Spring 2024

Colonial Legacies Challenging the State Building in Afghanistan

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Recommended Citation

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Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2024

Dedication

It has been 987 days since we hugged and not a single day goes by that I do not think of you. I remember the day I left. chaotic, afraid, and hurried. And without a proper goodbye. I am sorry.

When I left, I left a vital piece of me back home. I did not leave you behind, I left to give you a better life afterward. Between struggling all together, I left to save you from this unfortunate fate. But sometimes I think to myself, what would have happened if I stayed? And this 10,831 km distance wouldn't exist.

I miss our conversations and the way you would listen. I may not have seen you smile or laugh very much, but it was you who kept me alive with your warmth and love. There are so many moments that I crave for you to experience with me.

I wish I could time travel and hug you one more time. But I cannot. So, I want you to know that I carry you with me every day. Your resilience, your courage, your strength, and your love have grown to be a part of me. I am very grateful to have you in my life to the extent that I question myself, "What have I done to deserve you?" I wish this tragedy would end someday to heal our wounds. Until then, remember that your daughter will always love you, forever.

To my beloved mother,

Acknowledgement

In light of their invaluable counsel, encouragement, and support during the composition of this paper, I wish to extend my deepest appreciation to my advisors and professors, Michelle Murray, Pinar Kemerli, Simon Gilhooley, and Mei Inouye at Bard College. Their rich understanding, mindful critique, and constant commitment to achieving high academic standards have significantly influenced the development of my study and the improvement of my arguments.

I like to express my gratitude to my family and friends for their persistent support and encouragement during this process. Their affection, kindness, and appreciation have consistently provided unwavering strength and determination.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the people of Afghanistan, specifically women and girls, whose strength, bravery, and unrelenting dedication have motivated me to dig further into the complexity of Afghan national identity and the lasting effects of colonialism. My intention for this project is to make a little contribution towards a greater understanding of their history, challenges and courage.

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Introduction

      I recall viewing a television series titled "Chai Khana," which translates to "House of Tea." The show featured gatherings of older individuals who would get together to recount their experiences and personal histories. While not all, a significant number of individuals contemplate the fact that before the arrival of colonial forces, people would leave their doors open and their markets unattended to go worship at the mosque. What is the significance of alternating between speaking Pashto or Dari for a certain reason in the market, or wearing a Gand Afghani adorned with Hazara embroidery and a Tajik cape? What is the significance of visiting Bamyan or Nooristan for tourism and then returning to Kabul to resume school? It was sometimes difficult for me to describe the distinction between being an Afghan in terms of legal standing and being a Tajik to my ethnicity. I usually wrote several pieces on topics such as the lessons the West should glean from failed corporations or the role of women in political dynamics. Engaging in an in-depth analysis of the decolonization debate provided me with a fresh lens through which to reexamine Afghanistan.

      Despite numerous attempts to build a cohesive Afghan national identity, enduring differences continue among the many ethnic groups inside the country. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and other ethnic groups own unique cultural customs, dialects, and historical accounts that contribute to their identities. The differences originate from cultural and political factors, as different factions compete for authority and impact in Afghanistan's multilayered social environment. This vignette provides a foundation for a more thorough examination of how the lasting effects of colonialism have shaped the development of an Afghan state with a Pashtun

ethnic-nationalist identity. It highlights the complex relationship between history, identity, and politics in Afghanistan. This paper argues that colonial interventions, namely the creation of the Durand Line and the enforcement of British India's laws, exercised a substantial influence on the advancement of Pashtun ethno-nationalism and the founding of the Afghan state. The lasting consequences of historical events have a substantial influence on Afghanistan's contemporary political dynamics, resulting in heightened ethnic tensions and posing challenges to the nation-building process. How did colonial legacies contribute to the formation of a Pashtun ethno-nationalist Afghan State?

The response intended for the question has many layers. I argue that the colonial legacies generated a multifaceted influence on Afghanistan, beyond the boundaries of basic economic and institutional spheres. The legacies had a major effect on the development of ethnic and national identities in Afghanistan, combining aspects of racism and distorting the nation's historical account. This distortion, in turn, weakened the fundamental elements of Afghan nationhood, namely decreasing the importance of religion and ethnicity in forming the nature of the country. Moreover, my argument is that this historical account had a role in the development of ethnonationalism, highlighting the importance of ethnic identity in Afghan culture. Although there were attempts at redefining Afghan nationalism and identity at the local level, the intervention by Western powers after the events of 9/11 tended to support a power structure that was controlled by the Pashtun ethnic group. This international intervention not only preserved the existing power imbalances but also enabled the emergence of both new actors and the Taliban Emirates government as a prominent political institution in Afghanistan.

The paper is organized subsequently: Chapter One explores the historical context of colonial administration in the region including the Middle East and British India, with particular

emphasis on the establishment of the "other" and the legacy of historiography in the region. Chapter Two delves into the consequences of British policies in Afghanistan, particularly their role in shaping the emergence of Pashtun ethnic-nationalist ideas and the Afghan identity and the consequences of these legacies on modern-day Afghanistan, carefully analyzing how they have affected the nation-building process and the interactions between different ethnic groups. In Chapter Three, the book examines the post-9/11 state-building including the "State beneficiaries". Finally, the literature has converged and the implications of my theory for understanding contemporary Afghanistan are outlined.

Chapter one

"not white/not quite.[1]"

      Like many other postcolonial states, Afghanistan's colonial legacies have shaped governance, economics, and society. Colonial rule had major economic effects both from settler colonies and extractive colonies. Colonial state-building affected society and culture beyond commerce. Understanding these legacies helps us understand the current issues and situation of Afghanistan in all of its aspects. This Chapter is divided into Colonial legacies in Afghanistan, The Formation of "The Other" in Colonialism Discourse, and The Legacy of Colonial Historiography in the Region.

Colonial legacies in Afghanistan

      Matthew Lange argues that The difference between direct and indirect types of colonial governance is determined by the individuals who occupy positions within the colonial administration. Doyle states that direct control entails the administration of most jobs by colonial authorities, while only the lowest levels are occupied by natives. On the other hand, indirect control is distinguished by the native elite members managing large areas with the oversight of imperial administrators. He claims that according to Fisher, indirect control mostly involves blending native institutions into the colonial framework, rather than primarily focusing on individual roles[2]. Juan Alexander and Pierskalla Jan make a similar argument with specific details that many forms of colonial governance imposed an impact on the economic growth of

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[1] Prakash, Gyan. "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography." 17
[2] Lange, Matthew. British Colonial Legacies and Political Development. 906

different regions. The text emphasizes two primary forms of colonial governance: settler colonies and extractive colonies. Settler colonies such as North America, Australia, and New Zealand created institutions that preserved private property and facilitated civil rights and political engagement for a significant portion of the people. Consequently, this resulted in the emergence of new ideas and expansion, resulting in long-lasting advantages for these regions. Conversely, extractive colonies, characterized by a minority European ruling class that controlled political and economic authority, resulted in exploitative governance and restricted economic progress. Despite achieving independence, these areas had challenges with extractive entities, leading to a state of economic paralysis. The nature of colonial governance had a long-lasting effect on the economic progress of these territories, resulting in a "reversal of fortune" where formerly rich civilizations declined in development, while originally less developed ones developed[3]. Besides its influence on the institutions and economics of the colony, The outcomes of colonial state-building extend beyond the basic establishment of institutions; it also created long-term effects on social and economic circumstances. For example, the educational initiatives and missionary attempts during colonial times were intended to "civilize" civilizations, which in turn might shape cultural standards that are transmitted over generations. Also, economic interventions, such as guiding agricultural output towards specific crops or adopting specific forms of production, can have long-lasting impacts on economic organization. These actions have the potential to influence long-term economic patterns by mobilizing economies of scale and technological progress[4]. A great example is India. According to "European trading companies, by drawing local economies into networks of long-distance maritime trade, played a

