



Taliban Leadership: The Science of Organizational Membership

Gina Scott Ligon, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Management and
Collaboration Science

Michael K. Logan, M.A.
Doctoral Student,
School of Criminology
and Criminal Justice

University of Nebraska at Omaha

*This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under Grant Award Number 17STQAC00001-02-00.

The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Question posed by
USCENTCOM:
*What are the drivers of
instability & buffers against it
in Afghanistan?*



مقتل 17 شرطياً في هجمات لـ "طالبان" غربي أفغانستان

واختطاف 9 آخرين بولاية فراه، حسب مسؤول محلي

Kabil 17.09.2018 الصفحة الرئيسية < دولي. عناوين اليوم



كابل / الأناضول

أمن مسلح أفغان - مقتل 17 شرطياً واختطاف 9 آخرين بولاية فراه "طالبان" غرب البلاد

*Courtesy of *Daesh Daily*

- *America's Longest War Now Spread Across Three Administrations*
- *136 Countries Supporting*
- *United Kingdom Ranks Second to United States in Number of Troops Lost*

Your Army
Pentagon identifies soldier killed in apparent insider attack in Afghanistan

By: **Michelle Tan** July 8



News ▾ Middle East Documentaries ▾ Shows ▾ Investigations Opir

NEWS / ASIA

Afghanistan: Civilian deaths hit record high, says UN

A total of 1,692 civilians killed in first half of 2018 despite June's truce between the government and the Taliban.

15 Jul 2018

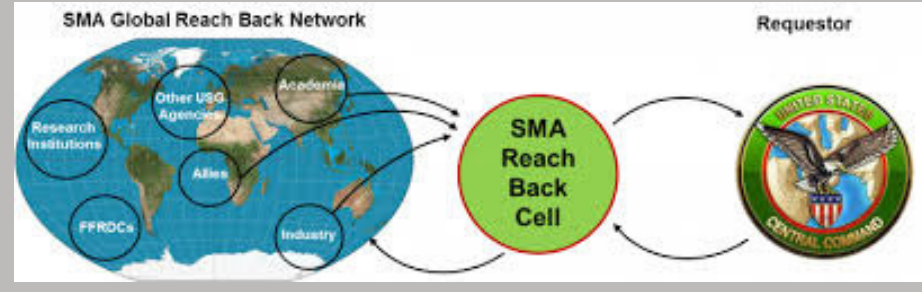
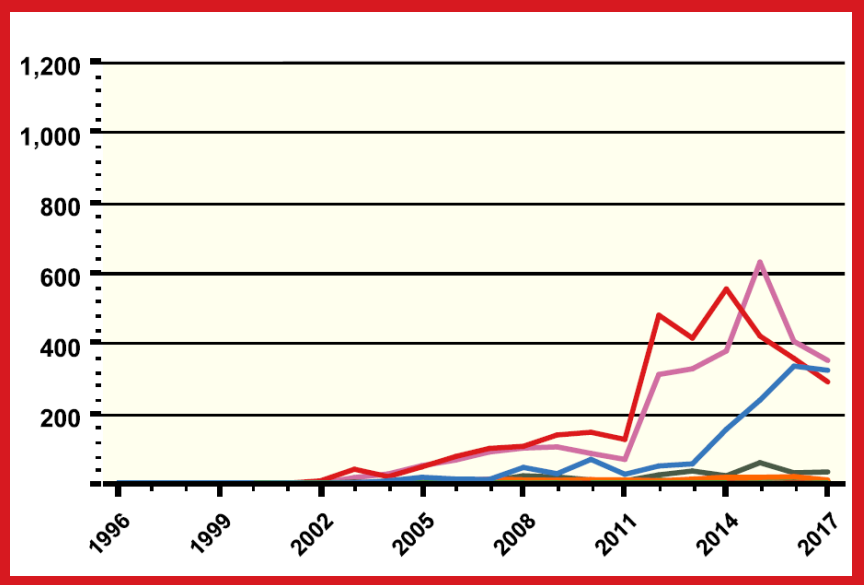


AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan: 40 years of instability, is there hope for peace?

