including constitutional and legal provision; land allocation, land tenure and dispute settlement; development and service delivery; social and cultural change; the relationship with central and local government; the relationship with civic and community based organizations; training, protection of local customs, supporting political election and provision of advice on use of traditions of communal provision of services; provided communication between local people and government; provided social cohesion and maintain traditional values, reducing juvenile delinquency and crime. Verification and acknowledgment of the leaders on development proposals faster the approval process of the proposals by donors because donors highly value their intervention in development.

US government's lack of interest in similar policies in Logar. The Balkh and Logar based Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) play less of a role in development and governance projects<sup>16</sup>. There are other contrasts between the two provinces. In addition to the economic and security disparity between the two selected provinces, Balkh is a multi ethnic province. It is argued that the Tajik ethnic group constitutes the majority of the population of Balkh in addition to Pashtun, Uzbek, Turkmen and Hazara ethnic groups forming a minority of the population. The Pashtun ethnic group makes up the majority population of Logar<sup>17</sup>. In Balkh, there is also a higher rate of literacy and education<sup>18</sup>. In addition to its strategic location for business and production in the north Afghanistan, Balkh University has been ranked as the second best performing university in Afghanistan (after Kabul University).

As part of the research, field visits were made to Balkh between Jan and March 2013 and to Logar between April and September 2013. After comprehensive sampling of respondents in both provinces<sup>19</sup>, 21 key informant individual interviews and two focus group discussions were held in both provinces including: Mazar-e Sharif, Poli Alam (provincial capitals), Sholgara and Khulm districts of Balkh province; and Mohammad Aga, Baraki Barak, Khushi, Azra, Kharwar and Charkh districts of Logar province. Located in southwestern Balkh Province, Sholgara district was selected because it had previously experienced some levels of relative insecurity, although the current and previous insecurity in Sholgara seemed to be related more to criminality than politics. It is argued that there are many of criminal and illegal armed groups in this area who operate mainly for personal gain carrying out crimes such as robbery and kidnapping. Located in the eastern part of Balkh province, Khulm district is selected because it is considered a secure area<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> The roles of the PRTs in the 2 provinces were different because the development interventions of PRTs in the provinces are based on their political and military interest.

<sup>17</sup> In the both province, Balkh and Logar, update and standard statistic figure of population is not available there. Therefore, I didn't add any % of the figures.

<sup>18</sup> Due to insecurity in some areas and lack of update information, it was difficult for me to find out the real % of literacy. However, I was told by one respondent in Balkh that the % of literacy is around 65-70 %.

<sup>19</sup> It is explained more in the upcoming paragraphs.

<sup>20</sup> Although there are elements of unrest around border areas of Khulum and Chahar Dara district of bordering Kunduz province.



Six districts from Logar province were selected for this research. The main criteria for the selection of the districts were insecurity, political and traditional conservatism, uniformity of ethnicity, being home to ex-local militia, geographical location, and weak economic and educational systems. Mohammad Agha is the closest district of Logar to Kabul. The rate of education is higher here than in other districts. *Approximately 60% of total population in this district is educated (a traditional leader said)*. The Ainak Copper Mine which is one of the biggest copper mines in the region is also located in this district. It is argued that due to recent economic growth, closeness to capital city and relatively good security situation, international and national development agencies have been interested in working in this district in recent years<sup>21</sup>. However, following the opening of the Ainak Copper Mine, contracted to a Chinese company in 2007, the security condition of this district, particularly near to mine began to deteriorate<sup>22</sup>.

Contrasting these different provinces provides us with a variety of contrasting data and information. As indicated earlier, 21 key informant interviews and two focus group discussion were held with 30 persons at the provincial, district, and community level, including provincial capitals. Respondents included current and former government officials, parliament and provincial council members, former Jihadi commanders<sup>23</sup>, insurgent representatives, UN and aid agency staff, tribal and religious leaders, civil society representatives, including CDC members, women, disabled peoples representatives and Islamic studies students studying in Pakistani Madrasas. In addition, secondary sources were used for background and historical information to support the research.

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<sup>21</sup> Many international and national organizations have been working in this district, such as IRC, DACAA, Care International and some other agencies implementing USAID projects.

<sup>22</sup> The common argument among public in Logar province, particularly Mohammad Agha District is that Pakistan ISI and USA military forces play active role in the insecurity of this province because it is also part of normal interference of Pakistan administration in the economic, social and political situation in Afghanistan due to political and economic competition of China and USA governments in the regions, USA creates several problems to challenge the investments led by the China companies or government.

<sup>23</sup> Jihadi is a holy term used for those fighting for independence of their country. Jihadi refers to those who led the war against Soviet forces from 1979-1989.

The group discussions and interviews were carried out in rural and urban districts of the selected provinces<sup>24</sup>. When unable to visit an area due to security constraints, respondents were invited from insecure to secure locations where group discussions and interviews were conducted. The interviews and discussions were centered on the practices of traditional and religious powers in social, political, and economic developments at the community and state level. The balance and relation of power among local, national, and international power holders was one main part of this discussion. I also tried to include some past cases from traditional and religious practices as examples for inclusive participation, peace and security, and accountability for the sustainability of current development interventions.

The individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with the following categories of peoples:

1. Traditional leaders (6 persons);
2. Religious leaders (6 persons);
3. Insurgent representatives, commanders, (2 persons only from Logar province);
4. UN, International and National humanitarian and Development Agencies (2 persons);
5. Former and current Government officials (2 persons);
6. Former Jihadi Commanders (2 persons);
7. Current and former Provincial Council and parliament members (4 persons);
8. Civil Society and Women Representatives (3 persons);
9. Islamic Students studying in Pakistan Madrasa (3 persons);

Selected questions for interview included five open ended questions used for the data collection the questions weren't more than two pages. The data collection questions encompassed and supported the main aspects and points of the research objectives<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> But majority of the respondents was selected from the rural communities.

<sup>25</sup> The questions are available in appendix 1.

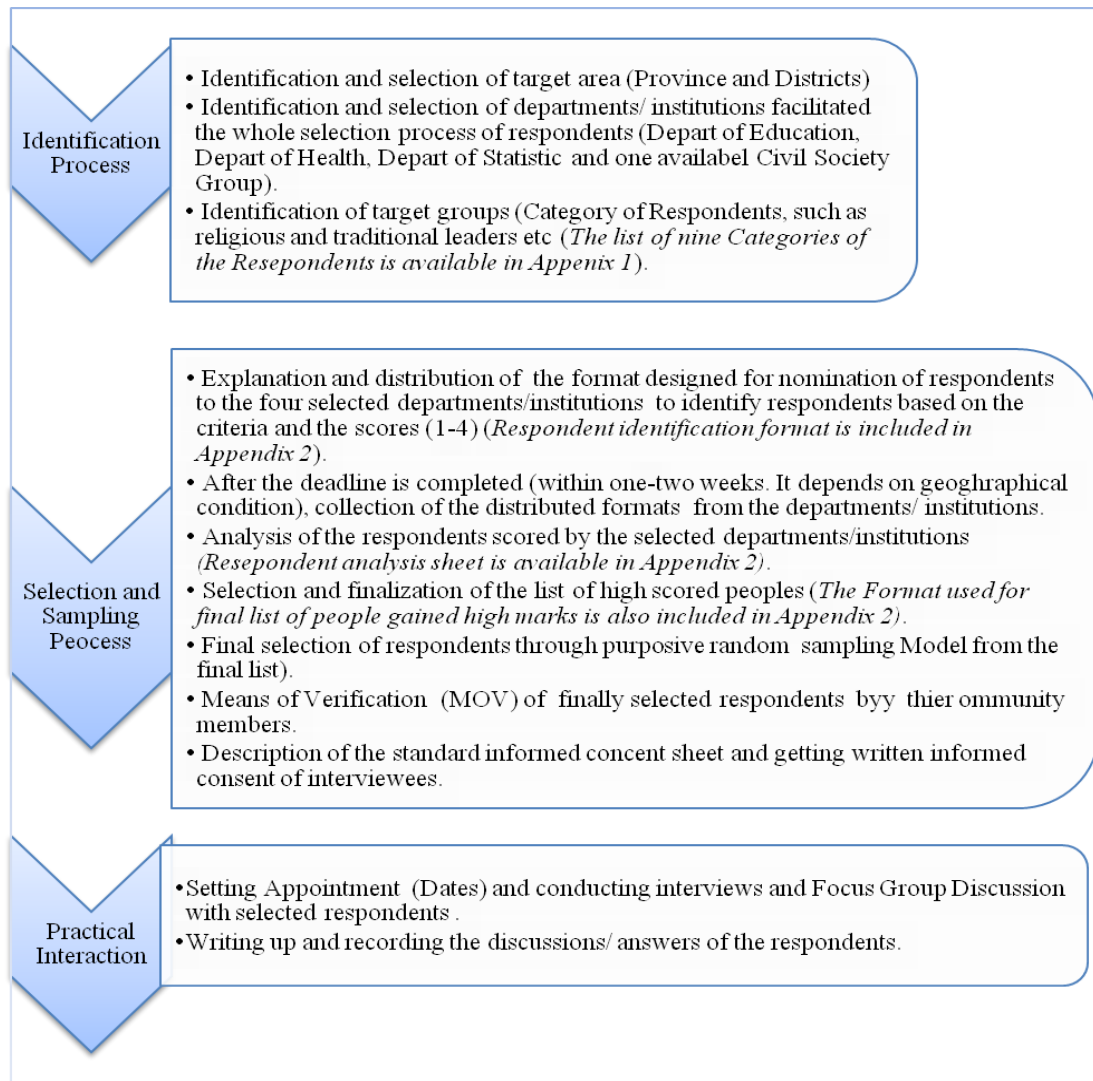
In focus groups, the respondents were asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes toward inclusive participation in development, and the role of other key local stakeholders in participatory development. The focus group discussions focused on the following four main topics/areas: (a) systematic approaches can change the concept of inclusive participation from theory to practice; (b) role of traditional and religious leaders in sustainable development; (c) what the relations of power are among power brokers; (d) power mapping the source and reasons of these power holders. Individuals who participated in focus group sessions were not restricted by the limited choices. Participants generally were allowed to say whatever they would like to say in the focus group sessions. Peoples with similar characteristics were invited to join the focus group sessions.

If we compose a focus group with highly different characteristics and opinions, the quality of the data will be decreased, and the individuals will tend to censor their ideas in the presence of people who differ greatly from them in power, status, job, income, education, or personal characteristics. Five participants participated in each focus group. To get a cross section of views from a diverse population using the focus group method, two separate and multiple sessions in the both provinces were conducted. The length for each session was around 1.5 to 2 hours. Participants in the both focus groups were selected based on local and tribal structures<sup>26</sup>. After informed consent, the participants were invited by individual invitation. Data was collected by audiotape during the focus groups and the discussions were later transcribed to into manual and translated to English. Forms of data used in this research included conversations, tone of voice, silence, words, and body languages. The geographical difficulties and structures in some districts of Logar province were a challenge and created barriers to undertake this research on time<sup>27</sup>. The detailed process of methodic identification and selection of respondents is explained in the below paragraphs.

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<sup>26</sup> First I mapped out the # of tribes in each province, and then based on the tribes, the participants were selected using purposive/judgmental sampling tool.

<sup>27</sup> The very high mountains and lack of infrastructure were the main challenges. As planned in the proposal. It was planned to be completed in 2012



**Figure 1.2: Shows the Key Processes of Respondent identification and Selection and Data Collection**

## **1.8 Shows the Key Processes of Respondent identification and Selection and Data Collection**

The above key steps and processes were necessary to be undertaken because it doesn't ensures only methodical and systematic identification and sampling of respondents but also accuracy and transparency data collection in the whole

process of this research. Diversity in terms of education, economic growth, security, and deep rooted traditional structure/practices was the main criteria for selection of the two provinces and eight districts<sup>28</sup>. Similarly, based on some criteria, purposive/judgmental random sampling model was chosen and used for selection of respondents participated in this research<sup>29</sup>. To make sure that the selection process of the respondents is done in more methodical and transparent manner, I designed some formats and systematically used the formats to make sure that right respondents with right background, understanding and knowledge are selected for this study<sup>30</sup>. Before starting the sampling of individuals, I mapped out and identified the main category/groups of peoples to be interviewed in this research. The nine main categories and groups identified for this research is listed in the above paragraphs (starting from traditional leaders and ending with students of Islamic Madrarsa)<sup>31</sup>.

Due to daily interaction of people with the departments of education, health and statistic, they were chosen to facilitate the sampling process of respondents because due to their daily contact with publics the departments are well acquainted with those stakeholders that are well aware of traditional norms and practices. One civil society group that was available in the field was also selected to take part in identification of respondents. The civil society groups selected for identification of respondents were women networks in Balkh province and disable union in Logar province because due to family and cultural restrictions in both provinces, access to women was very difficult for me, particularly in Logar province. The sample of the formats used in the whole process of sampling of respondents and collection of data are included in the appendix 2. Finally, follow up of the abovementioned methodic steps and use of the designed formats during research is a directive guideline for researcher and gives full confidence to the communities to voluntary participate in the research process which ensures the accuracy of data. After the sampling of respondents completed, the data analysis starts which is explained in the below figure. It should be noted that the process of data management has been included in ethic

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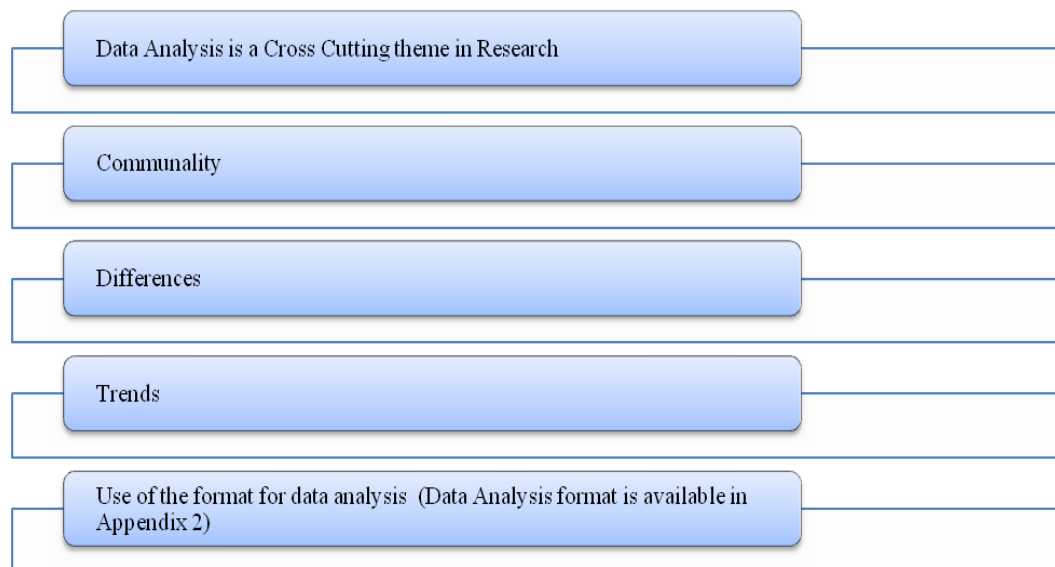
<sup>28</sup> For more details, please refer to chapter two, the literature review (Introduction to the Political, Economic, and Social Background of the Two Provinces).

<sup>29</sup> The list of criteria included Appendix 2.

<sup>30</sup> The formats are also available in Appendix 2.

<sup>31</sup> The 30 respondents are divided into nine main categories of respondents.

section because coding and documentation of data is part of data security and data security is part of ethic in research.



**Figure 1.3: Maps the Key Steps of Data Analysis**

## 1.9 Maps the Key Steps of Data Analysis

After the collected data is managed, analysis of the data starts. To make the data more practical and analyzable, it is essential to conceptually and technically divide the data of each respondent into three main categories, communality, differences and trends. It gives more space to researchers to think into the data from different angles. Researchers can easily figure out what the key focus area of this research. For more details, the data analysis format is available in appendix 2. Finally, it should be noted that the identification of three steps and process stated above for research (respondents sampling, data collection and data management process) are innovated by the author. After piloted in my research, I found this innovation more useful tool for concentration of researches, confidence of respondents and security and accuracy of data. If it is still unclear, I am always available to facilitate separate sessions through presentations and lectures.

Collection of data and facilitation of interviews and focus groups in the selected districts of Balkh province was relatively straightforward. Security was less of an issue, and there were more effective transportation systems available. Unlike Balkh, in terms of geographical unsuitability, collection of data in some districts of Logar province (like Azra, Kharwar and some areas of Khushi) was challenging. Due to lack of electricity and other basic services in this area, it was not possible to bring a computer to interviews. Due to lack of development in these districts, no proper transportation system exists. There were neither roads nor vehicles. Local and traditional transportation means were the only way of travelling around the districts, mainly by donkeys and horses for days and nights to reach target destination, then walking for hours through mountains and sleeping on boulders.

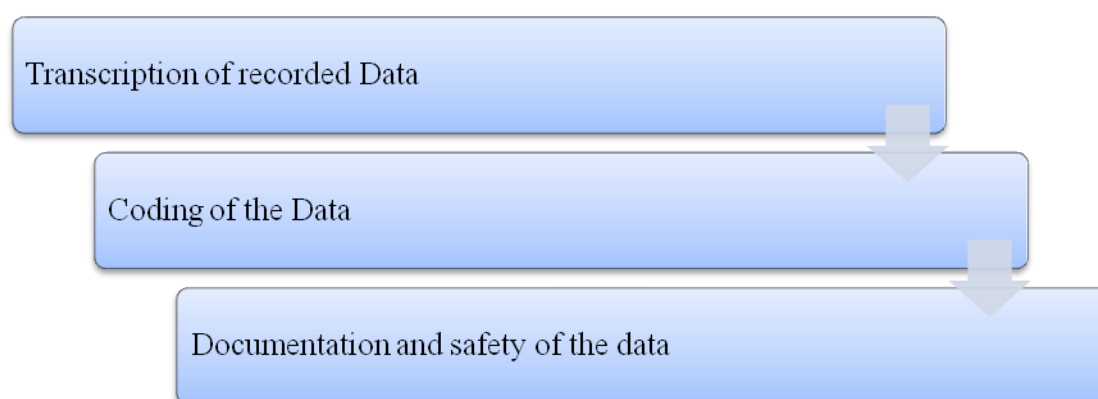
### ***1.10 Ethics in Research***

People recognize some common ethical norms but different individuals interpret, apply, and balance these norms in different ways in light of their own values and life experiences. Ethics always focus on the disciplines that study standards of conduct, such as philosophy, religion, law, psychology, or sociology. Ethics is also defined as a method, procedure, or perspective for deciding how to act and for analyzing complex problems and issues. This study has encompassed all ethical principles and norms, such as informed consent, mitigating risk of harm, voluntary participation, honesty, objectivity, integrity, research design, openness, and respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, non-discrimination, and legality. Data, results, methods, and procedures used in this research have been based on truth and honesty<sup>32</sup>. I did not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data, and did not deceive colleagues, respondents, or the public to participate in this research. Bias has been avoided as much as possible in data analysis, data interpretation, personnel decisions, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required.

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<sup>32</sup> I used the method of privacy and security of data and respect to the rights of individuals to ensure ethics in my research.

This research has avoided deception or disclosing personal or financial interests that may affect the accuracy of this research. The research has avoided careless, errors and negligence and carefully and critically examines the work. The project has also kept detailed records of research activities, such as research design, data collection, data management, including coding and documentation of data, data analysis. Confidential communications, respondents name, papers, and personnel records were coded and protected. The research has avoided discrimination against respondents because of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity. During the research, known laws and institutional and governmental policies where respected. The principle of voluntary participation was confirmed to, which requires that individuals are not coerced in any way to participate in the research. It is also important to ensure the informed consent of respondents. Finally, this research considered all relevant ethical issues in formulating research plans, and it matches the requirements of Mahidol University's ethical board review<sup>33</sup>. To make the ethical discussion more methodic and systematic, the below figure 4 has outlined the key measure undertaken to ensure security of data during and after research.



**Figure 1.4: Outlines the Key Steps of Data Management**

<sup>33</sup> The board review is a panel of academics that review theses with respect to ethical implications and then decides whether additional actions need to be taken to assure the safety and rights of participants.



### **1.11: Outlines the Key Steps of Data Management**

Management of data has been one of the important steps of this research. In whole cycle of this research (from design to implementation), security and management of data and privacy of respondents have been divided into two key phases. The first phase of data management was a cross cutting them and contains the whole processes during data collection to make sure that the data which is being collected has been in line with the questionnaires developed based on the objectives of the research. Therefore, after the individual interviews and the focus group discussions were completed, the above three main steps outlined in figure 4 have been undertaken to ensure that the data is well managed and secured. Half of data in this research was recorded and half of the data was written during interview and focus group discussion. Due to insecurity in some district of Logar province, I hadn't been allowed to carry electronic devices with me (camera, mobile and voice recorder) to the districts. Therefore, almost half of the data had been manual data (hand writing) and the remaining half of the data was recorded, transcribed and translated from local languages into English<sup>34</sup>. After the transcription of data was completed, the second step which is coding of the data started. The data was coded based on the category of information outlined in the questionnaire sheet as well as based on the category of the cluster of respondents, such as traditional and religious leaders and government officials etc to avoid missing and confusion during data analysis. After the data was coded, the third step which is documentation of data has started. Finally, data in this research was documented in two ways, soft and hard copies. To secure the data, I documented both types of data (hard and soft) into different places to ensure that the data has been secured from the natural and human made disaster.

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<sup>34</sup> From Pashtu and Dari local languages into English.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter will outline what other researcher and academicians have done to address the same research questions. It will further identify what has already been known about an area of study and identifies the key questions which have not been answered through other researchers conducted in the same field. Finally, this study creates demand for further study which is important to be conducted in a specific field.

#### **2.1 Introduction to the Political, Economic, and Social Background of the Two Provinces**

After the invasion by Soviet forces in 1979 and before the assault by American forces in 2001, Afghanistan was in a disastrous state. Its economic, political, and social foundations were in ruins. People had been suffering injustice and dying of war and hunger. There was no legitimate group or government that ruled over the entire country. The majority of Afghanistan, including its major cities (Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Herat) was under Taliban rule, while the rest of the country was under the control of the United Front, a group headed by Bahauddin Rabbani. Rabbani's administration was recognized by the United Nations, the United States, and the rest of the world as the legitimate government in Afghanistan. Only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates formally recognized the Taliban's administration. In terms of economy and governance, Afghanistan has been one of the world's poorest and corrupt countries in the world. As indicated in BBC's Persian news "only in 2012, Afghans paid \$4 billion as bribes, which is twice the domestic income of Afghanistan and a quarter of the total assistance promised by the

international community in Tokyo, Japan” (BBC Persian News: 2013)<sup>11</sup>. The conference was held in Tokyo, Japan on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2010. As it will be discussed more, the political instability which is the result of many years of war has left the country in ruins and dependent on foreign aid.

During periods of peace in the past, Afghanistan had a stable economic system in the Asian region. Afghanistan had been producing enough food and food products to provide for the population, as well as creating a surplus for export. In addition to timely technical support provided by the Ministry of Agriculture (e.g. pesticide and insecticide trainings and products), the agriculture development bank had been providing farmers and land holders with agricultural Loans/credits to increase their products and improve its quality. An ex-farmer in Logar province argued that due to the strong commitment from the government and high capacity of the farmers and land owners, the production rate had been very high. Meanwhile, the low rate of corruption in government had played an important role in an even distribution of food. The major food crops produced were corn, rice, barley, wheat, and various vegetables, fruits and nuts. In Afghanistan, industry is also based on agriculture and pastoral raw materials.

The major industrial crops were cotton, tobacco, castor beans, and sugar beets. Sheep farming was also extremely valuable to the economy. The major sheep product exports were wool, and highly prized Karakul skins<sup>12</sup>. Afghanistan is also rich in natural resources. There are numerous mineral and precious stone deposits, as well as natural gas and yet untapped petroleum stores<sup>13</sup>. Some of these resources have been exploited, while others have remained relatively untouched. What has been mentioned above is the hard and physical side of Afghanistan’s resources. However, the richness

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) report: 7, February, 2013.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2013/02/130206\\_zs\\_afghanistan\\_corruption.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2013/02/130206_zs_afghanistan_corruption.shtml)  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21364557>

<sup>12</sup> Karakul is the cap which is used by President Karzai.

<sup>13</sup> For more information, please refer to the economic history of Afghanistan written by many national and international experts.

of Afghanistan is found within its ancient cultural heritage<sup>14</sup>. Afghanistan has a long and rich cultural heritage which is developed complex traditions, carving ordinary Afghan's value systems. Although in recent years, Afghanistan's traditions and culture have been criticized, these ancient cultural and traditional norms have played a critical role in maintaining the unity of the society in protecting the country from numerous external occupations<sup>15</sup>. Finally, the two provinces selected for this study Logar and Balkh provinces are part of this socio-cultural system, practicing a variety of cultural and traditional norms within this system. In terms of political, social and development practices, both provinces are quite contrasting. The diversity of the provinces provides a wide array of findings which enrich this research.