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[3] Juan, Alexander & Pierskalla, Jan. The Comparative Politics of Colonialism and Its Legacies 160-161
[4] Juan, Alexander & Pierskalla, Jan. The Comparative Politics of Colonialism and Its Legacies 164

key role in the enduring transformation of geographical and social patterns of economic

organization.[5]"

Lee claims that the British Empire's growth in South Asia was heavily affected by

conflicts in Europe. During periods when the British Empire's administrative and military forces

were directed elsewhere as a result of warfare, they were hesitant to build systems of indirect

governance with pre-colonial elites in India. During times of peace, British expansion in the

Indian subcontinent often involved implementing indirect rule, which enabled local elites to

retain some power while being supervised by the British[6]. Although the nature of this argument

can be true in a few circumstances, I tend to argue that there were more internal factors. The

nature of colonialism throughout the British Empire was not random but rather impacted by

several variables. Lange uses the research conducted by Acemoglu et al to explain that the

increasing number of European residents in settlement colonies resulted in a shift towards direct

forms of governance, whilst non-settlement colonies often adopted more indirect methods of

administration. Additionally, the colonial power's tendency to engage in direct rule was impacted

by the strategic significance of a territory. The financial security of a colony was a determining

factor in the level of colonial administration, as it relied on the colony's capacity to produce and

utilize local resources. The illness conditions in colonies had a significant role since areas such

as Africa were less conducive to settlement or widespread European presence due to the high

death rates among Europeans. Ultimately, the local populations shaped the nature of governance

by restricting the availability of settlement options and intensifying the risk associated with

establishing large-scale settlements. In addition, indigenous groups had a greater capacity to

[5] Juan, Alexander & Pierskalla, Jan. The Comparative Politics of Colonialism and Its Legacies 165
[6] Juan, Alexander & Pierskalla, Jan. The Comparative Politics of Colonialism and Its Legacies 163

oppose invading manifestations of colonialism, resulting in an inclination for more "customary" and indirect methods of governance[7]. If the Muslim revolt in Afghanistan had not worried the British, they might have been more likely to implement settler colonialism along the lines of what was done in India. This would have meant a more explicit type of governance with extensive European colonization, as seen in areas such as North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Yet, their fear of rebellion and the difficulties presented by the indigenous people could have convinced them to use this strategy in Afghanistan, resulting in an alternative style of colonial administration. However, because of their fear of rebellion and the difficulties presented by the local inhabitants, the British probably chose an alternate strategy in Afghanistan. This alternate approach to governing Afghanistan during colonial times may have been a more indirect kind of control, where only one ethnic group of elites was assigned to manage the territory under British supervision. For example, Colonial administrations regularly fragmented pre-existing ethnic communities, particularly in Africa, resulting in persistent consequences for ethnic politics and a correlation with civil conflicts. The extent to which colonial power included or marginalized ethnic minorities has also been linked to the frequency of rebellions. The ongoing influence of post-colonial political landscapes can be attributed to colonial decisions regarding ethnic boundaries and inclusion[8].

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[7] Lange, Matthew. British Colonial Legacies and Political Development. 908
[8] Juan, Alexander & Pierskalla, Jan. The Comparative Politics of Colonialism and Its Legacies 162

The Formation of "The Other" in Colonialism Discourse

Gyan Prakash quotes Homi Kharshedji Bhabha, an Indian contemporary post-colonial scholar who believes that colonial literature misused prejudices and false scientific concepts to justify its perspectives. He proposes that they tried to make sense of the contradictory meanings in colonial literature. On one hand, there existed those who needed authority and uniformity, symbolized by the concept of an unchanged identity. However, there was a recognition of the past and evolution, which posed a threat to this unchanging identity. This clash generated tension in colonial discourse, forcing a regular validation of certain views, such as the alleged dishonesty of Asians or the alleged sexual liberation of Africans[9], despite the lack of empirical evidence to support those claims.

The Kipling and Afghanistan: A Study of the Young Author as Journalist Writing on the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885 by Neil K Moran is the transition of the author of the Jungle Book from an imaginative world into politics. It is a fascinating detailed exploration of the early journalistic career of Rudyard Kipling and his account of the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885 and Amir Abdul Rahman Khan. The book doesn't seem to focus on the role of women especially, despite there perhaps being brief mentions of women in the context of the historical events being described. He describes a male-dominated hierarchical system where women are not very much included, nor the reason behind their exclusion. "Women are ofcourse invisible in the streets, but here and there instead, some name- less and shameless boy in girl's clothes with long braided hair and jewelry– the center of a crowd of admirers.[10]" Yet, he does provide a detailed physical explanation of Turkmen women in Durand's letter to his daughter including their traditional

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[9] Prakash, Gyan. "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography." 16
[10] Moran, Neil K. "Kipling and Afghanistan" 137

clothing calling it funny but nothing more. The transition from being unseen to being depicted in great detail indicates a conflict in the colonial narrative when it comes to how women are portrayed, which parallels the way Asians and Africans are stereotyped mirroring Bhabha.

Bhabha continues to claim that the adoption of stereotypes and pseudo-science in colonial literature to explain colonial ideas. According to him, British individuals referred to Indians who spoke English fluently as "mimicmen," implying that they were imitating English people. This concept provided a means for the British to exert control over and manipulate Indian conduct. However, Bhabha says that there was a more serious meaning underneath this. He contends that although the British wanted these "Anglicized Indians" to blend in with them, they also perceived them as something different, causing them to experience insecurity. Despite attempting to attract these Indians into English culture, there was always a visible awareness of their difference. The difference in opinions produced fear and concern among the British as it challenged their position in their supremacy in India[11]. On the other hand, Kipling's writing initially uses strong, derogatory language to describe ordinary people, portraying them as barbaric but slowly contradicts his ideas and terms used before. He used terms such as "Barbarities" and "Barbarous" referring to the code of Turkestan and views "... under the influence of Russian civilization, these Barbarities have been much mitigated.[12]" This behavior in writing is a form of injecting emotions and personal beliefs while talking of another nation. Later on, when he first meets the king's companions, he uses phrases such as "They point like children,[13]" or "They look in the distance like engine drivers out of employment[14]" but then "... I

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[11] Prakash, Gyan. "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography." 16-17
[12] Moran, Neil K. "Kipling and Afghanistan" 117
[13] Moran, Neil K. "Kipling and Afghanistan" 141
[14] Moran, Neil K. "Kipling and Afghanistan" 141

feel that I owe some sort of reparation to these retainers I described yesterday…" following

"they are by no means as bad as they look[15]" gave me hope to repent until the next sentence.

