Fractured Relationships

Understanding Conflict between Nomadic and Settled Communities in Wardak's Pastureland

Khibar Rassul

October 2010
Acknowledgment

Cooperation for Peace and Unity does not endorse the views of any particular community but seeks to provide a platform through which the communities can engage one another and explore ways of addressing their conflicts.

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<td>Community Based Peacebuilding Approach</td>
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<td>CPAU</td>
<td>Cooperation for Peace and Unity</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GoA</td>
<td>Government of Afghanistan</td>
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<td>MFTA</td>
<td>Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs</td>
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<td>MoA</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
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<td>MRRD</td>
<td>Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation &amp; Development</td>
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<td>National Risk and Vulnerability Analysis</td>
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<td>Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation and Capacity Enhancement</td>
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<td>RAMP</td>
<td>Revitalizing Agricultural Markets Program</td>
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<td>SDO</td>
<td>Sanayee Development Organization</td>
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<td>SALEH</td>
<td>Sustainable Agricultural Livelihood in Eastern Hazarajat Programme</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
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Introduction

The conflict between nomadic and settled communities is a historical product originating in the conquest of the central highlands by Amir Abdur-Rahman Khan. The conflict started off based on political motivations, where Abdur-Rahman Khan used nomads through ethnic and religious propaganda and economic incentives, in his conquest of the central highlands. The communities have been used as political pawns ever since. However peacebuilding initiatives have consistently shown a willingness amongst community members to address these conflicts.

Since 2006 the conflict in Wardak between settled communities and the nomads arriving for the summer, has been getting more intense and spreading. The seasonal clash in 2010 coincided with an election year for the parliament and the Peace Jirga. During the Peace Jirga, leaders and MPs from settled communities threatened to boycott the Peace Jirga if this conflict was not solved (Afghanistan Votes, 2010). The leader of Hizb-e-Wahdat, the MP Mohaqeq, who played a key role in getting President Karzai elected, turned his back on him due to this conflict. On the 20th of May, 2010 Mohaqeq stated in front of thousands of protesters: “In last year’s presidential election, we supported Karzai. Now if he does not meet our demands, we will show him that we have the courage to challenge him” (Afghanistan Votes, 2010). During the same period the nomad MP Alam Gol Kuchi stated during a parliamentary session that “They (the Hazaras) started the dispute and now that they are defeated they are complaining. I will reclaim the [land] as it is a right given by God” (Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2010).

The tensions created by the conflict in Wardak and the political rhetoric sparked into violent riots and fighting over a land dispute in Kabul. Thousands of Hazaras took to the streets firing at the police, vandalizing shops and tearing up parliamentary election posters and billboards (The Killid Group, 2010). They also burnt Kuchi tents and several people from both sides were killed (Hazaristan Times, 2010; Tolo News, 2010).

Nomadic and settled communities in Wardak are amongst the most politically, socially and economically marginalized communities in Afghanistan. Their marginalization has created a vulnerability to tangible and intangible factors which has been used by various political entrepreneurs throughout recent history to create conflict and violent between these two communities for their own political benefit. Their vulnerabilities are becoming a national threat which has the potential to spread around the country, resulting in a disregard for the government and causing conflict and violence. The vulnerability of these two communities has to be addressed for their sake and the sake of the nation at large.
Methodology

Since November 2009, Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) has been working with nomadic and settled communities in Nangarhar, Laghman and Wardak towards the promotion of a community based approach to conflict resolution and conflict transformation. This program has involved training workshops for members of these communities, the gathering of 30 personal testimonies from members of the two different communities and a research component of which this paper is the result.

The testimonies were gathered in-order to give voice to the people and bring out their perspective on this conflict. This enables greater understanding of the conflict and of potential common ground where progress could be made towards stability. All 30 testimonies can be found online in English, Dari and Pashto at: http://www.cpau.org.af/Peace_building/NomadicSetCom_AComPBapp.html

The selection criteria for nomadic communities were that they had to migrate to Behsud and/or Daimirdad during the summer. The selection criteria for settled community were based on them being located in the same area. Among the nomads the Khaderkhel, Amarkhel and Naser tribes were selected; according to their own testimony, around 45 Khaderkhel, 250 Amarkhel, and 200 Naser families venture to Behsud and/or Daimirdad each year. Among the settled communities the villages in the following districts were selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>District</th>
<th># of H/H</th>
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<td>Badak</td>
<td>Behsud 1</td>
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<td>Merazar</td>
<td>Daimirdad</td>
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The methodology for this study was based on an analysis of the 30 testimonies gathered during the period of Jan-May 2010. It included a review of relevant literature, including academic journal articles, newspaper articles, books and various reports from government and non-government organizations. It included informal discussion with and observation of members of both communities during two joint

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1 Household figures are based on the communities own estimates.
workshops in Kabul in May and August 2010. It also included the gathering of field data through individual interviews and focus group discussions. Around 50 individual interviews were held with members of each community (100 in total) and around 50 people were involved in the focus groups discussions held with members of each community (100 in total). The field data was gathered during the period between April and July 2010.
The Hazaras: Settled Communities of the Central Highlands

The Hazaras are one of the largest minority ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The origin of the Hazara people is variously attributed; some claim them to be the original inhabitants of the central Afghan highlands while others believe them to be decedents of a Mongol contingent left behind by Genghis Khan (Bacon, 1951; Emadi H., 1997). The Hazaras are also a religious minority in Afghanistan; they follow the Shiite school of Islam while the clear majority of the rest of the country follows the Sunni school of Islam. Hazaras have been among the most oppressed and dispossessed ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The Hazara communities in the central highlands lived largely independently until the late 1800’s when Abdur-Rahman Khan conquered the region. They have since been oppressed by various Kabul governments such as the Nadir Shah regime and the Taliban regime, who used various policies such as high taxes, redistributing land to nomads, forced marriage of Hazara girls and promoting the Pashto language in the region (Emadi H., 1997). The years of oppression and domination have seriously affected Hazara communities.

This legacy of oppression and marginalization has had a negative effect on the lives and livelihoods of the Hazara people. The three Wardak districts of Behsud I, Behsud II and Daimirdad are primarily

(UNEP, 2009)
occupied by ethnic Hazaras, and these areas have served as one of the main frontlines for the Afghan state’s incursion to the central highlands and to the Taliban expansion.

People in these settled communities (Behsud I, Behsud II and Daimirdad) live in small houses made out of mud and stone, cheap material that keeps the heat well during wintertime (CPAU Field Research, 2010). During winter they are cut off from the rest of the country due to the snow which blocks off the mountain passes. Most people in these areas keep small farms; in 1997 on average a family owned 1.7 jiribs (0.34 hectares) of irrigated land and 1.26 jiribs (0.252 hectares) of rain fed land (Johnson, 2000). The available irrigated land has probably reduced even further due to the droughts since 1997; this is supported by interviews with local inhabitants (CPAU Field Research, 2010). These areas have generally been food insecure, even before the wars when parts of the country were self-sufficient, these areas had to import food (Johnson, 2000).

Access to safe and adequate amounts of water is a major issue in these areas. The main source of water is surface water (springs, streams and rivers) and water provided by the karez system. All of these sources are directly linked to the amount of snow and rainfall. The worst drought in the recent decade, a consequence of the low levels of snow and rainfall in 2007/2008, caused a general food crisis in the country with a 55% reduction in wheat production and an estimated 67% reduction of barley. According to the inhabitants of these areas the drought caused at least 50% of their water source to dry up. These sources have remained dry (CPAU Field Research, 2010). In Wardak province only 8% of the households use safe drinking water as their main source compared to 30% nationally (NRVA, 2007/08). Only around 32% of the population in Wardak thinks that they have access to adequate amount of water compared to 57% nationally. And the experience of water related shocks in Wardak is 26% higher than the national average of 12% (NRVA, 2007/08).