By **Masoud Imani Kalesar** • last updated: 25/07/2018

Data



Sample: Most Violent AFPAK VEOs

Table 1. AFPAK Violent Extremist Organizations (2007-2017)

ID	VEO Name	# of Attacks
1	Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)	21
2	Halqa-e-Mehsud (HeM)	30
3	Haqqani Network	97
4	Hizb-I-Islami	44
5	Jaish-e-Islam (Jaish-ul-Islam)	25
6	Jamaat-ul-Ahrar	19
7	Jundalluh Group (Pakistan)	32
8	Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State (IS-K)	387
9	Lashkar-e-Islam (LeI)	132
10	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)	164
11	Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)	16
12	Mujahideen Ansar/Ansarul Majahideen	19
13	Taliban	7099
14	Tehrik-e-Khilafat (TeK)	16
15	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	1397

Longitudinal Analysis:¹ Attacks Pooled at Monthly Level



Global Terrorism Database Criteria to Determine Periods of Instability

Successful
Attacks

Coordinated
Attacks

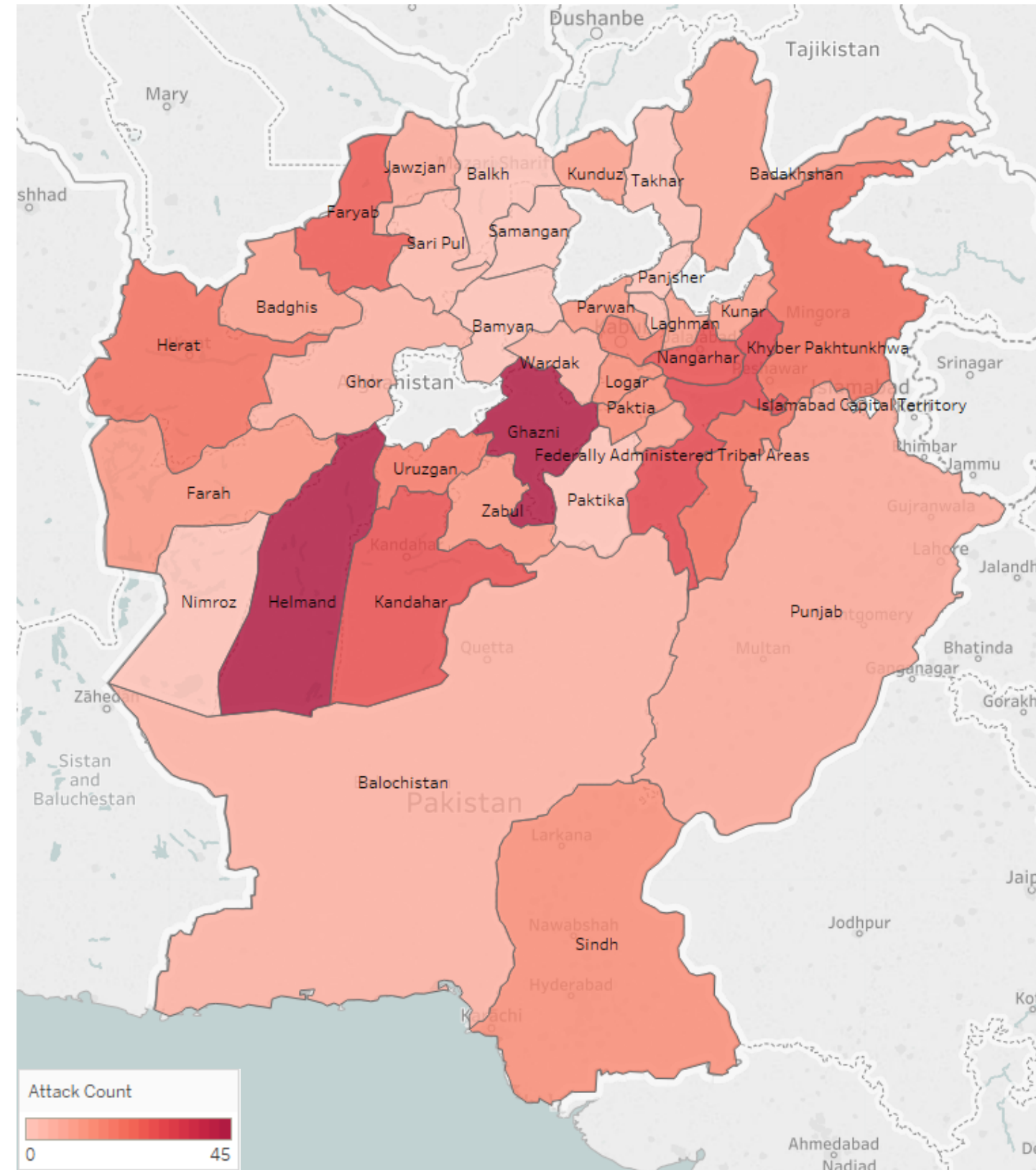
Suicide
Attacks

High-Value
Targets

Average
Lethality

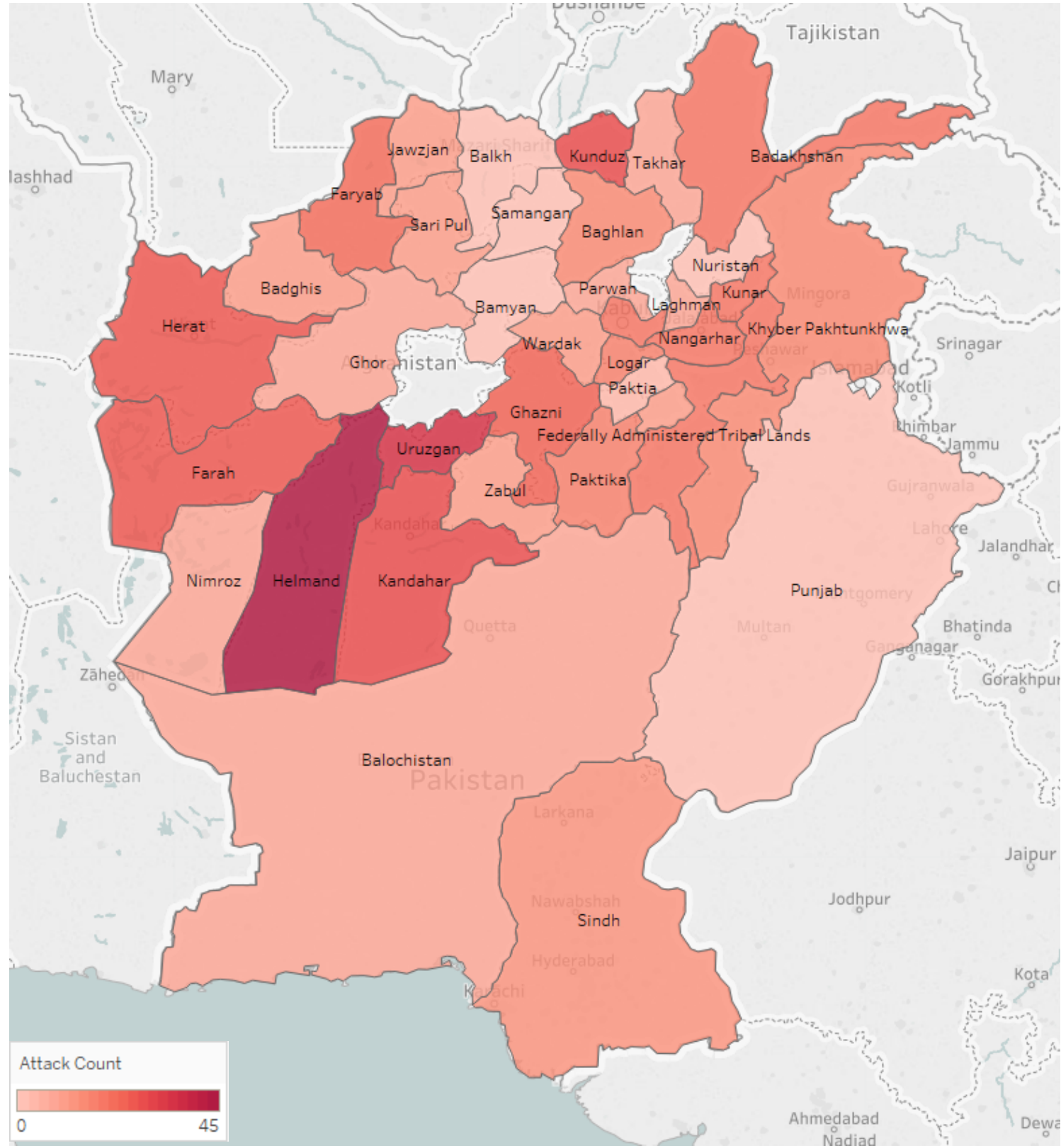
March 2014 - June 2014

1st Period of Instability



April 2015 - June 2015

2nd Period of Instability

