



NEGOTIATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN AFGHANISTAN

Omar Sadr



‘Omar Sadr attempts a well-founded analysis of the identity politics in Afghanistan. His central argument—that for democracy to be a successful project, it must be grounded in the representation of cultural diversity—is pertinent to contemporary Afghanistan. Sadr’s contribution to the discourse on multiculturalism addresses a crucial gap in the literature on Afghanistan, making it significant for its academic worth and its relevance to policy.’

—Jayashree Vivekanandan, *Department of
International Relations, South Asian
University, New Delhi, India*

‘Drawing on contemporary normative literature, both from political theory and international relations, Omar Sadr makes a compelling case for preserving cultural diversity in Afghanistan. This work is laudable and well-timed, considering a growing perception that multiculturalism is on the wane globally. I am sure Sadr’s work will immensely profit scholars across disciplines and especially those keen to learn from a transnational mapping of multicultural theory and practice beyond the intellectual comfort zone of Western constructs.’

—Ashok Acharya, *Professor, Department of
Political Science, University of Delhi, India*



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This book analyses the problematique of governance and administration of cultural diversity within the modern state of Afghanistan and traces patterns of national integration. It explores state construction in twentieth-century Afghanistan and Afghan nationalism and explains the shifts in the state's policies and societal responses to different forms of governance of cultural diversity. The book problematizes liberalism, communitarianism, and multiculturalism as approaches to governance of diversity within the nation-state. It suggests that while the western models of multiculturalism have recognized the need to accommodate different cultures, they failed to engage with them through intercultural dialogue. It also elaborates the challenge of intra-group diversity and the problem of accommodating individual choice and freedom while recognising group rights and adoption of multiculturalism. The book develops an alternative approach through synthesising critical multiculturalism and interculturalism as a framework on a democratic and inclusive approach to governance of diversity.

A major intervention in understanding a war-torn country through an insider account, this book will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of politics and international relations, especially those concerned with multiculturalism, state-building, nationalism, and liberalism, as well as those in cultural studies, history, Afghanistan studies, South Asian studies, Middle East studies, minority studies, and to policymakers.

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER WHO
ENDURED ALL THE HARDSHIPS TO
PROVIDE ME OPPORTUNITIES



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INTRODUCTION

This book theorises the patterns of political and socio-cultural integration in Afghanistan and the extent to which these policies have shaped cultural discrimination and inequality. It will explain shifts in the state's policies and societal responses to different forms of governance of cultural diversity. By analysing how multiculturalism in Afghanistan is a “movement from below” and not a policy of the state, the study further seeks to identify indigenous formulations about administration and governance of cultural diversity in Afghanistan. Finally, the book aims to go beyond the formalistic understanding of rights to explore discourses and imaginaries of self, belonging and difference. The period that the study covers starts from the Mujahideen capture of power in 1992 until the end of President Hamid Karzai's term in 2014. The genesis of claims for ethnic rights can be traced to this period, culminating in the Bonn Agreement in 2001.

The first section of this Introduction fleshes out the research puzzle. Accordingly, I present the research question, objectives, propositions, main concepts, and the arguments of the book. Section 2 provides a critique of the existing literature on the role of the modern state in the construction of cultural diversity. It shows how the literature in Political Science and International Relations (IR) does not talk about the cultural dimension of the formation and consolidation of the state. It emphasises the need for an alternative and comprehensive approach to taking into consideration this aspect. It outlines a framework for the study of the issue. Section 3 discusses how the literature on Afghanistan does not cover what has been the role of the state on the mediation of cultural diversity. Section 4 presents the method of the study and, finally, the last section of this chapter outlines the chapterisation of the book.

The contemporary globalised world is characterised by increased diversity in terms of culture. Governance of diversity has turned into a critical issue for academics and policymakers at different levels as the growing diversification demands a process of identity readjustment. On the one hand, there has been anxiety and insecurity over the recognition and practice of

culture and identity; on the other hand, there are challenges and questions regarding social and political accommodation. In such a globalised world where values, ideas, and culture transcend the conventional boundaries, governments encountered difficulties in dealing and administering diversity and difference. Cultural diversity functions both as a site of cohabitation and contestation. It may lead to false stereotypes, prejudices, unjustified fears, and finally, multiple and reinforcing conflicts.