Education is another major challenge in these areas only around 11% of boys aged 6-15 can read compared to the national average of 13%. The figures are more positive on the female side with the equivalent literacy rate of 42% for girls compared to the national average of 32% (NRVA, 2005). Among the older age group of 15-24 the male literacy rate is at 8.1% and the female at 19.6 mounting up to an average of 27.7% compared to the national average of 31.3%. The marginalization in these areas is further demonstrated by communities’ exposure to shocks and their inability to cope with them. Among rural households in Wardak around 37% experienced some sort of shock, around 45% experienced agricultural shocks and around 44% experienced natural disaster (NRVA, 2005). Around 66% of households experiencing a shock in the last 12 months has not recovered (NRVA, 2005).
Kuchies: The Nomads of Afghanistan

The nomadic communities of Afghanistan are often referred to as “Kuchies”, a difficult term which holds different meanings for different people. In the common perception the term Kuchi is applied to Pashtun nomadic pastoralists; however this is not always the case. Kuchies “do not share a single ethnicity, language or religion. Although a large majority of them are Pashtun most Pashtun are not nomadic and many groups of nomads in Afghanistan are not Pashtun” (Barfield, 2004, s. 1). The term Kuchi does not necessarily have an ethnic affiliation; it is used by various groups to describe Kuchies irrespective of their ethnic affiliation (Patterson, 2004). Some Kuchies have even settled down and no longer lead a nomadic lifestyle, but they still refer to themselves as Kuchies. The common denominator among Kuchies is their historical and current occupational specialization as nomadic pastoralists.

Nomadic communities in Afghanistan have been an important part of the country’s economy. They are the main producers of meat for the Afghan market, specialized producers of milk, yogurt, dried yogurt (qaroot) and cheese. They also produce a number of goods which are exported to international markets, such as: carpets, wool, live sheep, karakul skins and intestines which constituted about 36,37% of Afghanistan’s official export earnings during 1969-70 (Barfield, 2004). Their lives as nomads, traveling from area to area with livestock able to transport goods gave them a comparative advantage towards becoming skilled traders, bringing goods to remote villages in the mountains and connecting distant markets.

The Kuchi lifestyle has been eroded by various factors such as conflict and drought. Their situation has grown worse since the 2001 US led invasion of Afghanistan, with access to pastures limited in the central highlands due to accusations by Hazaras of the Kuchies siding with the Taliban. In the north Uzbek and Tajik warlords have confiscated their pastures for poppy cultivation (Tapper, 2008). Much of the country has suffered from chronic drought for the last 7-10 years (CPAU, 2010), and the period of 2007/2008 saw the lowest level of rain and snow fall the country had seen in the previous decade (USDA, 2008a; USDA, 2008b). This resulted in a severe decline in the availability of wheat, causing a 200% increase in the retail price in most markets. At the same time the price of livestock decreased by 40-70% (FEWS NET, 2008; USDA, 2008b).

Kuchies face a harsh daily reality, their population has dropped from an estimated 2.5 million in the 60s and 70s to around 1.5 to 2 million currently (Herold, 2005; De Weijer, 2003; NRVA, 2007/08). On average every Kuchi household owns around 63 livestock while it is estimated that a Kuchi household (of 10) needs a minimum of 100 animals to subsist (De Weijer, 2005; NRVA, 2007/08). This results in 54% of Kuchi households not being able to meet their basic subsistence needs (NRVA, 2007/08). Kuchies have on average the lowest level of access to safe drinking water; only 16% of Kuchies have access compared
to the rural average of 20% and the national average of about 27% (NRVA, 2007/08). Their access to safe sanitation is nonexistent, reportedly at 0% (NRVA, 2007/08).

Their situation in terms of access to healthcare and education is also dire. Among Kuchies, only around 46% have access to a health facility within one hours’ walking distance, compared to 63% in rural areas and 68% nationally (NRVA, 2007/08). Among Kuchi children only 13% have received full immunization compared to 33% among rural children and 63 among urban children. Kuchi children are also by far the largest group who has not received any vaccinations at all; around 31% of Kuchi children have not been vaccinated, compared to 15% among rural children and 7% among urban children (NRVA, 2007/08). Kuchies also have the lowest level of education among any afghan population. The average literacy rate among male Kuchies is around 14%, 3% among female Kuchies resulting in an average of 8% literacy rate for the total Kuchi population, compared to the national literacy rate of 26%. Among female Kuchies aged 25 and above, the attained education of any kind is reported at 0%, among male Kuchies the highest level of education achieved is a high school degree, attained by only 2% (NRVA, 2007/08).

Enrolments rates among Kuchi children are very low with only around 6.6% of boys and 1.8% of girls enrolled in school. The primary reason for this is the long distance to school (De Weijer, 2005; NRVA, 2007/08). The present and future of Afghan nomads seem bleak, especially when many in the Afghan government seek not to remedy the challenges faced by the Kuchies but rather to end the nomadic life still and convert them into a sedentary community (Tapper, 2008).
The Tangibles and Intangibles of the Conflict

The conflict between settled and nomadic communities in Afghanistan is not an isolated occurrence; it is a part and a consequence of the history of modern Afghanistan. Based on Kaufman’s recognition that wars are not only fought over tangible factors such as land, resources and power but also intangible factors such as myths and fears (Kaufman, 2001; Kaufman, 2006). The conflict between nomadic and settled communities is not as simple as a grievance over tangible factors such as land and water. It is a combination of tangible factors such as land and water and intangible factors such as the historical creation of myths, fears and ultimately social fragmentation which enable this conflict. These tangible and intangible factors enhance peoples’ vulnerability to the conflict. The vulnerability experienced in these communities is the root cause of the current conflict.

Tangible Factors – Socio-economic Deprivation

Nomadic and settled communities in Wardak are among the most marginalized communities in the country. They have amongst the lowest level of education, access to land (both irrigated and rainfed), access to safe drinking water and sanitation and proper healthcare. The marginalization of these communities is one indication of their high level of poverty. It also indicates a high level of vulnerability to shocks (especially livelihood/economic shocks), meaning that natural and/or man-made shocks can have a significant negative effect on lives and livelihoods.

Their high level of vulnerability means that an incidence of a herder being denied access to water or pasture land or a farmer having his crops eaten by a flock of animals will have a significant negative effect on their livelihoods and thus become a major issue. Their economic marginalization and lack of alternative coping strategies means that a man-made shocks such as described above would most likely result in immense frustration and difficulties for these people in terms of providing for their households or making it through the winter. Such man-made economic shock could potentially be a matter of life or death for people in these communities (CPAU Field Research, 2010). The high level of vulnerability has a magnifying effect on the negative impacts of economic shocks on these communities. Statement such as “since the people of this region have a lot of economic problems, if the nomads attack again this year, it will create a big catastrophe” is an indication of what people’s fears are and how their economic situation attributes to it (Testimony Seven: Settled Communities). Understanding the desperation and frustration resulting from livelihood shocks in these communities is a key factor in understanding the violent potential of this conflict.

In the testimonies gathered by Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) from members of both communities, the economic implications of this conflict are a key area of focus for both communities. This is reinforced by the field research conducted by CPAU in form of focus groups discussions and individual interviews between May and July 2010.

The nomads see their migration to Behsud as a necessity for their survival; it is a key part in their livelihood strategies. Even though the fear of violence exists among nomads they feel obliged to migrate
to these areas for their survival. It is a common view among nomads that “After the 1979 revolution we would not go to the region of Hazarajat because we were afraid that the Hazaras would fight with us and kill us. But we have to migrate to Hazarajat because we must take our livestock there for grazing, if we do not our livestock will die from hunger. We nomads have no other way of earning an income and paying for our home expenses” (Testimony Fourteen: Nomad Communities).

The negative economic effects of the conflict on the nomads and the contribution to their economic vulnerability can be seen in the following testimony. “Cattle rising provide for our expenses and with this we find food for our children and families. We do not have any another source of income, we only have our livestock. This is the month of Saur (April) and we should have migrated to Hazarajat regions by now because in the Maidan-Shar region there is nothing for our livestock to eat. But the Hazara people have blocked our routes and they do not let us migrate there. We are economically weak, so we cannot feed our livestock anything else. We have 1500 livestock including sheep, their calves, goats and camels and soon they will all die from hunger” (Testimony Eleven: Nomad Communities).

Settled communities are also suffering economically: “due to the conflict a large number of homes were burned and crops completely destroyed. These conflicts have inflicted an economic blow to the people” (Testimony Fourteen: Settled Communities). The violence and lawlessness of the conflict means that the settled communities are having their homes looted, crops burnt and livestock stolen. Statements such as “The nomads took away twelve-hundred sheep, fifty cows and eighty donkeys and looted our homes and they destroyed the agriculture of the people of the region completely” represent a common experience among settled communities contacted by CPAU (Testimony Ten: Settled Communities).

Having crops destroyed, eaten by flocks of animals belonging to nomads or having them burnt by nomads are the most common economic shocks experienced by settled communities. However the looting of homes are the incidents that are seemingly experienced most emotionally. Testimonies such as “the people of the Geervi Rozi region all left due to the conflict, the nomads came and broke the locks of our homes with bullets and looted all the material” are common (Testimony Five: Settled Communities). The conflict and violence forces people to abandon their homes and when they return their homes stand looted and empty. The material goods lost overnight in these households may have taken some families decades to accumulate (CPAU Field Research, 2010).