Logar is one of Afghanistan's more politically and traditionally conservative provinces, and its political history is a microcosm of Afghanistan's recent turbulent past. During the period immediately prior to the US invasion of 2001, the Taliban controlled the province. During the Jihad "Holy Independence War" against Soviet occupation from 1979-1989, and before the Taliban's administration, the two major armed parties, Jami'at Islami and Hizbe Islami controlled the province<sup>16</sup>. Among Afghans, Logar was known as Bab al-Jihad "Gate of the Holy War" because it is argued that Logar was a theatre of war between the Mujahedeen and the Soviet army and their national alliance. Logar was also the main supply route of both the Mujahedeen coming from southern Afghanistan and Pakistan and going towards

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<sup>14</sup> Afghanistan, which is located at an important junction on the ancient Silk Roads, has been the crossroads of cultures for thousands of years. Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage is the result of Greek, Persian, and Central Asian, Islamic, Mongolian, Chinese, Indian, Russian and British influences on the country. From very ancient time Afghanistan is considered the land of rich architecture and art. Afghanistan hosts some of the most impressive Buddhist monuments of western Asia. Greek and Buddhist stupas, monasteries, arches, monuments, intricate Islamic minarets adorn the land of Afghanistan. Great mosques of Herat and Mazar-e Sharif; the minaret of a mosque at Jam, Great Arch of Qal'eh-ye Bost; the Chel Zina, the Great Buddha of Bamiyan, the "Towers of Victory" in Ghazni, and the Bala Hissar fort in Kabul are some of the architectural gems of Afghanistan (for more detail, please refer to the UNESCO's website).

<sup>15</sup> UNAMA Human Rights' 57-page report Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan: 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Hizbi Islami being led by Gul Budding Hikmatyar, and Jami'at e Islami led by Burhanuddin Rabbani mainly equally controlled the province. Burhanuddin Rabbani who ethnically is Tajik, killed by suicide attack, and was the president of Afghanistan until 1996, and the head of the current peace Jirga/council was leading the party "Jami'at e Islami" in Afghanistan. Gulbuddin Hikmatyar who ethnically is Pashtun, was the isolated prime minister until 1996, and is a combatant against NATO and the US forces, is leading the party "Hizbi Islami" in Afghanistan.

northern and central Afghanistan while the Soviet army was supplying the other southern and southeastern provinces<sup>17</sup>. A former commander who was involved in this fighting argued that in 1985 the largest single convoy of the Soviets consisting of more than 350 tanks, food trucks, oil tankers and other vehicles was attacked and destroyed in Logar province in a combined operation of different Mujahedeen factions<sup>18</sup>. He argued that this convey was attacked in Mohammad Aga district of Logar province.

Since the fall of the Taliban, Logar's provincial capital Puli-Alam has seen a significant amount of reconstruction. The main road to Kabul was completed in 2006; significantly reducing travel time to the national capital. Additional projects include numerous schools, local radio stations, government facilities, and a major Afghan national police base situated just south of the city. However, like most Afghan cities, there is little municipal planning and lack of government services. Diesel generators provide electricity and wells are the primary source of drinking water. As noted by a government official interviewed *the overall literacy rate in Logar province is 21 percent, with nearly 31 percent of men and just 18 percent of women are literate*<sup>19</sup>. The respondents interviewed in Logar argued that there are more than 168 primary, secondary and high schools in the province catering to more than 81,538 students.

There are several girls' schools in the province, mostly located in Azra, Koshi, Mohammad Agha, and Puli-Alam districts. As key challenges to the development in Logar, the large insurgent presence in Kharwar, Charkh, and Baraki Barak districts and the limited freedom of women do not always allow for their formal education. It is also argued that the girls attending school were warned by insurgents and some of schools were burned down in some districts<sup>20</sup>. Ethnically, Pashtun and

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<sup>17</sup> Paktia, Khost, Paktika, Wardak, Ghazni, and the current Maidan provinces.

<sup>18</sup> Reference is the thousands of the residents were living in Logar, including me. Also this evidence is frequently spoken by ex-commanders involved in this fighting.

<sup>19</sup> Confidential interview with representative of education directorate in Logar: 2013.

<sup>20</sup> The respondent gave the example of the Padkhwab Roghani high school which was burned down by insurgents in 2008 in Baraki Barak District.

Tajik are the majority in Logar province<sup>21</sup>. Hazaras ethnic groups are minority of the population in Logar. “Due to a weak economy, unemployment, conflict, and illiteracy, 65 percent of the total population is living under the poverty line” (*Directorate of Employment and Social Affairs, 2013*). “Logar is amongst the worst 15 provinces for girls’ primary school attendance and amongst the worst 20 for overall primary school attendance” (UNICEF Best Estimates Provincial Fact Sheet 20: 1)<sup>22</sup>. It is argued that due to cultural barriers, illiteracy and insecurity, the employment opportunity is very limited, particularly for women. Hence, majority of the population from the insecure parts of the country have preferred to be the residence of capital cities.

Unlike Logar, Balkh province has traditionally enjoyed a relatively secure environment accompanied by steady economic growth and employment and high literacy rates. Mazar e-Sharif, the provincial capital, was the first city in Afghanistan that the Taliban lost in November 2001. Since 2006, Balkh has been a poppy-free province. It has received over \$4 million through the Ministry of Counter Narcotics under the good performance initiative<sup>23</sup>. Balkh has been of increasing strategic importance to NATO and the U.S. government. US forces have been developing a major new transport artery (the Northern Distribution Network) for the delivery of military supplies shipped to Afghanistan via central Asia that passes through Balkh Province. In 2011, the U.S. sent an additional 3,000 troops to Balkh Province arguing that the supply line may come under intensifying attacks from insurgents. “The overall literacy rate in Balkh is reported to be 44 percent (male 54 percent, female 32 percent), 15 percent above the national rate of 28 percent (male 38 percent, female 19 percent)” (Gerald J. Dorothy R, 2010: 12). Balkh is also an ancient center of religious activity. The Shrine of Hazrat Ali or the Blue Mosque in Mazar e-Sharif attracts tens of thousands of pilgrims and visitors a year. The respondents interviewed in Balkh

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<sup>21</sup> Due to lack of exact figures, I didn’t include any figures or percentage.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF –Factsheet, \*2010: 1).

[www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Best\\_Estimates\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_-\\_Logar.PDF](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Best_Estimates_Fact_Sheet_-_Logar.PDF)

<sup>23</sup> There is a competition among all provinces. If a provincial authority proved that the poppy cultivation is zero in his/her province, the province will be awarded by the ministry of counter narcotic supported by the international community. The award is not given to the provincial authority, but they select and prioritize a common project at the provincial level or relevant district level, and the selected project is financed from this allocated budget. The project is designed based on the amount allocated to the province or district.

argued that during celebration of the traditional Persian New Year (Nowruz), an estimated 500,000 people travel to Mazar e-Sharif for the festivities<sup>24</sup>. Hence, an international airport which was financed by the government of United Arab Emirates and the government of Germany has been built in Balkh province. It is also argued that after the Kabul International Airport, it is the largest and most modern airport serving Afghanistan.

Use of military for succession of development in unstable countries, including Iraq and Afghanistan has been a common method used by U.S. Army for defeating insurgency. Afghanistan is among those countries where the U.S. Military forces have been investing billions of dollars to control the insurgency spreading to the capital cities and to achieve the security goals, particularly in the most remote and unstable parts of the Afghanistan because it is assumed that the use of military for development contribute to fight the current counterinsurgency efforts in the country. “The U.S. military has increasingly used development projects as a strategic weapon to fight ongoing counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other theaters ... Development projects can form part of a counterinsurgency strategy if they are successful in increasing the government and weakening support for insurgents” (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov, 2012: 2). The above quote clearly implies that the author has indicated to and observed the immediate security impact of such projects in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the respondents interviewed in rural parts of Afghanistan argued that in addition to the lack of social acceptance of such projects in a conservative society as Afghanistan, the intermediate and long term economic impact and sustainability of such projects implemented for counterinsurgency have remained questionable among Afghan development professionals who have an insight to the rural context of Afghanistan.

“Berman, Shapiro, and Felter (2011) examine development projects undertaken by the U.S. military in Iraq and, after controlling for region-specific characteristics and pre-existing trends, find that projects reduced violence, although only after a significant increase in troop strength in 2007” (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov, 2012: 3). A common argument in the rural society in Afghanistan is that

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<sup>24</sup> Balkh authorities

the key reason for failure of such projects implemented by the U.S. Army for counterinsurgency in Afghanistan is the replication of the same development model implemented by the U.S. Army in Iraq without a baseline survey and understanding of whether or not this model is applicable within the context, culture and tradition of Afghanistan. In other words, if this model of development is successful in Iraq, it does not mean that the same model is applicable in Afghanistan. Finally, it is argued that although the religion is the same in the both countries, practice of culture, tradition, social norms and the level of education in both countries are completely different.

## **2.2 Inclusion of Communities in the whole Cycle of Decision Making is the best Model of Good and Sustainable Development**

Although, Afghanistan has been reeling from economic, political and social instability, it has been moving from dependence on humanitarian aid to a development model. The formation of a structured executive, legislative and judiciary system which had collapsed during the civil war as well as the flow of billions of dollars invested by the international community to restructure the infrastructure are the key indicators of these changes. It is argued that cultural norms and religious values have been playing a significant role in the success and failure of the current development interventions. In other words, as a deep-seated religious and traditional society, Afghan beliefs, values, and religious norms have played an important role in participatory and sustainable development of the country.

In addition to other key elements, this study is about the social and cultural values of the southeast society and local potential supporters of the current development initiatives. As a lesson learnt or secondary references for the current development intervention, the above quotes in the other sections clearly indicates the importance of social norms and religious values in public decision makings that have led the Afghan people to make many strategic changes in the approaches by some of the development agencies in the country. The key elements of the proposed changes are to engage religious and traditional leaders, and other stakeholders into the cycle of development; to increase local acceptance of the development intervention at the



national, provincial and district level; to fully and systematically involve key local power brokers in all normal and critical decisions made in the country; and, to base project identification and selection process on the inclusive participation of beneficiaries because traditional and religious leaders maintain and protect traditional norms and religious values.

Inclusive participation, gender mainstreaming, accountability, transparency and ownership of development programs are fundamental pillars for improving good governance and security. “Participation is a highly fashionable term in current development practice and is now practically sine qua non for project funding” (Dorsner, 2004: Intro). A common view in conservative societies is that development at the local level can be more effective only through participation of local actors and community leaders because the local actors know better as to what works within their communities. While others emphasize that only marginalized groups whose voices are often unheard by duty bearers should have an effective role in local development. However, the term *inclusive participation* refers to all those categories or groups of inhabitants living in a society. NGO representatives, community leaders, civil society activists, human rights defenders, and government officials need to work together to empower peoples to identify and prioritize their development needs and to implement socially accepted approaches to ensure a community-owned and beneficiaries-led development model contributing to sustainable development and to bring social cohesion. “IRC prioritized exemplifying NSP’s stated values of participatory and inclusive decision-making, gender equity, transparency, and accountability in its own interaction with government, communities, and the population in general” (Maynard, 2007: 4).

As I will define NSP in upcoming paragraphs, the example of NSP’s successfulness indicates that bottom-up development approach is very important for inclusiveness and ownership of the communities in the whole cycle of development and that top-down development approach has been a serious issue in developing countries including Afghanistan. Therefore, majority of academicians and development practitioners have been trying to find a systematic way to introduce bottom-up development approaches through the inclusive participation of beneficiaries

in societal development. It is argued that use of inclusive and participatory development approaches for development of traditionally and politically conservative and post conflict society bring and strengthen unity and ensure good and sustainable development because bringing communities together to discuss their development issues ensures harmony and ownership of development intervention. “In bringing together the domains of development and the environment, the idea of sustainable development grew to become the developmental leitmotif of the 1980s. It’s most common definition is that of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development. It is ‘...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Duffield, 2005:5). Twenty-eight out of thirty respondents argued that the majority of the populations in Afghanistan have been deprived of knowing the concept and benefit of inclusive participation in the decision making in the country. Hence, the rate of local participation in rural areas in majority of decision making is very low because traditional and religious leaders who can mobilize people to effectively participate are kept out of the development process. My criticism on above statement (quotes) is that they simply explained the successfulness of NSP. However, as an inclusive, participatory and sustainable development model for rural development, they didn’t indicate how NSP’s approaches could be replicated in the other development interventions undertaken by other development players in Afghanistan.

### **2.3 The National Solidarity Programme (NSP)**

The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) is a nationally recognized and accepted program executed by Afghanistan’s Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) with funding from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) and other bilateral donors. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) was established to develop and implement programs promoting responsible social and financial growth in rural areas, primarily in the non-farm sector (NSP website). “Since the mid 1990s,

there has been a growing call to harness developmental resources to change the balance of power between social groups, include the excluded and rebuild crisis-ridden societies anew in the interests of global stability. This radicalization of development ranges from coalition attempts to remake Afghanistan and Iraq into regional sites of democracy to the present policy drive to develop fragile states” (Duffield, 2005:3). It has employees in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan and delivers a wide range of programs funded both by the ministry itself and the international community. MRRD aims to reduce poverty amongst the approximate 80% of Afghans who live in rural areas by implementing a made-in-Afghanistan “Pro-Poor” growth strategy which calls upon the government and civil society to address macro economic constraints, the small size of the formal private sector, and the realities of rural poverty in order to implement realistic poverty reduction and development strategies. MRRD has six (6) Programs:

1. NSP: National Solidarity Programme;
2. NABDP: National Area-Base Development Programme;
3. NRAP: National Rural Access Programme;
4. Ru-WatSIP: Rural Water Supply, Sanitation & Irrigation Programme;
5. AREDP: Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme;
6. CARD-F: Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development – Facility;

Due to limited space in this research, the NSP will only be explored among the abovementioned six programs.

The NSP was created by the Government of Afghanistan to develop the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own development projects. Through the promotion of good local governance, NSP works to empower rural communities to make decisions affecting their own lives and livelihoods. “NSP was devised in 2002 as a means to deliver services and infrastructure to the rural population and to build representative institutions for village governance...” (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov, 2012: 7). NSP is the primary vehicle used to promote rural development in Afghanistan. “We also find that the areas around villages which receive NSP become safer, although this effect is limited to regions

with moderate levels of initial violence” (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov, 2012: 2). Empowered rural communities collectively contribute to increased human security. NSP lays the foundation for a sustainable form of inclusive local governance, rural reconstruction, and poverty alleviation<sup>25</sup>. National Solidarity Programme supports local governance and poverty alleviation by:

1. Establishing a national network of community development councils that empower communities to make decisions;
2. Funding priority subprojects that improve access to infrastructure, markets, and services;
3. Strengthening community capacities through participatory processes and training; and
4. Promoting accountability and wise use of public and private resources<sup>26</sup>.

“NSP remains one of the core programmes of MRRD, aimed at developing the ability of Afghan communities, to identify, plan, manage and control their own development projects” (Sarkar, 2012: 134). MRRD aims to reduce poverty amongst the approximate 80% of Afghans who live in rural areas by implementing a made-in-Afghanistan “Pro-Poor” growth strategy which calls upon the government and civil society to address macro economic constraints, the small size of the formal private sector, and the realities of rural poverty in order to implement realistic poverty reduction and development strategies<sup>27</sup>.

“NSP was devised in 2002 as a means to deliver services and infrastructure to the rural population and to build representative institutions for village governance. The program is structured around two major interventions at

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<sup>25</sup> The data is taken from NSP/MRRD website ( [www.nspafghanistan.org](http://www.nspafghanistan.org) )

<sup>26</sup> The information has been taken from MRRD’s website. For more details about MRRD, NSP and CDC, please refer to [www.mrrd.org/www.nspafghanistan.org](http://www.mrrd.org/www.nspafghanistan.org). The DCC policy recently endorsed by Afghan cabinet gives more legal entity to these institutions. For more details, please refer to [www.mrrd.org](http://www.mrrd.org)

<sup>27</sup> These strategies are developed within the broader context of the interim Afghan National Development Strategy (i-ANDS), the roadmap the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GOA) is following as it works towards achieving the UN’s Millennium Development and Afghan Compact goals.

the village level: (i) the creation of a Community Development Council (CDC); and (ii) the disbursement of block grants to support project implementation. In order to facilitate the creation of representative institutions for village governance, NSP mandates the creation of a gender-balanced CDC through a secret-ballot, universal suffrage election. Once CDCs are formed, NSP disburses block grants - valued at \$200 per household up to a village maximum of \$60,000 - to support the implementation of projects. Projects are selected by the CDC in consultation with the village community” (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov, 2012: 6-7).

As a development and governance body at the community level, CDCs play local governance role to empower communities to identify, prioritize and propose their humanitarian and development problems to the governments and other development agencies. As a social and development foundation, CDC in collaboration and coordination with communities are responsible for implementation and supervision of governmental and nongovernmental funded development projects. In addition, CDCs play the role of mediator between the communities and governmental and non-governmental institutions to improve inclusive participation, community contribution and transparency and accountability mechanism during implementation of NSP funded projects<sup>28</sup>. The overall discussion implies that NSP is a community owned and community led development model which is achievable through inclusive participation of community. “The NSP’s community driven development (CDD) approach directs decision-making on local development needs via block grants directly to the communities through a process that emphasizes participatory planning and accountability and growing relationships with local government” (Maynard, 2007: 5). The rationale behind inclusive participation in decision-making is to increase the participation of unheard voices and marginalized groups in the society. Finally, inclusive participation promotes greater accountability and transparency and improved ownership of development and empowerment of societies.

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<sup>28</sup> CDC by-laws govern the CDC. For more detail, please refer to the NSP Operation Manual, [www.nspafghanistan.org](http://www.nspafghanistan.org)

Before the 1990s, states emphasized the upward development model, which empowers dialogue on the role of the state and other national and international agencies in delivering development to people. It is argued that due to its practical failure to effectively address the fundamental causes of poverty, this proposed approach of upward accountability was progressively challenged because upward-development approach centralizes the power which fully contributes to injustice and corruption in the supply side. “In Afghanistan there is historically little or no tradition of formalized community participation in political decision making, or development planning. In that sense the NSP programmes has established a new trend, whereby communities are being empowered to make decisions and control issues affecting their lives and livelihoods...” (Sarkar, 2012: 136). Therefore, as an effective model of sustainable development, community participation has emerged to ensure downward accountability and collective action in the cycle of development. “Embryonic ministries struggle with corruption, lack of familiarity with international governance standards and the complexities involved in trying to build an effective administration. Afghanistan’s history and predilection for centralized government ... there is a general deep-rooted suspicion and distrust of central authority among rural communities” (Maynard, 2007: 3). Finally, centralization of power in the country has created distrust between the government and the public because it is argued that centralization of power is a key barrier to inclusive participation of demand beneficiaries in decision making. Moreover, centralized administration weakens local institutions and increases corruption in the country. Hence, it is argued that centralization of power gives more space to local stakeholders to generate their own rules and regulations to maintain their influence in the society.

## **2.4 Internal Emerging Ethnic and Racial Discord by External Investment in Afghanistan**

After the Soviet occupation in 1979 which has been the key root causes for the civil war in 1990, peoples in Afghanistan, in particular in rural and tribal areas have been divided into a variety of ethnic, linguistic and militia groups. It is argued

that the ethnic, militia and linguistic division of the society and the misuse of the ethnic and linguistic identity by the leaders to occupy social power are the root causes of the long term social conflict in Afghanistan. “The rediscovery of internal conflict following the end of the Cold War also shifted policy focus from states to people. Concern over civil and networked conflicts within states and across their borders moved centre stage. It is now an accepted truth that today’s wars, unlike the past, are increasingly ‘. . . within States rather than between States’, moreover, they are usually . . . of a religious or ethnic character and often involving unusual violence and cruelty” (Duffield, 2005:5). However, the criticism from Duffield is that Duffield has only pointed out the structured and previously announced interstate war and conflict. The secret war which has been facilitated by secret intelligence of some countries in Afghanistan has been rather harmful and dangerous than the structured war because it is argued that the target of the structured and previously announced interstate war is mainly government institution, such army, police and other institution. However, the secret war facilitated by *inter-intelligence* in other countries is harmful for human dignity and development intervention because it is argued that the target of secret war is not clear. Therefore, civilians are more vulnerable and violated in unstructured war and conflicts.

The countries, particularly Pakistan and Iran involved in political and social instability in Afghanistan, have received massive benefits of the internal discord and have invested to strengthen various Afghan militia groups to continue conflict in a more structured and systematic way because it have been argued that a politically and economically strong and stable Afghanistan is not in the favor of Iran and Pakistan. Richness of the U.S. and negative intervention and influence of Pakistan and Iran in Afghanistan has played an important role to mobilize the young generation to establish ethnic- and religiously-oriented militia groups to fight against administrations in Afghanistan. Hence, most were forced to join these militia parties based on their ethnic identities. For instance, the majority of Tajik, Uzbek and other ethnic minority groups joined for the parties lead by Tajik leaders. “Because public institutions in conflict and post-conflict environments often are weak or nonviable, CDD is increasingly used to help build bridges between the state and its citizens. It also is

used to strengthen social cohesion where social groups are divided” (Maynard, 2007: 4)<sup>29</sup>. Pashtuns tend to join the party led by Pashtun leaders, because it is argued that some racial and ethnic leaders try to educate civilians that their economic, social and political rights can be protected only through these racial and ethnic identities. As mentioned earlier, most of the key positions in the Afghan government including ministers, the provincial governors and the head of security departments are not relegated based on their ability, merit or qualification. Therefore, the degree of corruption is increasing in the country. Finally, the respondents interviewed in rural parts of Afghanistan further argued that therefore, the executive, judiciary and the legislative institutions including the presidential palace are not protected from usual corruption and bribes<sup>30</sup>.

The long-term ethnic discord among various ethnic groups in Afghanistan has created distrust and varied perception towards each other. It is argued that although the minority ethnic groups like Uzbek, Hazara and others have visible presence in the political, social and economic decision making, the two major ethnic groups, Tajik and Pashtun still control and have influence on political, social, and economic decisions making in Afghanistan. “Perception among non-Pashtun groups was that Pashtun communities were generally more conservative, especially those that had returned from spending a significant length of time in Pakistan” (Gerald J. Dorothy R, 2010: 20). However, at the same time, there is also a widespread belief among Pashtun as well as others including members of the international community that Pashtuns were being discriminated against, both by communities and authorities. “Pashtuns returning from Pakistan had tried to reclaim land, but were not helped by the provincial government, allegedly due to ethnic solidarity or bias” (Gerald J. Dorothy R, 2010: 20, 21). The criticism here is that the above quotation gives very broad pictures of ethnic and racial disputes in Afghanistan. However, the authors do not provide explicit evidence for their claims. In other words, the literature explores

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<sup>29</sup> It will be explained more in the power mapping section. If you need more information, please refer to that section.

<sup>30</sup> The current dispute among parliament members and the ministry of finance and ministry of interior and other anti corruption department is the bed evidence. Please search it in the international Medias.



the ethnic and racial problems (they used the what), but they do not present the sources and reasons (why and how) for these ethnic and racial disputes.

In a traditionally conservative country like Afghanistan, Jirga (Council of Elders) plays an important role in political and social stability. It is argued that the locally appointed council of elders (Jirga) has proven that they can fight against corruption, narcotics trafficking and effective in dispute resolution. Jirga, which is common in Pashtun settled parts of the country, is a powerful council of traditional elders that serve as key authorities in their community, province and regions, particularly during unrest and dispute in their communities and regions, even at the national level<sup>31</sup>. As a traditional justice provider mechanism in the society, the Jirga needs a traditionally established security system to implement the rules and regulations regulated by Jirga and to implement the decisions made by the members of the Jirga. Hence, Jirga has created its own rules and regulations, including a policing system (Arbakai). Their policing system totally differs from the current local policing system created by the government of Afghanistan (ALP) and financed by the international community. In addition to other tasks given by Jirga, Arbakai implement the Jirga's decisions. In addition to their independency and neutrality, the members of Arbakai are unpaid volunteers and highly supported by the Jirga. "Tribal jirgas tend to be particularly influential and tribal affiliation plays a large protection role" (Maynard, 2007: 3). "Community policing is a popular concept in the Anglo-Saxon world, which identifies with it as its own form of policing as opposed to the continental model of a more centralised and state-centric police force" (Giustozzi forthcoming 2009). The Arbakai is not a militia system because Arbakai are unpaid and no government, individual or private company employs them. Importantly, membership within the Arbakai system is considered an honor for the member of the Arbakai as they fulfill the responsibility given to them by the tribal Jirga. The common tasks and duties of this community based policing system, Arbakai, are as follows: (a) to implement the Jirga's decisions; (b) to maintain law and order; and, (c) to protect and defend borders and boundaries of the tribe or community.

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<sup>31</sup> The Jirga system might be exist in other parts of the country also (ARBAB), but it won't be well organized and systematic machinery as it is in the Pashtun area.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **POWER MAPPING**

This chapter introduces the key local, national and international power holders in the current situation of Afghanistan. In addition, this chapter will outline the relation of powers being maintained by different power brokers in the country. Lastly, it will look at the impact of the powers being identified by the power holders on the current development interventions in Afghanistan.