Although state as a polity has been in existence for a long period of time, the idea of the nation-state is a relatively modern phenomenon. It is well established that the nation-building process has not been culturally natural, and the nation-state reinforces a collective identity as the basis of socio-political solidarity. The state reveals its cultural biases through the declaration of a certain language, religion or religious sect as official, the legitimisation of certain cultural codes and practices, and through the stratification of the population. In this sense, the modern state tends to protect the culture of the majority and naturalise its identity vis-à-vis all others. In such a scenario, minorities remain in a relatively disadvantageous position. They face not only institutionalised social and cultural discrimination but also social injustice and economic discrimination.

Historically, the state in Afghanistan has adopted different responses to address the issue of cultural diversity and modes of cultural assimilation. While some regimes such as of Shah Amanullah (1919–1929), Nadir Shah (1929–1933), Zahir Shah (1933–1973), Mohammed Daoud (1973–1978), and the Taliban had pursued a cultural homogenisation process, others, such as the communist administration (1978–1992), have opened the space and been supportive of vulnerable ethno-national groups. The homogenisation process has been a violent one, entailing ethnic and religious massacre, deprivation of land and property, resettlements, and discrimination of minorities. However, accommodative policies have recognised minority rights, provided assistance to minority groups, and exempted them from the provisions that were against their culture. Similarly, the democratic space created post-2001 also provides a limited opportunity for inter-cultural dialogue. However, the modern state in Afghanistan has largely demonstrated cultural bias and discrimination. The declaration of Pashtu as the national language in 1936 has entailed the renaming of places and areas from Persian or Turkic languages to Pashtu, the adoption of national anthem and national currency solely in one language, the discrimination against Shias, and many more such practices indicate institutionalised cultural discrimination (Saikal 2004). This process went to the extent that Afghanistan is upheld as a homogenous nation-state (Hyman 2002; Mahdi 2010; Kawyani 2011).

Besides the state, the Afghanistan diaspora has played a noticeable role in redefining the idea of nation and nationalism in Afghanistan. The diasporic community has played an important role in reclaiming the cultural

diversity of Afghanistan while maintaining its sense of belonging to one country. Different ethnic diaspora has produced their own respective conceptions of group identity, group rights and of what suffering in the civil war meant, and has organised themselves culturally. They influence and shape public debates at the international level through demonstrations and intellectual debates that, in turn, have a boomerang effect on the state.

The choice of 1992–2014 as the timeframe of the research is because of several reasons. The modern Afghanistan which was made through coercive centralisation of power and administrative structure, unification of the country and monopolising the use of force by Amir Abd-ur-Rahman (1880–1901), demarcation of territorial boundaries by the colonial interventions of the British and Russian Empires, and subsidising the rulers of newly established state of Afghanistan by the colonial British Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century was disintegrated with the collapse of communist administration in the last decade of 20th century. The colonially shaped state of Amir Abd-ur-Rahman continued for one century. This state was characterised by high centralisation of power, the domination of Pashtun in the hierarchy of politics, marginalisation, and discrimination of minor ethnic groups.

The last decade of the 20th century has also been marked by the rise in ethnic tensions and identity politics at the global level. Civil wars, ethnic cleansing, demands for recognition, and the rise of xenophobia have highlighted the centrality of identity politics, the crisis of governance of diversity, and the crisis facing centralised ethno-national states. With no doubt, Afghanistan has witnessed demands for recognition and identity politics to a large extent. The civil war in the 1990s was a clear indication of the failure of the earlier assimilationist policy and centralisation of power. The collapse of the state, the political turmoil following the civil war, and claims for ethnic and cultural rights have challenged the national governance framework in Afghanistan.

The trajectory of power structure changed in the course of 14 years armed resistance against Soviets (1979–1992) in Afghanistan. The traditional power structure has been broken down, and the people's perspective with regard to sovereignty and governance has changed (Saikal 2004; Mansor 2009; Spanta 2010; Pedram 2015). With the grace of resistance against Soviets, the marginalised and repressed ethnic groups armed themselves and entered into the battle for restructuring the state. They wanted redistribution of resources and power that observed their group rights. The outcome of such a process was manifested in the Mujahideen government established in 1992.