Kipling states "With European officering, they would make excellent soldiers.[16]"

Both Bhabha's analysis of colonial discourse and Kipling's writing reveal a pattern of portraying "the Other" (non-European peoples) in a contradictory manner. Bhabha discusses how colonial discourse tries to normalize its contradictory views through stereotypes and pseudoscientific theories, reflecting a tension between control and change. He then states that the imposition of colonial forces on different cultures engendered an irrational and bipolar mindset that stood in direct contradiction to the colonized population. Nevertheless, Bhabha held the belief that in specific instances, this inflexible mode of thinking may be interrupted, enabling the emergence of new interpretations. He believed that these disturbances exposed a multifaceted and varied comprehension of culture that extended beyond binary distinctions such as "us" against "them." This unexpected insight consisted of not only the coexistence of diverse civilizations but also the complicated dynamics of their interactions and the unexpected impact they had on one another. Bhabha viewed this as an opportunity for colonized individuals to argue against the dominance of the colonial power and proclaim their own separate identities and values[17].

Kipling presents specifics and inconsistencies, indicating a more detailed perspective of both common people and the Turkmen ethnic tribes. This statement reflects Bhabha's concept of colonial discourse struggling with the conflict between stable identities and the actuality of

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[15] Moran, Neil K. "Kipling and Afghanistan" 144
[16] Moran, Neil K. "Kipling and Afghanistan" 144
[17] Prakash, Gyan. "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography." 17

transformation and diversity. Both scenarios acknowledge the complicated and human qualities of "the Other," while also attempting to regulate and categorize them. The British colonial influence of the "Other" played a significant role in shaping and reinforcing the Pashtun-centric narrative, as it aligned with their interests in maintaining stability and control in the region. This colonial influence also led to the historiography of Afghanistan further solidifying the narrative's dominance over other similar post-colonial states through deep control of the historical realities of colonialism and its aftermath.

The Legacy of Colonial Historiography in the Region

Aside from its direct political or economic control, according to Fanon "The colonist makes history and he knows it. And because he refers constantly to the history of his metropolis, he indicates that here he is the extension of this metropolis. The history he writes is therefore not the history of the country he is despoiling, but the history of his own nation's looting, raping, and starvation to death. The immobility to which the colonized subject is condemned can be challenged only if he decides to put an end to the history of colonization and the history of despoliation in order to bring to life the history of the nation, the story of decolonization.[18]" The historical archives not only hold power but also represent the interest of the owner.

Fanon's criticism of colonial historiography can fit into the context of India's colonial history, namely by examining how colonial forces manipulated historical accounts to justify their authority. Bernard S. Cohn argues that "The conquest of India was a conquest of knowledge. In these official sources we can trace the changes in forms of knowledge which the conquerors

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[18] Fanon, Frantz, The Wretched of the Earth. 15

defined as useful for their own ends.[19]" He continues to add that the literature on India written in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries reflects a range of topics, but it creates a recurrent structural view that portrays Europe as forward-thinking and India as backward. India was frequently perceived as a storehouse of European history, providing Europeans with a wide platform to project their historical ideas. The region was portrayed as a place of eastern dictatorship, marked by recurring periods of strong yet anarchic rulers. It was believed that the lack of ability to construct a political system that limits absolute authority would ultimately drive India to self-destruction, ending in a state of disorder and catastrophe[20]. Thus, the Europeans came to save the state and the historical narrative of India had to be modified according to a linear and progressive structure that was influenced by the positivist historiography of the nineteenth century. This method prioritized the examination of ancient ruins, the interpretation of inscriptions including lists of kings, and the transformation of writings into valuable historical resources. Every phase of European operations in studying India's history included thorough gathering, categorization, and development of archives to examine and present Indian history from European viewpoints, to both Indians and Europeans[21]. The alteration of India's historical account signifies a deliberate attempt by European colonists to impose their perspective and knowledge of history upon India. The method includes not just comprehending historical events but also exerting authority and supremacy over Indian society. A similar attempt can be seen in the post-colonial Middle East.

Omnia El Shakry's "History without Documents: The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle East," focuses on the result of manipulating historical archives that silence

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[19] Cohn, Bernard S. Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India. 16
[20] Cohn, Bernard S. Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India. 79
[21] Cohn, Bernard S. Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India. 80

decolonization voices. The process of decolonization leads to a continued focus on archives as a

repository of national history. Post-colonial governments tried to create narratives that paralleled

their perspectives and experiences, opposing colonial depictions and claiming sovereignty.

However, the traces of colonialism remained in the archival record, provoking critical interaction

with these resources[22]. She discusses the obstacles that historians have while seeking out archival

materials, especially in countries in the Middle East. Joanna Sassoon's concept of "chasing

phantoms in the archives" applies to locating evidence inside historical materials. Historians in

the Middle East have been pushed to depend on alternative sources, such as oral histories,

interviews, family holdings, and private collections, to recreate historical narratives due to the

difficulty of the task. Historians have often adopted the use of counterfactual or fictional

archives, as shown by artist Walid Raad in his Atlas Group project[23]. With the ongoing battle of

colonial history or the unbiased history in the Middle East or India, one can make a similar

argument in the context of Afghanistan. The history of Afghanistan has been influenced by

colonial interventions and imperial goals, resulting in a complicated historiography that

sometimes hides or misrepresents the experiences and opinions of the Afghan population. In

Mujib Rahman Rahimi's book "State Formation in Afghanistan" this pattern is explicit in the

context of Afghanistan. He argues that in the narrative of Afghanistan being an independent

national state, the focus is not on Afghans or Afghanistan at all, rather it is portrayed as a perfect

democratic state that has been found through unity and freedom. He continues to argue that "The

official discourse denies the role of colonialism in the creation or construction of the country,

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[22] EL SHAKRY, OMNIA. History without Documents: The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle East. 922

[23] EL SHAKRY, OMNIA. History without Documents: The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle East. 923

and portrays Afghans as the indigenous habitants and owners of the land.[24]" Rahimi also quotes

Lee investigating the imperial narrative and its impact on the crafting of regional history,

emphasizing its flaws. According to Lee, the imperial attitude has resulted in a phenomenal bias

in the way the events of the region are portrayed. Both Lee and Rahimi criticize the influence of

the imperial narrative on regional history, emphasizing its biased depiction of events. These

critiques emphasize the strategies employed by colonial authorities to manipulate narratives to

rationalize their acts and preserve their authority or maintain the principles of the colonizers by

misrepresenting or ignoring certain portions of history. The phenomenon is not exclusive to

Afghanistan but is seen in the wider framework of colonial and post-colonial history, spanning

places such as the Middle East and India.

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[24] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. 2

Chapter Two

The Hay Days of Empires and Nationalism

"The 19th century was the hey-day of empires, not nation-states.[25]"

      The influence of colonial legacies has been critical in determining the course of

nationalism in several post-colonial countries, such as Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, these

legacies have not only shaped the growth of nationalism but have also played a role in the rise of

ethnonationalism, a phenomenon in which ethnic identification becomes more important than

national unity. The growing amount of ethnonationalism in Afghanistan has had significant

consequences for the country's many ethnic groups, frequently resulting in their exclusion and

the emergence of conflicts. Gaining insight into the impact of colonial legacies on this

transformation is essential for understanding Afghan nationalism and the obstacles it encounters

in promoting a fully inclusive national identity.

