My Cousin's Enemy is My Friend: A Study of Pashtun "Tribes" in Afghanistan

Afghanistan Research Reachback Center White Paper
TRADOC G2 Human Terrain System
United States Army

Fort Leavenworth, KS
September 2009

Summary

This report consists of two main parts: the first part is an overview of the existing historical and anthropological research on Pashtun "tribes" in Afghanistan, and the second part examines how "tribes" behave in Afghanistan. It is based mostly on academic sources, but it also includes unclassified government information and research performed by HTS Human Terrain Teams, which have been attached to U.S. Army brigades since 2007.

Military officers and policymakers, in their search for solutions to problems in Afghanistan, have considered empowering "the tribes" as one possible way to reduce rates of violence**. In this report, the HTS Afghanistan RRC warns that the desire for "tribal engagement" in Afghanistan, executed along the lines of the recent "Surge" strategy in Iraq, is based on an erroneous understanding of the human terrain.** In fact, the way people in rural Afghanistan organize themselves is so different from rural Iraqi culture that calling them both "tribes" is deceptive. "Tribes" in Afghanistan do not act as unified groups, as they have recently in Iraq. For the most part they are not hierarchical, meaning there is no "chief" with whom to negotiate (and from whom to expect results). They are notorious for changing the form of their social organization when they are pressured by internal dissension or external forces. Whereas in some other countries tribes are structured like trees, "tribes" in Afghanistan are like jellyfish.[1]

Instead of "tribal engagement" in Afghanistan, the HTS Afghanistan RRC advocates for "local knowledge, cultural understanding, and local contacts," in the words of David Kilcullen.[2] There are no shortcuts. What this means in practical terms is a need to focus on ground truth, looking at local groups and their conflicts, rather than arriving with preconceived notions of how people should or might, given the proper incentives, organize themselves tribally. Most of Afghanistan has not been "tribal" in the last few centuries, and the areas that might have been (majority-Pashtun areas that make up parts of Regional Commands South and East) have changed drastically over the past 30 years. Pashtuns may choose to organize themselves along many different forms of identity, and may be conscious of belonging to more than one form of community simultaneously. **Pashtuns' motivations for choosing how to identify and organize politically—including whether or not to support the Afghan government or the insurgency—are flexible and pragmatic. "Tribe" is only one potential choice of identity among many, and not necessarily the one that guides people's decision-making.**

Methods Followed

This report was originally intended to be a literature review of the existing English-language anthropological and historical research on Pashtuns, and specifically the research on Pashtun "tribes" in Afghanistan and their behavior. It does not represent original research on the topic. The HTS Afghanistan RRC sought to include the full range of existing opinions about tribes in Afghanistan.

After the literature review, it became clear that, among academic anthropologists and historians, there is a unanimous consensus on the subject of tribes in Afghanistan. The consensus position holds that groups that behave "tribally," according to the classic definitions of Middle Eastern tribes, are hard to find in Afghanistan. In fact, many scholars are reluctant to use the word "tribe" at all for describing groups in Afghanistan.

Since there was such an overwhelming consensus position among academics, the HTS Afghanistan RRC devoted significant personnel resources to seek out dissenting published and unpublished academic views on the topic. The reason for adding on this approach was that many who return from Afghanistan tend to say that, in fact, tribes *are* important. The HTS Afghanistan RRC wanted to find some representation of that opinion in existing academic research.

The result of the RRC's search for dissenting positions on tribes was a very small amount of historical research and analysis, none of which was performed by academic anthropologists or historians. The positions argued by these scholars have been taken into account, but because they provide no original fieldwork or historical data on tribes and do not engage existing anthropological and historical research, they have not influenced the RRC's analysis in this report.

PART I:
DO TRIBES MATTER?

What is a Tribe?

"Tribal" is not the same thing as "local." There are many different definitions of the word "tribe" among anthropologists. Among all the conflicting definitions, though, there are some common features that stand out.

1. Tribes are large groups connected through kinship.

The most commonly named aspect of "tribes" is that it is a group of people related by blood to a common ancestor. In many societies, tribes define themselves exclusively in terms of the relationships between sons, fathers, grandfathers, and other male relatives (what is called "patrilineal kinship"). Sometimes different groups invent fictional relationships in order to make non-family relationships into family ones.

As the generations pass, families on different branches of the family tree grow into different "segments." Individual families relate to each other as cousins, second cousins, third cousins, and so on, and consider themselves all as the member of one tribe.[i] In this kind of family structure, conflicts often operate along the lines of the Arabic proverb "I against my brother; my brother and I against my cousin; my cousin, my brother and I against a stranger."

2. Tribal society is not governed, and doesn't like governments.

This is a more controversial statement, but generally when anthropologists talk about tribes, they are talking about groups of people that aren't "governed" in the modern sense. They often have informal systems to deal with the basic realities of life (managing resources, conflicts, etc.) but they don't have institutions in the sense that states have them.

The reason this statement is controversial is that tribal society is supposed to be a "primitive" or "undeveloped" form of social organization that came before states in the prehistory of mankind.[3] The current consensus among social scientists is that, today, tribes are almost always specific organizational responses to specific historical facts.[4]

3. In relation to outsiders, tribes act together as groups.

This point is the most important from the point of view of the U.S. commander. In Iraq, part of the success of the "Surge" strategy was due to the fact that U.S. commanders made agreements with Iraqi tribal elders, or "sheikhs." Those sheikhs then made sure that everyone in their tribal groups would not act as the enemies of the Government of Iraq or the U.S. forces there. Tribes may have different ways of organizing themselves—they can have "chiefs" or councils, for example—but the result is that when a decision or consensus is reached, the whole community is expected to abide by it.

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[i] A good diagram of the "segmentary" model is available at: http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/descent/unilineal/segments.html , accessed on 7 July 2009.

Are There Tribes in Afghanistan?

Before getting into whether or not there are tribes, it's worth saying definitively that there are some groups in Afghanistan—a very large percentage of Afghans, in fact—that are *not tribal at all.* Talking about "tribe" in relation to these groups makes no sense (or about as much sense as talking about "tribes" in France, for instance). These totally non-tribal groups live mostly in the central, western, and northern areas of Afghanistan.

Non-tribal groups include: Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and many city-dwellers.

What does it mean to be totally "non-tribal?" Basically, it means that these people a) do not organize by kinship, b) do have government institutions (however basic) and c) don't act as one big group to achieve one collective goal.

