

Abstract

The Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme is a large community driven development initiative. The programme is recognized as ambitious and successful, and consists of a long-term community based governance promotion goal. However, locally the programme is extensively dominated by local elites who have emerged as result of the post conflict chaos. The elite members who are at the origin of most concerns are the local *Mullah*, the local village *Qumandan* and the village *Malik*. All these actors are considered as potential threats to the full realisation of the National Solidarity programs' development agenda. Using a political anthropological approach, this study examines the problem through the perspectives of different actors who have been directly involved at a point or another in the local development process of two Afghan provinces. The study findings confirm that if the local elites gain a formal position in the Development Council they tend to capture local councils and their development framework and impede future processes. On the other hand, if the elites were not given access to formal position in the development council their response would be to denigrate the whole initiative through negative propaganda in public places. This research further confirm that, among villages that are falling out of line with the development agenda, such elites had regained some form of hegemony.

Keywords: National Solidarity Programme, Community Development Council, Power Politics, Elites Capture, Domination and Hegemony.