**Intangible Factors – Social fragmentation**

The current conflict between nomadic and settled communities in Afghanistan is over a century old, with some periods more intense than others. The conflict between nomad and settled communities is in many respects a miniature version of the overall conflict in the country. The origin of this conflict lies in the formation of the modern Afghan state, during the reign of Abdur-Rahman Khan. The formation of the Afghan state during Abdur-Rahman Khan saw a process of divide and conquer, in an attempt to monopolize violence and centralize power. This was not a new experience for Afghanistan as the founder of the Afghan nation; Ahmad Shah Durrani forcefully relocated Ghilzai Pashtuns out of then the capital of the Pashtun federation, Kandahar (Rasanayagam, 2003). This was done in order to strengthen
his own tribesmen, weaken his rivals and thus solidify his power further. Historical processes of divide and conquer have produced long-lasting social fragmentations which have been exploited by political entrepreneurs.

The relationship between nomads and settled communities seen by CPAU is seriously fragmented even though there is a strong aspiration by local leaders to better this relationship. Their view of each other is seriously skewed along ethnic and religious lines. Among settled communities the main focus is on ethnicity, seeing the Kuchies as Pashtuns who are identified as the historical enemies of the Hazara people. There is clearly a sense of mistrust and even hatred towards people identified as Pashtuns, especially among locals in the settled communities (CPAU Field Research, 2010). There is a sense of fear in settled communities that the nomads will marginalize them even more, drive them further up the mountains and deprive them of their lands and livelihoods. This fear originates from the historical events kept alive among the people of the nomad/Pashtun conquest of their lands under the leadership of Abdur-Rahman Khan and the hardship suffered during the Taliban. The resulting fear and defensiveness is a powerful tool which enables the mobilization of communities, thus making them vulnerable to political exploitation.

Among the nomads a combination of ethnic and religious factors are used in order to build a sense of superiority and to justify utilizing this superiority against settled communities. The fact that most of the nomads are Pashtun enables them to draw upon the history of this country, which has been shaped by Pashtun leadership to build a sense of superiority. A sense of superiority in this case means that the nomads see these lands as rightfully belonging to them and as having an historical understanding of them that is stronger than the settled communities, mixing a sense of superior right with superior might (CPAU Field Research 2010). The perceived relationship between Iran and the settled communities is yet another factor adding to the view among nomads of the settled communities as outsiders. The social fragmentation between these people resulting from holding on to historical myths and fears which translate into ethnicity and religion is a weakness easily exploited by political actors. The social fragmentations make it easier to mobilize these communities against each other and thus increasing their vulnerability to political exploitation.

However social fragmentation, mainly along ethnic lines, is themselves political constructs. Ethnicity is a powerful tool which has the capacity to “create within-group solidarity and between-group discords” (Sen, 2006, p. 19). In Afghanistan ethnicity has been used in the “pursuit of crude self-interest” (Simonsen, 2004, p. 726). Ethnicity doesn’t emerge from nowhere and it requires a specific historical condition in order to flourish. It is the special achievement of those who use it as a political resource that they are able to construct an identity for their followers which, although based on a highly selective and distorted view of their collective past, has enough connection with that past to make it plausible and meaningful (Turton, 1997). Ethnicity has been used to create a common origin which is the strongest bond holding together an ethnic group, yet these “common origins can be easily manipulated and modified keeping in line with the new condition and justifying the claims and legitimacy” (Schetter, 2005, p. 51). The artificial nature of these social fragmentations can be revealed in an historical analysis.
which will show that the perceived “ancient hatreds may well be the result of fairly recent developments” (Simonsen, 2005, p. 315).

The Resulting Vulnerability

The poor economic conditions in these communities and the social fragmentations created between them make these communities vulnerable to conflict and violence. The intangible factors used to create and maintain a division between these communities’ functions as a means of enabling alienation, the spread of negative propaganda and prejudice to take hold in the respective communities. This creates a form of vulnerability to political manipulation and exploitation, making it easier to mobilize communities against each other. The vulnerability to political manipulation and exploitation means that it is easier for political actors to play on the ignorance of the respective communities of each other resulting from the alienation, to exploit the existing prejudice in the respective communities and to spread propaganda fitting their own political agenda. The vulnerability to political manipulation and exploitation resulting from the intangible factors is the main factor enabling this conflict on a large scale. It enables wider mobilization of these communities against each other thus allowing the conflict to grow to the magnitude we see today.

The vulnerability resulting from tangible factors, meaning their high level of poverty, also has a primary role in the violent conflict between settled and nomadic communities. However it plays a different role than the vulnerability caused by intangible factors. The tangible factors enable higher vulnerability to economic shocks and the resulting vulnerability also has a magnifying effect on the negative impacts of the economic shocks. The high vulnerability resulting from tangible factors means that economic shocks, especially man-made economic shocks, can cause immense frustration, desperation, difficulties and could potentially be a matter of life and death for households in these communities. The tangible factors make the communities vulnerable to violence as the immense frustration, desperation and difficulties resulting from these shocks have the capacity to drive individuals or groups of individuals to commit acts of violence. The vulnerability resulting from tangible factors therefore has the capacity to transform the conflict into violent conflict. The resulting events also add to the vulnerability to political manipulation and exploitation as it enables more negative propaganda and more prejudice to take hold.

<table>
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<td>Mobilizing the communities against each other through propaganda and playing on peoples prejudice</td>
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A Historical Product: The Vulnerability to Conflict among Nomadic and Settled Communities

The conflict between nomadic and settled communities and the vulnerability to tangible and intangible factors among them are historical products. These can be traced back to the initial conquest of the central highlands by Abdur-Rahmand Khan and the evolution of the conflict can be seen in the following historical events. By looking at the overall situation in Afghanistan during a certain period and the relationship between nomadic and settled communities during the same period enables a better understanding of the conflict. It enables us to better understand the link between Afghan politics and the relationship between nomadic and settled communities and it allows us to extrapolate the artificiality and man-made nature of the conflict.

1880-1901 The Relationship between Settled and Nomad Communities during the reign of Abdur-Rahman Khan

Amir Abdur-Rahman Khan also known as the “Iron Amir” is the founder of the modern Afghan state; he negotiated British withdrawal from Kandahar in return for aligning his foreign policy to that of the British. The Amir was encouraged by the British to fully bring the northern region up to the Amu Darya under his control, with British funds, weapons and military advisors, the Amir swiftly brought the northern regions under his firm control (UNEP, 2009). The Amir’s preferred strategy was to divide and conquer; he played the Durrani versus the Ghilzai, the Pashtuns versus the non-Pashtuns and the Sunnis versus the Shiites. To conquer the central highlands the Amir first set weaker Hazara lords against the stronger ones. However when they joined arms and started a rebellion against the Amir in 1882, he mobilized Pashtuns, predominantly nomads, to conquer these lands for the state (Ferdinand, 2006). The Amir mobilized Pashtuns to attack Hazaras for religious, economic and ethnic motivations. His declaration of war was followed by anti Shiite propaganda by Sunni clerics. He announced Hazara men and women to be slaves and their land and property to be rewards to those who participated in his jihad against them (Ibrahimi, 2009).

The relationship between Pashtun nomads and the government was close. In return for their service in time of war they were exempted from government intervention in their internal affairs and exempted from certain taxes and military conscription during times of peace (Ibrahimi, 2009). Around 30,000 to 40,000 nomads responded to the Amir’s call for a jihad against the Hazaras (UNEP, 2009). By the end of the war there was a flourishing slave trade of Hazara men and women and the government was creating incentives in the form of tax exemptions and credit for Pashtuns to settle in conquered Hazara areas. Pasture lands were brought under government control and pasture rights were granted to nomads participating in the war.

The reign of Abdur-Rahman Khan was a key period in the deterioration of the relationship between nomad and settled communities. First of all this period comprised a redistribution of tangible factors such as land ownership in favour of the nomads at the cost of the settled communities. Settled communities were seriously impoverished by the war and the resulting loss of a land and heavy
taxation. This tipped the economic power in favour of the nomads who used it to further marginalize settled communities. The nomads used their economic muscle to buy up cultivable land and turn the former owners to share croppers. They also forced their goods on these communities at a relatively high market price, often resulting in indebted relationships between the nomads and the settled communities (Allan, 2003). This further marginalized the settled communities and empowered the nomads.