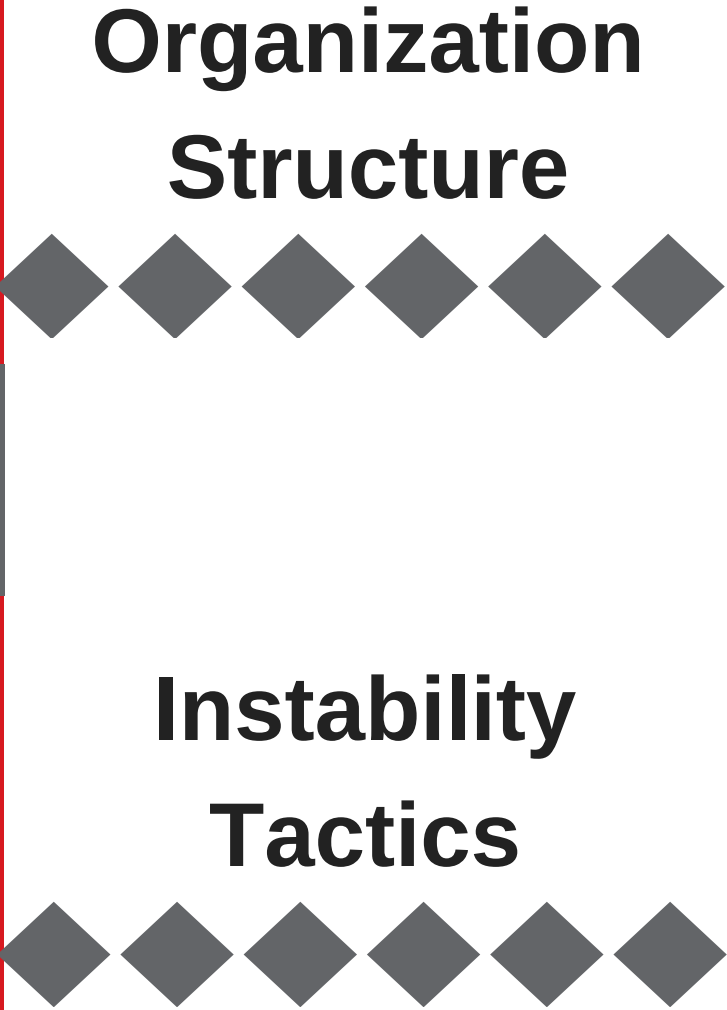


Periods of Instability

March '14 - June '14

Fractionalization

Target Diversity,
Bombings



April '15 - June '15

Consolidation

Target Coherence,
Firearms

Social Identity Theory²

Uncertainty
Reduction

Self Enhancement:
Belongingness

Self Enhancement:
Distinctiveness

*Optimal
Distinctiveness*

What Makes One Identity More Salient Than the Others?³



Nebraska Football

Hometown Area Code

*Image courtesy of *Lincoln Journal Star*.

Who Leads, and How Do They Do It?⁴

Archetype of Group's Identity

Maintain *Optimal Distinctiveness*



Hometown Area Code

*Image courtesy of Associated Press.

Period of Leadership: 1996 - April 2013

Mullah Omar: *Boundary Spanning*



image courtesy The Counter Extremism Project

Period of Leadership: July 2015 - May 2016

**Mullah
Akhtar
Mohammad
Mansour:
*Unsuitable***



image courtesy The Counter Extremism Project

Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada & Sirajuddin Haqqani: *Shared Leadership*

Period of Leadership:
May 2016 - Present



image courtesy the *Long War Journal*

Period of Leadership:
2007 - Present



image courtesy FBI.gov

Organizational Science Implications for AFPAK Instability

Akhundzada Needs Haqqani to Manage Identities of Fighters

Any Emerging Leader Should Manage Warring Factions

Leadership Predicts Organization Structure & Membership


Organization Structure & Membership Predicts Type of Instability

In the Presence of Strong Rival (e.g., IS-K), Inter-Group Differences Fade Away



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
**THE CENTER FOR
COLLABORATION SCIENCE**

Thank You!

 @ginaligon
@DACJournal

gligon@unomaha.edu
mlogan@unomaha.edu

End Notes

1. Ligon, G.S., Logan, M.K., & Derrick, D.C. (in progress). *Taliban Leadership and Instability: The Science of Organizational Membership*. Technical Report to be submitted to Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment Group.
2. Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1979). An integrative theory of inter-group conflict. In W. Austin, & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Inter-group Relations* (pp. 33–48). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
3. Brewer, M.B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *17*(5), 475–482.
4. Hogg, M. A. (2001). A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *5*(3), 184-200.