### **3.1 Power Mapping of Multi Stakeholders in the context of Afghanistan**

After the Saur Revolution led by the Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan in 1978 in which Daoud Khan's administration collapsed, consequently Afghanistan lost its independence, and its economic, political and social structure was dislodged. Upon the collapse of Daoud Khan's ruling, the aforesaid power equation was changed, and the borders of Afghanistan were opened for international and regional interference. It is argued that after the revolution, the regional and international meddling in the political, economic and social make-up of Afghanistan destroyed the last lucid power balance in the country<sup>14</sup>. The middling countries have protected their share/contribution in any political and other discussion made in the country. A traditional leader noted *in addition to the influential international investors in the instability of Afghanistan since 1979, its neighboring countries (as facilitator of the investment), particularly Pakistan and Iran have been*

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<sup>14</sup> The respondents provided many examples of such full negative facilitation of the neighboring countries. Destruction of hospital, roads, clinics, and schools and other development infrastructures and Neighboring countries have played important roles in target this infrastructure through the militia groups. In addition, Many Afghan elites, such as military generals, professors and others have been targeted by both sides to destroy or weaken the human foundation of Afghanistan. It is timely broadcasted by national and international Medias.

*taking advantage of its instability to systematically interfere and destroy the human and institutional infrastructures of the country*<sup>15</sup>. After the multi-stakeholder conference facilitated by German government in Bonn, a multi ethnic interim government system led by Karzai was established in Afghanistan. The respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that during the interim and transitional governments, as well as the elected governments, the pillars of the governments have been based on the rate and degree of power of the power holders in the country. Therefore, in today's situation in Afghanistan, there are many local, national and international power holders or power players in the scale of political, social and economic powers in the country. Twenty five out of thirty respondents argued that, due to strong local-level tribal system in the country, the international and regional power players believe that there will never been a sense and view of strong central government in Afghanistan. However, the international and regional power players have been trying to directly or indirectly influence the current situation in Afghanistan.

“NATO’s primary objective in Afghanistan is to enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country in order to ensure Afghanistan can never again become a haven for the terrorists. To achieve this goal, the 50 nations ..... As responsibility for security is gradually transitioned to the Afghans, ISAF’s mission is shifting progressively from a combat-centric role to a more enabling role focusing on training, advising and assisting” (*NATO Website: 2013*).

This section is included in this research because it is argued that use of military power to achieve security goal has a direct effect on social acceptability and future sustainability of development initiatives in Afghanistan. Based on the power mapping done under this research, the major existing power holders in Afghanistan can be divided into diverse major categories. As an external power player, the international communities, which represent the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in Afghanistan, are one of the key power players in the county. NATO

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<sup>15</sup> A confidential interview with a traditional leader in Azra District of Logar province: 2013.

and non- NATO member countries involved in the current situation of Afghanistan are mandated to support the government of Afghanistan to accelerate the reconstruction and development initiatives in the country to improve its good governance, freedom of expression, protection and promotion of human rights. However, NATO headed by USA is a battle-oriented organization and are the first and the main power player in Afghanistan<sup>16</sup>. It has been argued that although NATO is not a power holder over the peoples in Afghanistan, NATO is the main security and military player in the country. This military power can influence the current internal and external scale and scope of the powers in Afghanistan. The UN representative and government officials argued that as an international fighting-centric organization, NATO is actively playing an important role of third party in the current political, social and economic decision making process in Afghanistan and is mainly mandated to fight against insurgencies and to train and support Afghan security forces to enable them to take the complete security lead of the country at the end 2014. In addition to their direct involvement in fighting to defeat the current insurgency in the country, they aim to closely work with and enable the government of Afghanistan to take direct military, political and economic lead of the country after the security transition is completed in 2014.

### **3.2 Military Centric Development Approach versus Community Led and Owned Development Approach in Afghanistan**

With respect to above quotation, the common argument in the rural parts of the country is that despite presence of thousands of international forces in the country, the current situation of Afghanistan has been deteriorating and this instability has been threatening human rights and human dignity of the peoples in the country, even in the capital city, Kabul<sup>17</sup>. People participated in this research from the rural parts of the country, argued that in a post conflict or politically conservative and

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<sup>16</sup> It was noted by the respondents that Battle -Oriented means that NATO is mandated to fight against its common enemy threading its economic and political benefits in the world.

<sup>17</sup> The examples provided by the respondents are the attacks on US and Indian embassies in Kabul, attack on IOM office in 2013, attacks on Serena Hotel and attack on the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014. For more details, please refer to the BBC news via [www.bbcpersian/afghanistan](http://www.bbcpersian/afghanistan) .

economically unstable countries, use of military forces for succession of development and removal of barriers could be the worst approach for sustainable development and it can be called a security/battle centric development model or approach which might not be applicable in the context of Afghanistan. As noted by a government official *the international players in Afghanistan should create a clear boundary line between military intervention and development in Afghanistan. During the night, they have bombed our village killing our civilians, but during the day, they come with the same tanks and helicopters to developing our society which is impossible to be accepted. It is a clear disrespect to our values and norms*<sup>18</sup>.

The above arguments refer to the two different interventions undertaken by NATO in Afghanistan. As mandated, the first intervention of NATO is to combat against the insurgencies in Afghanistan. At the same time, the provincial reconstruction team (PRT) under the umbrella of NATO has been implementing some development projects in the unstable parts of the country. Traditional and religious leaders argued that this model of development facilitated by NATO is not welcomed in the rural and unstable parts of the country because public in that areas believe that this development intervention is not designed for the betterment of our life but is planned as part of their military operations<sup>19</sup>. As noted by a religious leader *in addition to lack of transparency mechanism at the community and public participations (from appraisal to planning process) in such projects, the soldiers who implement the projects during the day, the same soldiers enter our houses during the night without prior notice which is against our culture and religion. Therefore, community members are dissatisfied of them and their intervention*<sup>20</sup>. Respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that such development intervention is called Military Centric Development Approach. They further argued that continuation of such approach hasn't been only destroying the God given human dignity and human right of the

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<sup>18</sup> Confidential interview with a government official in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>19</sup> The respondents argue that the same forces who facilitate the development of the projects come and enter our houses without our prior permission which totally against our culture and traditional norms. In addition, the priority of the development intervention is very important, and the respondents argue that such projects implemented by NATO haven't prioritized by the community but they are implemented based on the target and plan prepared by NATO therefore, majority of such projects are not sustainable.

<sup>20</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Logar Province: 2013.

victims, but also undermining and damaging any positive gains of current development initiatives in Afghanistan<sup>21</sup>.

Further argument among victims of the conflict and local leaders in the field is that the use of security centric development models destroys the sense of ownership and sustainability of development projects implemented by security forces (PRTs), particularly in the rural and insecure parts of Afghanistan. The respondents further argued that there will be no sense of ownership of such development interventions among the communities because of lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms in place. As noted by a traditional leader *the projects planned and implemented by security forces (NATO) are not for betterment of our life, but are to prove their presence and powerfulness in the area because we haven't been involved in prioritization, planning and implementation of the development programs/projects*<sup>22</sup>.

The statement of powerfulness or powerlessness generally refers to the different views in Afghan society. The respondents interviewed in rural areas argued that although NATO's member countries power is represented in terms of their advanced weaponry, technology, highly educated army, and stable economic system. However, the common belief inside Afghan society is that NATO has been exposed for its various weaknesses and failures during their more than one decade military mission in Afghanistan<sup>23</sup>. As noted by a religious leader *Just use of military power in the context of Afghan society is illogic and can open and repeat the history of British and Soviet because in that time, they (British and Soviet) were the most powerful and superpowers in the world*<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, there are two different perceptions about the current battle in Afghanistan.

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<sup>21</sup> We will discuss it more in the upcoming paragraphs and chapters also.

<sup>22</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar province: 2013.

<sup>23</sup> They pointed out to the martyring/killing of 16 civilians in one night by Robert Bales, US force in Kandahar Province (16 civilians, including women and children were killed by one US soldier). On 11 March 2012, he murdered sixteen civilians and wounded six others in the Panjwani District of Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. Nine of his victims were children, and eleven of the dead were from the same family. Some of the corpses were partially burned.

<sup>24</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Logar province: 2013.

### **3.3 Multi Input Interventions to achieve Common Goals in Afghanistan: Use of Soft and Hard Powers by Key Power Brokers to Occupy Political, Social and Economic Power/Superiority in Afghanistan<sup>25</sup>**

This section is included in this thesis because war and conflict is the key barrier against the current Human and Institutional Development in Afghanistan because if there is a conflict, there won't be inclusive participation and transparency in development because it is argued that inclusive participation and transparency and accountability mechanism have been contributing to sustainable development. These paragraphs have been included in this section to indicate that trust, beliefs, values and faith of groups and individuals play important role in succession of their goals, including development intervention. As it will be indicated in chapter five of this study, trust, values and beliefs have been playing important role in socially acceptance, ownership, contribution and participation of beneficiaries which contribute and ensure sustainable development in the country. It is also notable that this thesis doesn't focus and explore the politics side of this conflict or involvement of military forces in development in the country, but explore the social and economic aspects of this conflict destroying the quality of life of communities and violating the human rights of inhabitants in the conflict zones. In addition, the conflict and war between parties directly affect the legitimacy and sustainability of developments undertaken by NATO because it is argued that due to lack of a clear definition and boundary between military and development interventions people in Afghanistan, particularly in the remote parts of the country are dissatisfied of the development projects being implemented by the international forces in Afghanistan.

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<sup>25</sup> The example of soft power is social values and acceptance, and the example of hard power is Money and military etc powers.

### **3.3.1 Northern Alliance Treaty Organization (NATO) is one of the Key Power Players in Afghanistan**

NATO and their national alliance believe that the Taliban are terrorists or supporter of terrorism and should be punished and removed from Afghanistan. While Taliban and the other insurgent groups believe that they are freedom fighters, and their country and natural resources have been occupied and exploited by foreign countries. As noted by the two Taliban commanders interviewed *we are not terrorists as the NATO claims. The foreign forces occupied our country and they do whatsoever they want to do and they go wherever they want to go. We own neither our air nor our land. The air and land of Afghanistan are controlled by these forces. They break our rules and regulations. They enter our houses without our permission and kill our civilians, including children and women*<sup>26</sup>. The respondents in Logar Province argued that what make a difference in this war are the different ideologies and beliefs owned by both parties involved in this battle. Insurgents have been fighting based on their religious faith and values. They believe that they fight against their enemy to protect their religious values.

The above mentioned argument from the insurgents answers the question which has remained unanswered for decades. The question which has always been raised in public and by professional is that despite the insurgents having less fighters and military equipment, the insurgents have been successfully fighting against the most powerful alliance in the world (NATO) that are well equipped and professionally trained with high technology and weaponry. A religious leader in Logar province argued that the current fighting in Afghanistan is between the two incomparable hard and soft powers. The insurgents are rather equipped with soft weapons (beliefs and faith) that give them full confidence of their future, and the other forces fighting against insurgencies are lacking this soft power and their reliance is rather on hard side of the power (weapons, planes, tanks and other). As noted by Taliban commanders

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<sup>26</sup> Taliban commanders referenced many awful incidents caused by NATO where women and children were killed. The commanders pointed out to the martyring/killing of 16 civilians in one night by Robert Bales, US force in Kandahar Province (16 civilians, including women and children were killed by one US soldier). On 11 March 2012, he murdered sixteen civilians and wounded six others in the Panjwani District of Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. Nine of his victims were children, and eleven of the dead were from the same family. Some of the corpses were partially burned.



interviewed *the main inducement behind our success in fighting is this soft side of our power. Our believe and faith is that we will go to paradise/heaven after we are killed*<sup>27</sup>. As part of their beliefs on the two dissimilar powers (Hard and Soft), the international forces have been announcing that the insurgency war in Afghanistan will be end and that the war is won in Afghanistan, in contrast to what the insurgents say. The insurgents stated *after 2014, the situation will get worse*<sup>28</sup>.

### **3.3.2 UNAMA is the Second Key Pillar of the Current Power Holders in Afghanistan.**

United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) in Afghanistan is a political UN mission established at the request of the government of Afghanistan to assist the Afghan government in laying the foundations for peace and sustainable development in the country. UNAMA was established on 28 March 2002 by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1401<sup>29</sup>. Its original mandate was to support the Bonn Agreement proposed by the international community and facilitated by German government on December 2001. The core mandate of UNAMA is to support the government of Afghanistan in its promised efforts to improve the critical areas, including, security, and economy and governance development. A representative from UN interviewed argued that in addition to the international and regional cooperation in multi-commitments made in London and other conferences held for development in Afghanistan, UNAMA is also mandated to support the government of Afghanistan on codification of constitution, coordination of development initiatives among development agencies, protection and promotion of human rights, good governance, and free and fair elections in Afghanistan.

However, the other respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that there are still lots of unanswered questions about the neutrality and independence of UNAMA. They further argued that UNAMA does not have any clear and concrete

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<sup>27</sup> A confidential interview with Taliban commanders in Logar province: 2013.

<sup>28</sup> In a religiously and traditionally conservative society like Afghanistan the soft power plays the most important role in mobilizing people against their common enemy and it had been practically proved during occupations by Great British and Soviet forces. The Taliban commanders believe that if the bilateral security agreement between USA and government of Afghanistan is signed, the situation will get worst and our legitimacy among people will be increased.

<sup>29</sup> Said a UNAMA representative participated in this research.

strategies on how to prevent or reduce murdering of civilians by insurgent and NATO, particularly US forces in Afghanistan. They argued that the mum and calmness of UNAMA towards the last corrupt presidential and parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2010 in Afghanistan has destroyed the reputation of UNAMA in Afghanistan. As noted by Taliban Commanders *the United Nations which is mandated to globally maintain international peace and security is dependent to the mandates and policy of western and European countries. UNAMA which is established based on the resolution of Security Council has been playing the same games in Afghanistan. So Taliban movement doesn't believe in its neutrality and independency. Therefore UNAMA's offices and staffs have often been targeted and attacked in Afghanistan*<sup>30</sup>. Taliban representatives further argued; that the corruption and bribes which are being vocationally practiced in the governmental and non-governmental agencies in Afghanistan and the violation of human rights including murdering of civilians by NATO forces and others are the main reason for the incredibility of UNAMA amongst the people of Afghanistan. Therefore, UNAMA has not been able to bring visible changes in protection of human rights and promotion of good governance in Afghanistan<sup>31</sup>.

### **3.3.3 The Government of Afghanistan is also one of the ten Power**

#### **Holders in the Country**

Although it is claimed that the government of Afghanistan is an elected, neutral and independent administration, due to its dependence to the international community, respondents interviewed in rural parts of the country argued that the government of Afghanistan does not have complete control on the country. Afghanistan's air traffic and its borders have been controlled by international forces. They further argued that due to unstable economy, lack of advanced military

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<sup>30</sup> Confidential interview with Taliban's commanders in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>31</sup> The respondents further argue that although there has been huge investment by the international community on protection of human rights and promotion of good governance in Afghanistan; there has been little improvement in the field of good governance which is a key for sustainable and transparent development. The current corruption practiced in governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Afghanistan could be the best evidence of this.

equipment and well trained human resources, the government of Afghanistan has been playing a secondary role in ruling the country<sup>32</sup>.

Although the international community wants to see the government of Afghanistan as a powerful institution, however, people in the rural communities do not believe that it is strong enough yet to protect them and their rights. Hence, NATO and other players have been investing huge amounts on improvement of good governance and elimination of corruption in Afghanistan because the international players aim to develop strong national and sub-national governments as part of their long term security-development strategy and commitments. *Local communities don't believe that the government is powerful because the key positions in the government, like ministries and others haven't been distributed based on merit but there is a family network controlling the government*<sup>33</sup>. The aforementioned quote strengthens the common argument public have in the rural areas. Their argument is that due to corruption and bad governance in the country, the legitimacy of the government among the public is worsening and the legitimacy of the insurgents in rural areas is increasing. Therefore, more and more people prefer to refer their criminal and civil cases to Taliban courts.

### **3.3.4 Taliban is Another Key Power Broker in the Country**

As a fourth key power holder in the country, the Taliban is mandated to implement Sharia law in the country. After 9/11, when the Taliban's administration collapsed and at the beginning of the interim and transitional governments, the Taliban's military movements were weakened. However, since 2005, they have visibly reformed their leadership and re-structured their military powers in the country. The respondents interviewed in the rural area argued that to be safe from NATO's military attacks, Taliban movement started their campaign from the most remote and unknown communities of Afghanistan. They have slowly expanded their military operations from the rural villages to the big cities of Afghanistan. The 2011 attack on the US embassy and some other attacks on UN compounds and Indian diplomatic and non

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<sup>32</sup> The respondents argue that the normal and development annual budget of Afghan government is based on the financial contribution from international community.

<sup>33</sup> Confidential interview with a civil society representative (women) in Balkh province: 2013.

diplomatic administrations in Kabul have shown that they have regained their ability to strike across Afghanistan<sup>34</sup>. Respondents who are well familiar with the rural parts of Afghanistan argued that most of rural communities, even some districts in the south, southeast and west of the country, including Logar province have been fully controlled by the Taliban. They have established their own local administration and legal/judicial system to address civil and criminal cases and developed their education curriculum taught in the schools as controlled by them. More details are available in upcoming sections.

### **3.3.5 Traditional and Religious Leaders are also the Key Power**

#### **Brokers in Afghanistan**

The two local power holders, (traditional and religious leaders) have been considered as the most socially accepted and cheapest tools to be used as entry point to the communities to mobilize peoples for a common gathering in the societies. The two powerful local stakeholders playing important role in political and social decision making in Afghanistan are traditional and religious leaders. The leaders have been playing important and influential roles in their societies for centuries. The common perception among the respondents of this research is that during the political gaps and social disputes in Afghanistan, the leaders have played an effective role in filling the political gaps and solving the political and social conflicts in the country. More detailed information on traditional and religious leaders is available in the upcoming section.

### **3.3.6 The Ex- Commanders Fought against Soviet Forces and Their**

#### **National Alliance is also a Power Player in the Country**

Like traditional and religious leaders, Jehadi commanders have considered as the most socially accepted and cheapest tools to be used as entry point to the communities to mobilize peoples for a common gathering in the societies. Considering this, criticizing the commanders who have been one of the key entry points to the rural societies will affect inclusive participation of the communities in decision makings,

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<sup>34</sup> Their attack on Libnanis Restaurant in Kabul in 2013 is another example.

including development. Therefore, it is essential to include these paragraphs in this study too. Another shareholder of power who commanded the public during the invasion of Soviet forces in Afghanistan are the Jihadi commanders. These power holders have often been called warlords also. However, this caste which has remained in the society and leaded peoples for long time can be divided into two categories, high profile and low profile commanders. The respondents in the rural areas argued that the first category is the best and high profile among the commanders and leaders in Afghanistan. This status (high profile) refers to that category of commander who remained in the community in post soviet conflict. It is further argued in the rural area that the most challenging time for Afghan society was from 1977-1992 when Afghanistan was occupied by Soviet forces. As noted by a former government official *when the Soviet forces and their national alliance carried out continuous attacks on civilians, particularly in the rural areas of Afghanistan, killing children and woman, these commanders harmed themselves and their family to protect civilians and country*<sup>35</sup>. Hence, it is argued that this is the main reason that the commanders have been respected and their roles have been highly appreciated by the rural communities<sup>36</sup>.

After the fall of Taliban in 9/11, the national and international media have changed the definition of these commanders; the term “warlord” was created and used for them<sup>37</sup>. The respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that this is the common terminology used by liberal and Western educated politicians in formal and political sessions<sup>38</sup>. As noted by a traditional leader *the commanders have been criticized and their courage and service done for freedom and protection of Afghanistan has been forgotten and ignored by these Dog Washers returned from Europe and other western countries*<sup>39</sup>. An argument which is common in the rural Afghanistan is that those Afghans who spent their time in the western countries have

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<sup>35</sup> Confidential interview with a government official in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Like Traditional and religious leaders, they can play influential and important role in mobilizing people and sustaining the development of their societies through participation.

<sup>37</sup> It is also argued that external players also played important role in changing their defecation from a holey title (Mujahedeen) to a negative title (Warlords) because as one of the most powerful aspects of the Afghan society, the external players also scared of their future.

<sup>38</sup> They argue that to criticize them, and to destroy their positive profile in the society, the Jihadi leaders have been the main target of this term “warlord”.

<sup>39</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Province: 2013.

entertained themselves at the night clubs and their children have been studying in the most expensive and high profile schools and universities in the world<sup>40</sup>. However, the respondent said that we and our children have been suffering and struggling with fight and conflict to protect this country from occupation. Some respondents in the rural areas acknowledge that we accept that 2 % of the commanders might be inappropriate people. However, these Dog Washers put all of the commanders in one pocket. Therefore, the general perception about this important category of people is negative, particularly among liberals living in the cities. Finally, let me try to describe the background and historic concept of the term “Dog Washer”. This terminology has been used in the rural parts of Afghanistan. The term “Dog Washer” has historic background and is common among Afghans in and out of Afghanistan<sup>41</sup>. The respondents in Logar province argued that this terminology refers to those Afghans who have left the country and migrated to the Western and European countries upon or before the occupation of Afghanistan in 1979<sup>42</sup>. The common perception among Afghans, particularly in the rural areas of the country is that the majority of Afghans who migrated to western or European countries no longer understands and respects the Afghan culture.

The second category of the commanders is those commanders who don't possess a positive profile, even in the rural communities. The respondents argued that this category of the commanders have occupied senior positions in the government but have low and inappropriate profile amongst people in the society. As noted by an International NGO representative *this category of the commanders have violated human rights, particularly during the civil war and occupied common resources and public properties (land and other) in the country*<sup>43</sup>. It is argued that the second category is still in power and controlling the political, social and economic situation in the current administration in Afghanistan<sup>44</sup>. As noted by the current and former parliament members *they (second category) are an important part of the current*

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<sup>40</sup> During the occupation of soviet forces from 1979-1989.

<sup>41</sup> It is a verbal history it is not a written history to be quoted.

<sup>42</sup> If a Western or European migrated Afghan is assigned to a ministry or any other key position, the minister is often referred to as a “Dog Washer”.

<sup>43</sup> Confidential interview with an International NGO's representative in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>44</sup> They argue that the first category and their family have been suffering from hunger, illiteracy and deprivation from other basic human rights; even they are removed from the political environment.

*network controlling the presidential palace. The financial crises of Kabul bank are an important example*<sup>45</sup>. It is further argued that some of the second category of the commanders has been involved in the cases of Kabul Bank and launched largest business outside and inside of Afghanistan and built luxury houses. Finally, despite the aforesaid negative points, the international community and the government of Afghanistan rely on them and consider them the most democratic people in the country. Hence, they have been involved in giving important directions to the political, social and economic decision in Afghanistan.

### **3.3.7 Political Parties is also Annexed to other main Power Brokers in Afghanistan**

The newborn political parties inside or outside the government are other players in Afghanistan. They are comprised of the well and less known political and opposition parties working in the country. Although the parties have been registered as political parties in the ministry of justice, it is, however, argued that they could not prove that they are nationwide political parties. The argument is that the leaders or the board of directors leading the parties are members of specific linguistic and ethnic groups and are mandated and interested to focus on specific majority or minority tribes settled in specific parts of the country. Therefore, they rely and have been supported by specific stratum of the society in the elections. As noted by a traditional leader interviewed, *the current political parties are ethnic, linguistic oriented and Semi-political parties*<sup>46</sup>. The respondents argued that in addition to the linguistic barrier, the parties are not representing the country as whole because the ex-background of most of the parties is militia<sup>47</sup>.

The parties don't have required political maturity to act as opposition parties and to legally fight against government for better political and economic reform in the country. Their ideas are stereotyped; their vision is not coordinated and is based on

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<sup>45</sup> A confidential interview with a current and former Parliament member in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>46</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>47</sup> They just changed their title from militia to political parties and were formed based on their geographical, linguistic, ethnic and tribal identity and interest. Therefore they are not much effective in the current situation in Afghanistan.

their own political and tribal interests. The parties haven't been able to legally challenge what government has been going, and to propose alternative ways for the improvement of development and good governance in Afghanistan. The political parties don't have any concrete and an effective agenda or program to improve the quality of life of people and the sustainable development of Afghanistan. It is argued that the political parties couldn't propose a comprehensive and long term plan for good governance, foreign policy, anti corruption, reconstruction and sustainable development of the country. This is the main reason of less interest and low participation of Afghans in the presidential and parliamentary elections<sup>48</sup>.

### **3.3.8 Non Governmental Development and Humanitarian Organizations in Afghanistan**

In addition to the international development agencies, the international and national humanitarian and development NGOs also plays an important role in the development of Afghanistan. The NGOs are mandated to serve the war and natural disaster affected people to improve their quality of life for the vulnerable and marginalized communities. However, the respondents in the rural areas argued that although in terms of service delivery, NGOs have a good reputation among peoples; there have been lots of questions about the transparency and accountability of the NGOs<sup>49</sup>. It is also argued that since the NGOs aren't mandated to interfere in the political issues, they are not interested and don't want to be in the balance of the current power holders in the country.