The strategies put in motion by Abdur-Rahman Khan in his attempt to build up a strong centralized state apparatus and bring the central highlands and the northern regions of Afghanistan under firm state control had devastating consequences, including the social fragmentation of various groups along ethnic/linguistic and religious lines. The mobilization of Pashtun nomads based on ethnic, linguistic and religious ground was matched by similar mobilization among settled communities in the central highlands. The bloodiness of the war and the fierce resistance faced by government troops deepened the cleavage between these communities.

The propaganda used during this period for mobilizing these communities against each other combined with the experiences of the bloody war and the economic consequences of the war provided a fertile ground on which myths, fears and prejudice could be grown. This has made both communities more vulnerable to political manipulation as it has allowed intangible factors to be more easily played upon in the mobilization of communities against one another. The redistribution of land ownership during this period also created room for future contests over the ownership of land, thus enabling future conflict over tangible factors.

1933-1978 The Relationship between Settled and Nomad Communities during Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan

The reign of Zahir Shah between 1933 until 1973 is commonly acknowledged as golden period due to the relatively high level of peace and stability persisting during his reign. The early years of Daoud Khan also saw relatively high levels of peace and stability in an Afghan historical context. The relationship between nomadic and settled communities is identified as at its most peaceful, stable and friendly level during the reign of Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan by members of both communities engaged with by CPAU (Field Research, June/July, 2010). According to members from both communities, during this period the nomads and the settled communities had very good relationships. They were engaged in trade with each other, attended each other’s weddings and funerals, had established lines of communication between their respective elders and most importantly in an Afghan context they had build up personal bonds with each other at the level of families.

The economic opportunities of the time meant that both communities saw potential for profitable trade between them (CPAU Field Research, 2010). The nature of the nomad’s life still meant that they could transport various goods across the country and the inhabitants of the settled communities were farmers growing agricultural products the nomads needed. This opportunity for beneficial mutual trade brought people closer together. The large amount of land owned by the nomads in these areas also created an
incentive for inhabitants of the settled communities to maintain good relations with the nomads as it could result in access to these lands in the form of sharecropping.

A nomad elder by the name of Haji Aman explained that during this time the relationship between the nomads and settled communities was good mainly because the government was strong. He explained that no one would step out of line because they knew that the government would “slap them back in place”. He further explained that elders of both communities were engaged in limiting and solving any conflict that might have risen between them so to not get in trouble with the government. Similar to today during the reign of Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan there were conflicts erupting between members of these two communities. Incidents such as a nomad flock trespassing into irrigated land and eating the crops were normal and caused conflicts but it did not grow into violence due to the interference of the community elders. When such incidents occurred elders from both communities would gather and would agree upon a suitable compensation for the damage done and the conflict would be solved and prevented from growing into a violent conflict (PEACE, 2009a; CPAU Field Research, 2010).

In the context of Afghan culture personal bonds between families and individuals are key factors in any social, economic and/or political relationship. To enable the trade and social relationship between these communities they had to establish personal bonds with each other. The bond between members of these communities was therefore very strong during this period, they knew each other on an individual level, they knew each other’s families and they even knew each other’s ancestral history. The strength of the personal bonds is demonstrated in the following examples:

“One day I was on my way down from my farm up in the mountain, I passed a nomad camp and hear a woman screaming out of pain. I went in to see what was happening and found out that the woman was giving birth. There were no male members present at the camp and the woman needed medical support so I ran to my village and brought back my wife and a donkey on which we took her to a doctor in Maidan-Shar. She gave birth to a healthy son and we brought back the woman and her son to the camp the next day and stayed with her until the male members of her family returned”.

A farmer from Garam-Ab village in Daimirdad

“When I was in Daimerdad I heard that there was a very poor woman with four children whose husband had moved to Pakistan and had not returned. No one knew where he was or what had happened to him. I decided to help the woman and her family, every winter before I left, I gave her 4 sheep to take care of during the winter. I told her that I would return for the sheep in the summer but she could use the sheep’s wool and milk for her self during the winter. In the summer when I returned I used to take back my sheep and give her one of the calves”.

A nomad elder from the Alkozai tribe

The relationship between nomadic and settled communities during the reign of Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan gives a valuable insight into the potential for peace, stability and friendliness that exists among
them. It also suggests a good recipe for unlocking this potential. The personal bonds created between members of these communities is another key factor, as it allows these people to cooperate on various matters. Their ability to cooperate enables them to solve disputes and conflicts internally thus preventing the conflicts from becoming violent conflicts. It is also more logical that the compensation amount set among themselves will be fairer to both parties, thus reducing the impact of the potential economic shocks. However most importantly their strong personal bonds makes them less vulnerable to intangible factors. It makes it more difficult to play on myths and fears, and spread propaganda in an attempt to mobilize communities against each other.

**1979-2001 The Relationship between Settled and Nomadic Communities during the Soviet Invasion until the end of the Taliban**

The relationship between nomadic and settled communities took a turn for the worse during this period. According to the respondents from the nomadic communities interviewed by CPAU, members of both communities fought side by side against the Soviets in Behsud for the first couple of years (Field Research, May, 2010). However the deteriorating security situation between 1980 until 1996 prevented the Kuchies from migrating to Behsud. The lawlessness on the roads around the country meant that the Kuchies regularly had their flocks stolen and as a result the nomads did not venture to the central highlands (Phone Interview with a Nomadic elder, October, 2010). There was thus a freeze in the relationship between nomadic and settled communities during this period.

The civil war during the period of 1992-1996 furthered the cleavages between nomadic and settled communities along ethnic and religious lines. Although there were no specific conflicts between nomadic and settled communities, they did belong to different mujahedeen groups. Most of the Kuchies migrating to Wardak joined either Hizb-e-Islami, lead by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar or Ettehad-e-islami lead by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf (Phone Interview with a Nomadic elder, October, 2010). Members of the settled communities in Wardak were mostly involved with Harakat-e-Islami and Sazman-e-Nasr, which were merged into Hizb-e-Wahdat in 1988.

The mujahedeen were not a united resistance group; they were divided among themselves, they were pawns in a greater game. On a regional level Afghanistan served as a proxy for the Middle Eastern rivalries, mainly between the Saudi Arabia (Sunni) and Iran (Shia). Saudi Arabia matched the funding by the U.S. plus a little bit more for the civil war, their main objectives were to be seen as the defenders of Islam against communism, whilst keeping the Shia at bay and to export their brand of Wahhabi Islam. They preferred to support the Pashtuns as they were seen more reliable and less likely to fall under Iranian influence (Saikal, 1998, s. 117). Meanwhile Iran was attempting to support the Shia minority Hazaras. They also wanted to “establish a land corridor that would link Iran with the Persian speaking populations of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan” (Rais, 1999, s. 7).

The various ethnic/religious groups in Afghanistan were being mobilized and manipulated against each other by international, regional and local actors. The Tajik warlord Masood sent the following instructions to his officers in a letter:
“Considering the progress of your work, you are instructed to authorize every department of the National Security to intensify the war between Hezb-e-Wahdat and Hezb-e-Harakat on the basis of ethnic cleansing between Hazaras and Pashtuns to the extent that its effects must incite hostilities among inhabitants of central and northern parts of Afghanistan either in the form of Shiite and Sunni differences or as hostilities between the Hazaras and Pashtuns which would be a sufficient ground for preoccupation of future military fronts” (Emadi H., 2001, ss. 445-6)

In the context of increasingly ethnically patterned conflict the Pashtun Kuchies who migrated to Wardak each year either withdrew to Maidan-Shar, a predominantly Pashtun area or fled to Pakistan and did not return to Behsud until the arrival of the Taliban. Those who tried were faced with armed resistance as a nomadic elder, recalls.

“During the government of Rabbani, my tribe and I moved beyond Maidan-Shar towards our traditional pasturelands in Behsud. One night when we camped in the mountains we got surrounded by a group of Hazaras, who shoot at us when we tried to leave our camp. We were stuck there for two days and two nights, without any access to water for ourselves or our animals. Some elders and children got wounded and a woman got killed. After two days and two nights they left and we returned to Maidan-Shar, we did not go back to Behsud until the time of the Taliban”

When the Taliban came to power, they totally disarmed the inhabitants of the settled communities while the nomads were allowed to carry weapons and the migration of the nomads began again. They misused the support of the Taliban and mistreated the people of the Behsud by using different excuses to collect money from them (Testimony Three: Settled Communities). The nomads again ventured to Behsud, supported by an anti-Shiite, pro-Pashtun government.