Among the groups that live in the south and east, however, there are some that clearly value kinship more than the non-tribal groups. Some of them stand outside the control of the government. However, it's important to understand that these groups do not act as coherent groups with "chiefs" or even formal councils. And from province to province, district to district, even village to village, people organize themselves in different ways, as we will show later in this paper.

When thinking about Pashtuns in the south and east, you can't assume anything.

The great cliché about the Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group in the south and east of Afghanistan as well as the northwest of Pakistan, is that they are "one of the largest tribal groups in the world."[5] This is a misleading generalization. We know, based on a large amount of recent and not-so-recent research that the meaning of "tribal society" in the Pashtun areas has changed a great deal even in the last hundred years. It is clear that there are many aspects of Pashtun life at least as important as "tribe," if not more so.

Scholars who have performed research in Afghanistan are unanimous in the view that Pashtun "tribes" aren't political units that act collectively:

> "No clear evidence exists of tribes actually coalescing into large-scale corporate bodies for joint action, even defensively, even for defense of territory."[6]
>
> "The tribal system is weak in most parts of Afghanistan and cannot provide alternatives to the Taliban or U.S. control. The Pashtuns generally have a tribal identity. Tribal identity is a rather flexible and open notion and should not be confused with tribal institutions, which are what establish enforceable obligations on members of a tribe."[7]
>
> "…As a matter of fact in most cases tribes do not have observable organizations which could enable them to perform collective actions as a tribe."[8]

Pashtuns' Descriptions of Themselves

Some Pashtuns, when asked to comment on their own sense of belonging, may emphasize the importance of tribal or kinship identity. There are numerous possible reasons why a Pashtun might do that. One obvious reason would be that their tribal identity is, in fact, important. The HTS Afghanistan RRC is not trying to disprove all cases of tribal organization in Afghanistan, but rather to show the variety of ways that people might choose to organize themselves in addition to family relationships.

If a Pashtun reports that tribe is important to him or her, it's also necessary to observe how that identity works itself out in practice. In many cases, Pashtuns have memories of tribal identities that don't always determine their behavior. Anthropologists refer to this kind of disjunction of what people say about themselves compared to what they actually do using the term "native model" (also known as the "emic" model). Every society has its own way of thinking about itself, and that image of itself may not correspond exactly to the description of an external observer. The native model should always be taken into account, because it certainly influences how people think, and it reflects a certain subset of a culture's belief system, which also changes over time.[9]

Many Pashtuns maintain their belief in the persistence of kinship systems through oral storytelling traditions. Family lineage narratives came into vogue in the second half of the 17th century A.D., and the great names of Pashto literature were involved in promoting these narratives widely. For example, Afzal Khan—the son of Khushhal Khan Khattak, the preeminent Pashtun poet—translated a Persian-language history of the Pashtuns into Pashto, and developed a triumphal story of Khattak success against neighboring Pashtuns. This story and others have been transmitted through families and play an important role in how people conceptualize their ancestry.[10]

States and the Pashtun "Native Model"

At least as far back as the Mughal Empire, which had dominion over Pashtun-inhabited areas for a long period of time, we can find examples of a central government that encouraged Pashtun groups to respond to the government tribally. Both the Mughals and the Durrani Afghan kings encouraged Pashtuns to maintain family-based networks instead of other forms of organization.[11]

The British made great efforts to engage Pashtuns along tribal lines to the exclusion of other methods: "They attempted to increase tribal solidarity, they introduced special tribal laws, and developed competing theories about how tribes worked and should be handled."[12] The British believed that establishing clear tribal regulations by imposing standards on customary law institutions (like Pashtunwali) would help them better control the Pashtun populations of the "tribal areas." That approach was unsuccessful.[13]

The presence of states adjacent to ungoverned areas has a formative effect on the people living there. Some scholars of tribalism and warfare have claimed that "the wider consequence of the presence of the state is the radical transformation of extant socio-

political formations, often resulting in 'tribalization,' the genesis of new tribes."[14] This is the case in the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan as well. The influence of the Mughal, Durrani, Sikh, and British Empires, among others, combined with the literary and oral traditions that emerged in the 17th-18th centuries, A.D., are part of the reason that today Pashtuns might sometimes name "tribe" as one important identity category.

In addition to 'tribalization,' states and conflicts can also 'detribalize' areas that were formerly tribal. As we will see below, decades of conflict have detribalized many areas of Afghanistan that formerly organized by tribe.

Today, some Pashtun groups still do, in fact, organize themselves along kinship lines. Even in those cases, however, there is no guarantee of coherence, and individual members of those communities may choose to ignore the consensus of the group.

Anthropological Models of Pashtun Society: Solidarity Groups

Anthropologists and historians who study Afghanistan don't use "tribe" as an analytical unit. Instead, they talk about a word that is often translated as "tribe," but has a lot of other meanings as well. That word is *qawm*. The best translation for *qawm* is "solidarity group," meaning a group of people that acts as a single unit and is organized on the basis of some shared identity.

In non-tribal areas of Afghanistan (like Tajik or Hazara areas), asking a person, "What is your *qawm*?" usually gets an answer of an ethnicity, a regional area, or a single village. For example, if you ask a Tajik from the Panjshir Valley, "What is your *qawm*?" he will probably answer "Tajik" or "Panjshiri." That's because Tajiks feel they have the most in common with people from their own valley, and after that from their own ethnicity.

In Pashtun areas, the word *qawm* can mean something different. Because Pashtuns maintain beliefs in the endurance of kinship, Pashtuns often will reply with the name of their tribe, even if that isn't really an effective solidarity group for them. That is, the fact that they answer with their tribal identity doesn't mean that they will act on it. Other *qawms* cut across family relationships.

Today, the word *qawm* can mean any group of people that has something in common and acts as a single group. That can mean a family group, especially in Pashtun areas; it can mean a geographical location; it can mean a group of people with the same profession; and it can also mean a group of people united by a common political goal under a leader.

This creates confusion for foreigners who ask Afghans "What is your tribe?" That gets translated into Dari and Pashto as "What is your *qawm*?" And the reply one receives can be an ethnicity, a geographical location, a professional class, a warlord's name, a village name, or a tribe. In English, we would have different questions to get each of those answers.

Finally, *qawms* change. People can choose to belong to communities. When conditions change, Pashtuns can realign themselves with another group. In the following sections, we will lay out some of the reasons why familial relationships might not be the best way to analyze Pashtuns, and instead why local, small-scale conflicts play a big role in organizing local communities.