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<sup>48</sup> The people of Afghanistan do not support the current political parties and their proposed agenda. Finally, lack of a nationwide agenda for sustainable and long term economic, social and political development of Afghanistan to improve the quality of life of Afghans has reduced the acceptance of Afghans for political parties. If you are interested to see the figures and rate of participation in presidential elections in 2004 and 2009, please refer to AIEC website.

<sup>49</sup> Karzai's formal press conferences with many national and international media indicate that corruption is not only in government, but the international organizations are also involved in the corruption in Afghanistan.



### **3.3.9 Peoples and Civilians are the main Power Holder in Theory but are the Firewood of Conflicts in Afghanistan**

The last and important source of local power is the people of Afghanistan. In developed countries, public are the fundamental and important pillar of the power in the society. They have the rights and freedom to fairly vote and elect their rulers and administrations. They control their rulers and their administrations are accountable for it. However, the situation is completely different in Afghanistan. The respondents argued that even though civilians are the most important part of the society, they have been violated and harmed in Afghanistan. Civilians in Afghanistan have been the weakest and the most vulnerable part of society because it is argued that amongst the above-mentioned power holders, ordinary people have been the firewood of their war and conflict. Finally, although public is the biggest part of the society to be discussed more, however, due to limitation of space in this study, it is impossible to explore whole aspects of life of people affected by conflict.

### **3.4 Traditional and Religious Leaders in the Context of Afghanistan**

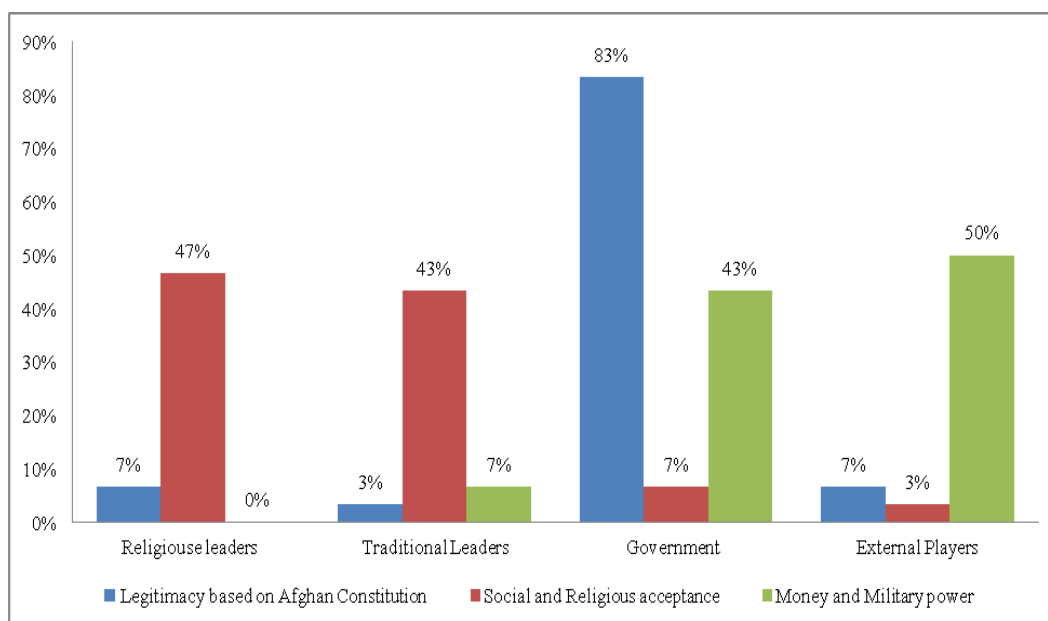
Amongst all existing spirituality and traditional leaders, this section will target Mullah, Mawlavi and traditional leaders who is the key entry points in the village in Afghanistan. The respondents interviewed in the capital cities argued that it has been proven that the leaders have played a significant role in both, the stability and destruction of the governments in Afghanistan. The leaders can play positive roles if the leaders and their role are systematically recognized by the governments. However, they also could be a destructive pattern of society if they and their norms and values are ignored from the decision making. As noted by a religious leader *we have been creating environments where the political and economic system are established and governed by ruler. If the systems are antithesis with the norms and values of the environments, the system will be collapsed. In other word, we (as environment) can influence and change the systems but the systems (established by rulers) can't influence and change the environment (us)*<sup>50</sup>. The leaders and their messages are cordially welcomed and highly valued in the society because it is argued in the rural

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<sup>50</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Logar Province: 2013.

areas that people believe that the religious leaders are the heir of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the only source that preserves their religious values. People are obedient of their advice and messages, even if they are invited for a battle<sup>51</sup>. The peoples believe that disobedience of their advice and messages is disobedience of the God and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH<sup>52</sup>).

Like religious leaders, traditional leaders also preserve the cultural and traditional norms in society. It is argued in the rural areas that like religious leaders, traditional leaders have been playing an influential role in social and political decision making. Therefore, it is argued that even though the religious and traditional leaders have separate lines of authority and responsibility in society, the values and benefits of the leaders are interconnected. Their common benefits are complementary of each other<sup>53</sup>. Finally, the above discussion implies that there will be rare possibility of conflict between these two local power holders. The below chart indicates the type, degree and dynamic of the role of traditional and religious leaders and other players in the context of Afghanistan.



<sup>51</sup> Because peoples believe that they are the only sources maintaining and protecting their religious values in the societies.

<sup>52</sup> Peace Be Upon Him.

<sup>53</sup> It will be explained more in the upcoming chapters

**Figure 3.1: The Key Power Brokers and the Type and Degree of their Roles on Different Situations in Afghanistan<sup>54</sup>**

**3.5 The Key Power Brokers and the Type and Degree of their Roles on Different Situations in Afghanistan<sup>55</sup>**

Mullahs are mostly living in the villages, and lead village level religious ceremonies and prayers in Masjed (Mosques). They exchange their Islamic beliefs and knowledge with the inhabitants of the village. In the villages, a person can be candidate for the position of Mullah whose Islamic knowledge and virtue is above the Islamic knowledge and virtue of the inhabitant in the villages. In selection of Mullah, agreement of traditional leader (Malik) of the same village is crucial. In the villages, Mullahs are unpaid by the government. Also there is not any common property, such as land and market (Mauqufat) to support livelihoods of the Mullah. Instead, the Mullah is paid and supported by villagers on monthly or yearly bases. It is argued that before the King, Abdul Rahman Khan came to power; there had been some pieces of land or any other income sources such as market (Mauqufat) which were the property of Mosques. That property had been utilized by the Mullah of the Mosques to support his livelihoods. Therefore, the Mullahs had been one of the most economically independent groups in societies. However, as noted by a traditional leader, *after the King came to power, he nationalized the property of the Mosques and included it in*

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<sup>54</sup> There are various sources of the data collected for the Means of Verification (MOV) about the whole information included in this figure, (1) practical examples collected from beneficiaries, (2) examples provided by National and International NGOs involved in the development of Afghanistan, (3) traditional and religious leaders (4) documents and files supporting this idea, (5) key informant interviews and focus group discussion in the both provinces, Balkh and Logar. Due to confidentiality and privacy of the data/information, it was requested that to not share the exact information and to not include any part of the documents in this thesis.

<sup>55</sup> There are various sources of the data collected for the Means of Verification (MOV) about the whole information included in this figure, (1) practical examples collected from beneficiaries, (2) examples provided by National and International NGOs involved in the development of Afghanistan, (3) traditional and religious leaders (4) documents and files supporting this idea, (5) key informant interviews and focus group discussion in the both provinces, Balkh and Logar. Due to confidentiality and privacy of the data/information, it was requested that to not share the exact information and to not include any part of the documents in this thesis.

*the list of government's common properties*<sup>56</sup>. It is also argued that through this, the King wanted to decrease the independence of the Mullahs they had for centuries in society and to build their dependent on the government. A verbal agreement between Mullah and the villagers took place before they take the lead of the Masjeed. Only 6 - 8 % of the Mosques (located in the cities) are registered with the government of Afghanistan (Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs). The rest of the Mosques (92-94 %) are not registered by the government and the annual wage and stipend of the Mullahs is paid by inhabitants from their tithe (Ushur) of the stock and harvest. As charity, Mullahs are paid when they perform matrimony ceremony and nominate a newborn child or bury the dead.

Traditional leaders (Malik) who are leading the villages and are the wealthy people in that villages play an important role in securing the livelihood of Mullahs, and the Mullahs have to hear the traditional leaders and the wealthy of villages, as they say or recommend. The social position of Mullahs is totally different across various areas of Afghanistan. In tribal areas, the social position of Mullahs is lower. As noted by a religious leader *the social position of Mullah is lower than tribal leaders if the Mullah isn't from the same tribal area, if the Mullah is also from the same area, the social position of the Mullah will be the same*<sup>57</sup>. In the other part of the country (non-tribal areas), regardless to whether or not the Mullah are from the same or other areas, due to their Islamic identity and knowledge, Mullahs are highly respected having the highest position in the societies. A traditional leader argued that in some remote and rural areas, Mullahs are the only literate people in that area. Mullahs play an intermediation role in the solution of conflicts between individuals and groups. They play the role of a third party in solving issues such as conflict and schisms in the village. Finally, it is argued that the Knowledge and literacy levels of Mullahs are quite different. Some of them know reading writing and teaching, while some of them are illiterates, but they have memorized and read some benedictions and verses of holy Quran in religious ceremonies.

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<sup>56</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in logar Province: 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Balkh Province: 2013.

Mawlavi usually teaches around ten or fifteen Talibs (Islamic students) in any Mosque or Madrasa<sup>58</sup>. The teaching is dependent to the sagacity and progression of every individual. Theology, interpretation and exegeses of holy Quran, jurisprudence, Hadith of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and Arabic science and grammars are the main monotonous and unchangeable Islamic subjects which have been mandatory in all Madrasa<sup>59</sup>. This study indicates that after a Talib is graduated and received permission of his teacher (Mawlavi), he can decide to be either Mullah/ Imam in any village or go for his higher Islamic education. A former government official argued that till 1928, there had not been any Islamic university or unique and recognized Madrasa for higher Islamic education in Afghanistan; hence the Taliban had been going to British India to one of the biggest Islamic Madras to accomplish their higher Islamic education<sup>60</sup>. However, after completing their higher education in India and returning back to Afghanistan, most of the students were against the social and economic changes proposed by rulers of the country. As noted by a traditional leader *after King Amanullah Khan recognized that the Mawlavies (Religious leaders) returning from Dewband/India will be harmful for his government, he prohibited Mullahs from Dewband Madrasa, and established the first Islamic Madaras for higher Islamic education in Afghanistan 1928*<sup>61</sup>.

Like Mullahs, some Mawlavies have been leading Mosques in the big cities. Their Mosques are registered by the government and they are unpaid by the villagers. From economy and livelihood perspective, they are dependent on government's financial support. It is argued that due to their economic and livelihood dependency to the governments, most of them support the political, social and economic decisions made by the government. Hence they are active members of different formal and informal councils established by the governments<sup>62</sup>. However, the influence and local power of the aforesaid Mawlavies paid by the government are

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<sup>58</sup> Traditionally established Islamic education center is called Madrars.

<sup>59</sup> The main subjects of Islamic science are SURF and NAHWA.

<sup>60</sup> Dewband is the name of Madrasa in India,

<sup>61</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Such as peace, religious and some other council have been established and appointed by the government of Afghanistan.

totally different from the influence and local power of the Malavies that are unpaid by the governments. As noted by a parliament member *maladies who are unpaid by the government or other organizations are always independent and neutral. The Mawlavies who are paid by the government or any other organizations is dependent and biased. The dependency and biasness of the members of the current councils established by the government of Afghanistan is the main root causes of ineffectiveness of the current peace and religious councils because the right leaders haven't been selected for the councils*<sup>63</sup>. It is also argued that in the rural and tribal context of Afghanistan, people prefer the independence and neutrality of traditional and religious leaders. In 1979, the Decree (FETWA) of Jihad (Holy war) against Soviet Union forces and their national alliance was declared by well recognized, neutral and independent religious scholars. Therefore, the declared decree was wholeheartedly accepted by all nations in Afghanistan and the peoples of Afghanistan had been mobilized and a nationwide war against Soviet Union had started.

As mentioned earlier, Mawlavi teaches the Holy Quran and the other Islamic subjects to the students. As noted by a traditional leader *religious leader are the most powerful, respectful and well recognized people in Afghanistan. They take care of bigger religious related ceremonies and activities*<sup>64</sup>. Traditional leaders are busy with leading their societies in social activities, such as welfare activities, conflict resolution and other important decision making. It is argued that traditional leaders divided suburbs, the area of their influence. Each of the leaders control and lead the area of their responsibilities and influence. The respondents in the rural area further argued that livelihood status of the traditional leaders is lower than the Khan. Khan is the Richest and landlord of their village, district or province. The Khans have appointed Dehqan (farmer) to take care of their properties. The Dehqan obeys the Khan and cultivate their agriculture lands. The formers (Dehqan) are annually paid by Khan from his harvest. As noted by a traditional leader *due to their economic superiority, the land lords (Khans) can also be ranked as influential local leaders. However, their leading role in the society is not obligatory, but sometimes they*

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<sup>63</sup> Confidential interview with a parliament member in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>64</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Province: 2013.

*interfere and have their influence on some specific issues. If they or their relatives are candidate for any elections, they are legally or illegally utilizing their financial superiority to win the elections, therefore the previous and current parliament members are the wealthiest people*<sup>65</sup>.

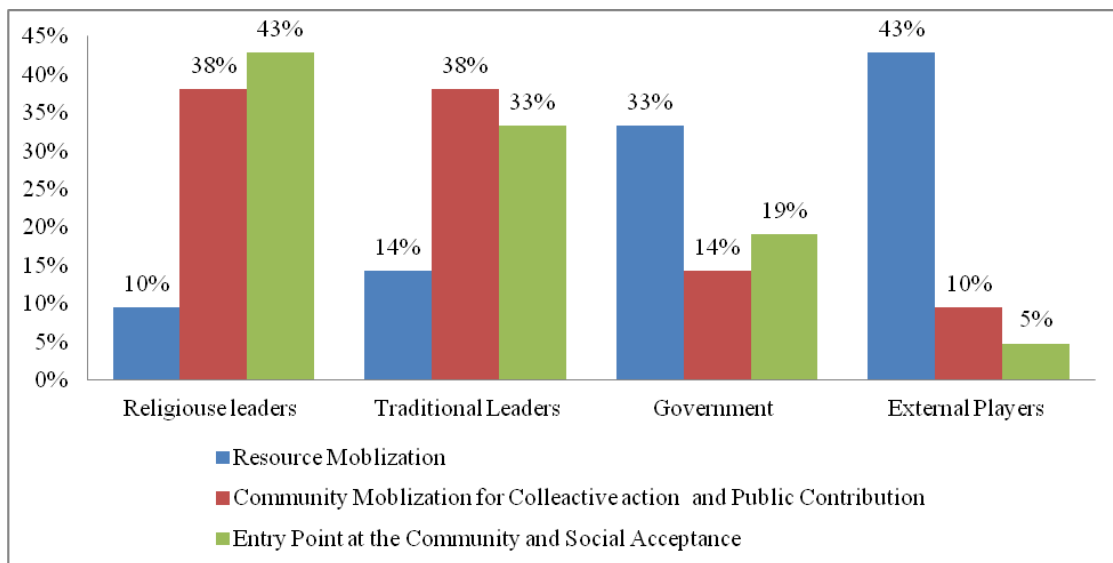
The farmers are obliged to obey what landlord say and accept them as their leaders and decision makers. Due to their weak economic status and livelihood problem, many medium and small level owner of land borrow cash from the landlord. However, when the small scale formers cannot pay loans, they are forced by landlords to transfer property to the Khans. The respondents in the rural areas argued that every traditional leader can be a wealthy person in society, while every Khan cannot be a traditional leader in Afghan society because being a wealthy person is not a criterion for being a traditional leader. Although traditional and religious leaders have their separate roles defined in society, they are dependent on each other. It is argued that the religious leaders are economically dependent to the non religious leaders. As noted by a parliament member *some time traditional leaders fill and ignore the gaps of their injustice and prejudice through close relationship with the religious leaders. The traditional leaders get sanction for Islamic justification for some of their unfair decisions made in the society; they are interlinked to their benefit they have in the society*<sup>66</sup>. However, although there might be unfair decisions made by them in the society, the leaders have been the key entry points in rural and conservative society. Meanwhile, the parliament member was unable to rule out a single example of unfair decision made by these leaders<sup>67</sup>. A respondent interviewed in Logar province argued that this parliament member quoted above hasn't have insight about the traditional norms and practices practiced in the rural area because the parliament members was born, grown and has been living either out of the country or in capital city, Kabul. Therefore, he has a wrong and incorrect understanding about traditional norms in Afghanistan.

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<sup>65</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Confidential interview with a parliament member in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>67</sup> I asked other respondents to provide me with practical examples unfair decision. They replied that many things are prediction.



**Figure 3.2: The Key Power Brokers and the Impact of their Power on Social and Political Situations in Afghanistan**

### 3.6 The Key Power Brokers and the Impact of their Power on Social and Political Situations in Afghanistan<sup>68</sup>

Many past examples have highlighted that governments of Afghanistan have tried to keep leaders contented. It is argued that if this stratum of the local and powerful stakeholders had not come under various attention and aid of the governments, the administrations and the administrators are absolutely refused by the leaders and the governments will be targeted and come under their imprecation and boycott, even caused revolution and downfall and collapse of their governments. As noted by a religious leader *we and our role are not changeable, but we are changing the rules and rulers if necessary*<sup>69</sup>. The respondents argued that therefore, the king ‘Amanullah gave privileges to the leaders to keep them silent because the king knew

<sup>68</sup> There are various sources of the data collected for the Means of Verification (MOV) about the whole information included in this figure, (1) practical examples collected from beneficiaries, (2) examples provided by National and International NGOs involved in the development of Afghanistan, (3) traditional and religious leaders (4) documents and files supporting this idea, (5) key informant interviews and focus group discussion in the both provinces, Balkh and Logar. Due to confidentiality and privacy of the data/information, it was requested that to not share the exact information and to not include any part of the documents in this thesis.

<sup>69</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Province: 2013.



that insurgency from these leaders will be jeopardous and disastrous for his administration. Eventually, his government was overturned by these two local stakeholders. Finally, it is argued that the leaders issued a decree/sanction that King ‘Amanullah is a heathen’<sup>70</sup>. They called for a revolution and lead an insurgency against his government until his government collapsed.

Traditional leaders interviewed in Logar Province argued that to maintain his relationship with the leaders, King Zahir Shah handed over the property of Qalaye Jawad to Mujadidi’s family and established his close relationship with Mujadidi community to avoid and prevent what happened with the ex-Kings<sup>71</sup>. During the communist regime, the case was changed. When the spiritual and tribal leaders recognized that this regime is going to defeat them and end their historical mastery, they mobilized people and called for Jihad against the regime. The respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that thus, a strong solidarity and league was established among the tribal and religious leaders to fight and resistance against the decrees of Taraki and to encourage and energize people to start battle/ Jihad (holy war) against the regime. As noted by a former governor *this unity had been very productive and dynamic*<sup>72</sup>. That is why; the communist regime was doomed to fail by religious and tribal leaders when they declared an Islamic sanction/decreed (Fetwa) against the regime. The decree of Jihad (holy war) against that regime spread quickly across the country.

The communist regime was the least experienced ruler in the history of Afghanistan. It did not have the cognition and insight from past history and political transition of the country. After they came to power, they stood against the landlord, tribal and religious leaders. A common argument among respondents is that this behavior insulated leaders. They further argued that, since the proponents of the communist regime had not been familiar with significance of Islamic, tradition and culture of the country in the context of Afghanistan, they had not only valued the

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<sup>70</sup> This wording came from the respondents

<sup>71</sup> It is argued that Qalayae Jawad is the name of the village where most of the Mujadidi families are living. Mijadidi was one of the influential leaders in that time and he layed important role in succession of revolutions against ex-governments.

<sup>72</sup> Confidential interview with a former governor in Logar Province: 2013.

religious and traditional practices, but also situated against those Islamic and traditional principles which have been practiced in Afghan societies for centuries. They copied ideas that were practiced in a secular and communist oriented society and tried to adapt them to a contrasting religious, traditional and politically conservative society like Afghanistan<sup>73</sup>. As noted by religious leader *naturally, in a politically and traditionally conservative and religious society like Afghanistan, anti religious movements are similar to suicide*<sup>74</sup>. Since the regime was involved in an intensive war, the rulers never had the chance to implement these issued decrees. Finally, the wealth of plutocrats, the land of landlords, and the influence of tribal leaders and the decrees/sanctions of influential religious leaders were collectively contributed and mobilized Afghan society to bring down the communist regime<sup>75</sup>.

In light of the overall discussion, it is implied that the religious leaders are the best tools to mobilize communities for common gathering. Therefore, it is criticized that the religious leaders have not been considered as the main pillar of the current development interventions because they are not systematically involved in the whole cycle of development in the country. The respondents in the rural parts of the country argued that the leaders have not been treated and involved in an asset based approach to sustainable development but they are considered as need based approach in development<sup>76</sup>. As noted by a former parliament member *the government of Afghanistan and the international community has not been willing to involve those leaders who have concerns and objections about the current development initiatives in*

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It is also argued that the communist regime in Afghanistan didn't want to build their intervention on the current culture, but they tried to change or replace the existing culture. Therefore, it was very harmful for them and for their interventions.

<sup>74</sup>

Confidential interview with a religious leader in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>75</sup>

On Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 1979 the first "Call for Jihad" in defiance and protest against the communist regime began by influential and recognized traditional and religious leaders. The mobilization of Afghan people against the Communist regime would lead to its eventual collapse a decade later.

<sup>76</sup>

It is also argued by the majority of the respondents that when the government or NGOs have had any formal or informal gathering, they would invite the specific leaders whom they have already identified in their mind because they believe that if they involve the real, neutral and independent representatives of the leaders, there will be lots of criticism about their interventions and approaches for the development of the country. So, a proper stakeholder mapping is required to find out the real local and religious representatives in the communities.

*Afghanistan. Therefore, they have been excluded*<sup>77</sup>. It is further argued that the independent and neutral leaders have been excluded because the rural leaders know the real problems of their people and they can transfer the real voice of vulnerable and marginalized people in the rural area. The leaders from the rural area also argue/believe that positive criticism gives practical and real recommendation for future inclusive, participatory and sustainable planning and ensures the real transparency and accountability, ownership and cost effective development in the country. Finally, this study clearly indicates and recommends that for improved ownership and sustainability of development intervention in Afghanistan, inclusive and systematic involvement of the religious and traditional leaders in whole cycle of development is crucial.

### **3.7 Corruption and lack of Government: Religious and Traditional Leaders increasingly takes the Governance Role in Rural Afghanistan**

Afghanistan is a tribal and a politically conservative country, which has been ruled by either kinship, dictatorial or ideologically oriented governments for centuries. A civil society representative interviewed in Balkh province argued that the kingship administrators have strengthened and reinforced their mastery and territory in the country through this tribalism as monarchs and the other two part of the triangle, traditional and religious leaders had their own role in ruling the country. Therefore king and the other rulers in Afghanistan have been seeking the stability of their governments through relationships with these leaders. In other words, the rulers link their legitimacy and the legality of administrations with credible and recognized spiritual and tribal groups in Afghanistan. As noted by a former governor *the technique of managing the country through the triangle system, King, tribal and religious leaders had never been tolerable for the people of Afghanistan. Poor and illiterate people in the country had been carrying a density of this problem and toil*<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> Confidential interview with a parliament member in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Confidential interview with a former governor in Logar Province: 2013.

However, respondents interviewed in rural parts of the country argued that in a traditionally and politically conservative country where around 75 % of total population are living in the remote and rural area, a balanced triangle leadership system was the best for effective ruling of the country because the first two parts of the triangle (traditional and religious leaders) have had social power and they know how to influence and mobilize peoples and the last party (government) had been using their social powers to sustain their administrations<sup>79</sup>. Finally, as it will be explored more in the upcoming paragraphs, it is further argued that the legitimacy and legality of the governments depend on verbal or written ratification of religious and tribal leaders.

