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The Concept of Ethnicization, Political Reconstruction and Ethnic Unity in Afghanistan

Abstract

The ambiguity in the concept of ethnicity and ethnic minority has made the interaction of governments with ethnic groups difficult. For this reason, the most fundamental step to determine the rights of ethnic minorities in a political society in a scholarly and normative manner is to explain the concept and the limits and semantic gaps of terms such as ethnicity, ethnicity, ethnic group, and ethnic minority. This research seeks to explain the definitions of ethnicity after explaining the lexical and idiomatic meanings of ethnicity and presenting the background of the discussion, and then to choose a comprehensive and appropriate definition in this regard (as a challenging factor in modern political societies). It has also, perhaps for the first time, presented a table containing indicators to determine the extent and intensity of ethnicity. In this regard, and to better explain the concept of ethnicity, it has also attempted to express the degrees of ethnocentrism. Finally, by combining the definitions of the two terms ethnicity and minority, ethnic minority has also been defined. Among the topics of interest in political geography are the discussion of tribes, the methods of formation and gathering of tribes in geographical areas, and the way they interact with other ethnic and racial groups, both intra-ethnic and extra-ethnic. The discussion is of particular interest from the perspective that tribes in Afghanistan have played a significant role in the formation of a phenomenon called the country through ethnic integration in various ways. The results of this research and some other research show that the ethnic-based power structure in the past, supported by the ideology of ethnic nationalism, has also fueled lineage and

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ethnicism among non-ruling tribes, turning ethnicity into a natural and widespread phenomenon in all spheres of society and causing a national identity crisis in Afghanistan.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Ethnicity, Minority, Power

Afganistan'da Etnikleşme Kavramı, Siyasi Yeniden Yapılanma ve Etnik Birlik

Öz

Etnisite ve etnik azınlık kavramlarındaki muğlaklık, hükümetlerin etnik gruplarla etkileşimini zorlaştırmıştır. Bu nedenle siyasi bir toplumda etnik azınlıkların haklarının bilimsel ve normatif bir şekilde belirlenebilmesi için en temel adım etnisite, etniklik, etnik grup, etnik azınlık gibi kavramların sınırlarının ve anlamsal boşluklarının açıklanmasıdır. Bu araştırma, etnisitenin sözlüksel ve deyimsel anlamlarını açıkladıktan ve tartışmanın arka planını sunduktan sonra etnisite tanımlarını açıklamayı ve ardından bu konuda (modern siyasi toplumlarda zorlayıcı bir faktör olarak) kapsamlı ve uygun bir tanım seçmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, belki de ilk kez, etnikliğin kapsamını ve yoğunluğunu belirlemeye yönelik göstergeleri içeren bir tablo sunmuştur. Bu bağlamda ve etnisite kavramını daha iyi açıklamak için, etnosentrizmin derecelerini de ifade etmeye çalışmıştır. Son olarak, etnisite ve azınlık terimlerinin tanımları birleştirilerek etnik azınlık da tanımlanmıştır. Siyasi coğrafyada ilgi çeken konular arasında aşiretlerin tartışılması, aşiretlerin coğrafi alanlarda oluşum ve toplanma yöntemleri ve hem etnik hem de etnik olmayan diğer etnik ve ırksal gruplarla etkileşim biçimleri yer almaktadır. Tartışma, Afganistan'daki aşiretlerin çeşitli şekillerde etnik entegrasyon yoluyla ülke denen olgunun oluşumunda önemli bir rol oynadığı perspektifinden özellikle ilgi çekicidir. Bu araştırmanın ve diğer bazı araştırmaların sonuçları, geçmişte etnik milliyetçilik ideolojisiyle desteklenen etnik temelli iktidar yapısının, yönetici olmayan kabileler arasında da soy ve etnikçiliği körüklediğini, etnisiteyi toplumun her alanında doğal ve yaygın bir olguya dönüştürdüğünü ve Afganistan'da bir ulusal kimlik krizine neden olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afganistan, Etnisite, Azınlık, Güç