First-Cousin Hostility in Eastern Afghanistan

One reason why the "family tree" model of tribes doesn't apply to Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan is because of the unique relationship between male father's-side first cousins. It is so unique to Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan that one anthropologist goes so far as to say that first-cousin hostility is a defining feature of the Pashtun ethnicity.[15] The word in Pashto for "male father's-side first cousin" is *tarbur*, which is, at the same time, also one way of saying "enemy" in Pashto.[16]

Why would first cousins in a tribal society be enemies with each other? The standard model of a Middle Eastern "tribal society" says that close male relatives should be a source of support against more distant "relatives" in other tribes, not enemies.

For Pashtuns, it comes down to competition over the inheritance of land from common ancestors—especially from one's grandfather on the father's side. In many areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the land that is suitable for farming is limited, because it's located in valleys surrounded by mountains. As a result, the individual men of each succeeding generation inherit smaller and smaller parcels, because they are subdivided with the other sons. Intensifying things even more, the men who are in most direct competition with one another also tend to have land plots that share borders—borders which, in the absence of any good system of surveying and land law, are the cause of many violent negotiations.[17]

In one study, a petty land conflict between first cousins turned into a bloody case of revenge:

> "As an example, two […] cousins had neighboring plots. The cousin whose field was more distant from the village walked to his field on an ancient pathway which verged on the plot of his *tarbur*. There was a simmering dispute over the right to this narrow path which ended in a gunfight and the death of one of the man's sons."[18]

The conflicts that happen between cousins are not always directly about land or money, even though those things are always at the heart of the matter. Many rural Pashtun men are constantly on guard about anything that might hurt their public reputations—and the behavior of cousins reflects directly on a man's reputation.[19] If a cousin makes himself seem braver, better, or more successful, then a man will feel compelled to match the cousin or put him back in his place. For example, an anthropologist witnessed the following conflict in Swat, Pakistan:

> "The most devastating feud ongoing during my fieldwork was one which began with a boy's refusal to let his second cousin play soccer with him. This trivial insult led to a fight which spread to include the boys' fathers. At the close of the fieldwork three men were dead and the fields of both families had either been sold for weapons or else left fallow as the remaining men sought to eliminate their rivals."[20]

Matters of honor are, to some rural Pashtuns, as real as infringements against a land border, if only because they are "representative" of some possible future event in which actual resources are involved.[21] Honor is not just an ideal in Pashtun society; it is viewed by many Pashtuns as the very mechanism that preserves Pashtun society as something separate from the wider world. The struggle between cousin-rivals and the feuds that struggle spawns are seen not as problems to be eliminated but, in fact, as "identical with the social structure."[22] Feuds between first cousins, and their respective factions, can last decades, as in one documented case that began in the 1920s in Mohmand Agency, FATA, Pakistan and was still playing itself out in the 1970s.[23]

This is not to say that first cousins are incapable of being on the same side of a conflict, and in fact, having a strong first cousin is a source of pride. But it is always also a comment on one's own position relative to the cousin, a position that constantly needs to be augmented by generosity and fighting. It is also not inevitable that conflicts must necessarily spin out of control; rural Pashtuns have well-developed methods to resolve conflicts through *jirga* mediation and the exchange of property or women.

The result of this special kind of intra-family relationship is that, during times when conflicts aggravate first-cousin hostility, the sides don't necessarily break down along "closest male relative" lines. Whereas in a classical Middle East tribal situation, all the participants in a conflict pick sides based on which side represents their closest male relative, Pashtuns establish temporary factional groupings that are unpredictable and not necessarily based on familial relationships.[24]

Instead of Tribes, Factions

Anthropologists have long noted the tendency of Pashtuns to form factions that don't break down along tribal lines. The phrase "blood is thicker than water" is not an accurate description of Pashtuns. Pashtuns are just as likely to choose a way of organizing that has nothing to do with the closeness of family relationships. Pashtuns freely choose the side of distant family (or non-family) as often as family. As seen in the diagram below, the line between factional groupings of community leaders shifts across tribal group boundaries—far from being a stable structure, these leaders align themselves strategically and switch sides as time passes and events develop.

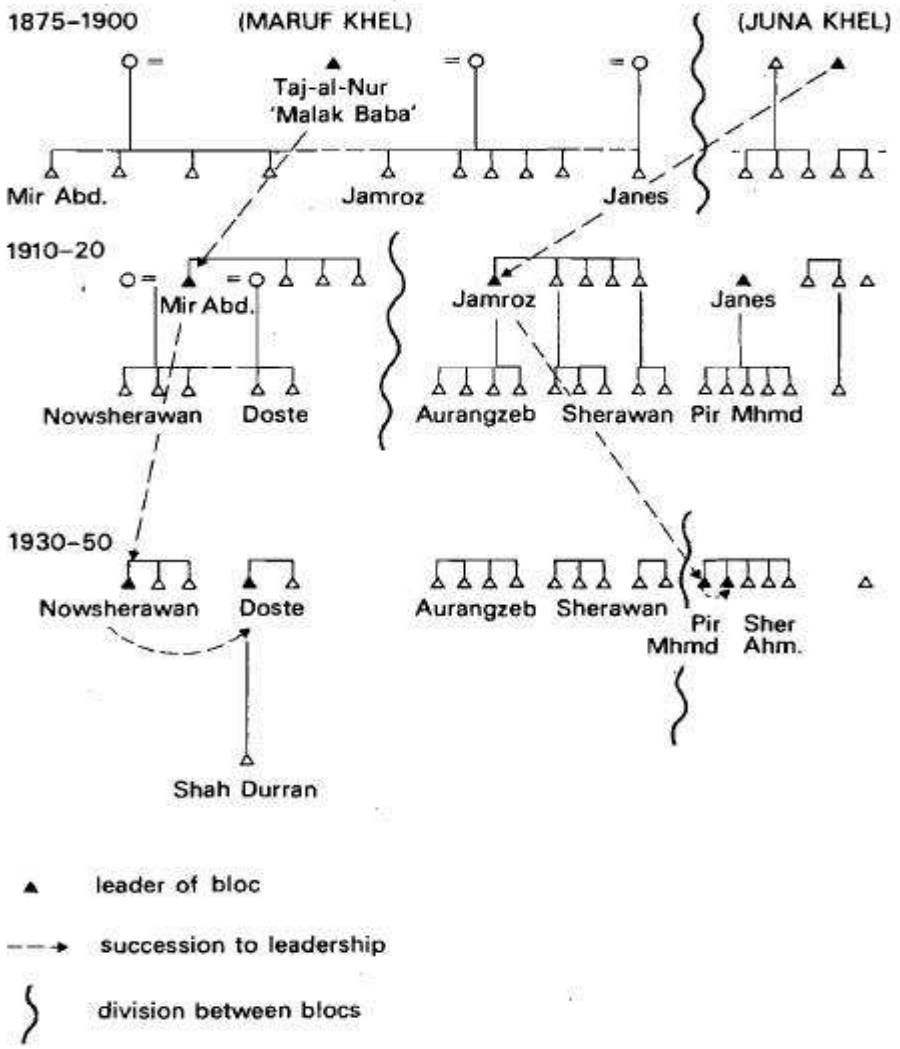

Figure 1. Example of a complex factional dispute in Swat, Pakistan, 1875-1950.[25]