The Theoretical Basis of Nationhood

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[25] Walby, S. The Myth of the Nation-State: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era. 533

The formation of the Afghan State began with the establishment of the Durrani Empire under Ahmad Shah Durrani in the 18th century and played a role in consolidating power in the region. While external influences were present, indigenous leadership also played a significant part in shaping the early Afghan state. However, I argue that the Afghan nation did not fit the description of a nation in the first place. Ahmad Shah Durrani did not create an Afghan state, rather he continued the same legacy of Pashtun rebellion and the dream for a Pashtun-Durrani Empire rather than a Afghan state. Siraj Ul Tawarikh (Lamp of Histories), authored in Farsi by Faiz Mohammad Katib under the personal supervision of the King is a crucial text to analyze regarding this argument. The book addresses the era extending from the rule of Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1747 to the ending of the Sadozai dynasty (1747-1818) and the Barakai dynasty (1826-1901) in Afghanistan. In the beginning, Katib clearly states that he authored the book at the command of King Habibullah, emphasizing the king's major influence on the historical documents. The state engaged in the process of creating data to establish a new identity. Katib also disregarded prior empires, emirates, and kingdoms in this region. The text fails to mention the Horakis period, during which the Chilzai tribe of Pashtuns formed their tribal government in Kandahar before the Abdalis in 1747. As per the literature created by the state, Ahmad Shah Abdali established Afghanistan in 1747 and formed an early sovereign Afghan state under his authority. Katib refuses to credit the title of the founder of Afghanistan to Ahmad Shah Abdali, instead referring to him as the founder of the Durrani Empire and the first monarch of the Sadozai dynasty[26]. Despite such measures to establish a cohesive narrative, Afghanistan was never seen as a nation-state within its historical structure.

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[26] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. 64

Sylvia Walby claims that there are far greater nations than states. It is atypical for a territory to have one nation and the entire nation, as well as one state and the entire state. The majority of nations and national projects do not have their own state but rather share one with other nations and national projects. This pattern of cross-cutting countries and states might occur because of forced or voluntary migration, conflict, or conquest. This is not an argument against the existence of nations, but rather that stable nation-states rarely exist. Smith (1986) and Anderson (1983) define a country as a political and cultural attempt founded on a shared heritage and an imagined community.[27] She continues to use the example of Ireland for her argument. Ireland's history as a nation in the United Kingdom is defined by its efforts to form a state and become independent from the British Empire. In the 1920s, the country demanded independence and was granted it for the island's southern half. The nationalist movement developed an alliance with the transnational Catholic Church, which resulted in the addition of the Catholic Church to the interwar Irish state. Ireland's development into a modern, expanding economy came only after entering the EU, which meant reforming gender relations in the workplace. recognition of Irish growth involves an awareness of several polities, including national, state, religious, and EU. A nation-state has been a myth, frequently pursued but never fully achieved. Ireland's involvement into the global system is based on the many insertions of different polities into distinct global networks. The EU allows for interactions with global capital and economic networks, while the Catholic Church provides links to local gender regime centers of power. The connection between Ireland and globalization is best described as a complex reform of several policies related to several global networks, rather than the destruction of a nation-state by global capital. Europe struggles with cross-cutting nations, aspiring nations, and states. Especially with

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[27] Walby, S. The Myth of the Nation-State: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era.

nation-states consisting entirely of one nation rare in Europe and around the world[28]. Although

Europe is viewed by many as the founding home of nation-states, a number of other countries,

like Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal, were empires throughout the nineteenth century. They

dominated different nations across the world, resulting in colonialism. This means that the

people living in these colonies were not considered members of European nations. European

societies and those they conquered had independent civil institutions and no shared cultural

heritage.[29] Leaders also play an important role and their independence or dependence reflects the

future of their reign. The majority of Afghan historians, usually unquestioned by Western

experts, regard the year 1747, under the rule of Ahmad Shah Durrani, as the foundation of the

Afghan State. I disagree with this view, though, states Dupree. Around the 1880s, Afghanistan

experienced a political dynamic characterized by consistent and constant transformation, which

included both unifying and polarizing factors. This phenomenon, which I label as political fusion

and fission, requires the rise of a charismatic leader inside a tribal community. By employing a

blend of military might, skillful diplomacy, and strategic unions, this ruler successfully united

several tribes into a confederacy at first extending their circle of influence to the furthest extent

possible and establishing an empire rather than a nation-state. Following the leader's downfall, or

perhaps before it, the empire would break into several tribal kingdoms. This pattern would

continue with the emergence of another influential and charismatic leader[30]. Dupree explains the

characteristic and the future of such a series of events in Afghanistan which its historical

narrative has been characterized by several leaders who successfully united tribal groups into

alliances, establishing an empire rather than a contemporary nation-state. The phenomenon of

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[28] Walby, S. (2003). The Myth of the Nation-State:: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era. p 532
[29] Walby, S. (2003). The Myth of the Nation-State:: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era. p 533
[30] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 118

political fusion and fission, characterized by the unification of tribes under the leadership of charismatic individuals followed by eventual fragmentation, resembles the notion proposed by Walby of countries existing within broader political frameworks.

The formation of Afghanistan as a nation-state in the global scene in the 1890s was greatly influenced by colonialism and the impact of visual representation according to Elphinstone. The recasting of Afghanistan as a nation-state had two significant consequences: it marginalized the diverse and culturally essential identity of the region, and it enforced a single identity linked to a dominant ethnic group on the country's numerous other ethnic groups, including Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and many more[31]. He continues to also argue that although the Afghans themselves lack a specific name for their country, this term is recognized and used both in Persian and among the residents. He clarifies that a significant portion of Afghanistan is encompassed within the province of Khorasasaun, while the remaining portion is under the jurisdiction of Persia. Afghans commonly identify their homeland as Khurasan[32] until the late 1880s.

Following the end of the Anglo-Afghan wars, a new political system emerged, and the British Empire appointed Amir Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901) as the ruler of the nation. Throughout his rule, several publications in native languages designated him as the sovereign of Afghanistan under divine entitlement. In his publications and interactions with British India, he commonly used the terms "Afghanistan" and "Dawlat". Still, these books do not provide a thorough historical narrative detailing the creation and development of the Afghan state. Although many believed that he was a strong leader and labeled him as the "Iron Amir" I argue

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[31] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 154
[32] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P.

that his description was a result of colonial history itself. Barfield states that during his reign,

Afghanistan witnessed a period of centralization, when people from all ethnic origins were

forced to adopt a newly established national identity as Afghans, which mostly represented the

Pashtuns. Afghanistan was seen as the ancestral homeland of the Pashtuns. The Amir maintained

his dictatorial rule by requesting international aid while portraying himself as a guardian of the

nation and its religious beliefs[33]. Lee argues that "Abdur Rahman Khan truly was a disaster for

the ordinary people of Afghanistan but a case of success for Britain; it was under him that Britain

could achieve its long-lasting goal of a unified and pro-British Afghanistan[34]." Besides, he

claims that any writings authored by British travelers or tourists to Afghanistan were subjected to

severe censorship. All work that was deemed outspoken or independently minded was repressed

and classified as confidential, guaranteeing that only the official narrative was made available to

the public. He explains that the appointment of Amir Abdur Rahman as the leading reformer and

creator of contemporary political systems in Afghanistan is perhaps the greatest permanent

outcome of colonial media manipulation. Amir was perceived by him as a ruthless autocrat ill

with a persistent disease that impacted his mental stability, and this information was concealed

by Britain[35]. Kipling's writings confirm the puppet characteristic of the king. "For that there will

be war, and war to the bitter end between the Lion and the Bear, is everywhere held beyond

doubt.[36]". The primary emphasis is on the competition and possible dispute between Russia and

Britain, indicating that their interests and actions took priority surpassing any other concerns of

Afghanistan. One of my favorite examples is the spelling of King Abdul Rahman in Kipling's

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[33] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 184
[34] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 173
[35] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 173
[36] Moran, Neil K. 2005. *Kipling and Afghanistan : a Study of the Young Author as Journalist Writing on the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885*. P. 176

text. He began confusing Owen (his editor) by firstly calling him "Ameer[37]" instead of "Amir" which later on became "Badshah". Eventually, after Kipling met the king in person and got to know him, he later referred to him as "Abdur Rahman[38]" instead of commonly as "Abdul Rahman". Although Moran states that "Kipling had nothing but sympathy for the Amir…[39]", Kipling's writing suggests critique rather than sympathy. He emphasizes the possibility of such changes in odd wording as "Verily, the way of Easterns are strange and past finding out.[40]".