Introduction

The political structure in Afghanistan has been shaped by ethnic politics, and the country's governance has been based on a single ethnicity since its inception and has strongly avoided the participation of major ethnic groups in the country's political structure. The main goal of this research is to analyze and evaluate the single-ethnic politics in the political structure, while this country has ethnic diversity. The main question in this article is: What has been the role of ethnic politics in the political structure of Afghanistan in the contemporary period? In response to this question, the hypothesis is put forward that the political structure based on ethnic politics in Afghanistan has been centered on the dominant ethnicity, and different governments have had similar and different characteristics and approaches, and in addition, the shortcomings of the ruling governments have sometimes been met with resistance from the

traditional and tribal society of Afghanistan. Ethnic politics has three patterns and models, in which Afghan rulers have used the ethnic identification model in some periods of their rule and the ethnic pluralism model in other periods, and finally some rulers have used the unity in diversity model and model. The research method in the present study is a developmental and applied method. The findings of this study show that Afghanistan is one of the countries with ethnic diversity. Different governments have implemented ethnic politics based on the way they look at the ethnic diversity component and considering the characteristics of this mosaic structure of ethnicities. However, the rulers of Afghanistan have not been able to benefit from the approach and model of ethnic politics in an appropriate way. Therefore, this country is still subject to conflicts and even ethnic confrontation and continues to suffer from its insecurity and instability.

1. Historical Background

Given the ongoing war in Afghanistan, when we consider the issue of "ethnicity", different opinions and ideas come to mind. On the one hand, there are many journalists like (Rashid, 2000) and researchers like (Rieck, 1997) and politicians like Colin Powell and Joschka Fischer who describe the Afghan conflict as ethnic. On the other hand, most Afghan politicians always deny this important issue due to their ethnic background and affiliations. Against this background, in this article I intend to discuss the concept of ethnicity and its importance for the structure of the future Afghan system. With the assumption that ethnicity is a dominant tendency in the Afghan conflict, it can be said that the peace and state process that emerged at the Petersburg-Bonn Conference in November 2001 was based on an ethnic approach. Therefore, it seems impossible to ignore the ethnic affiliation of each political actor. In stark contrast to this approach, I strongly suggest that efforts should be made to prevent the political reconstruction of political institutions from fostering ethnicity in the political sphere. The practice of ethnicism and ethnic quotas in the future Afghan government, rather than contributing to lasting peace, will worsen the fragile and critical situation in Afghanistan. My main argument in this section is that ethnic groups cannot be considered as effective and useful sources of unity and solidarity in Afghanistan. We should not forget that ethnicization has taken place during the wars in Afghanistan, but nation-building of the masses has always been a failure. It is still not too late to curb the misuse of ethnicity in the political reconstruction of Afghanistan, not to reinforce ethnicity as a "solution."

1. The Mythology of Ethnicity

Entering into the process of reconciliation with the ethnic mentality raises the question of what is the main characteristic of an ethnic group. While there are heated discussions and scientific debates about the definition of ethnicity and ethnic groups in academic institutions around the world. Most researchers agree that ethnic groups have existed in Afghanistan before. They say that an ethnic group is a solid cultural unit that is formed with specific boundaries and has also played a role in conflicts for hundreds of years (Shahrani, 1986). Contrary to this view, my argument in this article expresses the fact that ethnic groups in Afghanistan were formed or even "created" in the twentieth century and are not yet the main reference of identity in Afghanistan.

1.1. The Ambiguous Nature of Ethnic Groups

A review of the literature and reports of British officers, researchers and soldiers shows that the term "ethnic group" was a completely unknown concept in the 19th century and many writers used this term to define and describe the sources and different ranges of the Afghan population. One such example is Henry Bell's ambiguous report entitled "The Races of Afghanistan; A Brief Report on the Original Inhabitants of the Country", in which the terms races and nations are used synonymously. According to this report, the people of Afghanistan are divided into five main groups, namely Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and Turkmens, and other ethnic groups, most of which are currently classified under the name of the "Afghan" ethnic group. After the mid-20th century, foreign researchers and the government began to systematically categorize the people of Afghanistan based on cultural, linguistic and religious differences.