In dispute depicted in the figure above, we see an example of the way that in a factional environment, conflict participants switch sides over time. In the first period, 1875-1900, the Juna Khel was in conflict with the Maruf Khel. In the 1910-1920 period, part of the Maruf Khel split away and joined Juna Khel in this specific dispute (this is signified by the shift of the wavy line to the left, putting part of the former group on a different side.) The leader of that combined faction was actually a Maruf Khel, although the original party was Juna Khel. In 1930-1950, the line between the sides shifted again, and the descendents of Juna Khel took back leadership of their faction. Thus the "tribal" dispute shifts from family to faction and back to family over time.

The tendency for rural Pashtuns to form groups that aren't based on family relationships has, historically, also been a way for Pashtuns to stymie attempts by central governments to establish control over them. For example, British colonial administrators and officers

attempted a "tribal approach" in Waziristan, and it is worth quoting one historian's summary of the issue:

> "It appears that the tribes of Waziristan tried to organize themselves in different ways in different circumstances; the difficulty for the government officer was that both the [family] system and the factional model (and sometimes even the chiefly one) to some extent corresponded to reality. Each reflected a different aspect or potentiality of tribal organization. Sometimes tribal politics were shaped by clan and lineage membership, at other times they revolved around factional nuclei, or even maliks, occasionally they expressed some kind of territorial identity. Usually all of these influences played some part, and as a result the Mahsuds especially demonstrated an ability to coalesce and dissolve in a way that was extremely difficult to predict."[26]

From Factions to Larger Solidarity Groups: Parties and Patronage Networks

When there is no wider conflict outside of the local conflict, factional disputes may remain limited to the local community. When a national conflict (like the Soviet-mujahidin war, or the present war) overlays the local situation, however, the local conflict can transfer itself into the different sides of the larger conflict.

For example, the Kunar uprising in 1978-9 against the Communist government of Afghanistan began as a "tribal" revolt by Safi Pashtuns. "Tribal" in this case meant that the groups involved used the traditional structures of organization—informal gatherings of fighters and elders into *jirgas*, and informal fighting groups known as *lashkars*.[27] After a brief initial success, the "tribal" revolt dissolved into failure because of the structural limitations of tribal *lashkars*. Because in most rural Pashtun societies, the equality of all adult males is a paramount value, it was difficult to organize the men of the *lashkar* by assigning them different roles (everyone wanted to fight at the front, not work on logistics, e.g.).[28]

As the *lashkar* dissolved, more disciplined and better-funded parties stepped into the void. These parties eventually evolved into the mujahidin parties such as *Hizb-e Islami* (later led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar). The parties, because of their access to weapons, were able to leverage the cultural tendency of conflict participants to compete with their factional rivals as a way of maintaining personal honor:

> "A vital dynamic of tribal society—arguably the fuel that keeps honor alive as a moral code—is the understanding that a man will not willingly allow his paternal cousins and other peers to outdo him in any competitive endeavor, particularly combat. One gains renown by being the first into the fray, the most daring in the pursuit of glory, and the most successful in battle. Rivalry (*siali*) therefore required results, and when weapons were not available from tribal sources, individuals turned to parties who were

> only too happy to give them some as long as they agreed to become members and to submit to party discipline."[29]

This dynamic of non-tribal groups— or parties—subsuming factional rivalries explains why the mujahidin resistance was not at all a tribal conflict with the state. Rather, the mujahidin groups exploited local factional conflicts that had expanded from family rivalries to recruit fighters.

When local conflicts became part of the wider national conflict in the Soviet-mujahidin war, many areas of Afghanistan became "detribalized" because of the change in conflict structure. Before the Soviet war, many Pashtun communities were led by groups of village elders and other adult males, and they had the power to mediate local conflicts. After the start of the war in 1978-79, communities that were reshaped by the process of detribalization found new, non-family based ways to organize themselves politically: local strongmen.

> "These local petty notables would not have expressed themselves politically before the war, but they now find in political affiliation an access to weapons and a new self-assertion, making it more difficult for the dominant party and leaders to assert themselves as a political alternative above the traditional segmentation. Such petty notables do not necessarily have a territorial base…In some particularly detribalized or depopulated areas, there is a process of transforming a political group which people joined not necessarily out of consideration for *qawm* affiliation into a *qawm* network, a 'communal group,' whose existence is simply a consequence of the war, but which will try to perpetuate itself by accumulating wealth and political power. This reminds us that *qawm* and ethnic affiliations are in Afghanistan a dynamic process and not a static taxonomia."[30]

These "local petty nobles" (referred to recently by one scholar as "political entrepreneurs"[31]) form followings based not on family relationships, but rather based on their ability to hand out resources. Other terms for "political entrepreneur" in current usage are "warlord" or "local commander." Local commanders do not necessarily form their followings based on tribal identity. Tribal identity can be one way that these political entrepreneurs mobilize support for their causes, but it is not the only one.

Because these local strongmen have, in many places in rural Pashtun areas, replaced the former tribal organizations or at least competed successfully against them, Pashtun areas have started to resemble non-Pashtun areas more and more. In other parts of Afghanistan, like the northern areas inhabited by Tajiks, Uzbeks, and others that are not tribal, local strongmen convince people to follow them either by force or by charismatic leadership and patronage.

"Warlord" is a term most associated with the former commanders of the mujahidin parties of the Soviet war, such as Abdul Rashid Dostum of Mazar-i Sharif or Ismail Khan of Herat. These leaders seized territory and imposed their rule by force over that territory.