### **3.8 Court and Corruption: This Study Comparatively Looked at the Evidences outlining the Rate and Degree of Corruption in Formal and Informal Courts Established By Government and Taliban in Logar Province**

Taliban has been getting the political advantage of corruptions practiced in governmental departments, particularly governmental courts in rural Afghanistan. The respondents interviewed in Logar argued that due to corruption in governmental courts, the courts established by Taliban are the best alternative option for civilians to address their cases. Therefore it is argued that all the criminal and civil cases are referred to their established courts. They have established various Sharia scholars' councils, including judicial councils. As noted by the three victims of corruption/bribes in governmental courts in Logar province, *although Taliban's judicial system is informal to the government, but this institution is cost and time effective. The judges appointed by government are quite corrupt; we have to separate huge amount of money for their bribes and plenty of time for their party*<sup>80</sup>. The

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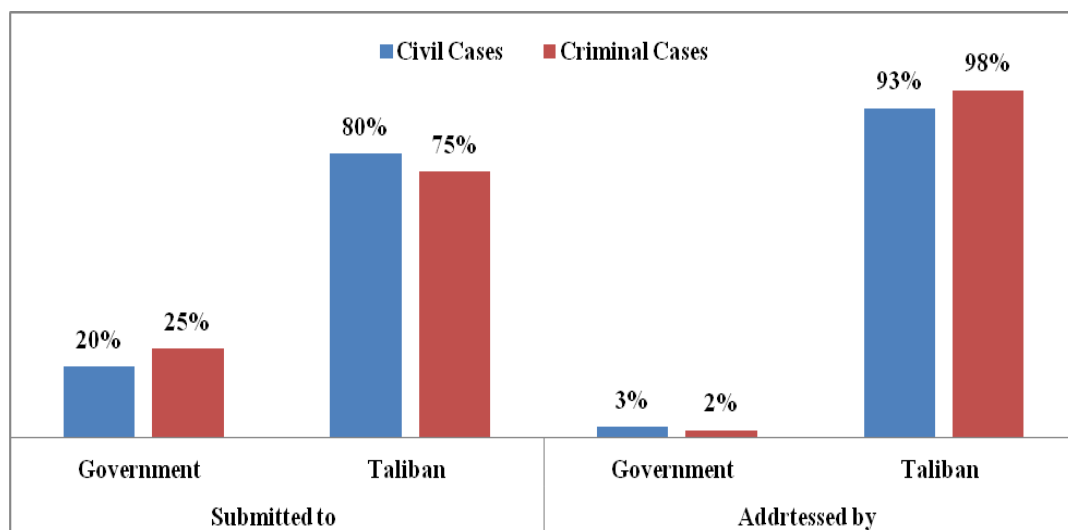
79

It is also argued that in addition to the religious and traditional believes, the rationale behind the power, influence and credibility of religious and traditional leaders is their economic superiority and valued spiritual status in society. The reliance on undemocratic and dictatorial governments is another reason for the influence and power of leaders in Afghanistan.

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Confidential interview with the victim of corruption and winners and losers of the cases in Logar province: 2013.

respondents in Logar further argued that the judicial council established by Taliban addresses civil and criminal cases. Their decision is obligatory, even under the territory and control of the current government. They punish the party that doesn't obey the decisions made by their judges in the courts. The below figure clearly indicate that majority of peoples from the areas controlled by the government also prefer to bring their criminal and civil cases to the courts established by Taliban. Finally, a respondent who was the victim of corruption argued that the key is not that courts established by insurgent are good. However, due to corruption and lack of required capacity of the judges in the rural parts of the country, the services being delivered by the government courts are not time and cost effective.



**FIGURE3.3: Shows the Percentage Rate of Civil and Criminal Cases submitted and Addressed to/by Governmental and Taliban's Courts in Logar Province**

### **3.9 Shows the Percentage Rate of Civil and Criminal Cases submitted and Addressed to/by Governmental and Taliban's Courts in Logar Province<sup>81</sup>**

As the above figure shows, the civil and criminal cases refer only to the target districts of logar province<sup>82</sup>. A total of 2,795 civil and criminal cases were submitted to the both courts, governmental and Taliban's courts at the district level. The numbers and types of the cases are due since Jan 2012 until February 2013. 1,070 cases out of 2,795 are civil, while 1,725 cases out of 2,795 cases are criminal. As indicated in the chart, 214 out of 1,070 civil cases that are 20 % of the total civil cases were submitted to the governmental courts and 856 out of 1,070 civil cases that are 80 % of the total civil cases were submitted to the Taliban's courts. 431 out of 1,725 criminal cases which are 25 % of total criminal cases were submitted to the governmental courts, while 1,294 out of 1,725 criminal cases which are 75 % of the total criminal cases were submitted to the Taliban's courts. The figure implies that only 3 % out of the total civil cases (20%) submitted to the governmental courts were addressed by the governmental courts. Taliban's court addressed 93 % of the total civil cases (80%) submitted to Taliban. Only 2 % out of the total criminal cases (20%) submitted to the governmental courts were addressed by the governmental courts. Taliban courts addressed 98 % out of the total criminal cases (75%) submitted to their courts. Finally, Governmental courts addressed only 2 % of the total criminal cases (25%) submitted to the governmental courts.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that due to extreme insecurity, one district of logar province (Kharwar) hasn't had any court and judge at the district level therefore all cases in this district refer to the Taliban's court. In Charkh district, there was a room reserved for court with no judge. *A court has been established and a judge*

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<sup>81</sup> There are five sources of the data collected for the Means of Verification (MOV) about the whole information included in this figure, (1) winner of the cases submitted to the courts, (2) loser of the cases submitted to the courts, (3) traditional and religious leaders who provide traditional justice in the rural areas and (4) documents and files in the courts (government and Taliban's courts), (5) the respondents interviewed in the rural parts of Logar province. Due to confidentiality and privacy of the data/information, it was requested that to not share the exact information and to not include any part of the documents in this thesis.

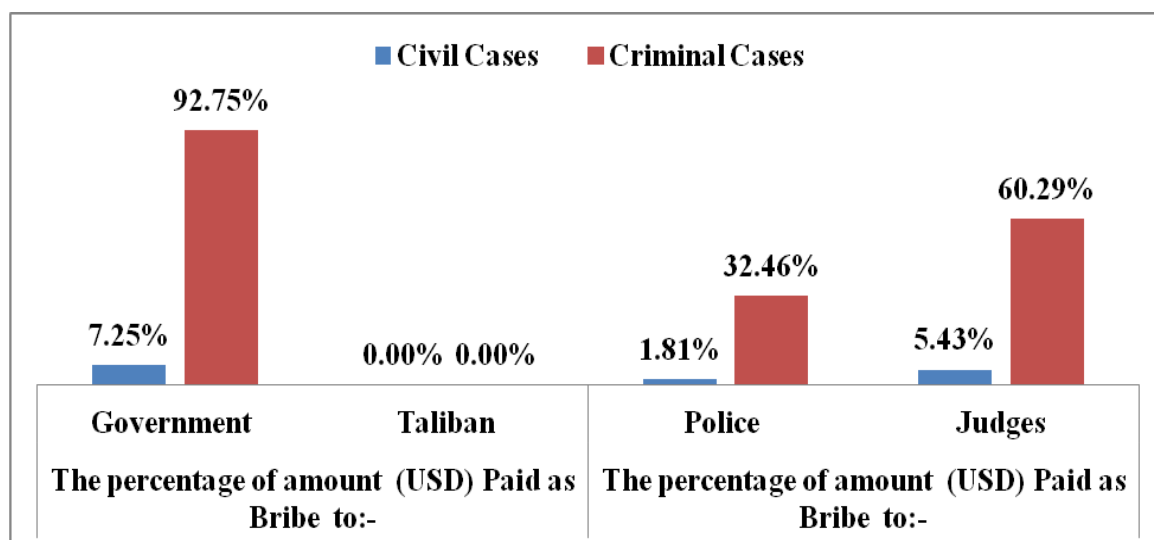
<sup>82</sup> For knowing the name of the districts, please refer to the chapter two, literature review, provincial identity.

*is nominated in Chekh district, the judge however, has been living in Kabul city and he is receiving his salaries in Kabul*<sup>83</sup>. Respondents in the two districts (Charkh and Khrwar) argued that people prefer to refer their cases to Taliban's courts because they don't have any other alternative way to solve their civil and criminal issues. Like civil cases, the criminal cases also include both, minor and major cases. The criminal cases include major and minor cases, such as murdering, robbery and individual conflicts and disputes and the civil cases also include both, major and minor cases, such as divorce and land and property cases. For the analysis of the above chart, it is clearly implied that the both courts rather addressed criminal cases than civil cases because majority of civil cases include disputes and conflicts on common or personal properties. Finally, it is argued by a governmental judge that due to unclear formal regulation and law on management and distribution of common resources and properties, it is quite difficult for the government and Taliban to address most of the civil cases. Most often, the common properties have been managed and distributed based on the traditional rules, norms and mechanisms because the rule and regulation for the management and distribution of common property have been regulated by the traditional leaders<sup>84</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Charkh district of Logar province: 2013.

<sup>84</sup> It should be noted that there might be many other cases in the districts which are not included in my research because I didn't meet all individuals who were the victim of the cases. The total number of cases mentioned above (2795) and the total amount of money (\$ 345000) mentioned below is the only information that I found and used for the Means of Verification for my research data. Due to security and privacy of information, I will never quote the name, place and positions of the respondents who helped me to visit the victims and collect the information.



**FIGURE3.4: Shows the Percentage Rate of Civil and Criminal Cases submitted and Addressed to/by Governmental and Taliban's Courts in Logar Province**

### **3. 10 Shows the Percentage Rate of Civil and Criminal Cases submitted and Addressed to/by Governmental and Taliban's Courts in Logar Province<sup>85</sup>**

The total amount/bribe of \$345,000 was paid to the two major departments which are responsible for equal enforcement of laws, including elimination of corruption in the country, judicial and security<sup>86</sup>. As mentioned earlier, the cases and the bribe amounts was collected and calculated only from the target districts of Logar province. The respondents interviewed in Balkh province refused to talk about this issue. As indicated in the above chart, a huge amount of bribe was paid against the

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There are five sources of the data collected for the Means of Verification (MOV) about the whole information included in this figure, (1) winner of the cases submitted to the courts, (2) loser of the cases submitted to the courts, (3) traditional and religious leaders who provide traditional justice in the rural areas and (4) documents and files in the courts (government and Taliban's courts), (5) the respondents interviewed in the rural parts of Logar province. Due to confidentiality and privacy of the data/information, it was requested that to not share the exact information and to not include any part of the documents in this thesis.

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The transportation cost carried by the individuals or groups traveling to the courts are not included in the aforementioned amount.



civil and criminal cases submitted to the judicial departments in the districts<sup>87</sup>. As indicated in BBC's Persian news *only in 2012, Afghans paid four billion dollars as bribes. This amount is twice the internal income of Afghanistan and a quarter of the total assistance promised by the international community in Tokyo conference in Japan (BBC Persian News: 2013<sup>88</sup>)*. The respondents interviewed in Logar province argued that the judges and police from the two departments that are mandated to enforce the laws and to ensure justice to their civilians are usually and fully benefited from these bribes. As indicated in the above chart, the judges benefited more than police. This study tried to find out why more amounts were paid against criminal cases than civil cases and why Judges were more benefited from these cases than police<sup>89</sup>.

The respondents in the rural areas argued that most of the civil cases are processed by the involved parties in a peaceful manner. The two groups or individuals involved in the civil case don't want to create any conflict during their fighting in the courts therefore there are fewer chances available for the judges and police to earn an income during civil cases. However, for criminal cases there is good opportunity for police and judges to often earn money from the both sides of the conflict without any final decision. As noted by two victims of such cases interviewed<sup>90</sup>, *since the cases remain with police (1 week-15 days), police have less opportunity to earn money. After the cases are transferred to the courts, judges have more opportunity to delay the cases for months and years and earn more money in different ways. Finally, if you have a case of cat in the courts in Afghanistan and you want to win this case, you have to lose a cow to win the cat<sup>91</sup>*. They further argued that although the courts established by Taliban are not officially recognized, the rate of corruption is zero. It was also noted by the participants in a focus group discussion in Logar *when there are any serious cases (like murdering), some judges in the governmental courts also transfer such cases to Taliban courts because most of the governmental judges believe that*

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<sup>87</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2013/02/130206\\_zs\\_afghanistan\\_corruption.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2013/02/130206_zs_afghanistan_corruption.shtml)

<sup>88</sup> United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) report: 7, February, 2013)

<sup>89</sup> It was translated from Persian to English. The original page of the Persian news is available on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21364557>

<sup>90</sup> Although, one of them was winner of the case and another was the loser of the case, but both of them had the same complain.

<sup>91</sup> Confidential interviews with victims of the bribes paid to win their cases in the court in Logar Province: 2013.

*such cases can't be solved in their courts and the cases could be fallen down in the governmental courts for years without any decision* (Focus Group Discussion: 2013)<sup>92</sup>.

The overall discussion implies that this is the key reason that majority of civilians have lost their trust on their police and the judicial system, particularly in the rural parts of the country and are not interested to refer their cases to the governmental judicial systems<sup>93</sup>. It is also argued that the traditional and religious leaders also play important role in solution of the most civil and criminal cases. Most often Taliban refer most of the cases submitted to their courts to independent, influential and well recognized traditional and religious leaders. Taliban follow up the status of the cases submitted to the leaders until the cases are solved and a formal decision paper is given to the two parties involved in the cases<sup>94</sup>. Due to confidentiality and security of the information, copies of documents issued by Taliban Judges to the parties involved in the case could not be shared as the victims refused my request because their personal information as well as, the seriousness of the cases was highly important to them<sup>95</sup>.

It is important to analyze the current categories of the Islamic clergies (Ruhaniat) based on their importance and the degree of their sequences in Afghan societies, and to discover the source of their religious influence and validity in Afghanistan. The two major, active, visible and influential in Afghanistan are religious and tribal power holders. The religious power holders are mandated to implement, manage and protect religious norms and values in the society. It is argued that the leaders teach people, particularly children Islamic subjects<sup>96</sup>. In light of the overall

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<sup>92</sup> A confidential focus group discussion in Logar province: 2013.

<sup>93</sup> Although officials in the capital cities would like to show that everything is fine and normal. However, the above statements clearly indicate that many things should be done and changed, especially by the new government which will be elected in 6<sup>th</sup> April 2014 to recover and resolve the issues because all statements and information included or quoted in this research are based on the voices of peoples in the rural parts of the country. None of the information included in this thesis is my personal idea or perceptions. I expect some criticism, particularly from the government side. However, I believe that the real voices of peoples should be transferred through such studies and researches.

<sup>94</sup> The data and information was collected from the respondents, Taliban commanders, victims and the courts.

<sup>95</sup> There are four sources of the data collected for Means of Verification (MOV) about the whole information included in the thesis, (1) winner of the cases submitted to the courts, (2) loser of the cases submitted to the courts, (3) traditional and religious leaders who provide traditional justice in the rural areas and (4) documents and files in the courts (4 government and Taliban's court). due to confidentiality and privacy of data/information, I was requested to not share the exact information and to not include any part of the documents in my thesis.

<sup>96</sup> Such as Quran/Koran and other Islamic subjects.

discussion, this study found that religious and spiritual leaders in Islamic countries, particularly in Afghanistan have been recognized and respected by peoples in the country and a special significance has been given to them and their decision making powers in Islamic societies. As noted by a traditional leader *a proven history has existed that the religious leaders have been the most united array in Islamic society. The two separate, but very important elements that can give legitimacy and stability to ex-monarchy, or any type of government in Afghanistan are in agreement of recognized traditional and religious leaders*<sup>97</sup>. The respondents in the rural areas further argued that the leaders have been playing important role in mobilizing Islamic societies towards nationwide religious, political and anti dictatorial movements. Therefore, rulers of Afghanistan have always sought social and political sustainability and stability of their government through recognition of renowned and influential religious leaders<sup>98</sup>.

In addition to their normal mandate and responsibility, they fill in the political vacuums, particularly during unrest in the country. As a case study, it is notable that after the communist regime collapsed in April 1992, there was political vacuum in the country<sup>99</sup>. To prevent social crisis and internal conflict among multi ethnic local commanders in Logar province in 1992, all influential local stakeholders gathered to find out an alternative way to fill in the political and administrative vacuum in the province until a governor is appointed by upcoming central government<sup>100</sup>. The respondents interviewed in Logar province further argued that the stakeholders agreed that the province should be ruled by a Shura (local council) comprised of powerful and influential Jehadi commanders and traditional and religious leaders<sup>101</sup>. The Shura (council) members also agreed that the Shura should be headed

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<sup>97</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>98</sup> It has been historically proved that political leaders, the former monarchy and the current president have been respecting and following the same system in Afghanistan.

<sup>99</sup> As a case study, the example of logar province was selected for this research.

<sup>100</sup> The stakeholders refer to the commanders , traditional and religious leaders

<sup>101</sup> As one resident of Logar province, I am fully aware of the whole incident had been happening in the province.

by Mawlavi Kateb, one of the most powerful religious leaders in the province, even in Afghanistan<sup>102</sup>.

An ex-Jihadi commander who was part of this Shura (council) argued that although Mawlavi Kateb owned all three identities (Commander, traditional and religious leaders), he was appointed by the other stakeholders because of his religious identity<sup>103</sup>. He further argued that after Mr. Kateb led this council for months, he was officially appointed as provincial governor by the interim president of Afghanistan, Sebghatullah Mijadidi. As noted by a former commander who was also member of the Shura (council) *the 21 members of the council had appointed Mr. Kateb as head of the council not because he had been a commander or traditional leader but he was appointed for this designation because he was an influential religious leader. In terms of military power, we (the commanders) had been the most powerful stakeholders in the society, but in terms of local acceptance, we had nothing to influence people. In other words, his words and message were robust and more effective and acceptable in the society rather than our military equipments. Therefore, we appointed a religious leader for this important position*<sup>104</sup>.

This council was mandated to serve in the province as a formal provincial government. Moreover, the respondents interviewed in Logar province argued that upon the collapse of the communist regime in 1992, all Afghanistan had turned into a firewood of civil war, except in Logar province because the council and the other power brokers requested the other power holders in the province to live in unity and solidarity and to not allow the existing local stakeholders to fight each other<sup>105</sup>. Finally, as noted by an ex-commander *we were the starkest fighters against soviet forces and their national alliance, but were clement among ourselves*<sup>106</sup>. As one of the resident of Logar province and the victim of fighting between Mujahidin and soviet forces, I have been being well aware of social and political structure of Afghanistan,

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<sup>102</sup> Shura is the council of multi ethnic stakeholders established for a common goal at the local, sub-National and National Level.

<sup>103</sup> Mr. Kateb was a commander of Islamic Movement leaded by Mawlavi Mohammad Nabbi Mohammadi.

<sup>104</sup> Confidential Interview with Ex- Commanders in Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>105</sup> Some small personal incident incidents might be reported, but the council protected the province the big and long term disaster of civil wars.

<sup>106</sup> Confidential Interview with Ex- Commanders in Logar Province: 2013.

particularly Logar province. The commanders participated in this research, were the most powerful in terms of equipments and fighters<sup>107</sup>.

Like religious leaders, traditional leaders are also mandated to provide traditional justice, resolve conflict and fill in the political vacuum during the unrest in the country. The respondents in Logar province argued that to effectively perform their rule and regulation, leaders used their local power, including armed coercion. Hence they have established their own volunteer and dedicated Arbakai (local policing system)<sup>108</sup>. It should be noted that the Arbakai which has been established by the government of Afghanistan and funded by the international community in Afghanistan is totally different from the Arbakai the tribal leaders have established. As noted by a traditional leader *the governmental Arbakai is paid, undedicated and owned by government*<sup>109</sup>. For the usage of the military power, the leaders have established their own rule and regulations which is protected and implemented by the Jirga (council of elders). Finally, a traditional leader in Logar Province argued that despite the traditional justice and tribal governance we provide to support our rural society, we have always been criticized by the rulers and other liberal activists who don't have insight about the traditional and religious norms. Therefore, not only the leaders have not had chance to systematically participate in any development interventions but also they have cruelly been criticized by a liberal part of the society. The argument indicates that the conflict of interests between tribal and liberal societies in Afghanistan have always been the root causes of the misunderstanding, conflict and disagreement between the liberal and conservative stakeholders in the country.

The two upcoming paragraphs outline the criticism of traditional and religious leaders. As noted by a current parliament member *while looking at the religious and traditional leaders from the angle of their role in development, we can*

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<sup>107</sup> Meanwhile it should be mentioned that in that war, there were 7 casualties from my family and relatives. My father was captured by the communist regime and soviet forces in 1981 and he was put and cruelly tortured in the worst prison (Puli Churkhi) for three years. In 1984, he was killed in the prison and his body wasn't repatriated and returned to my family. My children have been asking me *where is the graveyard of my grandfather to visit and pray for him*. There are still no answers.

<sup>108</sup> For more details about Arbakai system in Afghanistan, please read the articles written about this policing system in Afghanistan.

<sup>109</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Province: 2013.

*find that they have not been only at the edge of development programs, but also stymie against the development programs introduced by government or non government agencies. When some governments had fairly launched any development programs for economic and social development in Afghanistan, the programs were disrupted by the religious leaders*<sup>110</sup>. The respondents interviewed in the capital cities further argued that the sabotage of many development programs introduced by the king Amanullah, Zahir Shah and the ex-president Daoud Khan are the significant examples of disobedience. However, the respondents only indicate that the ex-governments launched many development programs in Afghanistan which were disrupted by the leaders but they didn't mention about the approach used by the ex-governments for the identification, planning and implementation of the programs. Majority of the respondents in the rural areas argued that as the majority of the bygone governments in Afghanistan had been in essence of dictatorial and monarchies, the governments did not have any clear or structured developmental strategies to drive Afghanistan's peoples to a systematic and inclusive participation model. They further argued that due to the centralized and top-down planning system, there has not been any space for civilians, including creating an environment for local leaders to participate in whole cycle of development initiatives in the country.

The second criticism of the traditional and religious leaders is traditional justice provided by these leaders. Due to weakness and corrupt formal and governmental justice system in the country, particularly in the rural parts of the country, traditional justice mechanisms which are based traditional values of the rural communities are common in Afghanistan. However, such justice system and services have been criticized by individuals and groups. It is argued that this type of justice and courts which have been led by traditional leaders is not appropriate because such courts and services are harmful in the society. They further argued that in addition to lack or less capacity of traditional leaders; the leaders don't have enough information and understanding on international human rights. As noted by a civil society representative interviewed, *there are many examples of such harmful decisions made*

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Confidential interview with a parliament member in Balkh Province: 2013.

*by traditional justice mechanism runs by the leaders. Forced marriage and payment of girls as compensation and restitution which is known as “Bad” are the best example of such unfair decisions<sup>111</sup>.* In light of the above quote, a traditional leader in Logar province argued that the criticism is that the interviewed respondent from civil society hasn’t had any insight about the traditional norms and justice because she is from capital city of Balkh province, there is no traditional practices at all. The traditional leader further argued that the examples she provided such as forced marriage and payment of girls as compensation have been very rare and taking place in exceptional cases and by individual decisions. Hence, it is argued that due to lack or misunderstanding about traditional norms and practices, there are misperception and misinterpretation about traditional norms and practices in the capital cities. Finally, the overall discussion implies that a justice system that is clean from corruption and mixed of formal and traditional justice mechanism is required in Afghanistan because it is argued that the formal courts and justice system doesn’t have insight about traditional contexts that is also very important for fair decision. In the same time, the traditional justice system needs to understand Afghanistan’s domestic laws as well as, the key principle of human rights.

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<sup>111</sup> Confidential interview with a civil society representative in Balkh province: 2013.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **POWER IDENTIFICATION AND POWER RELATION AMONG KEY POWER BROKERS IN AFGHANISTAN**

This chapter aims to project the vertical ways used by power holders to identify their power and the usage of tools through which they define themselves to each other in Afghanistan<sup>31</sup>. This chapter will also map out the various power relations among power holders in Afghanistan. The power relation will be based on the political and social ideology and opinions which is owned by the power holders in the country. Meanwhile, it will be indicated that what kind of effect the power identification and the power relation will have on the current development intervention in Afghanistan.

#### **4.1 The Nine Vertical Approaches used by the Power Holders to define their Power in Afghanistan**

The aforementioned power holders projected power and influence, and identify themselves from other groups using a variety of ways. The NATO, insurgents, and the government of Afghanistan have identified power through military and militia, often harming civilians in the process. In addition to military power, NATO has tried to project economic power through development interventions. Since NATO does not define clear boundaries between military operations and development initiatives, people, particularly in remote and war affected areas are often confused by the objectives and processes of the development intervention undertaken by the NATO. The respondents interviewed in the rural parts argued that the current development projects implemented by the PRT under the umbrella of the wider NATO

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<sup>31</sup> The tools can be military, social and political power and influence, as well as, money and other equipments such offices, cars and high salaries can be a tool to identify power.



military operations are interconnected and just to complement their military operations in Afghanistan. Therefore, the sense of ownership of such projects is very weak among peoples because it is believed that *such projects haven't been planned for our welfare but are planned to complete and achieve their [NATO's] military goals*<sup>32</sup>.

In addition to military power, the government of Afghanistan projects its power through enforcement of laws. As noted by a religious leader *the laws are equally endorsed but differently enforced on citizen in Afghanistan*<sup>33</sup>. It is argued that the enforcement of laws is not in the transparent manner. If government high authorities break the laws, he/she won't be prosecuted and punished. However, if a civilian does so, he/she will be in person. To show their importance and power, traditional and religious leaders and Jihadi commanders have developed their power through the influence they have amongst communities. It is argued that these leaders have been using messages and leadership in communities to mobilize people against injustice in society. In addition to their soft influence, there are also some cases illustrating that commanders project their power through militia interference to challenge the government and other political players<sup>34</sup>. As noted by a former government official *the religious and traditional leaders identify their power through challenging governmental and non-governmental development programs if these leaders are not recognized as key players in the whole cycle of the development interventions in society*<sup>35</sup>.