The Leverage of Nomadic Communities over Settled Communities during the Taliban Era

The Taliban and the nomads used different excuses to torture the people of the region. For example, one day we were sitting with the villagers when two nomads came to us and said that they had lost their donkey. They accused us of taking their donkey and told us that we should give it back. We told them that we did not have the donkey but they did not accept this. The nomads complained to the head of district and a few Taliban soldiers came and a number of villagers were taken away.

When we reached the district the Taliban mullah asked us why we were withholding the donkey. We told the Taliban mullah that we did not know anything about the donkey. The mullah said in reply that we should either give the nomads their donkey or the cost of the donkey, and if not, we will be arrested. Because of this, we were forced to give the nomads two hundred thousand AFS. Upon return to the village, we found out that the nomad’s donkey had slipped into the mountains and had died there.

Some of the villagers went to the district and told the district-head that the donkey had slipped into the mountains and had died there. We demanded that the nomads should give our money back. The Taliban
mullah told us that this was not possible because the nomads had left for war and the subject should not be broached again

Testimony Fourteen: Settled Communities

One of the main negative effects of this period was the damage done to the personal bonds which had been established during Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan. This again made both communities more vulnerable to mobilization against each other and exploitation by various political actors. This vulnerability would materialize once again during the Karzai government.

The post-2001 Relationship between Settled and Nomadic Communities

The current relationship between settled and nomadic communities is fragile and marked by conflict; it has the potential to blow up into violent conflict at any moment. It has had several major violent outbreaks since 2006 until 2010 (UNEP, 2009; The Killid Group, 2010). The testimonies gathered by CPAU gives a good insight into the experience of conflict in these areas.

In the year 2008, in the area of Daimirdad of Kujaab, nomads in large numbers armed with different types of weapons, for example, rocket launchers, PK’s, Havaan and Kalashnikovs attacked the area. In the beginning they occupied the villages of Daimirdad and Marazar. The people were forced to abandon their homes because of the barbarism of the nomads. The attacks continued until most of the villages in Kujaab Valley were occupied by the nomads. As a result, nomads in Kujaab killed and injured a large number of people, looted their homes and then set them on fire. For three weeks, the area was under the control of the nomads during which all agricultural fields were totally destroyed.

Testimony Eight: Settled Communities

In the year 2008, when we went to Behsud they fired at us and a large number of our livestock were killed. The second time that year Hazara people promised us that we could go to these areas but when we went there they attacked us using sticks, stones and weapons. This fighting started in the morning and continued until evening and four of our people were injured.

We have been fighting for six months with the Hazara people and losses have been inflicted on both sides. They’ve burnt our tents and they treat us badly. In the same year, the Hazara people suddenly attacked us and we did not have the power to resist so we were forced to leave the area. We use camels and donkeys to carry our material from one place to another. When we go from one area to another, we go by foot for long distances. While we can walk on foot, our children cannot so we tie them on the backs of camels. During the escape, we had tied the children and home materials on the back of camels. When a camel was shot by a bullet, the camel fell and children on the back of the camel were killed, their clothes were torn, stained with blood and their bones had been broken. One of the dead children was the grandson of my uncle and another child was from our tribe.
Looking at recent historical changes in the relationship between these two communities and the fragmented nature of Afghan politics today, the persistence of conflict and violence hardly comes as a surprise. This makes it increasingly difficult to establish peaceful relationships between the two communities. The current relationship between them is as hostile and fragmented as ever before, and continues to be the victim of political manipulation and exploitation.
Peacebuilding Efforts

The magnitude of the conflict between nomadic and settled community around the country has attracted the attention of different organizations and has generated different approaches to this issue. The approaches vary and deal with different aspects of the conflict. Some work towards resolving conflicts over tangible factors, while others attempt to work towards solving conflicts arising from intangible factors. There are valuable lessons to be learned from these experiences which can be used towards a more holistic approach to the conflict between nomadic and settled communities.

The Nawur Pasture

The Nawur pasture, located in northern Ghazni is one of the largest pastures in Afghanistan at around 600 sq km and an elevation of up to 3,350 meters. Historically the Nawur pastures was the most westerly point to which Pashtun nomads ventured, they also paid grazing fees to the local Mohammad Khwaja Hazara. However the late 1880s conquest of this region by Abdur-Rahman Khan encouraged Kuchies to join the proclaimed Jihad against the Shiite Hazara communities and gain deeper access into the highlands. This combination of political and economic motivation translated into ethnic and religious terms has laid the foundation for the conflict and the competing claims to the pasture between these two communities.

In 2005 the Ministry of Agriculture under RAMP/USAID sponsorship brought together 40 Kuchi leaders in a conference which resulted in a clear demand for support in resolving the conflicts over summer pastures (De Weijer, Conference on Afghan Pastoralists (Kuchi), 2006). The Nawur pasture was selected to be a testing ground for attempts by an inter-ministerial mission (MoA, MFTA and MRRD) at producing user agreements between nomadic and settled communities. The project was canceled due to an increase in insecurity in early 2006, by then a draft protocol agreement had been produced but was not introduced to the participants (UNEP, 2009).

From the discussions with both communities an understanding arose that there is the possibility of an agreement. Key Kuchi leaders were willing to acknowledge Hazara ownership of the pastures in the highlands as long as they were granted seasonal access, while Hazara leaders acknowledged that Kuchies who owned farms in the area also had rights to the associated pastures that could not be deprived (UNEP, 2009). However there were signs of internal disorder and disagreement which could become a significant obstacle to future attempts. Hazaras wanted more time to consider their internal arrangements and their position to the return of the Kuchies before engaging in negotiation with the Kuchies, while publicly Kuchi leaders insisted on their ownership to the pastures.

Sustainable Agricultural Livelihood in Eastern Hazarajat Programme (SALEH)

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) started the SALEH programme in 2006 with DFID funding. The Yakawland district of Bamyan province was chosen as the pilot site. A building block for this project was the lessons learned from the Nawur experience. Attempts were made to remove pasture
related conflicts among settled communities through Community Based Pasture Management (CBPM) institutions. The buildup of CBPM institutions would allow for conflicts and disputes over pastures to be solved locally on a community level. This would create clarity over the ownership of the pastures and potentially result in more internal stability.

Some of the main recommendation for the SALEH programme included:

**A community based approach to rangeland future (sic):** All pasture is to be brought under community based pasture management.

**A changing role for Government:** Government’s role will formally change from de facto owner-manager to facilitator, technical adviser, regulator, supervising mediator, and monitoring watchdog of local pasture ownership and management.

**Removing the founding impediment to sustainable pastures:** Confused and contested rights: Rangeland strategy must make ownership conflicts over pastures a key task; pastures cannot be rehabilitated without communities being sure of their rights.

**Every pasture in Afghanistan should have a designated Custodian:** A Custodian is a lawful manager. Sometimes (in the case of Private and Community Pastures) the Custodian will be the recognised owner. In the case of Public Pastures, the Custodian will be the pasture-adjacent communities within the district where the pasture is located and which hold the strongest customary claim to the pasture.

**Custodians need to be properly empowered as Managers:** They must have the power to regulate access and use, to enforce the Use Rules, the power to fine offenders and the power to set aside parts of the pasture against any grazing or bush cutting.”

*Source: UNEP, 2009*

The CBPM system with a designated custodian is in many respects similar to the traditional Mirab system used for water management on a local level. The Mirab system has proven to be effective, although only during periods of strong government backing of the Mirab’s authority (Vincent & Mujeeb, 2009). Thus similar community based natural resource management institutions have shown promise in the past. However the SALEH programme only tested the CBPM with settled communities and the capacity of these institutions to successfully deal with disputes, conflicts and bring about some sort of stability between settled and nomadic communities is still unknown.

**The Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation and Capacity Enhancement (PEACE PROJECT)**

Another USAID funded project, the PEACE project, was initiated in July 2006 after a request made by the GoA to address issues negatively affecting livestock production within the country. A part of their work involved providing peacebuilding workshops to settled and nomadic communities. These workshops were carried out by the Afghan NGO Sanayee Development Organization (SDO). The purpose of this training was to provide the participants with the necessary conflict resolution and negotiation skills and to provide the knowhow to share this knowledge with others in their community (PEACE, 2008). Representatives from both nomadic and settled communities were invited to attend separate 8-day long workshops followed by an invitation to a joint 8-day workshop.
The joint workshops aimed at building trust and a channel of communication between the representatives of these two communities. They also selected 10 “Peace Ambassadors”, five from each community. They were tasked to travel around Wardak and Ghazni provinces and share with the communities what they had learned and experienced in the workshops and how that could be used to solve conflicts (PEACE, 2009). The workshop received positive responses from the participants. One interesting observation made at these workshops was that of a settled community member and a nomadic community member talking about how their grandfathers were very close friends. They were saddened by the fact that they were not friends like their grandfathers (PEACE, 2009).