A more traditional Afghan form of social organization is the patronage network. Patronage networks in both the north and the south are dependent on the ability of the patron, or *khan*, to distribute resources to make a convincing case for his leadership. Local *khans* do not hold any formal office—they are not elected and people are free to decide whether to support or reject them. Many *khans* also have some sort of tribal relationship, but their followers are not limited or defined by their tribal identification.[32] The patronage networks they lead, therefore, are temporary and their membership is not a given. Each locality has its own dynamic, and only first-hand investigation can tell whether a locality has a warlord, a *khan*, or a tribal organization at a given time.[33]

Summary

Though tribe is a factor in Pashtun society, it is neither the only source of Pashtun identity nor the only foundation of Pashtun social organization. Traditions of shared kinship have formed the narrative foundations for Pashtun tribal organization, and historical forces have reinforced these structures. However, both in the past and where kin-based social structures still exist among Pashtuns, other social forms routinely arise and trump the importance of tribe and tribal organization. Rivalry between close male relatives, the formation of factions within kin groups, and the dynamics of patronage make Pashtun social structures far more complex than if they followed the classical anthropological definition of "tribe."

PART II:
LOCAL CONFLICTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Part I described some of the general features of Pashtun social organization and identity. Part II examines these concepts in the context of one particular conflict between two Pashtun groups to illustrate that "tribe" is not the central organizing and motivating principle in Pashtun society.

Local Conflicts: A Test of "Tribe"

Conflict is an important category of social interactions to examine for two reasons. First, because Afghan society is popularly described as "tribal" and communal disputes are often labeled "tribal conflicts," it is worthwhile to examine the role that tribal identities and institutions actually play in conflicts between Afghans. Second, the existence and outcomes of conflicts have political and security implications. How the government does or does not deal with local conflicts shapes public perceptions about government effectiveness and insurgents exploit local conflicts to increase their area of influence. Examining Afghan conflict dynamics then helps answer whether or not tribe is an operationally useful concept and illustrates that understanding Afghan social dynamics is critical for defeating the insurgency and strengthening Afghanistan's government.

Most Afghans are not invested and do not take part in the conflicts that are typically of greatest concern to Coalition Forces. National politics and the insurgency are issues about which Afghans may have opinions – quite strong ones, in fact – but they are not the conflicts that they experience on a daily basis. Particularly in the rural areas in which most Afghans reside, Afghans are heavily invested actors in local conflicts. Local conflicts in Afghanistan are pervasive, often long-lasting, and inextricably tied to Afghan livelihoods and social relations. Further, Taliban and other insurgents exploit and exacerbate local conflicts in order to expand their influence. Correctly understanding local conflict dynamics then is a critical first step to combating the insurgency in Afghanistan.

Tribal and ethnic identities offer convenient frameworks for both Afghans and external observers to describe local conflicts. In some cases, these narratives resonate, providing a reasonable and accepted explanation for the conflict, in turn mobilizing others of the same tribe or ethnic group to play a role in a conflict. Over time, related sub-conflicts that have spun off from the original conflict may lead to a situation in which two large groups, each sharing a tribal or ethnic identity, actively participate in conflict against one another. However, for reasons explored in greater detail below, tribal and ethnic narratives are inappropriate for describing the general causes and dynamics of local conflict in Afghanistan. A close examination of the human terrain and the features of conflicts in Afghanistan demonstrate that viewing conflicts through a tribal lens offers few unique or useful insights.

"Tribe" and Local Conflicts

Tribe provides a convenient narrative for framing and understanding local conflicts in eastern Afghanistan. Afghan society is often, and incorrectly, as demonstrated earlier in this essay, described as "tribal." Therefore, conflicts are often described as being between

tribes *x* and *y*, and area assessments often attempt to detail all the ongoing tribal conflicts. Though convenient, the tribal narrative oversimplifies local conflicts and distracts observers from key issues in these disputes. In turn, reliance on tribal models and narratives for understanding local conflict makes it more difficult for the Coalition to deny the Taliban influence over the population.

One reason why tribal narratives are inappropriate for understanding local conflicts is that there are other narratives available to parties in conflicts. Three decades of war have undermined the centrality of tribe as a source of identity. While it certainly still exists, identities grounded in religion, language, place of origin or residence, socio-economic position, and association with tanzims, the mujahedin parties that fought the Soviets, can (and often do) all trump tribe in different circumstances. For example, the parties involved in a conflict within a community over a disputed resource may be two social networks based in past membership in different tanzims. In another example, the parties involved in a dispute over use of land may be from the same ethnic group, speak the same language, be distant relatives, and yet define themselves in the conflict as farmers and nomads, two socio-economic groups.

A second, and critical, reason to avoid using tribal narratives to describe conflict in Afghanistan is that the vast majority of conflicts occurs within rather than between groups described as tribes. Most conflicts occur within families, between families in the same community, or between factions within communities. **Only about 20% of all local conflicts occur between communities. The rest take place within communities, with most being either within a family or between families.**[34] At all scales, livelihoods are a source of conflict. Land is the most frequent source of dispute within and between families, while water and debt are more important in communal conflicts. And only in some of those cases – particularly those in areas inhabited by two predominant groups – do tribal narratives neatly describe the conflict.[35] Even then, however, the narrative only really explains the shared identities of the actors in the conflict and may obscure the causes and stakeholders in the conflict.

A third important reason to avoid tribal descriptions of conflict is that stereotypical classical tribal models are a poor tool for the job – they do not provide any shortcuts. Calling conflict tribal does nothing to anticipate or identify the stakeholders in a particular dispute. Instead, stakeholders are usually better-predicted by particular features of the people and area under consideration such as land inheritance customs, local geography, marriage practices, and water management.

Additionally, tribal models do not help identify leaders who can help resolve conflicts. Traditional tribal and community institutions have weakened over the last several decades. Respected local elites who controlled land and water resources and who could provide cohesive force to local institutions have been targeted from the late 1970s to the present by the communist government, commanders affiliated with mujahedin parties, warlords, and most recently, the Taliban, which has attacked traditional institutions and replaced them with its own.[36] The weakness of traditional institutions and the absence of

government institutions allow conflicts that may have in the past been solved relatively quickly to persist over longer periods of time.

Where tribes exist in Afghanistan, there only very rarely are single leaders of tribes or clans. Instead, within tribes and communities, there are various local elites, some of whom may be extremely influential. Leadership is often situational. A local elite who expertly solves land conflicts may not be the same person from whom community members seek advice on debt disputes. And in many cases, a group of local elites must be consulted to resolve local conflicts.