The term groupe ethnie was first used by a French anthropologist named (Dollot, 1937) to divide the Afghan people into several ethnic groups. It was in the mid-1950s that Wilber (1956/1962) introduced the ethnic classification of the Afghan people into Anglophone literature. In order to eliminate the confusion of identity or composite identification, anthropologists created new ethnic groups based on which cultural customs and traditions were also recognizable for all these ethnic groups, such as Nuristani, Pashai, Aimaq, Tajik, Rural Tajik or Persian, and the Aktabaran. A good example of such "so-called" ethnic classifications was probably the creation of the Tajik people. The word Tajik, which was used in social interactions only in a negative sense for someone who did not belong to any of the social groups such as Pashtun and Hazara, was a non-ethnic idea. The Tajik ethnic group consisted of Sunni Persian speakers who lived in cities and villages without any ethnic background or shared genealogical and historical information. Therefore, the lack of a common background proved

that there were great challenges for the Tajiks to achieve political awareness and to create a real Tajik ethnic group in the form of double challenges. Despite all these grounds, the establishment of ethnic groups in Afghanistan still faces the following problems:

1. Some of the people who are categorized in these ethnic groups, while not being familiar with such ethnic labels, do not have the slightest awareness of this common identity. For example, Ismail Khan, one of the famous leaders of this land, is sometimes considered a Tajik and sometimes a Pashtun or a Persian. The aforementioned consistently refuses to be assigned to a specific ethnic group.

2. The criteria for ethnicity specified by anthropologists do not correspond to the social behaviors and realities in Afghanistan.

For example, those who believe that all Pashtuns speak Pashto and are Sunni Muslims are seriously mistaken. Because among the Pashtuns there are also Shia Muslims who live in the provinces of Kandahar and Kabul and often do not speak Pashto. For example, Mohammad Zahir, the former king of Afghanistan, is a good example of this group.

3. These problems become more prominent when, given the ethnic differences, some Afghans claim to belong to another ethnicity if they are placed in a dominant cultural position. For example, Babrak Karmal, the former president of Afghanistan, emphasized that he was of Pashtun descent, while many Afghans considered him to be of Tajik or Kashmiri immigrant ethnicity. Given the above, it is not possible to calculate how many ethnic groups there are in Afghanistan and how small or large their populations are. It should also be noted that researchers have approached this issue with different approaches, resulting in different ethnic classifications. A survey conducted by the Germans showed that there are approximately 54 ethnic groups (Orywal, 1986).

1.2. Instrumental Use of Ethnicity

The question arises as to why ethnic groups in Afghanistan entered the political equation. To answer this question, we need to look at history. A country called Afghanistan was created in the late 19th century by rival colonial powers, namely British India and Russia. The ruling Pashtun dynasty was crowned by the British Indian government, and this consideration shows that they were the supporters of the nation-state of Pashtun elements. This is why the word "Afghan" is synonymous with the word "Pashtun" in Persian, and Pashtun has always been the official language of Afghanistan, and the history of Afghanistan has also been written from the perspective of a Pashtun. According to the policy of the ruling family, existing ethnic patterns were employed to access and regulate public offices. For example, Pashtuns enjoyed all the

privileges and dominated the army. Tajiks were employed in the economic sector and educational institutions, while other ethnic groups were generally marginalized. Different behaviors of people also shaped ethnic stereotypes. For example, Pashtuns were considered militant, Tajiks were called "benevolent," Uzbeks were known as "brave," Hazaras were "illiterate" and "poor," and Turkmen were considered hardworking and neutral. Although the nation-state was structured along ethnic hierarchies, ethnic conflicts were surprisingly prevalent. One of the main reasons for the lack of serious conflicts was the stark difference between rural and urban populations, with political issues in the capital not being of interest to rural Afghans. In this sense, ethnicity remained an ambiguous concept for Afghans and was not welcomed as a framework for collective action.

Ordinary people did not express their political will to overcome the ethnic supremacy imposed by the state. Moreover, the Afghan people perceived the nation-state paradigm as a hostile factor that interfered with the social life of the people by force, not as a key to access to resources that they themselves controlled, such as the right to work in offices or the right to access land (Schetter, 2004). After 1979, with the outbreak of wars, ethnicity became a political-military tool to be used to achieve their goals. Even these wars were fought under the name of the struggle of Islam against communism, but according to the paradigms of the Cold War, the warring parties increasingly strengthened ethnic strength in order to consolidate their position and status in society (Roy, 1986). The communist rulers hoped that by using a policy of elevating ethnic groups to the status of nationalities, they could bring them closer to themselves (Pstrusinska, 1990) and, most importantly, they created militias that relied on ethnic groups, such as the Uzbek militia led by Abdul Rashid Dostum. At the same time, Pakistan and Iran also used ethnic potential to escalate conflicts. The Unity Party was founded by Iran on the basis of religious ties, and enjoyed strong support and status among the Shia Hazaras. In the 1980s, the Jamiat-e-Islami Party, one of the oldest resistance movements, became the political and military address of the Tajik ethnic group, and Pakistan supported the Taliban, which followed a radical Islam and Pashtun ethnic outlook. All four militant factions (Jamiat Party, Unity Party, Taliban Islamic Emirate, and National Movement Party) that dominated military and political action for a decade were also supported by the four major ethnic groups. These same political parties used "ethnicity" to legitimize themselves and their political existence, because all other ideologies, including Islamic, communist, and monarchist ideologies, had lost their social context and were no longer a means of mobilizing the masses and achieving political demands. The leaders of the warring factions informed their supporters of the past and present social and economic deprivations of the ethnic group. At the very least, they claimed that the