1992 was the negation of the state constructed by Amir Abd-ur-Rahman and colonialism. The timeline 1992–2014 manifests the efforts for renegotiation for the boundaries of power and reconstruction of the state in a new and accommodative form. In a sense, history repeats itself. The rampant

ethnic claims desired recognition of equality among groups by the state and political participation and representation in the power structure. The Amir Abd-ur-Rahman designed structure of the state was contested and renegotiated several times. Covering 22 years, the years 1992–2014 have witnessed at least two political transitions and negotiation of the state structure. The first transition is after the disintegration of state with the falling of the communist administration, and the second transition is the establishment of a political settlement after the defeat of the Taliban in 2001. Both these transitions are characterised by the failure of political order. At the core of both failures is mechanical enforcement of the one kind of state—the Westphalian state. The centralised, and unitary form of nation-state did not and does not fit to the multicultural and diverse society of Afghanistan. Though the democratic political system post-2001 has recognised equal social and political rights of all people, however, the state apparatus has remained unitary, and centralised and current democracy does not provide space for the cultural rights of communities, cultural diversity of the country, and multiple layers of loyalty.

In this context, the book elaborates the efforts and counter-efforts for making of a multicultural state and having an intercultural dialogue. The study focuses on the following research question: How was cultural diversity in Afghanistan mediated by the state from 1992 to 2014? In order to operationalise this question, the research will specifically look at the following sub-questions:

- 1 What are the indigenous intellectual and popular formulations of governing and administering cultural diversity in Afghanistan?
- 2 What have been the practices of cultural integration and patterns of cultural discrimination in Afghanistan?
- 3 What explains the shifts in state policies with regard to the governance of cultural diversity?
- 4 What has been the influence of external actors on the policies pertaining to cultural diversity in Afghanistan?
- 5 How to address intercultural contradictions and conflicts through intercultural dialogue and how to make a balance between individual rights and group rights?

The study puts forward four arguments about the governance of cultural diversity in Afghanistan. First, the modern centralised state has pursued an assimilationist policy with regard to minorities, which has led to cultural discrimination in the country. Second, the legacy of Amir Abd-ur-Rahman continued to influence the transitions in the 1990s and 2000s, which repeats the faulty model of centralised Westphalian State. Third, while multiculturalism in the West is about the integration of the migrants into the mainstream society, in Afghanistan, it is a critical movement from below demanding

inclusive politics and recognition of equality among ethnocultural groups. And fourth, the prospect of intercultural dialogue is challenging in a fragile context such as Afghanistan.

For the purpose of this study, *cultural diversity* implies a plurality of identities, customs, practices, values, modes of political discourse, and ideals in a state. *Cultural integration* is a socio-political process and policy through which the state attempts to reconcile unity with diversity. The emphasis on either unity or diversity within a state could lead to homogenisation or accommodation, respectively. Bhikhu Parekh identifies *assimilation* as a mode of social integration wherein a group is required to accept the cultural norms of the dominant group in society. The political space that the assimilationists design assumes that a state could not be stable unless it shares a common national culture. By this understanding, the state as a custodian of society has both the right and the duty to assimilate the minorities to the national culture. Minorities can enjoy the same rights as citizens on the condition that they assimilate with the mainstream (Parekh 2000). Finally, *cultural discrimination* is unequal treatment in the public sphere against minorities. The unequal treatment may take the form of unequal distribution of resources and opportunities for minorities or deprivation from one's identity and culture. Cultural discrimination might be embedded in social norms, law, and policies of the state, or it might be evident in the forms that communities are represented and portrayed in a public sphere (Mahajan 2002). These three concepts are interconnected to each other through the discourses of nationalism, intercultural dialogue, and the politics of recognition.

On state mediation of cultural diversity

Despite the logic of political science and IR literature, which argues that the state protects and represents its citizens in an anarchical international system, the history of the international state system indicates the opposite. Forced assimilation, expulsion, ethnic cleansing, xenophobia, and genocide are the practices that states turned on their own citizens. One cannot explain these solely through the lens of nationalism, as the practices are deeply linked with the modern international state system and date back to the 15th and 16th centuries when early phases of statebuilding were taking place.