In both areas with strong tribal identities and weak ones, Afghan communities generally share local institutions with similar features. Shuras or jirgas typically decide issues of concern to the community and solve conflicts. Mullahs and those who own lots of land or are wealthy are usually influential. To say the people of an area are tribal merely means that those people identify themselves tribally. In such areas, there may or may not be tribal institutions – shuras and elites that can enforce obligations on members of the tribe. In fact, in many areas there are no longer tribal institutions and during the wars of the past three decades, both tribal and local institutions have been targets of government, warlords, and insurgents seeking to control Afghanistan's rural populations.[37] Therefore, the local institutions that generally exist in every community in Afghanistan are those that must be engaged to address the local disputes that the Taliban exploits to its advantage. **Further, it should not be expected that these local institutions will be able to create enforceable obligations on anyone more than members of their own community.** Solving tribal conflicts will often require engaging numerous local institutions representing each tribe's constituent communities.

Mangal-Sabari Conflict – A Look at the Complexity of Local Conflict

A particularly bitter local conflict has been ongoing for the last several generations in Sabari district of Khost province. The conflict is often described as being between the Sabari and Mangal tribes, though more precisely it is between the Zambar sub-tribe of the Sabaris and the Bal Khel sub-tribe of the Mangals. The conflict has resulted in 80-300 deaths, and more will likely be killed as a result of the dispute as it continues.[38] Though the two parties directly involved in this severe conflict are both tribes, features of the conflict and the human terrain of the rest of Sabari district demonstrate that viewing local conflicts through a tribal lens offers few unique or useful insights.

The Zambar-Bal Khel conflict is like most other local conflicts in Afghanistan. The central issue in the dispute is control of resource-rich land in an area called *Prata Gundai*. According to some accounts, the Zambar originally allowed the Bal Khel to settle in their area to work in Zambar fields. Over time, the Bal Khel population increased in size and wealth, eventually leading them to claim land and resources in the area as their own.[39]

Once the conflict had begun, it fit neatly into a tribal narrative. As the conflict continued, the fighting has reinforced the tribal narrative and complicated the dispute by connecting

additional disputes over lost property, injuries, and deaths to the original conflict over control of *Prata Gundai*.

All previous efforts to resolve the Zambar-Bal Khel conflict have failed. During the 1990s, the Taliban government attempted to moderate the conflict, but the effort was tainted from the start as the Zambar perceived the Taliban to favor the Bal Khel. After the fall of the Taliban, the GIRoA sought to bring the conflict to an end. Governors of Khost, Paktia, and Paktika brought the disputants together, and UNAMA convinced them to agree to adjudication by a religious figure from Nangarhar province called Pir Rahmatullah, whose role was to draw the line of demarcation between the two sides. The Zambar rejected Pir Rahmatullah's decision, accusing the Bal Khel of having paid him $100,000 to draw the line in their favor.

Further attempts are complicated by the fact that though the two parties fighting for control of the resources in *Prata Gundai* identify themselves as members of tribes, thinking of the parties as stereotypical, classical tribes fails to offer any insight on how to bring about a resolution. On the Sabari side in particular, there are no tribal institutions or leaders who could enforce Sabari or Zambar compliance with a settlement, and not even the Zambar, the smaller sub-tribe, let alone the whole Sabari tribe, act together as unified groups.

The Sabari tribe is composed of three major sub-tribal elements. The Rugha live in southern Sabari district, the Tangai live in the middle of the district, and the Zambar live in the north. Prior to the Soviet invasion, all of the Sabari sub-tribes were reportedly unified under strong central leadership composed of a handful of elders. Relationships between the Sabari and the government and within the tribe were fairly static, and the Sabari policed themselves with formal, tribal institutions in exchange for autonomy from direct government administration. The Sabari organized themselves into 11 administrative sub-divisions through which resources could be equitably distributed and disputes could be quickly settled. [40]

The tribal institutions that once existed among the Sabari have disappeared. War, migration, and economic changes have disrupted social relationships and deprived the Sabari of organic leaders and institutions that once solved local conflicts and could enforce obligations on members of the tribe.[41]

In the late 1970s, Mamoor Ali Jan, an elder from the Zambar sub-tribe, was the most influential leader among the Sabari tribe. When the Soviets invaded, he decided the tribe should go into exile in Pakistan, and many Sabari followed him to the Kurram Agency. Mamoor Ali Jan died in the 1980s, and no one has been able to replace him. As has been the case with tribal elites elsewhere in Afghanistan, influential Sabari elders were killed, exiled, or marginalized during the wars of the past thirty years. Today, the Sabari lack clearly-designated elders with specific roles and obligations they had in the past. Many Sabari villages lack elders to represent them on a regular basis, and select ad hoc representation as necessary.[42] In some areas, the head of every household represents himself as an elder.[43] The lack of leadership and disunity of what leadership does exist

have created opportunities for the Taliban to move into and maintain a presence in the region.

Economic changes have further eroded the influence and relevance of Sabari elders and tribal institutions. In the past, Sabari families depended on elders for crop seeds, water, and many other necessities. More recently, however, many families receive remittances from relatives working overseas that have freed them from reliance on elders. Many families with money coming in from abroad say that elders held positions of influence because of money and that those receiving remittances could afford to ignore elders. [44]

On top of these two factors, there are lasting divisions resulting from the war with the Soviet Union. Members of the Sabari tribe allied themselves with different tanzims, leading to factionalism and fighting within the tribe.[45] Additionally, there is a split between the Sabaris who left for Pakistan during the 1980s and those who stayed. When those who followed Mamoor Ali Jan into exile in Pakistan returned to their land, they found that those who had stayed behind had occupied much of the land and that land rights agreements had been nullified. Because tribal institutions had already eroded in authority and relevance and the Sabari lacked stable, influential leadership, conflicts over land rights went unresolved.[46]

Both the Sabari as a whole and the Zambar themselves are internally disunited; neither the tribe nor sub-tribes act together as groups. Noori Kalay, a Zambar village in a traditionally Rugha area, provides examples of both intra-Sabari conflict as well as conflict within the Zambar sub-tribe. The Zambar of Noori Kalay moved to the area generations ago. They are involved in a land conflict with nearby Rugha that began at least 12 years ago when the Rugha surrounded and attacked Noori Kalay, killing two Zambar residents of the village. Residents of the village report that Rugha from Puri Kalay still try to destroy Noori Kalay's crops and that they occasionally shoot at the village as they drive past.[47]