Thus, non-Pashtun communities, such as Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks, found it challenging to promote and relate to a shared Afghan identity and nation since they already hold ethnic and tribal values, culture, and identities. It was not until the 20th century when for the first time in the history of Afghanistan, ordinary people, specifically the non-Pashtun ethnic tribes, obtained the privilege to freely manifest their cultural, military, and economic demands. With the emergence of this renewed sense of entitlement, along with a time of increased transparency after a long period of exclusion, repression, and Pashtun control, individuals were able to express and circulate their shared recollections. It facilitated the introduction of newly emerging works of literature, newspapers, and journals, stimulating novel discussions on the topics of history and national identity in Afghanistan. The updated narrative recognizes that Amir Abdur Rahman was chosen by Britain to lead Afghanistan. Also, it acknowledges the legitimacy of domestic uprisings and the struggle of the people against the Amir's expeditions and oppressive actions,

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[37] Moran, Neil K. 2005. *Kipling and Afghanistan : a Study of the Young Author as Journalist Writing on the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885*. P. 157
[38] Moran, Neil K. 2005. *Kipling and Afghanistan : a Study of the Young Author as Journalist Writing on the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885*. P. 160
[39] Moran, Neil K. 2005. *Kipling and Afghanistan : a Study of the Young Author as Journalist Writing on the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885*. P. 61
[40] Moran, Neil K. 2005. *Kipling and Afghanistan : a Study of the Young Author as Journalist Writing on the Afghan Border Crisis of 1884-1885*. P. 132

with particular emphasis on the fight of the Hazara people. In contrast to previous depictions,

Amir has been portrayed as a "tyrant" and "oppressor"[41].

Rethinking Afghanistan's Nationalism and Modernism

Ranajit Guha wrote an important essay called "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency" on the

history of people who were both poor and powerless. It is important to note that the majority of

civilians in Afghanistan lived in marginalized communities far away from direct contact with the

government and were poor. Guha's essay opened many doors for discussion and the study of

South Asia's cultural and social history in the colonial era. This also influenced the proper study

of developing countries without the idea that such countries are trying to become modern like the

West. Thus, the 'modernization theory' explores the writings of cultures that view progress in a

certain way rather than becoming more modern[42]. However, this theory is often viewed and

limited to the predictability and reactions of the societies. Mostly "non-elites are rarely portrayed

as initiators of any meaningful social or intellectual change." Meaning that ordinary people

would either accept or deny change. They do not change themselves. This mindset comes from

scholars who looked at such societies through the eyes of Marx, Weber, or Durkheim[43]. In 1915,

Habibullah organized a loya jirga to get approval for his stance of remaining neutral during

World War I, in the face of increasing nationalist feelings and calls for more involvement in

administration. Although the move failed to change the authoritarian nature of Afghan authority

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[41] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. 86

[42] James M. Caron, "Afghanistan Historiography and Pashtun Islam; Modernization Theory's Afterimage" History Compass, 5/2 (2007): 314-329.

[43] Cf. W. Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism, and Religion: A Global Perspective", Current Sociology, 51/3-4 (2003): 265-86.

at its core, it did indicate a transition towards a more structured and participatory decision-

making process, therefore weakening the impression of the nation as solely belonging to the

ruler[44].

Nationalism in Afghanistan like many other non-European countries is misunderstood or

measured through a way that is different to its natural development. In this case, under the rule of

Habibullah Khan (1901-1919), Afghanistan laid the foundations for a contemporary education

system, mandating the creation of a curriculum inspired by educational models from India and

Turkey. This educational reform involved the incorporation of topics such as history, geography,

and literature, resulting in the development of a modern historical account. To deliver this

curriculum, the state translated educational assets from colonial origins and enlisted educators

from India and Turkey. This era of educational reform had a crucial role in the advancement of

Pashtun (Afghan) nationalism, which emerged alongside modernity and Islam within the nation's

limited number of elites[45]. Barfeild concludes this era by stating that in a nation characterized by

low literacy rates and a centralized authority structure under the Amir, it was the court divisions

in Kabul that carried the most significant impact on the country's policy-making. Under

Habibullah's rule, two prominent groups exerted pressure on him to implement reforms. The first

side consisted of religious scholars, Sufi leaders, and the very religious members of the royal

family, with the most influential figure being Nasrullah, the younger brother of the Amir. The

second side consisted of nationalists and modernists, primarily composed of the emerging

younger generation influenced by Tarzi. In 1912, they successfully founded Afghanistan's first

newspaper. The group included students from the newly established Habibia College, which was

founded by the amir, as well as his two sons, Enyatullah and Amanullah, who were going to

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[44] Barfield, Thomas. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. 227
[45] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P.

marry into the Tarzi family[46]. When Amanullah became the Amir, under his rule, Afghanistan experienced a period of modernization and European reform, which was greatly inspired by Afghan nationalism promoted by Mahmud Tarzi. Tarzi, who was both the father-in-law of the new king and the first foreign minister of the newly independent Afghanistan, played a significant role in implementing these changes[47]. Tarzi was a key figure whose family was exiled during the Abdur Rahman Khan and was reestablished by Habibullah Khan to join his court. Beside Mamud Tarzi from Ottoman Syria other individuals are descendants of opposing Muhammadzai lineages, including the Peshawar sardars from India (specifically the Musahiban brothers)[48].

Another outcome of nationalism in Afghanistan was the declaration of two official languages. The ruling class of Afghanistan consisted mostly of descendants who spoke Pashto, while Persian was widely adopted by all members of the Court. According to Anthony Hyman The 1964 constitution of Afghanistan launched a "New Democracy" and declared two official languages. Pashto and Dari, with Dari being the Afghan variant of Farsi. Historically, Dari, rather than Pashto, has been the predominant language used across Afghanistan. The matter of language has been a cause of substantial contention and dispute. Attempts to advance Pashto as the official language, such as the creation of a Pashto Academy in 1937 to regulate the language and eliminate Persian and other foreign terms, eventually failed to establish Pashto as a strong rival to Persian[49]. He continues to state that attempts were undertaken to advance Pashto as the predominant language for official purposes, which included mandating Persian-language

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[46] Barfield, Thomas. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. 116-117
[47] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P.
[48] Barfield, Thomas. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. 175
[49] Hyman, Anthony. Nationalism in Afghanistan. 300

newspapers to incorporate Pashto sections. From 1953 until 1963, under the leadership of

Mohammed Daoud Khan as prime minister, there was a deliberate and organized effort to

promote Pashto as the official language, although it ultimately did not succeed. As per Louis

Dupree, an American anthropologist residing in Kabul at that period, certain officials who were

not fluent in Pashto had their Farsi messages translated into Pashto before being sent to other

offices. However, since the recipients frequently did not know Pashto, the reports were then

translated back into Farsi, resulting in confusion and the program's failure[50]. The main reason

behind this was superiority through language. Elphinstone reports that Afghans mostly utilize the

Persian alphabet among Pashtuns and read and write in Farsi. They further state that the age of

well-known Pashto authors exceeds 150 years, and no Pashto publications are twice as historical.