The participants at the workshops agreed that political leaders from both sides are using this situation to further their own political interests. They also agreed that with a concentrated effort the conflict can be resolved on the ground (PEACE, 2009a). Some of the main reported outcomes of the workshops were increased knowledge of conflict resolution methods, increased knowledge of the other community’s views, and concrete suggestions for future collaboration (PEACE, 2008a).

Community Based Peacebuilding Approach (CBPA)

In November, 2009, Cooperation for Peace and Unity, with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy started a pilot project aimed at evaluating the potential of community based approaches to conflict resolution as a remedy to the conflict between nomadic and settled communities. The pilot project included a research component (of which this paper is the final result), a component on gathering personal testimonies from members of both communities, and providing joint peacebuilding workshops.

The project was initiated by gathering personal testimonies as a means of making first contact with the various communities and building a better understanding of the situation and mindset on the ground. The gathering of testimonies proved to be an effective way of making first contact and it resulted in the following key understandings:

The testimonies gave an image of the atrocities committed against both sides. The testimonies allowed a better understanding of the experiences, perspectives and perhaps even the feelings the people in these communities held. This understanding is crucial for any step towards reconciliation as it lays the foundation for the understanding of how deep the problem is and where to begin.

The testimonies also produced a positive initial understanding of how conflicts between these communities used to be solved prior to the 1979 revolution. Prior to the 1979 revolution community elders from both sides used to get together and solve conflicts between them fairly and the decisions were accepted by both sides. This was an encouraging finding as it showed that they were not foreign to the concept of community based peacebuilding, it has existed previously and it has worked for them.
Another encouraging finding revealed by the testimonies was the past good personal bond between members of both communities. The decades of war have distorted these personal bonds, but this finding enables hope that such personal bonds are not impossible to forge and that the perceived hatred between them is not an obvious and ancient fact.

The second part of the project involved arranging a seven day joint workshop in Kabul for member of both communities during May, 2010. This was followed by a three day joint workshop held in Kabul during August 2010. The workshop training covered a range of topics from understanding conflict and its process of becoming violent conflict to negotiation, communication and conflict resolution. CPAU also used the lessons learned from the testimonies and tried to set up favourable conditions for building personal bonds between the participants of the workshops. They attended the workshops together, ate together and their accommodation was arranged in the same hotel. Picnics were also arranged at the end of both workshops as a means of giving the participants an opportunity to get to know each other in an informal and friendly environment.

The outcomes of the workshops are difficult to assess in the short run, however a conflict between the two communities in July, 2010 sparked a negotiation session to which CPAU was invited as observer. The negotiation session which took place in Taka Toh village in Behsud on the 15th of July produced positive observations of the behaviours and attitudes of the members of the negotiation sessions who had attended the peacebuilding workshop. CPAU observed that the participants who had received training were calmer, more willing to compromise, less willing to put all the blame on one side and received more of an audience for their speeches and arguments then did the participants of the negotiation sessions who had not received any training.

How to Build Peace

The first and most important lesson to be learnt from these experiences is that bringing an end to this conflict, although not an easy task, it is not impossible. There is a great deal of interest and opportunities available to bring an end to this conflict. The Nawur and SALEH experience are attempts aimed at resolving conflicts over tangible factors. They are conflict resolution attempts seeking to solve the conflict through the production of user agreements or setting up community based pasture management institutions. Although conflict resolution agreements do have the potential to bring about short-term stability, they are often a form of reestablishing the status quo a “RE-solution” of a problem that will need resolving later (Fetherston, 2000).

Transformative peace building or conflict transformation is the alternative to conflict resolution arrangements (Rupesinghe, 1995). The PEACE project and the CBPA led by CPAU provide tools which better enable conflict resolution outcomes such as enhancing negotiation and communication skills among the communities. It is also a transformative approach to solving the conflict. Conflict transformation is concerned with “broader social structures, changing and moving toward a social space open for cooperation, for more just relationship and for non-violent mechanisms for handling conflict” (Lederach, 1995, s. 201). The PEACE project and the CBPA seek to transform the conflict by building relationships between conflicting communities and enhancing individual capacity on a grassroots level,
thus reducing their vulnerability to political manipulation and exploitation through intangible factors such as propaganda and prejudice. The Achilles heel of conflict transformation approach is its inability to produce short-term stability and thus lacking a stable foundation on which long-term solutions can be built.

A more effective approach to the conflict between nomadic and settled communities would be to combine various conflict resolution methods with conflict transformation methods, thus creating a short-term stability on which long-term solutions can be built. User agreements on access to pastures would potentially reduce the vulnerability to tangible factors as ownership and access rights become clearer and agreed upon. This could bring about vital short-term stability; however it does not address the vulnerability to intangible factors. Thus the use of propaganda, prejudice and playing on fears along ethno-linguistic and religious lines could undermine the legitimacy of these user agreements and thus bring about conflict. However, if these short-term resolution attempts are followed up by long-term conflict transformation attempts such as enhancing individual and community capacity through training and building bonds between people, then the vulnerability of these communities to intangible factors would reduce as well, resulting in a desired scenario of a reduction in both short-term and long-term vulnerability to conflict and violence.

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Regional, National and Local Implications and a Way Forward

The exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities can have a destabilizing effect on the regional level. The potential change in migration patterns among nomads to different neighboring countries can result in similar situations of conflict with settled communities in the respective countries, potentially causing tensions to arise between various states. The potential patron-client relationships established between various regional states and local actors can enable local level conflict to be translated into the regional state realm. The vested interest the various states have in their respective client groups makes them more receptive to their cause and pleas. This is a significant source of regional vulnerability as it makes the regional states vulnerable to political manipulation by a third party as stirring up conflict between client groups on the ground can cause tensions between patron states on a regional level.

An intelligent way forward would be to build cooperation structures on a regional level aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities. This would reduce the individual states’ potential vulnerability to political manipulation by third parties and cooperation on this specific issue could enable cooperation and communication channels concerning other regional matters.

On a national level the exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities can be a source of destabilization, loss of legitimacy and could function as a potential spark for civil war. The state’s inability to address these vulnerabilities is a clear sign of weakness which can potentially create incentives for other political entrepreneurs to utilize this weakness for their own political benefit. This issue can thus create the incentive for unlawful advocacy of political change and function as a potential spark for civil war as a means of achieving political change.

A way forward would be for the state to actively engage in this issue with both a short-term and long-term plan. Increased economic opportunities for nomadic and settled communities would make them less vulnerable to economic shocks and thus function as an option to address their vulnerability to tangible factors. Meanwhile, in the long-run a better understanding and closer relations between nomadic and settled communities should be perused.

On a local level the exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities is a source of economic shocks and social fragmentation. A continued exploitation of the vulnerability to tangible factors could potentially result in continued economic shocks thus eventually exhausting any available coping strategies. This would drive local communities further into poverty and potentially create a sense of desperation and hopelessness, making acts of violence by an individual or groups of individuals more likely. The exploitation of the vulnerability to intangible factors could potentially cause a breakdown in established social relations and norms between nomadic and settled communities. The alienation created would make it easier to institutionalize, through propaganda various myths, fears and prejudice.
A potential way forward would be to build community based support structures between nomadic and settled communities which would be able to alleviate economic shocks. The cooperation and resulting personal bonds from these social structures would enable the respective communities to be more resilient to propaganda and attempts at alienation.

**Security, Political, Economic and Social Implications**

The effects of the exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities on security, political, economic and social structures are all interlinked. A resulting negative development in one of these four factors (security, politics, economic and social) will have a similar negative effect on the remaining three factors. This also means that a positive development within one of these four factors will have a similar positive effect on the remaining three factors.

The exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities could have a negative effect on the security situation in the country, by enabling conflict and violence to be created between these communities. The state’s inability to address these vulnerabilities could also mean a decrease in the perceived legitimacy of the government, potentially resulting in increased disregard for government security forces such as the police and the army.

The exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities could have severe a negative impact on the political structure of the country. The political establishment’s inability to address the vulnerabilities will create incentives for other political entrepreneurs to utilize this weakness for their own political benefit. More importantly, the resulting social fragmentation will also translate into a political fragmentation, creating political blocs which are increasingly less able to cooperate and compromise, making political stability and political solutions to disagreements less likely.

The exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities could have a negative effect on the economic situation in the country. The continued economic shocks would decrease productivity and exhaust surplus savings, making further investments, increases in productivity and economic growth less likely. The loss of profitable trade relations due to prejudice and/or community taboo in dealing with the opposite community could mean significant economic losses.

The exploitation of tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities could cause a breakdown in social structures, dismantling local support mechanisms and relations. This could make the communities more vulnerable to economic shocks and political exploitation.
A Way Forward

One of the steps to take forward in the conflict between nomadic and settled communities is to continue with the conflict resolution approaches. Conflict resolution approaches need to be deployed with the aim of clarifying ownership and access rights to pastures and water sources. The experience from the Nawur and SALEH programmes gives insight into the opportunity of producing within and between community arrangements around pasture land ownership and access rights. These lessons should be put to use and produces mutual agreements over pasture ownership and access.

Another step forward in the conflict between nomadic and settled communities is to focus more on socio-economic development. Socioeconomic development will enable the communities to adopt more effective coping strategies and it will increase the community’s resilience to economic shocks, reducing the severity and the potential of violence of the conflict.

A final step forward in the conflict between nomadic and settled communities is to focus conflict transformation approaches. There are around 1.5 million migratory nomads in Afghanistan of whom a majority are Pashtun and they face conflict with settled communities all over the country (De Weijer, 2005). However the level of conflict over summer pastures between nomadic and settled communities are among the highest in the North and central regions of the country these areas are mostly inhabited by non-Pashtuns. Around 940,790 nomads venture to Badakhshan, Baghlan, Balkh, Bamyan, Faryab, Ghor, Kunduz, Wardak, Sar-e-Pul and Takhar for the summer grazing and around 70% of these experience conflict over pasture access (De Weijer, 2005). Thus around 650,000 nomads experience conflict along with hundreds of thousands people in settled communities. It is difficult to give a more accurate estimated of the number of people affected and the level of conflict between nomadic and settled communities due to the limited research being done on this issue around the country, anecdote data suggest it is chronic and widespread. The ethnic and religious divisions in these areas play a key role in enabling these conflicts. Conflict transformation initiatives such as the PEACE program and the CBPA pilot program by CPAU needs to be expanded to reach these areas and generate a lasting momentum towards conflict transformation.

Policy Recommendations

- GoA with the support of the international community needs to focus on negotiation property rights agreement in several provinces, between nomadic and settled communities and then enforcing them.
- Economic development among nomadic and settled communities needs to be a top priority among the donor community.
  - Developing water infrastructure and creating greater access to water is a key area of concern for both communities
  - Diversifying economic activities such as investing in opening chicken farms among settled communities.

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2 It has to be noted that all population figures in Afghanistan are rough estimates.
Providing micro credit opportunity for nomads who have been hit hard by the conflict, drought or years of migration in Pakistan to build up their flocks again.

- Settled and nomadic communities should be encouraged to build up common community based support structures such as the CBPM.
- More research needs to be done into the conflict between nomadic and settled communities, not least in Badakhshan, Baghlan, Bakh, Bamyam, Faryab, Ghor, Herat, Kabul, Kapisa, Kunduz, Laghman, Parwan, Wardak, Sar-e-Pul, Takhar and Zabul.
- Investing in peacebuilding efforts should be a top priority for national and international, state and non-state actors.
Conclusion

In the conflict between nomadic and settled communities both are victims of political manipulation and exploitation. Various political entrepreneurs through recent Afghan history have exploited the vulnerability to conflict existing among these communities for their own personal benefit. This has created a negative cycle of vulnerabilities being exploited and as result creating further vulnerabilities.

The conflict and violence is driving people further into poverty, making them more vulnerable to tangible factors such as economic shocks. The conflict and violence is also driving these communities further apart and it is creating negative experiences which are used in the propaganda against the respective communities. This makes the communities more vulnerable to intangible factors such as playing on prejudice, fears and using propaganda in the mobilization of these communities against each other.

This conflict has become a national problem where it is being used as a tool towards undermining the current government and the rule of law. It has the potential to spark a civil war which could potentially destabilize the whole region.

However addressing these vulnerabilities is not an impossible task. History shows that there is capacity for peace, stability, beneficial trade and friendship between these two communities. The perceived ancient and unshakable hate between these two communities is not a given fact. It is a historical product built by decades of political exploitation and manipulation. Addressing these vulnerabilities through conflict resolution and conflict transformation mechanisms has the potential to stabilize the conflict and reduce the vulnerability to conflict among these communities.
Bibliography


Annex I: Conflict Analysis Charts

**Regional, National and Local Dimensions of Tangible and Intangible Vulnerabilities**

By looking at the exploitation of the tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities on different levels we can build a better understanding of the incentives it creates for different actors and the potential outcomes the exploitation of the vulnerabilities can have on different levels. The matrix below enables a simplified understanding of the overall destructive potential the exploitation of these vulnerabilities have on a regional, national and local level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerability to tangible factors</th>
<th>Vulnerability to intangible factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could fundamentally change migration routes leading to the nomads seeking access to pastures across state borders, most likely in Pakistan. This could create tension and conflict between neighboring states.</td>
<td>The long-term utilization of this vulnerability by regional actors could result in larger vested interest in their various client groups. Potentially increasing competition between various regional actors which can translate into conflict. The utilization of this vulnerability could also result in a civil war. A civil war is likely to increase demand for black market weaponry most likely paid for with the export of illicit goods such as drugs. This would have a destabilizing effect on the whole region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This could destabilize the state as its inability to organize and enforce property rights could undermine its perceived legitimacy. This could also function as a source of friction between different groups in the country, which can grow over time and cause serious social, political and economic problems on a national scale.</td>
<td>This could create incentives for various political actors across the country to get involved and exploit this vulnerability for their own personal benefit. Causing an increase in social fragmentation, making a stable and unified state less likely. In the long run this is likely to function as a spark for a civil war.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3 This conflict analysis framework was set up by CPAU’s conflict analysis series for more on this please see (Dennys & Zaman, 2009)
This could result in continued economic shocks which would gradually exhaust effective coping strategies. Thus gradually having an increased negative effect on people’s lives and livelihoods. The reduction in the availability of effective coping strategies will result in increased desperation thus making conflict and violence more likely. This would result in a disbanding of social institutions and a breakdown in social relations. Enabling the process of institutionalizing various myths, fears and prejudice. Making the communities increasingly more vulnerable to political manipulation and exploitation.

Security, Political, Economic and Social Dynamics of Tangible and Intangible Vulnerabilities

The exploitation of the tangible and intangible vulnerabilities among nomadic and settled communities has a broader impact than just resulting in conflict and violent conflict between nomadic and settled communities. The matrix below gives a simplified synthesis of the potential impact the exploitation of these vulnerabilities can have on the security, political, economic and social structure of the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynamics of Conflict</th>
<th>Vulnerability to tangible factors</th>
<th>Vulnerability to intangible factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>This will have a negative effect on security as this vulnerability can cause economic shocks resulting in desperation and frustration. Increasing the likelihood for an individual or groups of individuals to commit acts of violence.</td>
<td>This will also have a negative effect on security but it is less likely to cause violence by itself. However the conflict it creates will make it easier for other factor to trigger violence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Political
This could destabilize the state as its inability to organize and enforce property rights could undermine its perceived legitimacy. This could open room for other political actors, thus creating an incentive for other actors to engage and fill that political void. This would fragment and radicalize the political realm make it more factionalized. This would decrease the space for political maneuver and compromise across political blocks. The lack of opportunity of political solutions to disagreements would increase the likelihood of violent attempts at solving the disagreement.

### Economic
The persisting economic shocks would drive people deeper into poverty. It would also diminish any opportunity and/or incentive to invest in increased productivity and expansion of the economic activities. Resulting in a stagnant if not diminishing economic situation. This could result in economic losses due to the potential reduction in trade between the two communities originating from established personal prejudice and/or the institutionalization of a taboo in dealing with the opposite community.

### Social
The resulting violence could result in a disbanding of social institutions and a breakdown in social relations between the two communities. It would create social fragmentations and enable the process of institutionalizing various myths, fears and prejudice, which would cause further social fragmentation.
Annex II: Settled and Nomadic Testimonies

The four testimonies below are among the 30 testimonies CPAU gathered among settled and nomadic communities. All the testimonies can be found in English, Dari and Pashto on CPAU’s website www.cpau.org.af/peacebuilding

Testimony Two
Nomad Communities of the Naserkhel Tribe

We have a simple life without any specific residence. In the winter we go to hot places like Jalalabad, Tatang, Tor Ghar (Khogiani District). Some of our tribes also go to Kaama District. A problem for us is access to water to feed our households. There are no health services for our people.