As there is an integral link between state formation, sovereignty, the construction of a single and unified identity, and political legitimacy, political theory is expected to understand and explore it. Various theories of state formation analysed and provided different understandings of European state formation and homogenisation of undesirable population. Materialist theorists such as Immanuel Wallerstein assume state formation as a function of the world economy and explain homogenisation of people based on

economic and material interests. Similarly, the economic institutionalists explain state formation based on economic motivations but from a methodological individualism standpoint. Theories mentioned earlier do not take the articulation process of interest of state into consideration. The Marxist theories of state formation assume that homogenisation takes place as a need for the growing world economic system. Immanuel Wallerstein argues that the modern state has come into being in the 15th century in response to the crisis of feudalism reflected in the form of famines, plagues, and economic recessions in Europe. This crisis led to rebellions of peasants and war, which weakened the nobility. The strong and centralised state was seen as a prerequisite to the economic resurgence and establishment of a new order. Hence, the nobility and monarchs efforts brought into existence an absolutist state through bureaucratisation, homogenisation of people, centralisation of power, and monopolisation of forces. Wallerstein reduces the political action and the process of state formation to economic factors, which, as a result, ignores the cultural factors and processes. He also reduces the homogenisation of a population to a function and prerequisite of the capitalist world economy or structure. Homogenisation and assimilation of people could not be analysed merely through the economic factors. For instance, the belief system and religion played a remarkable role in legitimacy formation of the absolutist state (Rae 2002, 24–27). The best example of the use of religion for the legitimising of the absolutist state could be Amir Abd-ur-Rahman in the late 19th-century Afghanistan. He deliberately drew on the Sunni Muslim clergy for justification of his attempts for subjugation of his opponents. Similarly, the forced conversion the pagan of Nuristan in 1893 had less to do with religion than with the fact that their command of high passes allowed them to maintain their autonomy by extracting tribute from traders.

Power-based explanation such as Anthony Giddens takes the interest of state builders for granted. Giddens (1985) emphasised the role of military power and pressure of the international state system in the formation of the modern state. His argument on the role of the international system in the creation of modern state places the state as an agent in a secondary position to the structure. He further argues that cultural homogeneity is required for administrative unity. According to him, nationalism is the cultural sensibility of sovereignty functions for unifying the state. He notes, “with the coming of the nation-state, states have an administrative and territorially ordered unity which they did not possess before. This unity cannot remain *purely* administrative however, because the very co-ordination of activities involved presumes elements of cultural homogeneity” (1985, 219). Such a perspective limits culture’s role to being an instrument of administrative unification and underestimates the constitutive role of culture in the construction of the modern state. Giddens also ignores the forceful conversion

of Huguenot people into Catholicism while discussing the absolutist rule of Louis XIV in France (Rae 2002, 34). Applying Giddens typology of traditional, absolutist state, Barnett R. Rubin discusses the lineages of three forms of state in Afghanistan. Rubin (1988, 1193–1196) suggests that Amir “Abd-ur-Rahman’s state exhibited structural characteristics of absolutism ... [while] Amanullah’s policies were those Giddens identified as key to the transition from absolutism to the nation-state.” Interestingly, Rubin does not identify the steps taken by Shah Amanullah and his successors for cultural homogenisation of the country in the process of construction of the nation-state.

Lack of interest in cultural diversity in mainstream IR theory sharpens demarcation between the internal and external spheres and the necessity of internal stability. Charles Tilly argues that homogenisation of people within state took place as a part of concomitant delineation of internal and external aspects of the state. The processes of internal pacification and centralisation of power happened simultaneously with the struggles of the state externally to deal with the pressures of the international system. As the state weaponised itself against the external threats, the balance of arms between the state and its internal rival broke in the benefit of the state. Hence, the demarcation between internal and external becomes sharper, and as a result, the cultural diversity was minimised within the states and maximised among the states. Homogenisation of people has helped the ruler to consolidate their rule and to unite against an external threat (Rae 2002, 35–38).

The mainstream assumptions of IR were questioned by the critical theorists of IR. Andrew Linklater (1992, 83) argues that the state should not be taken for granted. By distinguishing between citizens and foreigners and encompassing the concepts of sovereignty and territoriality, the state is a system of exclusion and inclusion in itself. It should be recognised that state sovereignty has been shaped by the exclusionary practices, so the state comes into existence based on a number of axes of exclusion and inclusion such as race, class, religion, and gender. Linklater says that the normative aspect of a critical theory

entails recognition of the rights of groups, such as indigenous peoples, which fall within the jurisdiction of the sovereign state, but suffer exclusion from full participation in the national community ... Attempts to promote principles of social justice, and the rights of individuals and groups such as indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and non-western cultures exemplify a growing concern for the victims of exclusion in the international system during the past century.