The NGOs and the other development agencies display power and influence through physical goods and financial strength to commodities to influence people. In addition to their development programs, it is argued that the government of Afghanistan and international development and humanitarian agencies in the country has been projecting their influence and power through secured luxury offices, expensive vehicles and lifestyles. As noted by a traditional leader, *in addition to the very expensive and unnecessary office equipment and staff salaries, the government of Afghanistan and the other humanitarian and development agencies display their*

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<sup>32</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar province: 2013

<sup>33</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Balkh province: 2013

<sup>34</sup> It is already explored more in chapter two in power mapping sub-heading.

<sup>35</sup> Confidential interview with a government official in Balkh province: 2013

*power through high paid employees*,<sup>36</sup>. Respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that majority of the target beneficiaries of NGO programmes in the rural area are disappointed with results of their intervention and the agencies have been criticized by the beneficiaries of the development in terms of the quality of services delivered to the communities<sup>37</sup>.

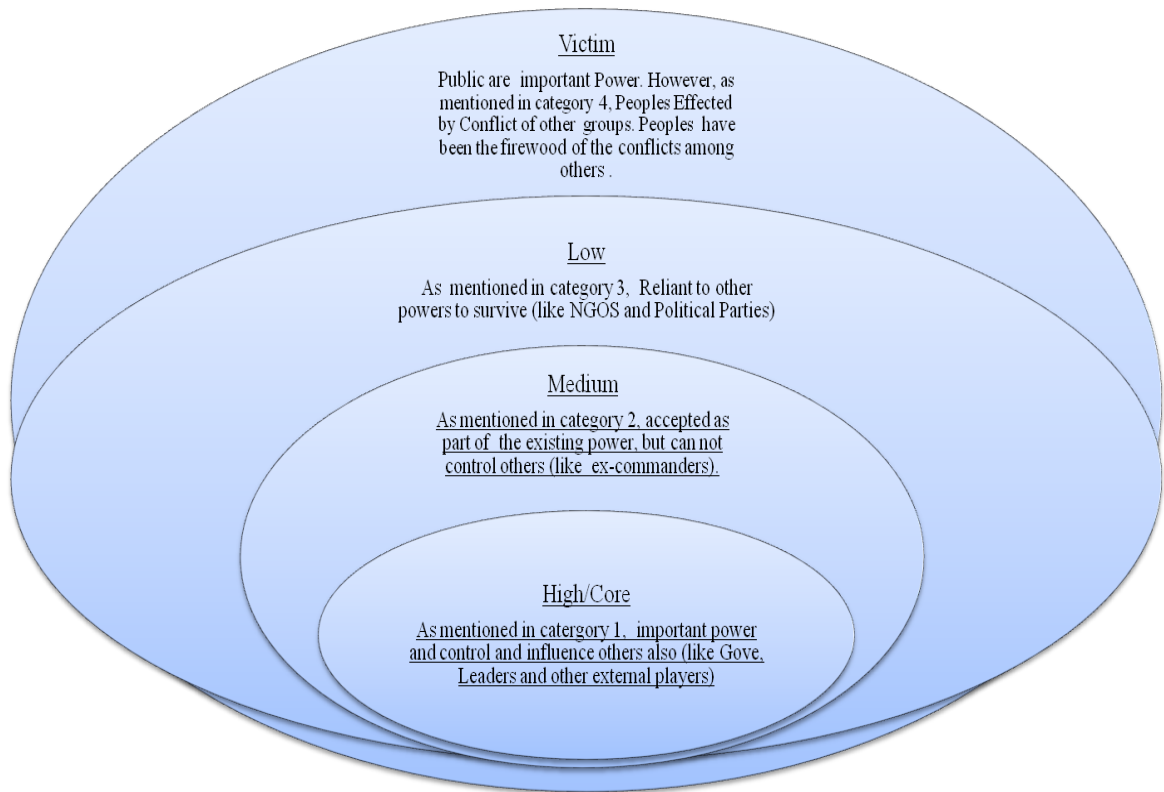
This study also found that the political parties have not had any systematic influence on society because they have not been managed to reach people directly, apart from during election campaigns, when they reach out to people to encourage voting allegiance. The political parties try to show that they are strong opposition parties to challenge the governmental programs and policies<sup>38</sup>. The last naturally powerful but practically powerless group is the general populace. Unlike the other countries, peoples are relatively more powerless and vulnerable in Afghanistan and do not have any power to identify themselves from other groups. It is argued that they are the most vulnerable and the major victims of violence and injustice in the country. Finally, for this research the ten international, national and local power holders are divided into four main categories.

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<sup>36</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar province: 2013

<sup>37</sup> More details are available in chapter V.

<sup>38</sup> There is no practical evidence showing that the political parties are powerful enough.



**Figure 4.1: Grouping of the Ten Power Holders Mapped under this Research**

## **4.2 Grouping of the Ten Power Holders Mapped under this Research<sup>39</sup>**

### **Category 1**

The first category of power holders is NATO, UNAMA, the government of Afghanistan, traditional and religious leaders and insurgent groups. Traditional and religious leaders are defined as the traditionally and religiously empowered grouping of the society and NATO has been defined as military focused/oriented powers, whose

<sup>39</sup> There are also various sources of the data collected for the Means of Verification (MOV) about the whole information included in this figure, (1) practical examples collected from beneficiaries, (2) examples provided by National and International NGOs involved in the development of Afghanistan, (3) traditional and religious leaders (4) documents and files supporting this idea, (5) key informant interviews and focus group discussion in the both provinces, Balkh and Logar. Due to confidentiality and privacy of the data/information, it was requested that to not share the exact information and to not include any part of the documents in this thesis.

primary goal is to remove their enemy using military power. The United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) is a political UN mission established at the request of the government of Afghanistan to assist the Afghan government in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development in the country. In addition to the laws enforcement, the government of Afghanistan is mandated to deliver social services to ensure equal justice, human rights, security and the rule of law. As noted by a traditional leader, *we are always (during rest and unrest) with our peoples in the society. In other words, we are from this society, with this society and for this society. Therefore we and our involvement are effective in development of our society*<sup>40</sup>. The government officials interviewed argued that although the traditional and religious leaders do not have any legal status or formal position of power in the Afghan governmental structure, they are more beneficial and efficient for the future of Afghanistan. It is argued that the leaders could be the most effective source of communication in remote and mountainous areas where print and electronic media are unavailable. They can easily and effectively transfer knowledge at social and religious gatherings (prayers, social meetings, Jirga).

### **Category 2**

The second category of power holders are ex- commanders, who are defined as the socially empowered grouping of the society. Like traditional and religious leaders, the ex-commanders are more beneficial and efficient for the future of Afghanistan. It is also argued that the commanders could be the most effective source of conflict resolution and peace building in remote and mountainous areas where judicial systems are either unavailable or corrupt.

### **Category 3**

The third category of the power holder is the political parties and the international development agencies and international and national NGOs. These are all defined by being agencies and NGOs mandated to deliver development and

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<sup>40</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar province: 2013

humanitarian assistance to reduce or eradicate poverty to change the quality of life of people, particularly in the vulnerable parts of the country.

#### **Category 4**

The fourth and final category of power holders are peoples of Afghanistan. The peoples in Afghanistan are the most vulnerable category of residence in Afghanistan and the firewood of the conflicts in the country. The above ten key power players have employed different types of power relation strategies that will be discussed more in the upcoming sections.

### **4.3 Power Relation among the Multi Stakeholders in Afghanistan**

This section will map out graphical using diagrams, the various power relations among power holders in Afghanistan based on the opinions given by interviewees from the various groups selected and outlined at the beginning of this study. Local power structures and power relations in Afghanistan have been extremely complex, particularly since the war of resistance between the Soviet Union and Afghan mujahedeen groups. The current situation in Afghanistan is the best example where the international community finds itself struggling with a clear definition and understanding of local elites and power structures playing role in Afghanistan. This research aims to be a solid basis for understanding local society and current power brokers in the context of Afghanistan. The reader will be introduced to the local elders and assume that they are the local power brokers<sup>41</sup>. It has been assumed that once the local power brokers realized foreigner militaries and development workers were not remaining in the country long term, the local elites began to make contact because they would like to maintain and consolidate their existing power to challenge their common enemy. As noted by a traditional leader interviewed, *we have different systems in different communities. We are the most unique and united informal institution in the rural parts of Afghanistan. The*

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<sup>41</sup> If the central government and the international players identify the real tribal and religious elites, control of the country becomes easier. The leaders are the most important pattern that still exists in rural areas across all of Afghanistan.

*dangerous pattern among us would be those in which the strongest local authority recognizes the outsiders as a direct threat to their power*<sup>42</sup>. The respondents interviewed in rural areas argued that the international fighters and their national alliance may not be able to do anything with the Taliban to stop or remove them from the ground.

Such relation often unintentionally changes the normal direction of development intervention to maintain relations. Therefore, it is argued that some of the international development agencies and the humanitarian NGOs have also often unintentionally conducted development projects that have strengthened local power networks. In fact, interviewees claimed the central government and international forces have been keen to establish relations with ex-local commanders, which have further increased their autonomy in relation to the central government. The creation of the current local police proposed by the government of Afghanistan and supported by the international community is the first step to maintaining these relations. As noted by a former commander interviewed, *it used to be very common for foreign troops to be manipulated by local authorities into attacking and destroying their rivals for local supremacy*<sup>43</sup>. Finally, the discussion implies that this innovation has meant foreign troops have developed local enemies and rivalries. The respondents participated in this study were asked the below three main questions to find out the real relation of power among the key power holders in Afghanistan.

- Who are the key actors who hold power in Afghanistan?
- Who are the key stakeholders?
- What kind of relations do they have to each other and to you?

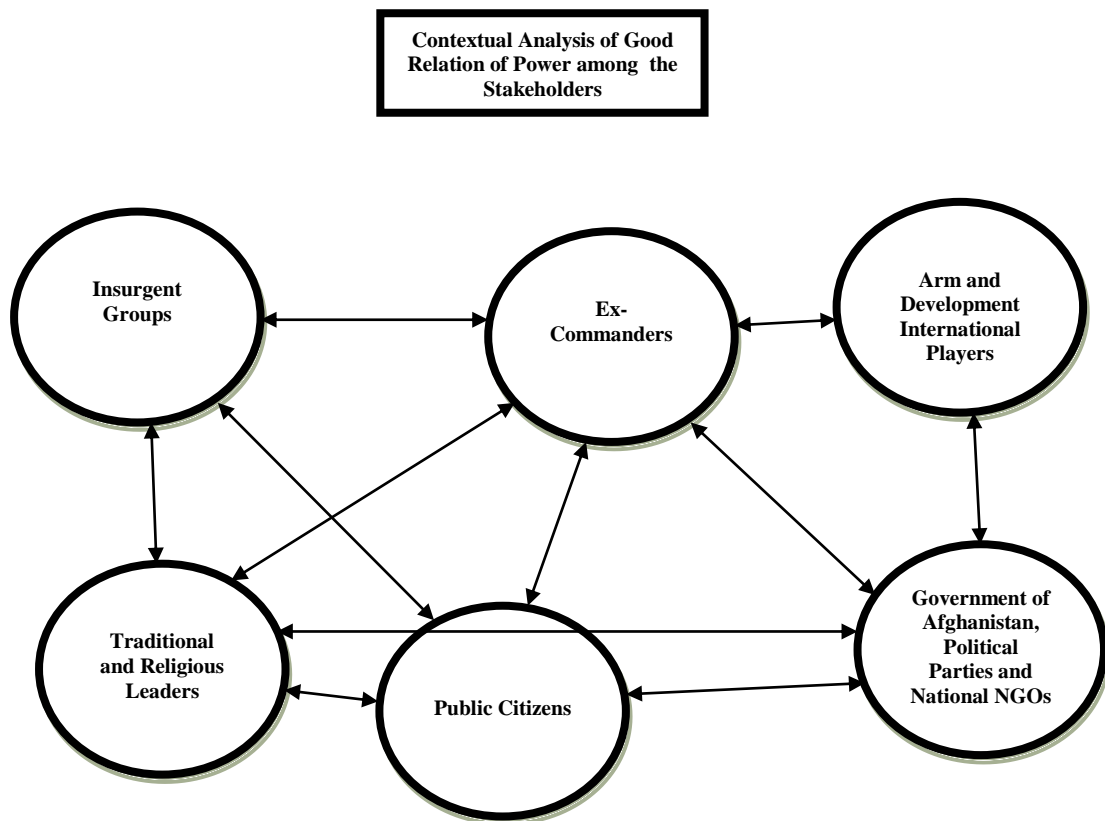
It should be noted that the good (in terms of relationships) does not imply that it is a well functioning relationship, rather it means that the relationship is generally positive or strong, and that the involved parties are willing to interact with each other. The source of data for this section, including the below diagrams are based on the key informant interviews and the focus group discussion. In addition to understanding and mapping the existing power relation in the context of Afghanistan,

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<sup>42</sup> Confidential Interview with a traditional leader in Logar province: 2013.

<sup>43</sup> Confidential Interview with a former commander in Balkh province: 2013.

this analysis indicates and gives an understanding of what kind of power relations can negatively or positively affect the mode and status of the current development initiative in Afghanistan. To shorten the discussion of this power relation, the current power relations can be divided into five categories. Due to limited space in this research, I will explore only one example for each category of power relation out of the five categories.



**Figure 4.2: Map of Good Relation of Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan**

#### **4.4 Map of Good Relation of Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan**

The data was collected from the respondents participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, the arrows used in the diagrams mapping the

relation of powers in this section were selected and used based on the recommendation and data collected from the respondents. In other words, I located five different charts (one chart per power relation) and gave five different small colored cards to respondents to locate one card in front of each chart. So based on this participatory exercise, the five categories of power relation (from good relation to conflict) have been identified and the arrows have been chosen for the power relation exercise. The above diagram gives a sense and picture of what kind of relations of power are maintained among different power holders. As indicated above, one of the five categories of power relation is good relation of power among the key stakeholders. The good relation of power depends on communality in their common vision and interest. For instance, insurgents and traditional, religious and public citizens have common vision and interests. The respondents interviewed in Logar province argued that the common vision and interest among these stakeholders in rural areas is their common faith and beliefs. They believe that the international forces did not come to Afghanistan to protect us, but rather to achieve their strategic goals which support their own interest. As noted by a traditional leader, *the current war is not against terrorists because terrorists are not in our village. This war is for the protection of global and regional interests which can be achieved through the creation of conflict in Afghanistan*<sup>44</sup>. The above quote from this interviewee clearly implies an important message of the sympathy by locals with the insurgency. It is argued that this sympathy is not because of their family relations but is because of common beliefs and religious interests they have.

Their common interest can be protection of their religious values from common enemy because common beliefs in the rural parts of the country is that the international forces have attacked our traditional norms and religious beliefs. This quote is a clear answer to an important and unanswered question<sup>45</sup>. As indicated earlier, the question is that despite low capacity and basic military equipment, the Taliban has been so successful at fighting against NATO forces and their national alliance. A Taliban commander interviewed answered *we are not alone. We are*

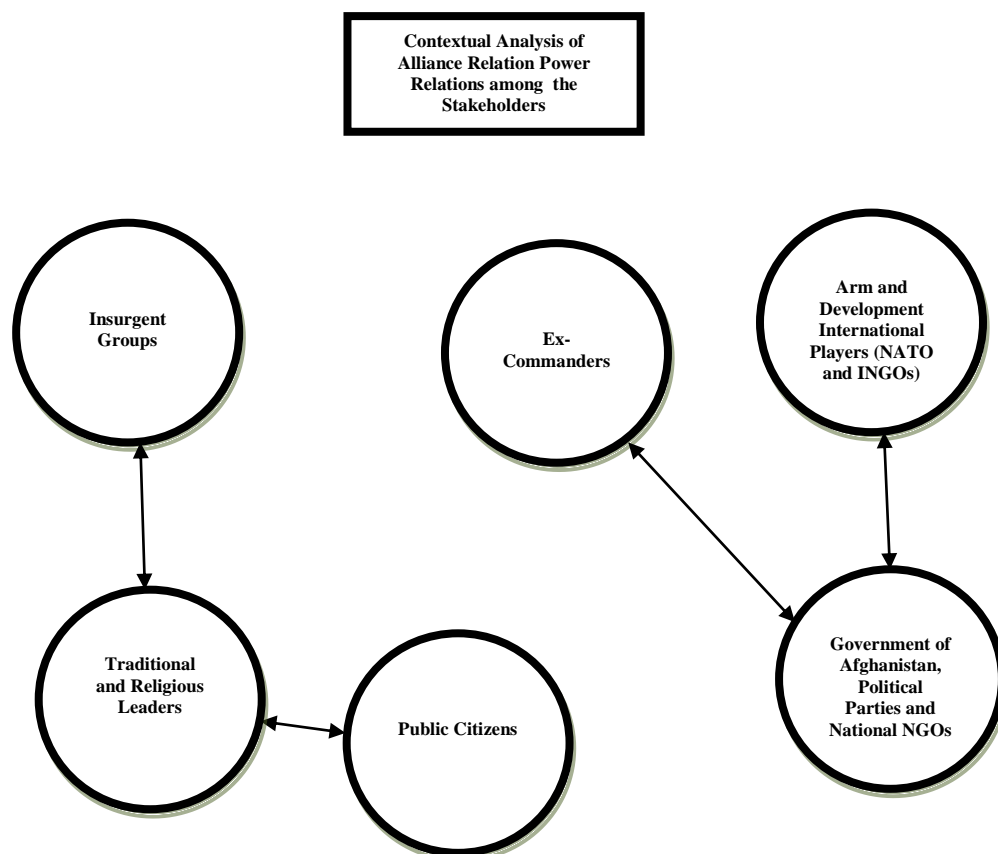
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<sup>44</sup> Confidential Interview with a traditional leader in Logar province: 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Their examples are the entrance of the USA forces into their houses and burning of Holy Quran by the international forces.



*among our peoples and we are protected by our people because we have a common vision of fighting against the foreigners to protect our religious and traditional values*<sup>46</sup>. Finally, the above quote clearly indicates that the balance of current power does not refer to military superiority alone or powerlessness, but it refers instead to the level of support among the general population<sup>47</sup>.



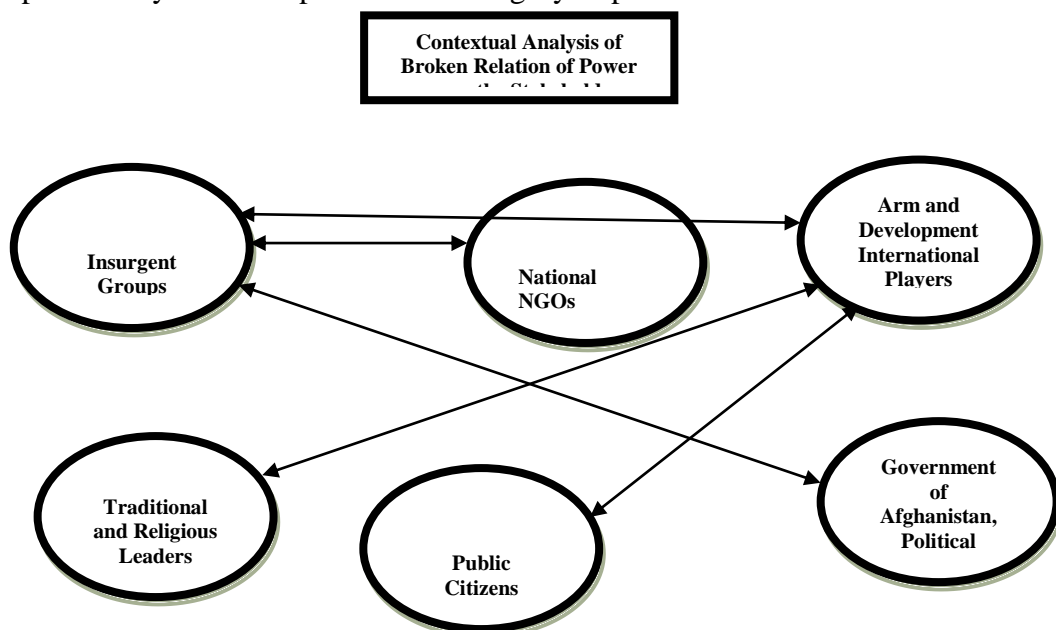
**Figure 4.3: Map of Alliance Relation Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan**

<sup>46</sup> Confidential Interview with a Taliban commander in Logar province: 2013.

<sup>47</sup> The example if good relation of power is between Local NGOs and traditional and religious leaders.

## 4.5 Map of Alliance Relation Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan<sup>48</sup>

As indicated above, one of the five categories of power relation is alliance relation of power among the key stakeholders. This category will refer to the both types of power relations, temporary and permanent alliance. As indicated in the above diagram, the temporary example of an alliance is power relation between government and some former commanders. However, when their desires are not considered by government, the commanders can sever relations with the government, often becoming a threat to the local government. The respondents in Logar Province argued that to take the example of NATO and the government of Afghanistan, it shows the normal, systematic and permanent power relation between these two power players. Although sometimes due to uncommon incidents, NATO and the government of Afghanistan have often experienced tensions in their relations, but their systematic and principally agreed relationships is to maintain an alliance. Due to limited space in this research, I explored only one example for each category of power relation.

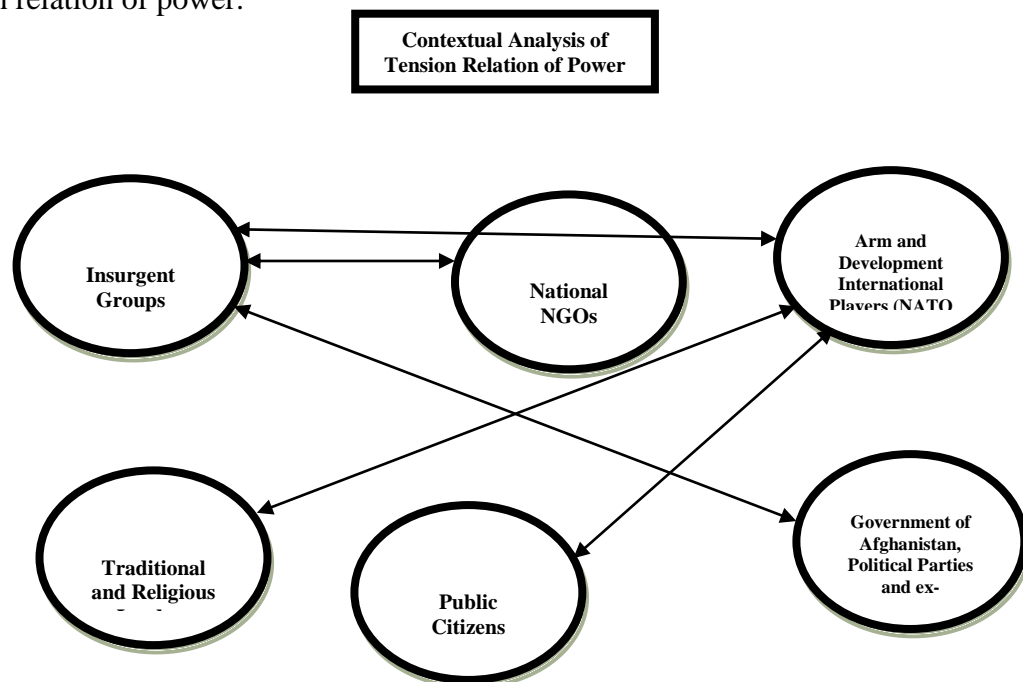


**Figure 4.4: Map of Broken Relation of Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan**

<sup>48</sup> The data came for the respondents participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. The daily political analysis of the situation by national and international Medias is the best means of verification for the data collected.

#### 4.6 Map of Broken Relation of Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan<sup>49</sup>

The above diagram also outlines an analysis of broken power relations and the dynamic of the power relation among various power holders in Afghanistan<sup>50</sup>. It gives reader a sense of kind of power relations the power holders share together. In addition to understanding and mapping the existing power relations in the context of Afghanistan, this analysis indicates and gives an understanding of what kind of power relations can negatively or positively affect the mode and status of current development initiatives in a traditionally conservative country like Afghanistan. Respondents interviewed in rural parts of the country argued that this category of the power relations is a broken relationship. Like other categories, due to limited space in this research, only one example for broken relation of power was explored. As indicated above, relation of power between public and NATO forces is an example for broken relation of power.



**Figure 4.5: Map of Tension Relation of Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan**

<sup>49</sup> The data came for the respondents participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. The daily political analysis of the situation by national and international Medias is the best means of verification for the data collected.

<sup>50</sup> Broken relation refers to the regular disagreement among involved stakeholders on the principle and approaches of the interventions.