Also, the writer states that Persian is the dominant language for written communication and

court, and nearly all scientific literature was written in Persian[51]. Among such attempts, the

discussion on the book Pata Khazana that is argued to be found by Abdul Hai Habibi in 1944.

Although many nationalists claim that this is evidence that Pashto is as ancient as Persian and

had a written history, I disagree.

Let us examine the story of the famous singer Sadiq Fitrat, who used the pseudonym

Nashenas (which means unknown) to hide his true identity, even from his own family, because

musicians were considered to have a low social rank. In his autobiography, titled "Nashenas Is

No Longer Nashenas," he argues that Pashto lacks the same grammatical depth as Farsi and

rejects the authenticity of "The Pata Khazana," a 1944 document that the Afghan government

promotes as having Pashto poems from the 11th century. Nashenas' disclosure evoked intense

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[50] Hyman, Anthony. Nationalism in Afghanistan. 301

[51] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 102

responses, as orthodox Pashtuns condemned him for disrespecting Pashtun culture, while non-Pashtuns welcomed his perspectives. This incident ignited a cultural discourse, exposing Afghanistan's tribal-oriented society characterized by feelings of shame and guilt, wherein violations against tribal customs can result in harsh consequences. Neurosurgery professor Robert Sapolsky has observed that the response to Nashenas' statements highlights an inherent desire of humans to engage in "us" versus "them" mentality. Nashenas' account transcends linguistic origins to emphasize the significance of freedom of expression, a complicated notion essential for the advancement of society. The reaction to Nashenas' comments exemplifies Afghanistan's tribal hierarchy and internal conflicts, which contribute to the preservation of divisions among the diverse nation. This emphasizes the difficult situation faced by numerous individuals in the Muslim world who are unable to express themselves owing to societal or religious suppression. The story of Nashenas highlights the crucial importance of freedom of expression in promoting social progress and overcoming reliance, as demonstrated by his choice to live in Great Britain instead of his native country, Afghanistan[52]. Abdul Hai Habibi's great grandfather used to work at the Ahmad Shah Abdali's court. He wrote only in Persian and Arabic. I argue that this attempt was rather a policy of linguistic oppression than a journey to modernism.

Willfried Spohn explores the journey of modernity, nationalism, and religion and suggests that there is not a blueprint for how any of these ideas should emerge. Different cultures and countries each experience them in different ways with unique intersections. To better understand each concept, one must take into consideration each country's history, culture, and

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[52] Raofi, Wahab. When Truth-Tellers Must Hide, Societies Collapse.

social context[53]. While in the context of Afghanistan, one must better understand the importance of ethnicity and tribes.

Ethnonationalism

Donald Horowitz indicates how colonialism shaped and intensified several primal identities, making them more distinctive, separated, and politically fueled. While many nationalist writers minimize colonialism's impact on the 'divide and rule' tactic, Horowitz believes that colonization had a far greater impact. He presents the idea of 'group entitlement', which takes into consideration the concepts of 'relative group worth' and 'relative group legitimacy' those colonial interventions constructed. These ideologies merged to form a politics in which ethnic groups felt entitled to certain privileges, resulting in the birth of ethno-nationalism. This perspective contends that colonialism had a major and diverse influence on ethnic relations, going past a policy of segregation or division[54]. According to Mohammad Shahabuddin ethnicity is often seen as outdated and unsuitable to Western principles in liberal political thought. This perspective regards ethnicity as distinct from the norm in the West, which is perceived as contemporary and absent of strong ethnic characteristics. As a result, ethno-nationalism, or the concept of nations based on ethnic identity, is commonly viewed as originating only in non-Western countries. The recommended answer to this perspective is for non-Western countries to advance along the same path of civilization and modernization as the West. Understanding the process of modernity and the underestimation of Islam can be attributed to the absence of local or native scholarly institutions and recognition for diverse historical and

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[53] Cf. W. Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism, and Religion: A Global Perspective" p 275
[54] Shahabuddin, Mohammad. "Geneses of Ethno-Nationalism in Postcolonial States." p 28-29

religious narratives and values. The Pashtun elite, who held power through their colonist allies, controlled the narrative-building process including modernization, making it difficult for alternative voices to gain recognition and be underestimated.

Moreover, Spohn believes that scholars that focus on conflict studies do not pay enough attention to the particular situation of post-colonial states and the journey of ethno-nationalism, since it does not fit into categories they are already familiar with. Primordialists claim that ethnic groups, which determine a person's place in society, are emotionally meaningful. As a result, any danger to language, religion, culture, or other characteristics may encourage ethnic groups to take collective action. In contrast, instrumentalists think that individuals act rationally and solely to maximize their gains. They understand ethnic groups as collections of people trying to maximize their gains. As a result, they see ethnic wars to be a struggle for limited economic resources within different ethnic groups. Elite constructivists, however, argue that ethnic conflicts are created by political, religious, or military elites. To organize people, these elites exaggerate and fabricate ethnic bonds and claims for economic resources[55]. Brasher, however, challenges these categories by claiming that any unified political actors or visible entities evolving cohesively through history should not be seen as consensus, stable, outwardly bounded, and internally cohesive ethnic communities. Policy-making and the formation of institutions tend to play a significant role in shaping the importance of ethnic identity, rather than it being entirely determined by ethnicity or ethnic diversity[56]. Rahimi argues that Afghanistan is a colonial construct of both the British and Russian empires in the region, the exclusive narrative of Pashtuns is based on colonial knowledge who weaponized and encouraged them to marginalize

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[55] Cf. W. Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism, and Religion: A Global Perspective"
[56] Brasher, Ryan. "Ethnic Brother or Artificial Namesake? The Construction of Tajik Identity in Afghanistan and Tajikistan." 99

and suppress the identity of non-Afghans within the country. Brasher explains the term Tajik used in Afghanistan into a similar context of what I understand Arabs called non-Arabs. He states that the Persian- and Uzbek-speaking groups in northern Afghanistan coexisted together, with their political mobilization mainly motivated by opposition to the Pashtun-led administration in Kabul, rather than related to language or ethnic divides. The 1929 revolt against Amanullah Shah, which led to the short-lived reign of Habibullah Kalakani, a Persian-speaking Kohistani who was not Pashtun, was supported by the northern populations mostly based on religious convictions, rather than any indication of Tajik nationalism[57]. "Ajam" traditionally defined non-Arab individuals in the Arab world, namely Persians, and conveyed a sense of being "silent" marking a cultural and linguistic distinction. Likewise, in Afghanistan, the name "Tajik" did not always have a clear meaning related to ethnicity or language. Alternatively, it might encompass many groups of Persian-speaking individuals or communities, including people who primarily associated themselves with regional, religious, or tribal connections rather than a specific Tajik ethnic identity. I mean although the state's establishment may be rooted in ethnic prejudice and concern towards minority behaviors, minorities frequently establish connections and alliances based on causes that go beyond ethnic origin. This emphasizes the subtle and varied character of minority experiences and reactions within a wider social framework.