The Zambar who live in Noori Kalay also are not united with the Zambar who still live in the sub-tribe's traditional territory in northern Sabari district. Residents of the village say that they do not share leaders with the Zambar to the north. There is also an unresolved dispute with the northern Zambars over timber that started in the early 1990s when many Sabaris returned from Pakistan. The two sides have apparently tried to resolve this dispute, but have been stymied in their attempts by Taliban in the area who do not want Zambar elders to meet.[48]

Though the Zambar and Bal Khel conflict is only a single example, there are hundreds of other less well-documented examples that share some of the same features and illustrate that local conflicts are far more complicated than "tribal" models imply. Examples of land and water conflicts can be found everywhere in Afghanistan in many different forms. In the Shiwa pastures of Badakhshan province, for example, a 2004 study found numerous, complex conflicts over control of individual pastures.[49] There are also many examples of the weakening of tribal institutions and leaders. In Ghazni, for example, numerous Andar villages have no functional shuras or significant local elites.[50] There are

also many instances of tribes not acting as groups. The Andar also show this quality. The tribe as a whole has not met since the 1980s.[51] In all of the many examples of conflict in Afghanistan, it is the rare exception, not the rule, that tribal identities or institutions cause or solve local conflicts.

Local Conflicts, the Afghanistan Government, and the Insurgency

Most conflicts in Afghanistan occur at the local level, between small groups, and over issues involving land or money. Typically, these conflicts are resolved by informal, local institutions such as shuras or by respected, local elites such as mullahs and maliks.[ii] Very few conflicts – only about 10-20% of all civil and criminal disputes – are brought before the local court system or other official institutions.[52] Local informal solutions are perceived to be preferable because they better satisfy notions of fairness, are less corrupt, and achieve quicker, more predictable results.[53] Despite the importance of local institutions and solutions to conflict, the majority of attention and funding from international donors and Coalition Forces has gone to strengthening formal institutions that operate at too high a level to be adequately responsive to local needs.

Afghanistan's government (GIRoA) is unable to resolve the vast majority of local conflicts in Afghanistan. Whether due to a lack of capacity, concern, corruption or some blend of these factors, this inability to settle local conflicts contributes to low confidence among Afghans in the GIRoA and its institutions.

Low confidence in the GIRoA and the persistence of local conflicts have created opportunities for Taliban and other insurgent groups to expand their influence in a variety of ways. First, local power struggles reduce the community's ability to resist the insurgency. Second, insurgents exploit and exacerbate local conflicts by allying with one side or another to gain access to the area. Third, Taliban-affiliated insurgents have increasingly set up their own shadow institutions to swiftly resolve local conflicts or address government shortcomings. There are at least some signs that by doing so, the Taliban is building a reputation for delivering fairer and more effective justice than the government.[54]

GIRoA weakness, lack of public confidence in government institutions, and the persistence of local conflicts have all allowed the insurgency to strengthen its presence among the people of Afghanistan. The Taliban's strategy is to exploit local conflicts to gain access to new areas and widen the gulf between Afghans and their government. Coalition Forces should be far less concerned with issues of little concern or importance to Afghans – national-level politics, for example. They instead should deny Taliban and other insurgent groups the opportunity to exploit local conflicts to expand their influence.

Apart from the National Solidarity Program (NSP), little attention has been paid to building governance and conflict resolution capacity at the local level. Because the

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ii The names for these leaders and institutions vary across Afghanistan, but the basic pattern is the same. Local leaders are typically respected landowners or religious figures, and local decision-making institutions typically are composed of the respected males of the community.

persistence of local conflicts diminish confidence in the GIRoA and create opportunities for the Taliban and other insurgent groups to expand their influence, which in turn reduces physical security, a key task for the counterinsurgent in Afghanistan is to understand, resolve, and avoid creating conflicts at the local level.

Summary

The Zambar-Bal Khel dispute demonstrates the complex way in which identity is put into practice in Afghanistan. In this conflict, the two parties define themselves by their tribal identities. Yet there are no tribal solutions to this dispute because, at least on the Zambar side, there are no tribal institutions capable of enforcing members of the tribe to comply with a settlement. Disunity and conflicts within the tribe further complicate matters. Thrown into this already complicated situation are the Taliban's efforts to prevent Sabari attempts to reunite in order to maintain their own influence and freedom of movement in the district. In fact, what is neatly packaged as a tribal dispute between the Zambar and Bal Khel is in fact a complicated, tangled web of local conflicts.

None of this is to say that tribes are not real or are irrelevant to Afghans. They are very real as a foundation for identity and bonds of solidarity. The institutions that once reinforced these bonds, however, have withered in most of eastern Afghanistan. Where there once were tribal elites are now local elites whose influence may not extend beyond the village in which they live. Changes in Afghanistan's economy have further weakened the foundations on which local elites based their influence. The result is that in almost all of Afghanistan, one should not expect to find leaders or institutions capable of making or enforcing agreements on behalf of large groups.

PART III:
WHY THIS MATTERS

It may seem pedantic to stress that there is a distinction between “local” and “tribal” knowledge. But there is a tendency to ascribe the word “tribal” to almost any situation in Afghanistan, where water and land disputes are called “tribal conflicts” or meetings with village elders are called “tribal gatherings.” Those using the term “tribal” may very well understand Afghan conflict and community dynamics, but in using “tribal” rather than “local,” they imply that Afghans have social qualities that often are not present.

Mischaracterizing social realities distorts our understanding of Afghanistan’s human terrain, which in turn hobbles our ability to create effective courses of action. A singular focus on “tribe” as the central organizational principle of Afghan society implies a need to identify leaders, institutions, and relationships that may not exist. The assumption that tribes have leaders or behave as a single unit contributes to inadequate engagement strategies. And looking for conflict between tribes distracts us from the more common conflicts that occur within tribes that give the insurgency opportunities to expand.

To accomplish lasting effects in Afghanistan whether building a well, resolving local conflicts, or strengthening government institutions requires a renewed focus on local knowledge. There are no shortcuts. One cannot assume social structures follow a general template throughout Afghanistan or even within a single ethno-linguistic group. Tribal identities do still exist. However, tribal elites and institutions have withered. Gathering and mapping tribal, sub-tribal, and clan identities and boundaries only tells a small and potentially misleading part of the story. The more important part of the story involves identifying local conflicts, elites, and institutions, all of which cut across tribal and ethnic identities often in unexpected ways. Local knowledge adds critical context that can be the difference between success and failure.