#### **4.7 Map of Tension Relation of Power among the Power Brokers in Afghanistan<sup>51</sup>**

The above diagram also shows another category of power relations indicating the type and cycle of tension among involved stakeholders in the country. The majority of the stakeholders mapped in this figure have shown tensions with the government of Afghanistan, NATO and international development agencies (International Players). If we choose the power relation of traditional and religious leaders and compare with majority of the other stakeholders mapped in the diagram, it gives us a sense of the massive lack of relations and tension. In addition to the disagreement of the public with the majority of the other stakeholders included in this diagram, the tension of power among local leaders (religious and traditional) who can play an important role in the current peace-building and sustainable development of Afghanistan with the other international and national players, such as government, international community, NATO and others implies that there is a significantly low level of agreement among the key stakeholders that are essential for sustainable development of Afghanistan.

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<sup>51</sup> The data came for the respondents participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. The daily political analysis of the situation by national and international Medias is the best means of verification for the data collected.

## CHAPTER V

### INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

This chapter outlines the key factors which ensure participatory and sustainable development in the current situation of Afghanistan. It will also figure out the common perception of beneficiaries about the current development in interventions in the country. In addition, this chapter maps out the importance and cost effectiveness of the role of traditional and religious leaders to mobile communities to participate in the whole cycle of the decision making at the local level to ensure community led and community owned development approach.

#### **5.1 Ensuring Equality through Inclusive Participation to Achieve Long-term, Community Led, Community Owned and Sustainable Development**

After the fall of Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan began moving from a humanitarian crisis and emergency assistance situation, to a reconstruction and development model. Since 2002, the country has undergone significant changes in the development and governance environment. There has been a greater formalization of the state system, the country has adopted a constitution, introduced a multi ethnic parliament and there has been an exponential quantitative increase in civil society organizations and activity. As part of Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the government, NGOs and donors have prioritized human rights and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has been protected by the constitution in order to *introduce mature, transparent, inclusive and self-stand civil society and development institutions; the aforesaid institutions need more qualitative improvement in terms of capacity development, effectiveness and transparency*<sup>55</sup>. In addition to governance and institutional development initiatives, many infrastructure

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<sup>55</sup> Confidential interview with traditional leader in Balkh Province: 2013.

and non-infrastructure projects have been implemented in the country. Reconstruction of the thoroughfare connecting north, south, west and east of the country with the capital city, Kabul, as well as, creation of the ring roads is one example of the thousand of development projects implemented across the country. There has been a nationwide increase in the enrolment of girls and boys in educational institutions, increased health services, clean drinking water, electricity network and other facilities have been expanding from the cities to rural parts of the country. The establishment of the of Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (AIEC) and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) undertaken by the government with full support from the intentional community were important steps taken towards a democratic system.

However, it is argued that there are still many unanswered questions about independence, freedom and accountability of these institutions. As noted by a religious leader *as an important indicator for the centralization of power in Afghanistan, the members of the commissions, the commissioners have been appointed by the president of Afghanistan*<sup>56</sup>. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) which supports MDGs frames the overall cycle and pillars of the development initiatives in the country. After the ANDS was approved by president of Afghanistan in 2008, Afghanistan experienced initial implementation of many infrastructure and non-infrastructure development projects with failures and negligible successes. As noted by an international NGO representative *ownership and sustainability of the development programs are an issue and a tough subject among development experts and professionals. Grass root level participation and inclusive planning with direct beneficiaries of development programs are crucial in preparation of any development strategy because they will be the benefactors of programs*<sup>57</sup>. In addition to other issues in development environment in Afghanistan, such as insecurity, corruption, lack of public contribution and lack of public participation, the interviewees in rural areas of the both provinces argued that in addition to high operation costs of projects, the frequent sub-contracting of

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<sup>56</sup> Confidential Interview with a traditional leader from Logar province: 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Confidential Interview with a representative of international NGO: 2013.

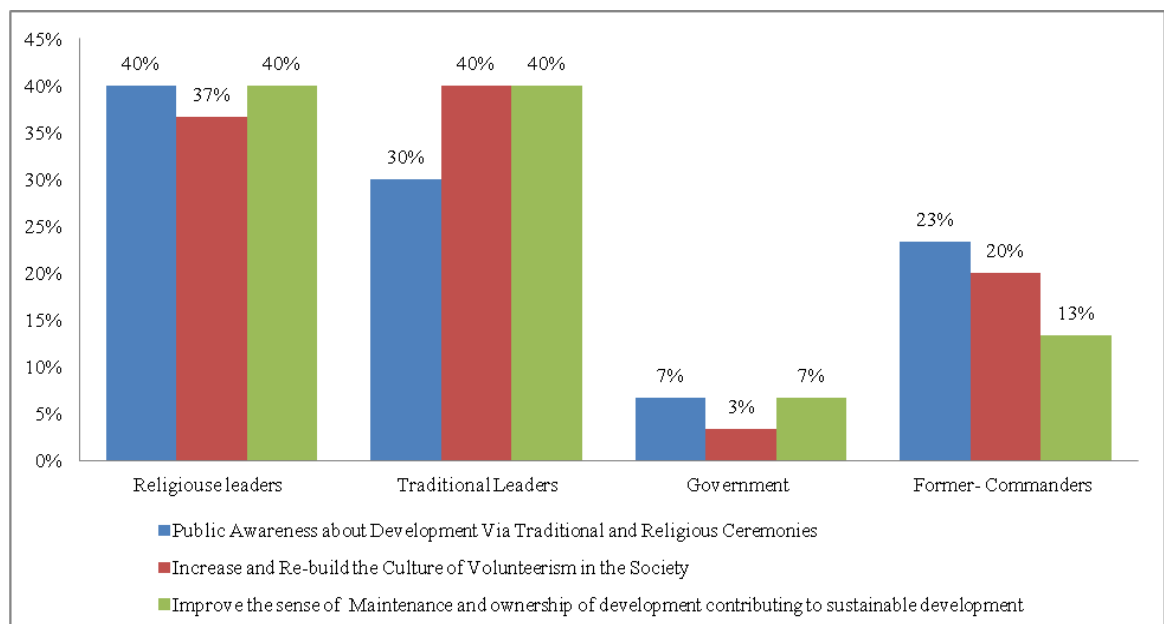
development projects to various construction companies has negatively affected the quality of the development projects in the country<sup>58</sup>. Without prior consultation with local communities, majority of the development projects have directly been contracted by the international development agencies with contraction companies<sup>59</sup>.

However, these construction companies subcontract the projects to other sub-contractors. These processes of sub-contracting progresses until eventually somewhere down the ability and resources of the projects that reduce the quality in implementation of the project. The respondents in Logar province argued that in addition to bribes exchanged by involved parties, every sub-contractor company deducts their own share from projects while contracting with other companies. The projects planned and implemented by construction companies without or less consultation with the local beneficiaries lose their value and ownership among the local communities. Local beneficiaries do not know how and when the projects were planned, how much budget the projects have had, or how budgets were utilized. As indicated in the below figure, it is argued that the quality of the majority of projects implemented with this approach (top down) is low and least accepted by public.

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<sup>58</sup> Please refer to the below chart and figure 1.

<sup>59</sup> These projects have been financed and directly contracted by the international development agencies and implemented by national and international construction companies.



**Figure 5.1: Shows the Role and Influence of the key Power Holders Contributing to Participatory, Transparent and Sustainable development**

## **5.2 Shows the Role and Influence of the key Power Holders Contributing to Participatory, Transparent and Sustainable development<sup>60</sup>**

The discussion implies that if beneficiaries are involved in the whole cycle of development programs (from designing to implementation), they will have the sense of ownership of development packages and this sense of ownership will directly contribute to sustainability of development programs. A religious leader noted *with regard to religious values, the governments of Afghanistan in collaboration with the international communities have to undertake and develop long-term, participatory, parallel, inclusive, holistic and national development plan to fundamentally address the current economic, social and political instability in Afghanistan*<sup>61</sup>. It is also

<sup>60</sup> The data came for the respondents participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. The daily political analysis of the situation by national and international Medias is the best means of verification for the data collected.

<sup>61</sup> Confidential Interview with a religious leader from Logar province: 2013.



assumed that infrastructure and income generation projects can decrease the rate of existing unemployment and alleviate the volume of poverty and improve the livelihood of inhabitants in Afghanistan, especially for conflict and natural disaster affected peoples in the most remote and vulnerable parts of the country because the respondent argued that the key root causes of the current insurgency in Afghanistan is unemployment contributing to poverty and injustice that eventually leads to corruption. Finally, the overall discussion implies that the interventions and investments in the current development of Afghanistan can be sustainable, effective and efficient by promoting public engagement in the whole cycle of development. Therefore, it is argued that traditional and religious leaders are needed to improve participatory and sustainable development in the country.

### **5.3 Common Perception about the Current Development Intervention Supported by International Development Agencies in Afghanistan**

After the fall of Taliban administration in 2001, many international development and UN agencies have been involved in the development initiatives in Afghanistan. USAID, UNDP, CIDA, Government of Japan /JICA/JSDF, DFID, WB, ADB and many other agencies and bilateral donors have been key technical and financial supporters of the government of Afghanistan in development initiatives under the guidance of the ANDS. Gender equality, counter narcotics, regional cooperation, anti corruption and environmental protection are the cross cutting themes applied in aforementioned ANDS sectors. Quantitatively, Afghanistan has enjoyed considerable changes and achievements at the cost of billions of dollars. However, the respondents in the rural parts of the country argued that despite spending billions of dollars in the development of Afghanistan, there are no significant and visible changes or improvement in quality of life of peoples in Afghanistan. They further argued that peoples in Afghanistan are still suffering from deprivation of their basic cultural, social, civil and political human rights. It should be noted that people in Afghanistan acknowledge that quantitatively Afghanistan have enjoyed development changes. However they are dissatisfied with the quality of the development done in over a

decade in Afghanistan. As noted by a traditional leader, *there are still lots of failures and issues that need to be improved. The people of Afghanistan are still excited to see tangible and positive development and construction changes in their country. We are hoping to see conditional, fundamental, and cost effective but more efficient and sustainable development intervention in our country*<sup>62</sup>.

On the other hand, projects identified through participatory approaches (bottom up approach) and implemented by target beneficiaries are more cost effective and sustainable than the projects proposed by government or donor agencies without consultation with the grass root level beneficiaries (top down approach). In this regard, the interviewees in rural areas argued that projects financed and directly contracted with the construction companies by the international development agencies are usually of worse quality and lack transparency and accountability. As a case study, it is argued that projects implemented by PRT and these construction companies were the most expensive with the poorest quality when compared to projects implemented through CDCs under the National Solidarity Programs (NSP). As noted by a traditional leader, *the projects proposed and implemented by CDCs/Community members are the most cost effective with high quality because there is effective transparency and monitoring mechanism which is lacking in the projects directly implemented by PRT and other companies supported by international development agencies*<sup>63</sup>. The above discussion implies that the rationale behind the aforesaid success and failures of these two models of development are inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the target community members. As clearly indicated in the below figure, the key areas for failure of projects financed by PRTs and the other international development agencies were related to the social acceptance, participatory planning, monitoring, and accountability mechanism of development initiatives.

Moreover, it is also argued that there is no inclusive monitoring and transparency mechanism to timely give financial and programmatic progression of projects to the public. There can be monitoring systems between donors and implementing partners, however, these do not contribute to raising awareness of the

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<sup>62</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>63</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Province: 2013

communities to the projects purpose, function and long term maintenance. A religious leader noted *if the current development programs are our property, we should be involved in the whole cycle of the development initiatives (from prioritization to implementation), and we should be aware of each failure and success of these programs, including the amount and utilization of budgets. Unfortunately it hasn't happened yet*<sup>64</sup>. It is assumed that although traditional and religious leaders don't know the theory of cycle of projects, they however, understand effective management of whole cycle of development projects.

The above discussion refers to the transparency and accountability mechanism proposed by National Solidarity Program (NSP) led by CDCs in each village. The projects implemented by CDCs under the NSP program include a comprehensive and inclusive monitoring and transparency system. In addition to the common monitoring system applied by facilitating partners implementing NSP, CDCs that are representing communities as development and governance institution in the villages are principally obliged to establish a Community Participatory Monitoring (CPM) system to ensure quality assurance of development projects, as well as, to facilitate the process of the transparency and accountability by CDC members to the communities. The CDC members interviewed argued that the CPM team includes 4 elected non-CDC community members (per CDC) who are responsible for monitoring CDC activities, especially in relation to the use and implementation of distributed block grants<sup>65</sup>. In addition to the aforesaid monitoring procedure, social audits (comprehensive downward accountability hearings at the village level) form part of the transparency and core monitoring system. A CDC member in Logar Province noted that social audits are defined under the current program as a community wide basic audit of all use of the NSP block grants against approved subprojects, actual expenditure and in adherence to NSP accounting and procurement regulations and forms. As noted by CDC member interviewed, *CDC members are required to share*

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<sup>64</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Balkh Province: 2013.

<sup>65</sup> In addition to the capacity building designed by MRRD and facilitated/ conducted by FPs, each CDC receive a block grants counted 10000 Afs per family sheltered under the responsibility of each CDC. The Block Grant is entitled to support the infrastructure projects identified and proposed by CDC and community members with technical support of FP. For more details, please kindly refer to the NSP Operation Manual through [www.nspafghanistan.org](http://www.nspafghanistan.org)

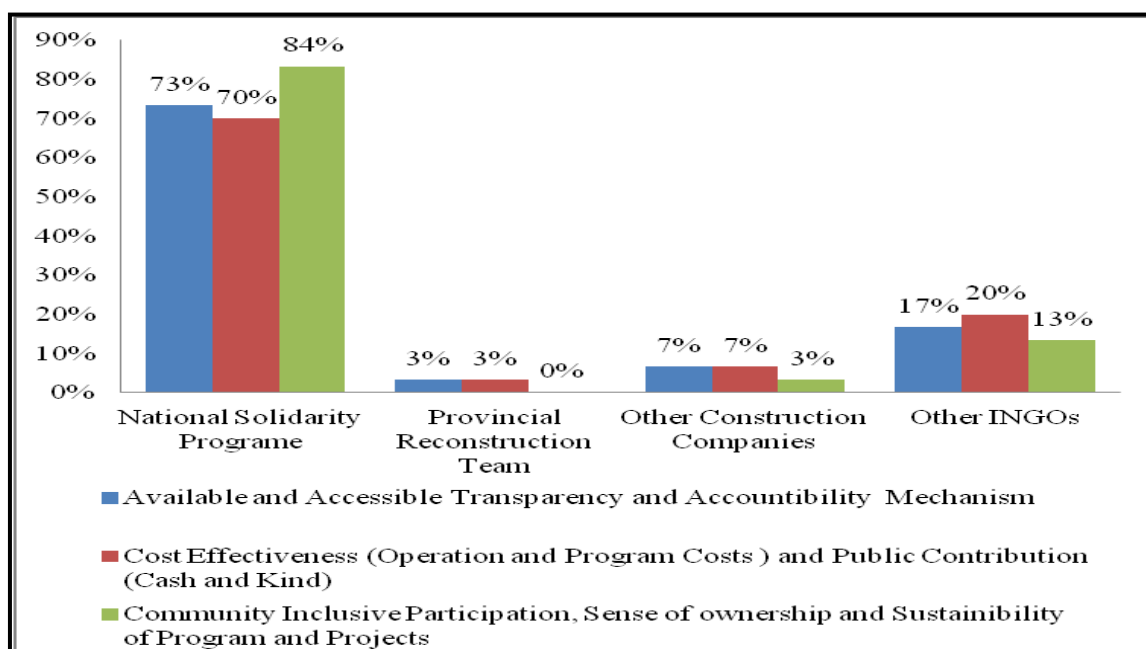
*all the required information with the community to facilitate these audits, with the help of social team of facilitating partners (FP) in the field*<sup>66</sup>. Finally, the steps ensure the inclusion of community members in whole cycle of development process that ensures sustainability and ownership of the development projects by people. Respondents argued that this model can be replicated in the other development models supported by the international development agencies and other organizations.

In terms of conditionality, development programs planned and funded by outsiders should at least represent Afghan's, common believes and their traditional, cultural norms. As noted by a religious leader *in a post-conflict and politically conservative country like Afghanistan, a broad, long term, positive, free of negative interference, and an Afghan cultural owned and religious oriented development intervention is required to address the current economic, social and political instability in the country*<sup>67</sup>. The interviewees in the rural areas argued that in all cycles of development initiatives (from planning to implementation) the involved stakeholders should understand and recognize what religious, cultural values and social norms should be considered while implementing any development or humanitarian program. In other words, the partners involved in development of Afghanistan should make improved efforts to investigate and understand which norms and values will harm the process of development and humanitarian assistance if ignored and excluded during planning and implementation, and what norms and values will help and sustain the long term development of any programs.

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<sup>66</sup> Confidential interview with a CDC member in Baraki Barak District of Logar Province: 2013.

<sup>67</sup> Confidential interview with a religious leader in Balkh Logar: 2013.



**Figure 5.2: Outlines the Rate and Degree of Public Participation, Transparency and accountability, Cost effectiveness and Community Ownership of the Current Development Intervention**

#### **5.4 Outlines the Rate and Degree of Public Participation, Transparency and accountability, Cost effectiveness and Community Ownership of the Current Development Intervention<sup>68</sup>**

A traditional leader noted *the most important thing to be implemented in our society is education to match our believes and Afghan values. The projects implemented in our society should be free of military intervention during planning and implementation of the projects*<sup>69</sup>. This quote refers to those approaches and interventions applied by PRT and some other international development agencies, while launching and monitor any development projects in the rural areas, they use national or international military forces to insure their security in the field. The

<sup>68</sup> The data came for the respondents participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. The daily political analysis of the situation by national and international Medias is the best means of verification for the data collected.

<sup>69</sup> Confidential interview with a traditional leader in Logar Logar: 2013.

interviewees in Logar province argued that such projects and programs, monitored by military forces carrying tanks, weapons and helicopters will lose/decrease social acceptance, value of downward accountability, sense of community contribution and maintenance, community ownership and sustainability of the intervention. They further argued that due to this reason, majority of such projects is not sustainable and useful to society because local peoples believe that these projects are not for the improvement of the quality of their life, but are implemented and monitored through military forces are part of the wider military operation of NATO. Hence the respondents assumed that most of such projects have been destroyed either through insurgents or due to lack of maintenance and ownership from the societies. Almost none of the projects proposed by local peoples have been destroyed or at least maintained by local contribution. It is argued that NSP projects are the best example. The NSP projects are not only safe from destruction of the insurgents but also are protected by the insurgents.

As case studies, “there are lots of examples showing that we have mobilized, even forced people to protect and maintain the development projects financed through NSP. Due to security reason, we don’t want to call the name of the villages, in Baraki Barak, Azra and Mohammad Aga districts of Logar province, we mobilized people to re-start the work of 6 Micro Hydro power projects which were suspended in that villages due to social conflict among some war lords and we warned the war lords that if they interfered again, they will be accountable in front of us and they will pay a huge price of their interference in future. There are hundreds of examples which show that we have been supporting development initiatives done by Afghans but it is impossible to list them here. We support such socially accepted interventions” (said two Taliban commanders: 2013)<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> Confidential Interview with two insurgent commanders in Logar province: 2013.

The above quote from insurgent commanders implies that when approaches and strategies applied for development of a traditionally conservative society are in line with context, norms and value of the society, insurgents also guard and maintain the development projects. The model of development which matches and respects traditional norms and religious values will be more participatory, transparent, cost effective, community owned and community led and sustainable model of development.

The second point which ensures sustainable development is inclusiveness of all people and a clear system of accountability and transparency in the whole cycle of development. Regardless to the tribe, ideology and minority or majority, all peoples living in the societies should be considered as a backbone for an effective, inclusive, participatory and sustainable development. As noted by the insurgents' commanders *every development intervention should be designed by the peoples and for the peoples. Development by the peoples means that beneficiaries of the projects should be part of this intervention, from identification to implementation. Development for peoples means that peoples should have the sense of ownership of the development projects. Hence, the majority of the development programs are not sustainable*<sup>71</sup>. This quote indicates the importance of collaboration and coordination among involved stakeholders in development. Respondents argued that coordination and integration among individuals and institutions working for a common goal is key principle for good governance and good governance is a foundation for sustainable development because good governance contributes to inclusiveness of participation and inclusive participation increases the sense of ownership of development among people and the culture of ownership of development intervention ensures sustainability and security of development interventions.

The three following key factors can guarantee sustainability of every intervention in the post conflict and traditionally conservative societies. The first factor is human and financial resources which are already in place. The second factor is legality and legitimacy of the intervention undertaken in the societies. The legality and legitimacy of the intervention can be ensured when the beneficiary for whom the

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<sup>71</sup> Confidential Interview with insurgent commanders in Logar province: 2013

intervention is going to be designed are fully involved in the whole cycle of the intervention (identification-implementation). The third factor is the capacity of individuals or institutions that delivers the services/interventions to beneficiaries. It is assumed that the development players in the country must have a comprehensive capacity and understanding of the society that they would like to intervene. Therefore, it is further argued that most of the international and national developments agencies working in Afghanistan are criticized by beneficiaries.

The respondents in Logar Province argued that majority of the agencies rely on national or international forces for their security while monitoring their development projects in the field. Therefore, they are often attacked because the insurgents consider them as part of the NATO military operation. The above discussion implies that a clear differentiation and boundary should be considered between the public centric development model/ approach which can be achieved through public participation and the military centric development model/approach which can be achieved through military powers because it is argued that local and public power is the center for peaceful, inclusive and sustainable development particularly in war affected countries like Afghanistan. The use of military power to support development can be a temporary solution. Military centric development approach creates a deep suspicion among beneficiaries and can be used as evidence by insurgents to legitimize prevention of development projects because they consider implementation of such projects part of military operation. Hence, since 2002, majority of such projects have been destroyed by insurgents.

Since a part of this study is cost effectiveness of current development, the research looks at the current effectiveness of the current employments undertaken by the involved organizations. In terms of cost effectiveness, various ways have been recommended to make the current development more cost effective. Respondents interviewed in rural areas argued that in addition to high salaries and other fringe benefits paid to international staff, expensive armored vehicles and offices creates further financial issues for development programs which negatively affect the quality



of the projects<sup>72</sup>. It is further argued that the question is not only high paid salaries and other benefits paid to the international employees, most of current development initiatives lack the required transparency and accountability mechanism to give a clear picture of what has been budgeted and how it was spent because an employee of an international organization argued that the key decision making positions in the organizations have been controlled by international staffs and if there is any concern about corruption a national staff is not allowed to ask about transparency of the interventions<sup>73</sup>. As noted by a traditional leader *since 2002, the development and humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan comes from a door, and goes from many windows. We know how, how much, when and from where the assistance came. However, we don't know how, when, where and by who the development and humanitarian assistance has been spent. In other words, the international community has created high paid employment opportunity for their citizens in Afghanistan*<sup>74</sup>.

Therefore, it is argued that despite billions of dollars assistance, there are no tangible and positive changes in the quality of life of Afghans, particularly in the rural part of the country because one of the key root causes of the ineffective and over priced development is the lack of transparency and accountability mechanism. As noted by a former provincial governor, *majority of international staff working in Afghanistan hasn't come here to bring any new innovative ideas to support the development of Afghanistan. They are in Afghanistan to improve their future careers. If they have the experience of working in Afghanistan in their resume, they will get a high paid job in the other countries*<sup>75</sup>. A respondent represented an international organization argued that when most of the international staff join an organization and then leave the organization; there are no positive changes in terms of policy and strategy because at least the employee needs months to learn the existing program. He further argued that in addition to that, the current volunteerism is another cancer to the development of Afghanistan. Their coming and living is more expensive than a

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<sup>72</sup> If local staffs are mainly employed in, the operation budget goes down and program budget goes up which directly contribute to the quality of the programs.

<sup>73</sup> A clear transparency and accountability mechanism is a key indicator for the confidence and sense of ownership of the beneficiaries.

<sup>74</sup> Confidential Interview with a traditional leader in Balkh province: 2013

<sup>75</sup> Confidential Interview with provincial governor in Logar province: 2013

permanent employee. The volunteers bring nothing and then go back leaving nothing. The respondents employed in the offices argued that as per their working experience in many international organizations, recruitment of volunteers is the worst exercise and is a waste of time and resources. The best way is to invest this amount on the capacity development of dedicated national Afghans.

Finally, in terms of numeric figures of the intervention, Afghanistan has enjoyed tangible improvement. However, cost effective and participatory development approaches are required to ensure sustainability of development and to address current poverty and injustice in the country. The respondents argued that the international community needs to differentiate between development and military mandates. The development agencies should engage communities to achieve their participatory development goals. In addition, inclusive participatory approaches to development will ensure (a) financial and human contribution of the society, (b) cost effectiveness of the program, (c) sustainability of project, (d) increases sense of ownership and maintenance and (e) decreases the destruction of projects by human made or natural disaster strategies.