Mohammad Ali Nazari quotes from "Saraj Ul Tawarikh" that as the Hazara tribe, which comprised individuals from Daia, Folad, Zawoli, and Sultan Ahmad, rose in revolt, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, ordered their execution. The instruction aims to exterminate them from Uruzgan Province and its surroundings. King ordered government soldiers to encircle Hazaras from all

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[57] Brasher, Ryan. "Ethnic Brother or Artificial Namesake? The Construction of Tajik Identity in Afghanistan and Tajikistan." 112

sides, trapping them in Hazarajat. He ordered that no Hazara escape and that the Ghiljayi and Durani tribes get their lands and goods. Any Hazara hostages or servants seized during the war would belong to government forces[58]. The majority of Pashtuns are nomad tribes that would mostly own livestock. To the eyes of a colonist, nomads hold less economic importance. Thus, to keep their position as the rulers, other ethnic groups such as Tajiks who lived on as primarily farmers and provided crops production were displaced by Pashtuns. This is a common event when exploring colonial land ownership. However, even when the Pashtun nomads settled down in the eastern and southern regions, the elites were not yet satisfied. The other found a safe label. To be nationalist and belong to a nation. Pashtun nationalism that led to the displacement and mass killings of Tajiks and other minorities from their lands. The Human Rights Defenders and the Future of Multi-Ethnic Democracy in Afghanistan article adds that minorities and women were brutally attacked during Taliban administration in the 1990s. In 1996 and 1997, the Taliban killed approximately 2,000 Hazaras in Kabul and Bamiyan and Tajiks in the North, forcing many to escape the north Kabul (Shamali) valleys. In 1998, the Taliban attacked Hazara and Shiite minority houses in Mazar-e Sharif, killing almost 5,000 people in 48 hours. Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021, minority groups and women leaders have suffered greater public discrimination, disappearances, arrests, torture, and killing. Kidnapping, gang rapes, incarceration, physical and psychological injury, home searches, arbitrary detention, and torture[59].

Islam and Pashtunwali

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[58] Subh, Hasht-E. The Massacre of Hazaras in Oruzgan; Ethnic Prejudice and Land Grab Politics.
[59] Human Rights Defenders and the Future of Multi-Ethnic Democracy in Afghanistan

Walby suggests a rethinking approach to the concept of polity. "Some organized religions, such as Catholicism and Islam, also constitute polities. It is particularly important to include regional polities and religions because they are highly significant carriers of ethnic and gender projects.[60]" She argues that the rise of ethnic and religious nationalism outside of Europe is related to the worldwide desire for countries to become more united and democratic. This surge in nationalism is a reaction to the elite's attempt to impose a secular nation-state model, either based on Western liberal or Eastern socialist ideologies, in a society composed mostly of many ethnic groups and faiths[61]. She continues to use the example of North America and Latin America arguing that "Whereas postcolonial nationalism and national identity formation in the Americas developed within two different Christian institutional and cultural frameworks, those in the Islamic civilization showed very different features.[62]" she continues by saying that during the colonial era, Islam, which stretched North Africa and Southeast Asia, was challenged by Europe's expanding power. This resulted in the fall of Islamic imperial capitals such as the Ottoman, Persian, and Mughal empires, which were colonized by European powers including France, Great Britain, and Russia. Considering this, anti-colonial movements arose, followed by the formation of postcolonial nationalisms and identities following independence. European models influenced these movements *(amanullah)*, but they evolved in response to modernizing commands within Islamic civilization[63]*(jihad)*. While religion, especially Islam and the Hanafi school of thought, has been an important factor in Afghanistan's state formation[64]. Throughout the colonial historiography of Afghanistan portrayed Islam as an old-fashioned and weak factor

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[60] Walby, S. (2003). The Myth of the Nation-State:: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era.
[61] Cf. W. Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism, and Religion: A Global Perspective" p 275
[62] Cf. W. Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism, and Religion: A Global Perspective" p 276
[63] Cf. W. Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism, and Religion: A Global Perspective" p 277
[64] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*.

to inspire people. Thus, governments who prefer a modern development process tend to oppress such groups. Amanullah intended to modernize Afghanistan and saw religion, namely its conventional customs and irrational beliefs, as an impediment to improvement. He expressed disapproval of the clergy for endorsing what he perceived as outdated views and aimed to introduce a more logical and contemporary understanding of Islam to the nation. Amanullah implemented a range of measures aimed at modernizing Afghanistan, such as the introduction of secular education, legislative changes, and infrastructural development[65]. There is a strong perception that as societies modernize, they grow more secular, which means that religion becomes less necessary. However, this perspective could exaggerate the secularization of the state or the society. While religion could grow in modern nations, its influence on government and society should not be unnoticed.[66] The format of Islam can vary depending on the connection between Islam and the state, as well as the economics of the nation. This variation is affected by interpretations of the Quran, the Islamic holy book, which can be modified by local, regional, and global Muslim leaders. This implies that Islam in one nation or area may differ from that in another[67]. Afghanistan is experiencing it both on the personal and political level but with a competitor.

Both Sharia Law and Pashtunwali have also interfered with colonial and king Amanullah's legitimacy, yet Pashtunwali and other tribal codes saw Sharia as a threat. They feared that Sharia law practiced and implemented by a central government would interfere and possibly oppose their tribal practices. Dating back to the pre-Islamic era, Pashtunwali is the code

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[65] Barfield, Thomas. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. 189
[66] Walby, S. (2003). The Myth of the Nation-State:: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era. p 536-537
[67] Walby, S. (2003). The Myth of the Nation-State:: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era. p 537

of conduct every proud Pashtun follows, may he live in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or as a refugee anywhere in the world. "Pashtuns believe that their social code produces men, who are superior to those produced under the Western model, and they have no desire to have a new social system imposed on them by outsiders" Pashtunwali sometimes goes beyond legal code as we see. It is more a code of honor by which a Pashtun will live by - and die for! When the history is presented from the perspective of the elites and powerful leaders, their approach fails to include other tribal or religious groups. Especially when such groups tend to insist or oppose when their own values go against their rule of law.

However, in contemporary international affairs, Islam has the potential to have major impacts on the behavior of other entities. It serves as a collective identity, influencing how Muslims perceive themselves and their role in the world. Despite its internal variety and several centers of influence, Islam may regardless serve as a uniting framework. This is shown in situations where people are prepared to give their lives for what they suppose are Islamic beliefs. The Taliban's tendency to use Islam to justify their acts emphasizes the necessity of understanding the complicated relationship between religion and politics in international affairs[68].

Chapter Three

A Return to the Colonial Past

*"Afghanistan has gone back to the dark ages"*Ahmad Massoud

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[68] Walby, S. (2003). The Myth of the Nation-State:: Theorizing Society and Polities in a Global Era. p 537-538

The Bonn Agreement, which formed after the September 11th attacks, was initially celebrated as a vital measure in stabilizing Afghanistan and laying the groundwork for a democratic future. However, although this agreement aimed to advance the country, it intentionally maintained the dominance of Pashtuns in Afghanistan politics. The continuing rule of Pashtun hegemony ultimately had a role in the return of the Taliban as a prominent actor in the state. The Bonn Agreement was insufficient in effectively addressing the inherent ethnic conflicts present in Afghanistan, hence enabling the Taliban to capitalize on these differences and establish dominance over significant portions of the nation.

