

Identity and Ethnic Conflicts in Afghanistan: Diversity as a Cultural Treasure

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Abstract : In Afghanistan, as a multi-ethnic country, there have been ethnic conflicts, especially after 2001. These conflicts are more visible among the four main ethnicities Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek. In this paper, such ethnic conflicts and their roles in the political sphere will be discussed. The distribution of personal electronic ID cards, for example, has been one of the most controversial and unsuccessful projects in Afghanistan. As a result, the lack of clear population statistics has led to several corrupted and unsuccessful presidential elections since 2001. The nation-building process in post-Taliban Afghanistan, as well as the Afghan government's failure to build a nation, are discussed. By referring to the hybridity theory of Homi Bhabha, it is argued that the process of assimilation for nation-building has not only failed but has deepened ethnic divisions. In the end, some suggestions and solutions for making the most out of ethnic diversity rather than suffering from it will be provided. It will be argued that diversity or difference improves the freedom of choices for groups and individuals; it boosts agency in comparison with life in an assimilated, coherent, and homogeneous society.

Keywords : Afghan identity, ethnicity, nation-building, political system, self and other

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