(Linklater 1992, 93–97)

Arguing from the non-western standpoint, a number of scholars such as Navnita Chadha Behera (2008) and Mohammad Ayoob (2002) argue that the failure of mainstream theories of IR to analyse the nature of the state in Asia, Africa, and Latin America is because these theories are essentially drawn from the European context. The non-western critique of IR theory proposes two main points. First, it argues the nature of the state in West and non-west narrates two tales of different conditions. Unlike the western societies where state emerged in a “more or less homogeneous population; unquestioned loyalty and/or the habitual obedience of its citizens” (Behera 2008, 27), the non-western societies are mainly distinguished by extensive diversity, lack of social cohesion, and absence of legitimacy for state boundaries. Second, it proposes that while the modern state formation in the West took four long centuries to take shape, the non-western countries are forced to establish their modern state in a short period of time in the post-colonial period (Ayoob as cited in Behera 2008).

While it is important to acknowledge the point that the western and non-western societies underwent different trajectories of experience regarding state formation, it would be a mistake to essentialise the process of state formation both in Europe and non-western societies and assume that a centralised state is a natural polity in the west and not elsewhere. The first argument takes state formation in Europe for granted. As the rest of the world, Europe was a heterogeneous society with multiple levels of loyalty divided among religious institutions such as Pope, political such as Empire, and local level such as the nobles, feudal lords, communities and so on. State formation in Europe evolved from a long process of manufacturing and consolidating legitimacy, homogenisation of people, and enforcing of a territorial boundary. The second argument takes the nation-state for granted. As Behera (2008) argues, it assumes that there is merely one kind of state—the Westphalian state which non-western societies do not have any choice except accepting it. State formation in non-west has been characterised by the colonial subjugation of their different indigenous social and political formations in the pre-colonial stage. Accepting the nation-state as a predetermined and given form of state and the end point is problematic. So, in the non-western context, the mechanical enforcement of territorial nation-state by the colonial rulers in the heterogeneous societies of South was disastrous. The attempt to generate political and cultural conformity on the sub-nationalities with the desire of nation-state ends with the homogenisation and alienation from diversity, which is fundamental to these societies.

The single nation tends to be identified with the dominant majority, with the state being the sole depository of political power, exercised by the majority while minority communities tend to feel

alienated and marginalised. Those left out seek to construct their own identity and create alternative spaces within or without existing state boundaries.

(Behera 2008, 29)

It is in this context, Behera suggests that the ontological origins of each non-western state shall be studied with respect to the socio-political formation in the pre-colonial period, as it will become clear how the non-western trajectory of experience is different from the western Westphalian model of the state. Behra's suggestion is in the same line with what Partha Chatterjee suggests that the responsibility of political theory is "to provide a conceptual map of the emerging practices of the new political societies of the East" (Chatterjee 2011, 207). This book builds on this analysis and provides the trajectory of state formation from the pre-colonial period. It is in this context that one can better understand the impact of state formation on the cultural diversity of a country.

More recently, Heather Rae has provided an insightful debate in her book, *State Identities and the Homogenisation of People* (2002). She theorises state formation in the light of understanding cultural elements. She argues the state builders draw on the cultural resources to construct both the single unified identity and the territorial state. The state builders not only establish their right to rule but also create political legitimacy. Two measures are necessary for doing such task: Construction of a single, unified, and cohesive political community in a demarcated territory and the identification of a monarch or national government as the embodiment of polity. The state employed different policies and strategies such as extermination, forced conversion, deprivation from citizenship, expulsion, and assimilation to actualise the mentioned goal. Rae calls these processes and measures as "pathological homogenisation" (Rae 2002, 5–6). There are different examples of such measures in the history of the international system. The outlawing of the Protestant sect in 17th-century France, forcing Muslims Moors to leave Spain or to convert to Christianity under the Ferdinand and Isabella government in the late 15th century and the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece, and India and Pakistan are examples of homogenisation in the international state system (Rae 2002).

It is important to note that homogenisation takes different forms under different circumstances. The spatial and temporal conditions are the determining factors of nature of homogenisation. State builders used different techniques in their state since the modern age. Using cultural factors for the construction of a single homogeneous identity did not begin with the age of nationalism. The conscious use of culture for the construction of a unified sovereign identity precedes the age of nationalism. In the pre-national era, the monarchs used cultural resources to consolidate the power and

construct an absolutist state. Replacement of universal church and Empire as a political community by the territorially bounded sovereign state was the transformation of a medieval polity to the modern polity. As Giddens (1985) argues, this transformation from the medieval to modern polity was mediated by a transitory period. In this transitory period, the monarchs established an absolutist, hierarchical, and dynastic form of polity. In the absolutist state, the monarchs were using the available cultural resources to generate legitimacy for their rule. However, nationalism in the later phase presented a shift in the notion of legitimacy and a new principle of inclusion and exclusion.