survival of their "own ethnic group" was endangered by the aggressive behavior of "other ethnic groups." The militant factions tried to arouse hatred and jealousy among the people by exploiting ethnic feelings and collective anxiety. While always demanding the economic and political resources of the state and society in the name of their ethnic groups, these warring parties tried to justify their political demands in terms of the size of the ethnic group and the territories under their control. In such efforts, they often lost their true sense of purpose.

1.3. The scope of ethnic propaganda

The ethnicization of the conflict was limited to one important perspective, and the ethnicity card was never played openly. However, by concealing ethnicity, ethnic conflicts actually took place. In this case, there is less evidence and documentation that political factions have resorted to ethnicization, and none of the political parties is linked to a specific ethnic group in its constitution or identity. The published statements of political leaders such as Ahmad Shah Massoud, Burhanuddin Rabbani, and Mullah Mohammad Omar Mujahid are full of Islamic rhetoric, and they all vigorously denied the ethnic dimensions of the war. These politicians never tire of describing their respective parties as multi-ethnic.

It should be noted, therefore, that the main reason is that Afghans deliberately avoid using ethnicity as a main issue. It should be noted that ethnicity was a very limited potential source of mobilization, and the warring parties also used the ethnic sentiments of the masses covertly and strategically (Publication Series on Promoting Democracy under Conditions of State Fragility, 2024). The reasons listed below are serious obstacles to the generalization of ethnicity:

• First: In Islam, one of the great religious values is that all Muslims are members of a single community (ummah), and the separation of the Islamic community from each other based on tribal affiliations is inconsistent with the concept of the Islamic community.

This is why public slogans avoid inciting ethnicity, and many Afghans consider the tendency around ethnicity to be an un-Islamic idea. Including parties that have a history of activity in the mujahideen movements since the 1970s-1980s, they have strongly rejected any attempt to incite ethnic tension in public.

• Second: In the 1980s, a large number of Afghans sought refuge in other countries due to their resistance to the communist regime. This increased their awareness and knowledge of their country. A large number of Afghans support the establishment and continuation of the nation-state in Afghanistan, and conversely, the disintegration of Afghanistan indicates an

uncertain future. Given this reality, the parties to the conflict in Afghanistan have always refrained from questioning the territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

This means that their call for ethnicization is strategically very limited. It must be said that there is a strong consensus among the Afghan people that raising ethnic issues poses a serious threat to weakening the nation-state in Afghanistan and that anyone who claims the right to a particular ethnic group is very quickly considered a traitor.

• Third: The ethnic identity of the groups involved in the power struggle in Afghanistan, with the exception of the Hazaras, has also been described in neighboring countries. Perhaps if the Jamiat-e-Islami Party and the National Islamic Movement emphasize "ethnicity," they feel the risk that their separation from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will remain ambiguous. Also, these parties are not inclined to unite with neighboring countries. Because this could lead to restrictions on political freedoms and their access to economic and social resources. The Taliban, however, faced a different situation, and due to the influence of Pashtuns and some ethnic groups on the Taliban, this movement could not openly demonstrate the claim of Pashtunism (Aruzgani, 2011).