[1] Malcolm Yapp, "Tribes and States in the Khyber, 1838-42," *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 186.
[2] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 242.
[3] For an example of this argument, see David Ronfeldt, *In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes—The First and Forever Form*, RAND Working Paper, December 2006. Accessed on 7 July 2009 at http://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/2007/RAND_WR433.pdf
[4] R. Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead, "The Violent Edge of Empire," in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, eds. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1992), 12-14.
[5] For example, see Thomas Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "No Sign until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008), 50. Bernt Glatzer claims that this analytically unhelpful stereotype first appears in J. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963), 17. See Bernt Glatzer, "War and Boundaries in Afghanistan: Significance and Relativity of Local and Social Boundaries," *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 41, No. 3, (Nov. 2001), 385.
[6] Jon W. Anderson, "*Khan* and *Khel:* Dialectics of Pakhtun Tribalism," *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 132.
[7] Gilles Dorronsoro, *The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), accessed on 8 July 2009 at http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/taliban_winning_strategy.pdf
[8] Bernt Glatzer, "The Pashtun Tribal System," in G. Pfeffer and D. K. Behera, eds., *Concept of Tribal Society* (New Delhi: Concept Publishers, 2002), accessed at http://liportal.inwent.org/fileadmin/user_upload/oeffentlich/afghanistan/40_gesellschaft/glatzer_pashtun_tribal_system.pdf on 7 July 2009.
[9] "We should not think of the native model… as a rigid structural model, joined to a reality which itself also changes little. The framework itself is changeable, and capable of accommodating both the static functioning of social forms and its transformations." Anatoly Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 119.
[10] Robert Nichols, *Settling the Frontier: Land, Law, and Society in the Peshawar Valley, 1500-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 39-43.
[11] Hugh Beattie, *Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 199.
[12] Hugh Beattie, *Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 199.
[13] Hugh Beattie, *Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 155.
[14] R. Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead, "The Violent Edge of Empire," in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, eds. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1992), 3.
[15] Akbar Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 199.
[16] The anthropological literature on Pashtun first-cousin hostility is deep and unanimous.
[17] Fredrick Barth, "Segmentary Opposition and the Theory of Games," *Features of Person and Society in Swat* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 66.
[18] Charles Lindholm, *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 74.
[19] "Social relations are temporary rather than permanent, flexible rather than fixed. Success in social undertakings comes less through more rectitude than through influential friends. Man is less a passive recipient of social fate than an active entrepreneur 'who builds and manages an enterprise for the pursuit of profit in the course of which he innovates and takes risks.' In this sense, he is ultimately embarked on a course of lonely heroics in which, because of inevitable flux, he can never rest secure." G. Whitney Azoy, *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 32.
[20] Charles Lindholm, *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 74.

[21] "Violence in the community is really over scarcity of resources, but it is 'represented' through oppositions concerning honor." Charles Lindholm, *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 78.
[22] "Finally it may be argued that the consequence of agnatic conflict is not dissonance or disharmony in society but, on the contrary, and as seen through the eyes of the involved groups in society, a confirmation and perpetuation of the key concepts of social behavior and social organization… It is no coincidence that the social mechanism terminating violent agnatic rivalry is the giving and taking of women in marriage from enemy groups… Paradoxically, both the murders and marriages underline the close kin relationships of the actors and in one sense symbolize this unity." Akbar Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 201. See also J. Black-Michaud, *Cohesive Force* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 207.
[23] Akbar Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 185-196.
[24] Hugh Beattie, *Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 11.
[25] Diagram taken from Fredrick Barth, "Swat Pathans Reconsidered," *Features of Person and Society in Swat* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 166.
[26] Hugh Beattie, *Tribe and State in Waziristan* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 197.
[27] David Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 138-142.
[28] David Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 152.
[29] David Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 151.
[30] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 216-217.
[31] Gilles Dorronsoro, *The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), 26. Accessed on 8 July 2009 at http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/taliban_winning_strategy.pdf
[32] Jose Oberson, *Khans and Warlords: Political Alignment, Leadership and the State in Pashtun Society. Anthropological Aspects and the Warlordism Debate* (unpublished ms., 2002). Accessed at http://www.kit10.info/Khans%20&%20Warlords%20in%20Pashtun%20Society%20PART%201.pdf and http://www.kit10.info/Khans%20&%20Warlords%20in%20Pashtun%20Society%20PART%202.pdf on 17 June 2009.
[33] G. Whitney Azoy, *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 32.
[34] Dennys and Zaman, 8-9.
[35] Dennys and Zaman, 8.
[36] Gilles Dorronsoro, *The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), 21-26. Accessed on 8 July 2009 at http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/taliban_winning_strategy.pdf.
[37] Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 184-264. Dorronsoro, 26.
[38] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 22.
[39] Correspondence with HTT AF1, 30 December 2007.
[40] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 9; 14-15; 19-20.
[41] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 9; 14-15; 19-20.
[42] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 9; 14-15.
[43] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 64.
[44] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 9; 14-15.
[45] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 23.
[46] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 9; 14-15.
[47] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 25.
[48] HTT AF1, "Sabari Initial Assessment," May 2009, 23-24.
[49] Mervyn Patterson, "The Shiwa Pastures, 1978-2003: Land Tenure Changes and Conflict in Northeastern Badakhshan," Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, May 2004.

[50] HTT AF1, "Eastern Ghazni: Andar, Qarabagh, Moqur, Deh Yak and Ghazni City 10 OCT – 17 NOV 2008," December 2008, 60-61.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Thomas Barfield, Neamat Nojumi, and J. Alexander Thier, "The Clash of Two Goods: State and Non-State Dispute Resolution in Afghanistan," United States Institute of Peace, 2006.
[53] Ali Wardak, "Building a Post-War Justice System in Afghanistan," Institute for Afghan Studies, http://www.institutefor-afghan-studies.org/Contributions/Projects/Ali- Wardak/Law%20and%20Social %20Change%204.doc (accessed 05 November 2008). USAID, "Field Study of Informal and Customary Justice in Afghanistan and Recommendations on Improving Access to Justice and Relations Between Formal Courts and Informal Bodies," Afghanistan Rule of Law Project, June 2005. Karim Khurram, "The customary laws of Afghanistan." Kabul: The International Legal Foundation (ILF), September 2004. Barfield, et. al.
[54] Barnett Rubin, "Saving Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 1, January/February 2007, 6. "Taliban saved us from terrorizing police: Afghans," Reuters/Al Arabiya, 12 July 2009, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/07/12/78542.html (accessed 20 July 2009). Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, 49, 55, 118-119.