In the recent times, a number of scholars under the rubric of multiculturalism has questioned the state cultural bias and raised the claim that even a liberal democratic state undermines the cultural diversity of the country and tends to subscribe to a certain ethnocultural identity (Parekh 2000; Mahajan 2002; Kymlicka 2007). The problematique of state bias comes when state privileges certain cultural practices as official and others as non-official. However, as the state is embedded in society, the state business will not remain limited to the language. Gurpreet Mahajan (2002, 28) argues,

the choice of the official national language, declaration of public holidays, curriculum of educational institutions, norms pertaining to the preparation of food in public institutions, accepted dress codes in public life, rituals of the state etc. all exhibit the culture of [the] majority.

Language, religious sect, the curriculum of educational institutions, and cultural practices—such as music and dance—have been controversial with regard to cultural policies of the state. Recognition of any of the mentioned practices as official vis-à-vis others “distributes resources and opportunities unequally in the society” (Mahajan 2002, 30). The liberal scholarship has also become conscious of the limits of liberalism. Will Kymlicka presents a liberal theory of minority rights. The first concern of Kymlicka is how to preserve minority rights in a liberal state, how liberals should endorse with the minority rights, and how the principle of individual freedom is consistent with minority rights. He presents justice as the logic of preserving minority rights.

Nonetheless, the western countries where multiculturalism policy was applied found that it was inadequate in many cases for the governance of diversity. For most of the policymakers and academics, multiculturalism as a policy aggravates the problem of governance by segregating the people into exclusive racial or ethnic categories and hence hindering the social cohesion and integration. The main challenge for these countries has been how to accommodate the claims of recognition of identity, beliefs, and practices

of migrants (either newcomer or long settled) that are in contradiction with values and culture of the majority. The rise of anti-immigrant, racist, xenophobic, and far-right movements and parties, as well as separatism, alarmed many about the crisis of governance of diversity. This issue has been characterised as a *crisis of accommodation* in Europe and Canada. Bouchard-Taylor Report of 2008 and the Council of Europe's (2008) *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* suggested 'interculturalism' as an alternative to multiculturalism. Unlike multiculturalism, interculturalism does not essentialise culture into fixed boundaries. It is an equitable distance from hegemonic tendencies of assimilationism and centrifugal tendencies of multiculturalism.

Further, most studies of multiculturalism and interculturalism focus on Canada, Australia, UK, India, and USA (Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2000; Mahajan 2002; Appadurai 2006; Modood, Triandafyllidou, and Zapata-Barrero 2006; Mansouri 2017; Grillo 2018), which are recognised as plural and multicultural states. These scholars largely overlooked the non-western and post-conflict cases such as that of Afghanistan. This study will combine interculturalism with the non-western and critical approach of multiculturalism such as Gurpreet Mahajan, Bhikhu Parekh, and Tariq Modood as an approach to governance of diversity to provide an analysis of the interaction between the state and cultural diversity as well as intercultural dialogue in a fragile and non-western context such as Afghanistan.

The question of cultural diversity and accommodation in Afghanistan

The diffusion of information and communication that has penetrated the territorial boundaries has infused the search and dedication for self and group identity. The transnational cultural and ethnic relations, increase in the communication and relations of ethnic groups with the fellow ethnic groups across the national borders, transnational movement of people and migration, weakening of nation-state, and politicisation of ethnic groups by the great powers have intensified the crisis of accommodation.

The issue of cultural diversity and the question related to identity in Afghanistan are still fiercely debated in recent years. This issue has become important in three aspects. First, the issues related to the national identity, national language, national anthem, national figures, and so on have remained contested and controversial. The debate over national identity has polarised society between those who want the term "Afghan" to be mentioned in the national identity card and those who do not. The contention over the ethnic composition of the government and political participation of ethnic groups has remained intact both at the grassroots and high political levels. The census has not been accomplished, and the question over the majority and minority groups is still contentious. Identity politics has