• Fourth and last: As long as these parties strive to seize central power, they must also demonstrate their capacity to govern a multi-ethnic Afghanistan. I have tried to prove that all influential parties in the past decades have used ethnicity as a tool to achieve specific political demands. But the specific political and cultural conditions in Afghanistan limit the use of ethnicity as a tool to achieve political demands and military mobilization (Wak Foundation for Afghanistan, 1999)

1.4. The dominance of aristocracy and the absence of civil society

Given the neglect and neglect of ethnicity, the question arises as to what are the prevailing frameworks, identities, and practices in Afghan society? In general, it can be noted that the structure of Afghan society is based on integration based on smaller social scales, and this solidarity is defined by the need for social obligations. This means that ethnic groups are formed less in line with national interests and more in family and kinship networks. In this regard, we should note that the social structures of societies in Afghanistan are very unconventional and social textures are changing from one place to another. For example, the most important social authorities are formed by people who live in villages and valleys, or tribes and clans from different tribes who live according to specific religious beliefs such as Sufi orders are the most basic sources of social textures. These sources also correctly define political identities, which in modern discourse are called aristocracy or patronage. One of the most important problems of political reconstruction in Afghanistan is that due to the dominance of aristocracy or

patronage, the country lacks civil society and political parties. Civil society and political parties can address the issues that have created the greatest concern for the Afghan people in credible ways. It seems that current social activities in Afghanistan are short-lived and take place without a sustainable direction.Permanent conditions of war and increasing insecurity emphasize the need to unite in small communities, which can itself be described as one of the organized forms of aristocracy/patronage, under the name of "survival networks".

The need for such survival networks was felt acutely when warlords, factions, and destructive conflicts divided the Afghan people along religious, ethnic, and tribal lines. Mistrust grew and strengthened the aristocracy in all spheres, including politics, the economy, education, cultural associations and organizations, and even so-called civil society organizations, national and international NGOs, and interest groups. As a result, all ministries, NGOs, or political organizations are usually occupied and controlled by a single dominant group of aristocracy (Azerbaijani-Moghaddam, Schetter & Schmeidl, 2002). A good example is that the Afghan government is not dominated by the Tajiks, but by a network of Panjshir aristocracy. It is a fact that the body of the regime also includes non-Panjshiris, but on closer inspection, many of these officials are connected to the dominant Panjshiri network through family ties or other means. For example, Taj Mohammad Wardak, who was the Minister of Interior until January 2003, is a Pashtun who is married to the niece of Younis Qanuni, a Panjshiri leader, and Syed Makhdoom Rahin, the former Minister of Information and Culture, who is of Arab descent, also has a Panjshiri wife.

2.The Ethnicity Trap

In my opinion, the United Nations has fallen into the "ethnicity" trap by making many efforts to achieve better developments in Afghanistan instead of achieving reconciliation. The media and policymakers, who have been faced with the confusing political and military situation in Afghanistan after September 11, have identified the Afghan conflicts as an ethnic reality and considered "ethnicity" as the most important model for analyzing this conflict. As I have mentioned, ethnicity is one of the most obvious factors of the conflict in Afghanistan, but limiting these conflicts only to their ethnic dimension excludes other aspects of the reality of the conflict:

• First: Ethnicity as a factor of communication and military and political cohesion in the Afghan wars has remained limited. For example, countless commanders and military units such as Haji Qadir or Abdul Haq have changed their ethnic affiliation and loyalty several times due to political opportunism and economic motives.

• Second: The mistakes that policymakers usually make are to consider ethnic groups as fixed wholes and to believe that these ethnic groups act in a coordinated and coherent manner like political parties. This proves that they represent a specific ethnic group. What is ignored in the present discussion is the fact that despite the ethnicization of the war in Afghanistan, the ethnicization of the masses is also a failed process (Bellew, 1880).

• Third: Policymakers ignore the aforementioned shortcomings in the discourse of ethnicity in Afghanistan. Ethnicity is a hidden driving force in the Afghan conflict that is used in a specific scope, not as a major debate in public gatherings and public debates (Qiyami, 2018). The serious mistakes of the UN reconciliation process at the Bonn Conference are as follows:

• They considered the two dominant terms "lordism" and "ethnicity" to be synonymous and identical;

• They tried to end ethnic conflicts with an "ethnic solution".

There is a strong consensus among Afghan politicians that the future Afghan government, while not being mono-ethnic, should reflect the participation of all Afghan people. The Petersburg-Bonn Conference divided power based on the following ministerial quotas: 11 Pashtuns, 8 Tajiks, 5 Hazaras, 3 Uzbeks and 3 others.