## **5.5 Ensure Gender Equality throughout the Country through Spiritual Values in the Societies**

As mentioned in methodology section of this research, due to cultural barriers access to female respondents were very limited, particularly in logar province. I was able to meet only one civil society representative in Balkh capital city. Therefore, this section is inserted to outline the current gender related intervention and issues. Gender equality is central to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). There are a number of internationally supported capacity building programs on gender mainstreaming that are implemented in several ministries and coordinated by the Ministry of Women's Affairs to raise public awareness on gender issues. It is argued that since 2001, the Government of Afghanistan and in collaboration with the international community has been taking steps to improve women's access to education, literacy, vocational training, justice, and has undertaken a review of

existing laws to reduce gender gaps. In addition, the Government has supported women's access to capital, markets, technology and productive assets by recognizing their participation in the economy and providing relevant services and support. As noted by a civil society representative, *the Ministry of Women Affairs (MOWA) has been able to create a policy framework for women's advancement. A 10-year National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) has been developed and implemented to promote gender equality in planning and programming of all Ministries*<sup>76</sup>. In terms of political participation, Afghanistan has a Millennium Development Goal target to have at least 30% representation of women in all Government institutions by the year 2020. To address the low health status of women, the Government is working on reducing maternal deaths by improving reproductive health services, increasing the number of female health practitioners, strengthening family planning programs, and developing a national policy to improve the quality of care provided by maternity units in public and private hospitals.

However, reducing existing gender discrimination in Afghan society requires a review of the current policies and strategies developed for equality of gender in the whole cycle of decision making in the country. The respondents interviewed in the rural areas argued that the decision makers in the capital cities who have been developing the policies and strategies (top down approach), including the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) should make sure that the policies and strategies are contextually applicable, geographically implementable and religiously and socially acceptable in the rural parts of the country where 75% of total population are living. The above argument implies that the strategies and policies should rather match field realities and sensitivities than the theories. In other words, the contexts of the societies are more important than the concept of the professionals developing the policies and strategies.

As a case study, the interviewees argued that inclusive and systematic participation of peoples, including women in the whole cycle of NSP is the key for succession of this program because NSP is an Afghan owned and Afghan led program and is based on the cultural norms and religious values. As noted by an insurgent

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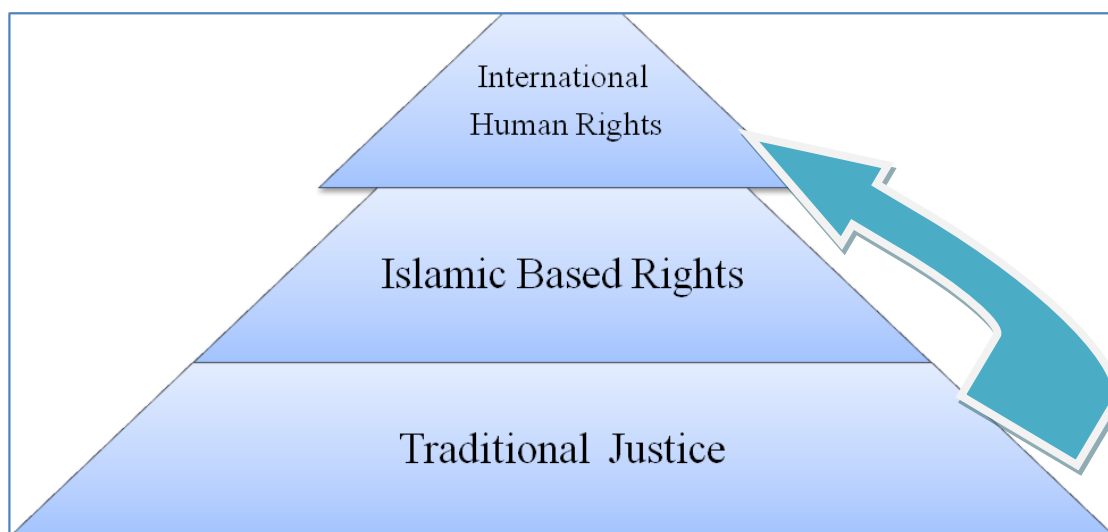
<sup>76</sup> Confidential interview with a civil society representative (women) in Balkh Province: 2013.

commander in the current development intervention, people in Afghanistan, particularly in rural areas deprived of their basic rights, such as food, clean water, education, health services, justice and other infrastructure, but the development agencies are focusing on western created gender equality and human rights which is based on the western context. They don't want to develop Afghanistan, but they want to destroy our social, civil and family values. Therefore, they are not accepted in remote societies and they are often attacked<sup>77</sup>. In addition to the insurgent commander's argument, publics in the rural areas also argued that the root causes of the violence against human, particularly women refer to extreme poverty in Afghanistan, particularly in the most remote parts of the country. They further indicated that if the government of Afghanistan and the international community would like to fundamentally eliminate the violence and disrespect against human, including women in Islamic societies, the development players should launch Islamic based human right campaigns to build/raise awareness among people, fundamental income generation and infrastructure projects matching Islamic values and social norms because the current human rights intervention have still been considered as product of western ideology. Therefore, the key and fundamental emphasize in the rural parts of the country is that every intervention should be in line with our religious and traditional principles. As noted by a religious leader *we accept every development intervention in the country, including gender equality and human/ women rights if it is not in antithesis with our Islamic values and traditional norms. The current western designed gender equality and human rights are in antithesis with our religious and traditional principles. Therefore it is refused in our societies*<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> Confidential Interview with an insurgent commander in Logar province: 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Confidential Interview with a religious leader in Logar province: 2013



**Figure5.3: Outlines the Main Three Available Steps for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Gender Equality**

### **5.6 Outlines the Main Three Available Steps for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Gender Equality<sup>79</sup>**

In light of the above responses from the insurgent and religious representatives, (quotes), I revisited the target respondents to find out why they have negative perception about the current gender equality and human rights interventions in the country. After a participatory exercise with the respondents, I found that the respondents, including the representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations participated in this research either didn't know what human rights is or the level of their knowledge was very limited. Therefore, majority of the respondents argued that the current human rights interventions are the product of western ideologies being imposed on Islamic societies. It is also indicated in this study that the misperceptions are mainly refer to the contents of human rights, approaches and officials lead the intervention. Twenty six out of thirty respondents argued that the current human rights intervention is a tool to destroy our religious values. As indicated in the above figure, the interviewees argued that the common reason about

<sup>79</sup> The data came for the respondents participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. The daily political analysis of the situation by national and international Medias is the best means of verification for the data collected.

the misperception, uselessness and misunderstanding about the current human right intervention in Afghanistan is that the national and international players investing on human rights in the country don't respect our norms and values. They further argued that the investors try to jump from traditional practices to international human rights because they have been ignoring the Islamic based human rights. It is also argued that the Islamic based human rights model in traditionally conservative societies is the most acceptable, cost effective and equally implementable tool.

The discussion implies that when policies, approaches and strategies applied for development of a traditionally conservative society are in line with context, norms and value of the society, the intervention will be acceptable, implementable and sustainable. The model of development that matches and respects traditional norms and religious values will be more participatory, transparent, cost effective, community owned and community led and sustainable model of development, including gender. Finally, it has been proposed by the respondents that the international and national players investing on promotion and protection of human right, women empowerment and gender equality in a conservative society like Afghanistan, they should jump from traditional justice and practices to Islamic based human rights because jumping from traditional justice to international human rights will harm the societies. Therefore, it is argued that despite spending millions of dollar on women empowerment and human rights, the violation of human rights are getting increased because people in the rural parts of the country still believe that the current human rights and gender equality intervention is the product of western ideologies imposed on Islamic societies.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

This last section provides a summary of the overall argument of this study and proposes an effective development approach that sums up the operational recommendations elaborated throughout this study. The study was intended to explore the practical ground realities of the current development process of Afghanistan. It intended to illuminate the perception of beneficiaries (through interviews with a variety of beneficiaries) about development initiatives and ongoing interventions in the country. It was not intended to provide a conclusive end or ‘exit strategy’ for the ongoing development process in Afghanistan, but rather to update and explore the effectiveness and inefficiency of the current debate initiated in since 2002 for the development of Afghanistan. Overall, the inclusion of the leaders will greatly improve the effectiveness and ownership of development in Afghanistan by improving the level of public ownership of projects through adaptation of projects to local cultural norms and traditions and a participatory approach to planning an implementation. In addition, with regards to the understanding of outsiders to the cultural and religious values and norms of Afghan society, involvement of these leaders will also open the door for new types of leaders to step in to the role of development leader.

#### **6. 2 Key Findings**

- Majority of the participated in interview and focus group discussions feel that the minority groups and marginalized members of the society have been mobilized by traditional and religious leaders to participate in decision making process. This has resulted in having their voices heard and problems addressed.

- Although this study has revealed positive trend with regards to inclusive participation in local governance processes, but still a lot has to be achieved in terms of improving the quality of participation. This is important as quality of participation also impacts the quality of development. This would further lead to a development model predominantly owned and led by Afghan people.

- The quality of development as well as community participation has been dented due to the absence of effective and alternative development strategy articulated by political parties that enjoys tremendous clout to influence the development agenda of the government.

- The dormant participation of the political class has in turn decreased their popularity, as most local people consider them to be too weak to challenge the government. This has subsequently increased the dominance and monopoly of the government over the development process.

- Strong presence and membership of some traditional and religious leaders within these democratically elected institutions: (CDC and DDA) have given legitimacy to these institutions.

- The religious and traditional leaders serving under these institutions have not only lent greater credibility to these institutions, but also broaden their community acceptance.

- The study also found out that most people in the urban areas, including those living in the capital cities, have little knowledge about the structure of traditional leadership, including their practices, norms and functioning in the rural setting. Consequently, this has contributed to the existing negative perception towards traditional leaders in urban areas to a large extent.

- The study also found that urban communities deviate/moved away from their existing culture and norms due to lack of strong traditional leadership striving to fix local problems and create a more cohesive society. This also exposes them to wide range of other problems, including the spread of militancy.

- The study has found that there has been a fundamental shift from the needs-based approach to demand driven approach to development, particularly in the rural areas.



- This finding also punctuates the inclusive participation of the minority and marginalized people in governance processes as highlighted in the above section. However most people feel dissatisfied with the current quality of state led development projects/services, spread all over Afghanistan,
- According to this study, government development projects in Afghanistan are grappling with poor quality due to absence of governance and community ownership of development projects. This has further contributed to lack of sustainability of development interventions.
- The National Solidarity Program (NSP) is the only Afghan owned and Afghan led program; and suggested that all interventions and development projects in Afghanistan should adopt the same approach exhibited by the NSP.
- Participants also suggested that more awareness rising campaigns should be carried out, most especially in the rural areas to increase people's awareness on the background and introduction of human rights. This will consequently reduce the current misconception that human rights are a product of western ideologies imposed on the people of Afghanistan.

### **6.3 Key Recommendations**

- After Afghanistan moved from emergency to development, it needs to move from development to sustainable development model. It happens through inclusive and systematic (asset based approach not need based approach) participation of publics in development, including traditional and religious leaders;
- Long term, cost effective, sustainable, Afghan cultural and religious oriented development initiative is required. It happens through public contribution;
- Regular and Systematic consideration and inclusion of traditional and religious leaders in the whole cycles of the development is required to insure transparency, accountability and gender mainstreaming in development initiatives;
- Inclusive participation is and parallel planning required to ensure the inclusion of pro-poor and marginalized groups in the development programs;

- A downward accountability mechanism is required to ensure elimination of the current corruption;
- Leadership of the current development initiative should be handed over from international players to Afghan experts, the international community should be as a technical and financial back up to support the development;
- Laws should be equally implemented among Afghans regardless to the high or low powers;
- To be sustainable and implementable to the all country, an Islamic human rights and gender equality model is required in Afghanistan;
- A clear boundary between military operation and development should be considered;
- All national and international development agencies and NGOs should approach an inclusive model of development similar to NSP to ensure the real transparency and ownership of the development programs;
- The international community's playing role in Afghanistan should not try to change the current traditional and cultural norms and values but they should be build on the current intervention on traditional and religious norms and values;

As this research is a qualitative field research, the principle and foundation of this study is the insight and opinion of the respondents participated in this study. In other words, the overall ideas and recommendations are rooted from the current political, social and economic decision making and development in Afghanistan.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONS**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. What are the most important things you want to implement in your society?  
Have these things changed or are they changing now? How? Why/not?
- 1.2. How would you describe the best future for your community? Is this different  
from current situation? How? Why?
- 1.3. What opinion do outsiders (government, NGO and others) have of your  
community? Is this important? Why/not?
- 1.4. What are your most important values that need to be understood by outsiders?
- 1.5. Who(s) have the power to invite or prevent development in current situation in  
your village, district and province? Why?

#### **2. MAIN SECTION OF THE INTERVIEW**

##### **Development and Participation**

- 2.1. Do you feel you can adequately address current problems through local efforts,  
abilities, and resources? Why/not?
- 2.2. Would you invite foreign assistance? Why/not?

##### **Probe:**

- 2.3. What type of foreign assistance would you prefer? \_\_\_\_ funding, \_\_\_\_  
experts, \_\_\_\_ project (implementation) assistance
- 2.4. Is there any source of assistance (from specific country or organization) that  
you would reject? Why?



- 2.5. Have / had you invited foreign assistance in the past? If yes, was the result positive or negative? Why?
- 2.6. What does “development” mean to you?
- 2.7. What skill do you think are important for development?
- 2.8. What is an example of successful development in your community? Why was it successful?
- 2.9. What is an example of different models of development have been practiced in your community, district an province? Describe.

**probe:**

- 2.10. Are these models of developments effective? How?
- 2.11. Do you propose any alternative/ more effective model of development? What? Why/not?
- 2.12. What does inclusive participation mean to you? What is an example?
- 2.13. Who can improve local participation in development? How? Why/not?
- 2.14. Who is more important to be included in development and is less important to be excluded from development? Why?
- 2.15. Who has the power or authority in your society to directly affect development in your community? Describe.
- 2.16. **Probe:**  
What is the source and reason of this power?
- 2.17. What are differences between this power and politicians?
- 2.18. What important role can other politicians play in developments in the societies? How?
- 2.19. Do you think everyone’s participation is important in developments? Why/not?
- 2.20. Have you ever been given an opportunity to learn about planning, managing, and monitoring development (seminars, trainings)?

- 2.21. If given an opportunity, would you be interested and willing to participate?  
Why/not?

**A. Foreign Assistance and Public Engagement**

- 2.22. Are you aware of any foreign funding for your village, district, and province?  
Describe.

2.22.1. Is this positive or negative? Why?

- 2.23. Are you aware of any foreign organizations working in your society?  
Describe.

2.23.1. Is this positive or negative? Why?

- 2.24. Are you aware of any local organizations with foreign funding in your society?  
Describe.

2.24.1. Is this positive or negative? Why?

- 2.25. How would you describe “NGO”? What is your opinion about NGOs? Why?

2.25.1. Is there any difference between NGO and UN? Describe.

2.25.2. What values do you think foreign NGOs hold?

2.25.3. Do you share any of these values?

- 2.26. What are important factors for foreign organizations to consider when working  
in your society?

2.26.1. Have you ever been asked this question by anyone? Who, when, what  
did your answer?

- 2.27. Rank in order of priority why you think aid is given: \_\_\_\_ Helping those who  
are suffering, \_\_\_\_ preventing suffering, \_\_\_\_ building local capacity,  
\_\_\_\_ rewarding loyalty, \_\_\_\_ supporting foreign interests  
(\_\_\_\_), \_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

2.27.1. Do you see reasons as positive, negative, or mixed? What?

**B. Personnel**

- 2.28. Have you ever met any foreigner involved in development work? Who? Describe.
- 2.29. Are you aware of any foreign organization staff working in your district? Describe.
- 2.29.1. Would you accept any foreign organization staff working in your society? Why/not?
- 2.30. Would you invite a foreign expert to your village? Why/not?
- 2.31. Do you believe it is better to hire staff based on technical qualifications or personal relations? Why?
- 2.32. Whom would you prefer as staff members of a foreign organization:
- 2.32.1. Origin: \_\_\_\_ people from the village where development projects are implemented, \_\_\_\_ people from your village living elsewhere, \_\_\_\_ people from neighboring agencies, \_\_\_\_ foreigners, \_\_\_\_ mixture depending on job requirements
- 2.32.2. Profile: \_\_\_\_ religious leaders, \_\_\_\_ technical experts, \_\_\_\_ government workers, \_\_\_\_ women, \_\_\_\_ youth, \_\_\_\_ former militants, \_\_\_\_ traditional leaders, \_\_\_\_ NGO workers, \_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.33. Whom do you believe foreign organizations prefer to hire?

### **C. Planning and Beneficiaries Perception about the Current Development**

- 2.34. Who identifies what the needs are for assistance in your village? How? Give examples
- 2.34.1. Who should identify needs? How?
- 2.35. Have you participated in developing any plan to identify and address needs? Describe.
- 2.35.1. Did you comment on or participate in country developing strategy (Sustainable Development Plan)? Why/not?

2.35.2. Do you have any comment on the development plans funded and implemented by international communities in your village, district, province or even Afghanistan? Describe.

2.36. Should any community, tribe, or group be able to receive assistance? Why/not?

2.37. What group is it most important to target for benefit? What group is least important? Why? Who misses out?

2.37.1. Describe all benefits that result from assistance and who receives these benefits.

2.37.2. Are you satisfied? Why/not? What do you suggest?

2.38. If assistance is limited, who prioritizes needs and beneficiaries? How?

2.38.1. Are you satisfied? Why/not? What do you suggest?

#### **D. Resource Allocation and Control**

2.39. Who decides whether to allocate assistance or not? How is decision made?

2.39.1. Are you satisfied? Why/not? What do you suggest?

2.40. What is most important about managing funds responsibly?

2.41. Who manages funds at agency level? Why? How?

2.42. Who should manage funds at agency level? Why?

2.42.1. Authority: \_\_\_\_ Political Agent, \_\_\_\_ religious leaders, \_\_\_\_ implementing organization, \_\_\_\_ traditional leaders, \_\_\_\_ common people, \_\_\_\_ mixed group, \_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

2.42.2. Origin: \_\_\_\_ local, \_\_\_\_ national, \_\_\_\_ foreign

2.42.3. What are the positive and negative possibilities with this?

2.42.4. How would you lessen or prevent any negative possibilities?

- 2.43. Who manages funds at project level? Why? How?
- 2.44. Who should manage funds at project level? Why?
- 2.44.1. Authority: \_\_\_\_ Political Agent, \_\_\_\_ religious leaders,  
\_\_\_\_ implementing organization, \_\_\_\_ traditional leaders, \_\_\_\_  
common people, \_\_\_\_ mixed group,  
\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.44.2. Origin: \_\_\_\_ local, \_\_\_\_ national, \_\_\_\_ foreign
- 2.44.3. What are the positive and negative possibilities with this?
- 2.44.4. How would you lessen or prevent any negative possibilities?
- 2.45. Who should be involved in purchasing and contracting at agency level? Why?
- 2.45.1. \_\_\_\_ Central government, \_\_\_\_ provincial Authority, \_\_\_\_ Political  
Agent, \_\_\_\_ religious leaders, \_\_\_\_ implementing organization,  
\_\_\_\_ traditional leaders, \_\_\_\_ common people, \_\_\_\_ mixed group,  
\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.45.2. What are the positive and negative possibilities with this?
- 2.45.3. How would you lessen or prevent any negative possibilities?
- 2.46. Who should be involved in purchasing and contracting at community level?  
Why?
- 2.46.1. \_\_\_\_ provincial officials, \_\_\_\_ district Authority, \_\_\_\_ Political  
Agent, \_\_\_\_ religious leaders, \_\_\_\_ implementing organization,  
\_\_\_\_ traditional leaders, \_\_\_\_ common people, \_\_\_\_ mixed group,  
\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.46.2. What are the positive and negative possibilities with this?
- 2.46.3. How would you lessen or prevent any negative possibilities?
- 2.47. On what basis do you believe it is best to make a contracting decision (rank by  
priority)? Why? \_\_\_\_ technical qualifications, \_\_\_\_ reputation,

\_\_\_\_\_ ownership, \_\_\_\_\_ location of business, \_\_\_\_\_ estimated cost, \_\_\_\_\_ other

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2.48. Would you be willing to have a contractor from outside your province or country? Why/not?
- 2.49. Would you prevent an outside contractor from doing work? How? Why/not?
- 2.50. What do you consider “misuse” of assistance? Give an example
  - 2.50.1. Are you concerned about misuse? Why/not?
  - 2.50.2. If yes, how do you think misuse can be prevented?
- 2.51. Have you been consulted by any organization about how to control resources? Describe.

#### **E. Transparency and Accountability**

- 2.52. What problems might you expect with project implementation?
  - 2.52.1. What would you do to prevent these?
  - 2.52.2. What steps would you take if problems did occur?
- 2.53. Would it be necessary to monitor works? Why/not?
  - 2.53.1. How would you do this? Whom would you involve?
  - 2.53.2. Have you been consulted by any organization about monitoring? When, what organization, what forum?

### **3. LOCAL POWER BROKE AND CURRENT DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1. Would you please define traditional and religious leaders?
- 3.2. How would you describe the roles of religious and traditional leader in your community? Do they benefit your community or harm it? How? Why?
- 3.3. What opinion do government, NGO, and International community have of traditional and religious leaders?
- 3.4. What important roles can/should the leaders play to change the current situation in the country? How?

- 3.5. What are the most important values, sources, and factors that make traditional and religious leaders more influential and powerful in the local and national level?
- 3.6. Do the leaders have the power to invite or prevent development programs in current situation in your village, district, and province? How? Why?
- 3.7. How do you compare the influence and power of politicians and religious and traditional leaders in the rural area of the country?
- 3.8. Do you discuss development with your traditional leaders? Give examples  
What roles do traditional and religious leaders can/should play to improve inclusive participation?
- 3.9. Can the leaders improve local participation in development? How? Why/not?
- 3.10. Is there any other source of power in your society (except the leaders) directly affect development in your community? Describe.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1. Do you believe that other tribes and other agencies would hold your same views expressed in this interview? Why/not?
- 4.2. Do you have any security concerns because of your participation in this interview? Why/not?
- 4.3. Any other thoughts, comments, or recommendations regarding this or any other topic?
- 4.4. Any other suggested authoritative individuals or groups to consult?
- 4.5. How did the interview go? Anything else not covered?

## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF NINE CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS

SN	Category of Respondents Participated in this Study	Codes	# of Participants	Province
1	Religious leaders	001	6	Logar and Balkh
7	Traditional Leaders	002	6	Logar and Balkh
13	Insurgent Representatives, commanders	003	2	Logar
15	UN, International and National humanitarian and Development Agencies	004	2	Capital Cities
17	Former and Current Government officials	005	2	Logar and Balkh
19	Former Jihadi Commanders	006	2	Balkh and Logar
21	Current and Former Provincial Council and parliament members	007	4	Balkh and Logar
25	Civil Society and Women Representatives	008	3	Logar and Balkh
28	Islamic Students studying in Pakistan Madrasa	009	3	Logar and Balkh
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>	



## APPENDIX C

### RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION FORUM

Province:.....

District:.....

Date:.....

To be filled by the Department of-----

S/N	Name	Father Name	Social Position	Years of working in this position	Tribe	Village	Given Mark	Remarks

**Note:** The highest Mark is 4 and the lowest mark is 1

## **APPENDIX D**

### **CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OG RESPONDENTS**

1. Residents of the same area (at least since 10 years);
2. Participated in membership of Jirgas (at least one complete period);
3. Fully understand traditional norms and regulations;
4. Independent and neutral;
5. Don't have any cases (criminal and misuse of his power inside the Jirga);
6. Addressed serious social issues at the national, local etc;
7. well known and well accepted among people;

## APPENDIX E

### ANALYSIS SHEET OF RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENTS

Respondent Analysis Sheet												
S/N	Name/ Code	Father Name	Position/Title in the society	Province	District	Tribe	Ranked/ Marked by Education Department	Ranked/ Marked by Health Department	Ranked/ Marked by Statistic Department	Ranked/ Marked by District Governor Office	Ranked/ Marked by one of the Local Civil Society Group	G. Total
1												0
2												0
3												0
4												0
5												0
6												0
7												0
8												0
9												0
10												0
11												0
12												0
13												0
14												0
15												0
16												0
17												0
18												0
19												0
Not The Lowest Mark is 1 and the Highest Mark is 4												

## APPENDIX F

### FINAL LIST OF PEOPLE GAINED HIGH MARKS

Date.....

Province:.....

[illegible]

# APPENDIX G

## DATA ANALYSIS SHEET

[illegible]

## **BIOGRAPHY**

<b>NAME</b>	Saleh Mohammad Samit
<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> February, 1973
<b>PLACE OF BIRTH</b>	Logar, Afghanistan
<b>INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED</b>	Imdamdul-Uloom Islamic University, Peshawar, Pakistan 1992-1996  Mahidol University, 2010-2014 Masters of Arts (Human Rights)
<b>SCHOLARSHIP RECEIVED</b>	N/A
<b>HOME ADDRESS</b>	House# 41, Street# 2, Qala-e-Fatullah, Kabul Afghanistan