In the spring we start our decamping and go toward Hazarajat (provinces where the Hazaras’ reside). Every tribe has properties there and we can prove our ownership with decrees and other documents. My own place in Hazarajat is in the center of Behsud in the villages of Gardan Dewal Koh, Shari Qol, Jung Jaay, Aala Sang, Qarghoy, Saazi Khel and a number of people also live in section one Behsud.

The main reason of conflicts between Hazaras and Kuchis is that they have started animal husbandry while their population has increased. So it is simple that in such situation they will not let us to go there and use our lands. Because of this they have occupied our pasture lands since the last revolution and have not paid us anything.

My own lands in Gardan Dewal are occupied as well and they don’t let me to go there and use them even though I have decrees and deeds. I am ready to give my lands to the Hazara people if they pay me but they don’t even accept this and I have not received even an Afghani. The last time I went there was two years ago but we spent the season in wars and disputes with the Hazara people.

We all are shepherd and have to take our sheep to pasturelands and mountains. In 1386 (2007) the Hazaras killed one of our men who had taken a sheep to the mountain. They threw him down from the mountain. After that the war started.

In this war, I have seen lots of RPG rockets, machine guns and other modern ammunitions which in such a war were not normal. They killed children, women and stole our flocks. The war started in the spring and finished by the end autumn. During the war my son was injured, he was shot by one of the Hazaras who was using a Kalashnikov. Now he is disabled because of this war even though he is just 25 years old.

Before we arrived there this year, they were armed and were absolutely ready to face us. We didn’t intend to have the same war but when we faced the armed Hazaras we had to defend ourselves. This led to a war with lots of casualties. This war continued until the end of autumn. At the end, the government interfered to bring reconciliation and peace. They formed a commission for negotiations.

4 Note: In translation we have sought to maintain the original Dari and Pashto phrasing and sense, this might not make the clearest English translation, but it maintains the meaning of the testimonies recorded by CPAU staff
They did a good job especially Mr. Sabawoon (the head of this commission) but I do not know what was the last decision made by them. We came back and the war finished.

This year (1388\2009) we did not decamp and go there. Naeim (a kuchi MP in parliament and one of the key leaders of kuchis) told us not to go and that the government will pay for the damages. We stayed here in Jalalabad and lots of flocks died but no one paid us for that. Even we had bought ammunitions no one paid us for it.
Testimony Seven
Nomad Communities of the Naserkhel Tribe

We have a nomadic life and keep livestock, for example, sheep, goat, camel, horse and donkey. Also few people who do not have livestock do other works such as building homes and working in the farm. We spend the winter in Jalalabad and our livestock are in Mohmand Dara and in the areas of Makhel, Khadakhel and Darakhel. In these areas we pay the people for grazing the livestock but now we do not often go there areas because our livestock has decreased.

It was because of the drought and migration that our livestock has reduced. In the spring, we would start moving from Mohmand Dara and would slowly move towards Kabul. In between we would stay in the village of Ghulam Qadir which is located in Dehsabz for a month.

We would come to Soorkand which is located in Chowke Arghandi and use this way to go towards Maidan-Shar and then the Oni valley of Hazarajat. It would take three months from Jalalabad to Hazarajat. When we would reach to the border of Hazarajat, first we would go to Qilae Sabz, which is the border between Maidan-Shar and Hazarajat, followed by Siakhak and Qilae Wazir till we were in the Oni valley. Our lands start from section one Behsud.

In section one Behsud the land is about 60 Sair grain seed out of which 15 Sair are dry wheat grains and the rest are agricultural lands. 3 Sair of dry wheat grain are equal to 7 Sair of wheat grains of the wet lands in one jirb. In section one Behsud, we have agricultural lands and grazing areas to both sides of the river. In section two Behsud we have about 2000 jirb agricultural lands and grazing area. It is a shared property of our tribe. This region is called Jung Jaay and the region of Jung Jaay is divided in two parts which are upper Jung Jaay and lower Jung Jaay.

The third valley of that is called Quffak valley, another Pasqolak, another Dazkhel, another Acha and another is called Surkha. In this region there are about 20 homes of Hazara people and they have land with documents. In lower Jung Jaay, Moshak village, Dewal village, Shuturmurda and towards the west of us the Hazara people reside.

We have bought these lands long ago and we have been grazing for which we have orders given to us by Abdur Rahman Khan. We also paid about 104 years ago and we have the documents.

Our tribe nation divided 1035 places during the government of Mohammad Yaqoob Khan between themselves. Our fathers’ relations with Hazara people were very good.

The problem between us the nomads and Hazara people occurred when we went to Pakistan. The Hazaara people took our lands and when we came back to Afghanistan they told us that we did not have any rights here.

Previously, we had 300 sheep but after the revolution we lost a lot of our livestock because the facilities were restricted. Our products are wool, cheese, milk, yoghurt and meat. We would trade these for wheat and corn from the Hazara people.

Our relations with Hazara people were good to the degree that they would tell us that you are our elder brothers and we are your younger brothers. The problem occurs when we want to go to Hazarajat to
our lands and they do not allow us to go there. In my opinion, there is foreign interference, especially from Iran.

We nomads are ready to make peace with Hazara people but the Iranians do not let them make peace with us. If Hazara people talk to us and we negotiate with each other this conflict can be solved but the Hazaara people do not do this because they listen to others.
Testimony One
Settled Communities in Behsud

Before the revolution, during the governments of Mohammad Zahir Khan and Mohammad Dawood Khan nomads used to come to Behsud and create certain problems for the people. During the government of Zahir Shah, nomads would come to the region and bring a few things with them, for example, clothes, tea and molasses and they would sell them to people. When the nomads would return they would leave some clothes in front of a number of people’s homes and would tell them when he came back next year, the money for the clothes should be present. Since the people of the region were economically poor, when the nomad would come back the following year, many people were not able to make the payment for the clothes. After a few years the money owed to the nomad would increase and the people would be forced to request to the government for a loan. Many people feared the government and due to this fear they would give their home, material livestock or land to the nomad. The example of this is in the village of Aghelsang Kujaab Behsud where because of the cost of some clothes, land was legally taken away.

Nomads are a big problem for the people of this region, since they were able to inflict a lot of damages to us every year. During the government of Taliban, the nomads tortured the people and every year destroyed the agricultural fields of the people by their cattle. It should be mentioned here that we do not know the nomads who presently come to Behsud.

In the past we did not have a problem when nomads, using different excuses, used some land from people. Now, the nomads want to take the land of Behsud region completely. If this was not the case then they would not torture the people. As every one knows in the year 1387 (2008) in the lower Kujaab, upper Kujaab, section two Behsud and Daimurdad, some children, an old man and a school girl were killed, a large number of people’s homes were burned, a large number of livestock of the people of the region were taken away and all of the agricultural fields were completely destroyed by their cattle.

The government should give this issue attention and this should not become a political issue. There is a lot of land for the nomads that can be distributed to them. They should leave our land, stop the torture and create an atmosphere of peace so that the people of Afghanistan can live peacefully with each other.
Testimony Five
Settled Communities in Behsud (Section Two)

After revolution during the government of Taliban, the first year that the nomads came, they set up tents on our wheat crops and destroyed all agriculture by their cattle. In this region the nomads have no land or grazing areas. They would come and graze their cattle over the agriculture and upon return they would steal our sheep and goats.

The regions where the nomads destroyed the agriculture of the people are:
1. Zarsang region
2. Dahn Naw region
3. Qol Khashak region
4. Sarqol region
5. Jungle region
6. Ali Beg region
7. Sari Karez region
8. Zartala region
9. Qol Pareeda region

We went to the district to file a complaint to the district-head. The district-head was a person by the name of Haji Mujahid, who told us that they would report the matter to the capital of the province and to Mulla Umar.

The next year when the nomads came back to the region they destroyed the agriculture of the people. They killed a person by the name of Javed in the Baba region of Behsood and injured a person. During the government of Karzai in the year 1387 on 26th of Jawza, the nomads again attacked the region.

The people of the region were busy in the cultivation and we did not think that the nomads would attack this region. There attacks killed six people from the region of a Geervi Rozi whose names are as follows:

1. Mohmmad Ibrahim
2. Salman
3. Gulab Khan
4. Mir Daad
5. Hashim
6. Sarwar

The people of the Geervi Rozi region all left the region. The nomads broke the locks of their homes by bullets and looted all the material. National armed forces came to the region and but did not help the people at all.