Although the "ethnic solution" seems appropriate for recognizing the rights or interests of different ethnic groups, it will also create major obstacles around other aspects of ethnic spheres and their spheres of influence. Another danger is that if ethnic quotas in power are not accurately recognized, this ethnic solution will create distrust and frustration among the people. On the other hand, this approach undermines ethnic participation as a constructive model, and the assumption of an ethnic state is that the state should represent all ethnic groups that make up the Afghan population, sufficiently including all aspects. A good example of this misunderstanding is Mr. Hamid Karzai. While the Pashtun ethnic affiliation was one of the strongest arguments for appointing Hamid Karzai as the head of the transitional government, the Pashtun elite and political leaders do not recognize Karzai as their representative. Therefore, Karzai does not gain a stable position among the Pashtun people.

3. Proposal for the structure of the future government

I propose that the politicization of ethnicity should be ignored in the formation of the future government of Afghanistan. Of course, it is emphasized that this should not strengthen the mono-ethnicization of the future government of Afghanistan. The fundamental problems will only intensify when ethnicity is the basis of political legitimacy. In this regard, the increase in ethnic addresses will have disastrous consequences. In this regard, Afghans will reach

political and administrative positions based on ethnic affiliations, not on their merits, and this is contrary to the concept of a civil and democratic society as promoted by the West. In addition, ethnicity should not be forgotten in political discourse, but should be transformed into a suitable platform for political interactions. This will not only eliminate ethnic speculation, but also cause every political actor to enter the political arena by rejecting ethnicity. Therefore, I will show which methods can be used to combat ethnicity and which appropriate alternatives are available in political institutions (Wilber et al., 1962).

3.1. General Recommendations

In order to reduce the influence of ethnicity in the political sphere, it seems very important that the new Afghan constitution, which will be presented in detail this year, takes into account ethnic and cultural factors as clearly as possible. Registering Sunni Islam as the official religion of the state would be very disastrous, as it would eliminate the Shia, Hindu and Sikh communities. Also, regarding language strategies, Persian, which is the intermediary language for the majority of speakers of other languages, should be given equal status with Pashto, and other languages such as Uzbek, Turkmen or Balochi could be supported as the languages of the people of other provinces. The goal is that the right of expression and advocacy of each individual from a cultural (linguistic and religious) perspective should be restored. Everyone should have the right to express their identity and position from a cultural perspective, and the appeal to ethnicity should be reduced. Of course, the complete suppression of the discussion of ethnicity would be a failure and a disappointment. But politicizing ethnicity will not overcome ethnic tensions and resolve Afghanistan's conflicts. I want to speak in an open dialogue about ethnic prejudices and stereotypes. It must be acknowledged that ethnicity is created by powerful individuals and can never be a basis for division among the people of Afghanistan. This issue must be part of a reconciliation process in the country and must be seriously implemented to get rid of myths of hatred and ethnic stereotypes. It should be noted that different ethnicities have lived together in peace and harmony in the past and it is clear that knowledge about a particular ethnic group and relations with it does not cause problems, just as knowledge about oneself as a Pashtun, Tajik, etc. is legitimate (Effects of Ethnicity and Political Participation on the Stability of Afghanistan, 2024).

3.2. Power Sphere

The question of whether the future Afghan state will be based on a centralized or decentralized system is also very important. The actual fragmentation of Afghanistan into various islands of power by warlords or local leaders highlights the fact that Afghanistan today

lacks the ability to create a strong central state, and the status of the transitional government can be described as a "Kabul City Council." The state's powers and influence do not extend beyond the borders of the capital. In light of the above, if the creation of a strong central state is envisaged, it will take several generations to achieve it, and it is likely to immediately trigger new periods of war and violent conflict that may plunge the country into chaos. It should not be forgotten that forces fleeing from the center always resist state-building processes and the authority of the central state. It is difficult to imagine that a strong central government in Afghanistan can satisfactorily address the challenges arising from political, social, and cultural diversity, and only a unified political and legal system can cover the whole of Afghanistan. There has been much discussion about the establishment of an ethnic federal system as an option for implementing justice and addressing ethnic demands. But this approach could be detrimental, because none of Afghanistan's provinces is homogeneous in terms of ethnic composition, and it is very difficult to localize the numerous ethnic groups given the geographical location. There are many villages and valleys where different ethnic groups live side by side. The establishment of ethnic federalism, compared to an elected state, often causes discrimination and ethnic rejection by the lords or leaders of ethnic groups to spread and consolidate rapidly (Kaveh, 2022). At that time, the ideas of mono-ethnicization of the system are easily predicted, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, "ethnic cleansing" as a political act took place. For example, the tyranny against the Pashtuns and their cruel expulsion from northern Afghanistan in the winter of 2001 and 2002 are warning signs of the process of ethnic cleansing. Another result is that the leaders of ethnic minorities make themselves more popular by changing the borders of provinces or creating new provinces, and political instability spreads. Against this assumption, the division of Afghanistan into two northern and southern zones, with Tajiks and Uzbeks in the north and Pashtuns in the south, or the annexation of part of Afghanistan to neighboring countries, not only seems very simple and meaningless, but also very dangerous. It should also be noted that the establishment of ethnic federalism also calls into question the strength and influence of the central government. In this case, defined identities that could be used for the process of political reconstruction would be lost. For example, for ordinary people or the masses, for many years, the provinces established in 1964 were the main references to their identity. I visited Kabul in 2002, when it was common to determine a person's reputation by asking about their original residence or province, not by asking about their descent and ethnicity. Instead of ethnic federalism, the discussion of creating a federal system in which the autonomy of local governments is preserved in an extremely strong way is very promising. For example, we can mention the models of countries such as

India and Switzerland, which have a strong federal system, where ethnicity is not considered in the formation of federal states. But in the case of Afghanistan, provinces and districts should remain as territorial bases and administrative units in this federal system, and some of these administrative units should operate independently in legal, linguistic, religious or cultural areas. For example, local and customary laws play an important role as the judiciary in many parts of the country. It is safe to say that if judicial reforms were to impose a uniform judicial system on the entire country and block access to justice through non-governmental channels such as schools and religious institutions, it would certainly be unpleasant for many people. In this regard, it would be reasonable if religious pluralism were strengthened within its permissible limits. As this approach has worked well in Indonesia. However, if appellate courts are not organized uniformly across the country based on priorities that protect Sharia on the one hand and fundamental human rights on the other, modern governance undermines the fundamental principles of equality before the law and the power to protect against unjust violence. Given the realities of Afghanistan, any kind of federal system may lead to the consolidation of the influence of local warlords, a few of whom are currently involved in the current debate on the future state of Afghanistan and support a decentralized state. Indeed, the usurpation of local government powers by warlords and other local powerful figures is considered a major threat to a unified and unified Afghan state.

3.3. Governance

Establishing a system that is defined by ethnicity and in which fixed quotas are specified for each group in the center of power could have negative consequences for the future of Afghanistan. Research shows that the creation of such governments in highly developed countries with strong capacity may be effective because they have a high political culture and a spirit of tolerance and enjoy lasting stability. Establishing a system based on the ethnic-religious quota that many people currently have in mind will lead to increased conflicts rather than reducing them. In view of this, ethnic quotas for government positions perpetuate permanent risks and also increase the importance of ethnicity and provide the ground for manipulation and fraud in the recruitment of officials. A recent study conducted by a Pashtun NGO called the Walk for Afghanistan Foundation in 1999 showed that 62.63% of the Afghan population is Pashtun, and contrary to this statistic, Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, who was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the interim government in the Bonn talks, stated that only 38% of the Afghan population is Pashtun. The ground seems ready for further conflicts, and if a government based on ethnicity is to be formed, precise criteria should be set regarding the

formation and proportion of ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Also, in the second stage, a census should be conducted to determine the percentage of ethnicities and some Afghans who ignore ethnicity should be encouraged to show their affiliation with one of the official and recognized ethnic groups of Afghanistan.

Given that most Afghans choose their ethnic identity with social context in mind, this type of classification will be unstable. Moreover, the census process will face the problem of identity of those people who do not belong to recognized ethnic groups. Thus, ethnicity will appear as a complex and ineffective criterion in Afghan politics (Shahrani, 2018). Moreover, ethnic leaders are demanding not only a certain share of ministers in the transitional government in the name of a particular ethnic group, but also a specific and key position. Accordingly, when the Bonn Agreement handed over key ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interior Affairs and National Defense to the Panjshiris, this speculation was reinforced. Abdul Rashid Rashid Dostum also demands one of these key ministries for the Uzbeks, while many Afghans believe that each of the key ministries should be managed by politicians from different ethnic groups, and in this situation, ensuring justice to ethnic claims seems completely impossible.

Finally, other problems will also arise from other ethnic groups such as the Aimaq, Qizilbash, Baloch, Nuristani, Turkmen, Pasha, Sikhs or Hindus, who are significant ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Although they are not numerous, they are certainly influential politically and economically. Sooner or later, these ethnic groups will also claim political rights in the center and provinces of Afghanistan. But how should these ethnic demands be met? (Shahrani, 2018). Contrary to the ethnic approach to the problems of Afghanistan, I emphasize that the qualification for a position in the Afghan government should be based on merit, not ethnic affiliation. Of course, it is impossible to exclude and exclude ethnic groups in the formation of the state. But the main question is whether ethnicity should be defined as the basis for the legitimacy of the state or be considered an important secondary factor, as this approach advocates? Ethnic quotas are not an inflexible approach, but consideration should be given to achieving ethnic participation or balance in government institutions at all levels informally.

3.4. Democracy

Although the political growth and development of democratic Afghanistan seems very unfavorable due to the social context, the best way to resolve conflicts and ensure lasting peace in Afghanistan is to create a multi-party system with civil attitudes, not based on ethnic tendencies. In the absence of a strong civil society and the necessary capacities, democratization of Afghanistan will lead to an escalation of disputes and conflicts instead of resolving conflicts. It has been previously noted that Afghan society does not have a civil culture and does not have

any democratic experience of governance. If governance in Kabul has become important due to the attention and favor of global powers and their support, control of this governance is also of particular importance. If the right mechanisms for distributing power are not put in place, the elections will also have losers and may lead to their permanent deprivation of power. In the electoral process, the struggle for political and material success and survival is determined at the ballot box, and the people's votes are the means of winning the elections. It is a fact that the democratic state, which is created by the people's votes, also plays a role in the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic differences. During elections, ethnic boundaries become increasingly important. As the struggle for power is often seen as an ethno-religious conflict between ethnic groups, their leaders try to present themselves as representatives of their "people" in order to hold the largest quota at the center of power. The ethnicization of politics may lead to conflicts between groups that are difficult to resolve through negotiation and compromise.

Now we can consider political actors such as Burhanuddin Rabbani and Abdul Rab Rasool Sayyaf, the latter two of whom were excluded from forming the government, and who represent extremist political ideologies and are the most effective and successful in creating political parties (Setez, 2015). In my opinion, the elections scheduled to be held in 18 months are too early to establish a stable and democratic system. Democracy is achieved when political institutions have a good capacity to consolidate the cohesion and stability of society. To this end, a clear framework must be defined in the form of an institution that is capable of confronting the risk of power struggles with ethnic and religious tendencies and act accordingly. It may be realistic if, in the medium term, instead of holding democratic elections following the social tradition, an attempt is made to achieve consensus among prominent figures, including bureaucrats and tribal leaders, and at the same time, the groundwork is prepared for the institutionalization of democracy with caution and care. Therefore, holding a Loya Jirga is a suitable measure, provided that political relations and power equations are realistically taken into account and that at least the feudal groups and patronage networks of the transitional period and the dual republic period are sufficiently represented. In the emergency Loya Jirga held in June 2002, an attempt was made to select and include representatives of various warlord and feudal groups. Although the majority of the Afghan people are disappointed with the effective and fair results of the Loya Jirga, its holding has helped stabilize the fragile political situation. Therefore, institutionalizing democracy in Afghanistan is a long-term project. Just as other democratic and political processes take time, in this case too the pulse of time must be measured over generations, not years (Setez, 2015).

Conclusion

The international community has once again faced the challenge of conflict in Afghanistan, which is interpreted as "ethnicity". The builders of the future Afghan state should be advised to fight against ethnic polarization. In this article, I have tried to prove that ethnicity is neither the cause of the conflict in Afghanistan nor the reason for proving the natural realities of human society. Ethnic groups in Afghanistan have been specifically created by Western sociologists with a cultural approach and have always been strengthened. While before the wars, ethnicity was not the dominant political discourse in Afghanistan, it later emerged in 1992 as the main subject for political and military confrontations.

Ethnicity is never useful and effective for achieving the political goals of those who exacerbate it, as this experience has also been proven in the Balkans. Therefore, resorting to ethnicity in resolving the Afghan conflict will not have a positive and useful result. Therefore, I suggest to political lobbyists and agents of global powers that in Afghanistan, ethnicity should be considered informally in the distribution of power resources, but should not be emphasized as the basis of political decision-making processes. The biggest challenge facing the sustainable peace process in Afghanistan is how to dominate the networks of political patrons and hegemons.

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