Post 9/11 Bonn Agreement and Loya Jirga

In multiple instances, colonization originally brought together diverse ethnic communities. According to Horowitz, this coming together enabled the comparison of these groups, resulting in the formation of a feeling of relative group worth and legitimacy. This was enough to prove to the world that Afghanistan is no special and needs aid to rebuild itself with help from the West. The unequal distribution of chances by colonial rulers either British or the US contributed to the creation of a divide between those perceived as 'backward' and those perceived as 'advanced.' Colonialism and ethnic inequality did not always have a passive relationship. There were intentional attempts to set one group against another. Colonial administrations frequently advocated uneven treatment of ethnic groups as their official policy. This includes preferring particular communities over others and employing picked ethnicities for colonial administration and interest[69]. Thus, "Their privileged position in the current post-Bonn

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[69] Shahabuddin, Mohammad. "Geneses of Ethno-Nationalism in Postcolonial States." p 29

political structure…" was not a result of their own power, rather because of a colonial policy.

Brasher explains this matter by saying that the United Nations and the U.S.-led Bonn peace

process saw Afghanistan as a nation that was strongly fragmented along ethnic lines, to achieve

fair representation across different ethnic groups. Likewise, Afghan officials residing in foreign

countries, with the backing of international friends, called for the restoration of Pashtun

supremacy inside a powerful and centralized nation. A few individuals from minority groups

advocated for an ethno-federal resolution. The 2004 presidential elections appeared to mirror this

distinction, as candidates such as Pashtun Karzai, Tajik Qanooni, Uzbek Dostum, and Hazara

Mohaqeq gained support based on ethno-national affiliations. However, there is no specific

evidence available to prove this voting trend at the individual level[70].

The adoption of Jirgas, under the influence of Islamic law and Pashtunwali, for the

resolution of matters symbolizes a system of administration that precedes the official state

structure. This governance system, based on traditional and religious customs, emphasizes the

authority of tribe elders and their capacity to wield influence inside their communities instead of

the government[71]. In his work Editing the Past: Colonial Production of Hegemony through the

"Loya Jerga" in Afghanistan," M. Jamil Hanifi exposes and questions the Loya Jirga. He asserts

that the Loya Jirga has been applauded in the West as a successful democratic exercise and

representative power, to the point where some US government leaders, international leaders, and

the international media have recommended it be implemented in the political rebuilding process

of the Iraqi state. He believes that Euro-American scholars, local academics, and politicians see

the Loya Jirga as the most credible source of legitimacy for the Afghan government and its

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[70] Brasher, Ryan. "Ethnic Brother or Artificial Namesake? The Construction of Tajik Identity in Afghanistan and Tajikistan." 114

[71] Barfield, Thomas. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. 138

policies. Hanifi believes that there have been no thorough investigations of the Loya Jirga in the

last century, except for descriptions of 1941, 1955, and 1964 ones[72]. Hanifi's criticism of the

Loya Jirga as a means of colonial dominance suggests that its structure does not promote

inclusion. If the assembly has traditionally served to strengthen pre existing power hierarchies

and marginalize specific groups, it is likely to continue in doing so. As always, restricting the

opportunity for actual inclusion and representation of multiple ethnic identities. The argument

suggests that the involvement of the Loya Jirga in the Afghan administration could block the

progress towards establishing a democratic system that is more inclusive and upholds the rights

and beliefs of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, Oliver Roy states "The great jirga was the founding myth of the

Afghan state and was to be re-enacted in periods of crisis.[73]" The revival of the Loya Jirga during

times of crisis suggests a return to customary decision-making and governing frameworks, which

may not necessarily be inclusive or corresponding to Afghanistan's various ethnic groups. It is

said that a religious man put a piece of wheat crop on Ahmad Shah as his crown and declared

him a King. This religious man is often represented in many different ways to portray the

importance of religion and authenticate an Islamic association with this practice. Rahimi

continues that "the concept of Loya Jirga (grand assembly) as a nodal point enters the realm of

education on a massive scale and became part of official historiography as a political institution

and decision making at the national level[74]." Yet, one must not forget that this myth has been

going around through history textbooks for centuries and is often used as a legitimizing tool for

Pashtun Kings. The most recent Loya Jirga happened in 2002. I argue that the Bonn Agreement

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[72] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 211
[73] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 217
[74] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 75

in 2001 was a tool to redirect Afghanistan back into its Pashtun-centric dominance followed by

the 2002 Loya Jirga. The Loya Jirga may therefore have historical value, but its exclusivity

might not be appropriate for modern Afghanistan, where a stable and inclusive government

system depends on inclusion and representation of all ethnic groups. These events not only

redirected and challenged the decolonization discourse but returned the country a few thousand

years back excluding minorities. Especially after the fall of the USSR, Tajikistan and

Uzbekistan, after gaining independence, were regarded as the "external homeland," providing

support and politicizing ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks in Afghanistan against the Pashtun-dominated

government[75]. The same argument can be implemented towards the Turkmens and Hindu and

Sikhs of Afghanistan.

The emergence of "state beneficiaries"

During the early 19th century, Afghanistan was visited by several British missions,

intelligence, and independent travelers. These visits often were funded by the British government

and the East India Company, to examine the area nearby British India. The primary goals were to

broaden and secure British economic interests and prevent influences from the outside,

specifically those of European origin which had the potential to jeopardize British interests in

India and the Middle East. The reports provided by these visitors significantly increased

comprehension of Afghanistan's landscape, geography, political transformations, and history[76].

Coincidentally, for the past few years after the Taliban took over the country in Afghanistan,

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[75] Brasher, Ryan. "Ethnic Brother or Artificial Namesake? The Construction of Tajik Identity in Afghanistan and Tajikistan." 98
[76] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 92

there has been a wave of foreigners visiting and posting on social media. Many praised the Taliban government and were faced with a wave of criticism by both the local citizens and even Afghan immigrants who live abroad. Thus, I argue that the attempt to repeat the colonial representation strategy failed, and a new group of Afghans and Talibs emerged. Afghans who were born and raised in the US or have worked for the post-9/11 government in Afghanistan emerged with almost no or very little criticism advocating for the topic by foreign travelers.

Hernandez et al. conducted an "agent-based models and an experiment[77]" where the study identified different types of people that behave in a group. The main two characteristics of behavior he refers to that are the core arguments in this paper are 'Strong Reciprocators' and the 'Opportunistic actors'. He defines 'Strong Reciprocators' as those who "...believe in behaving appropriately. They cooperate with others and will punish others who do not cooperate with them. Because Strong Reciprocators punish those who they believe have crossed them,...[78]" and defines 'Opportunistic actors' as "These agents will cheat if they can, invest in cooperation minimally and only when they have to, and will not retaliate. Unlike Strong Reciprocators... they have no strong predisposition to cooperate... Opportunists try to avoid punishment, appeasing Strong Reciprocators... Depending on one's perspective, the Opportunists can be seen as "unearnest," sycophantic "weasels";...[79]" He argues that 'Opportunistic actors' enable the growth of 'Strong Reciprocators'.

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[77] Hernandez, Ivan, Dov Cohen, Karl Gruschow, Andrzej Nowak, Michele J. Gelfand, and Wojciech Borkowski. 2022. "The Importance of Being Unearnest: Opportunists and the Making of Culture." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, March. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000301. p.249

[78] Hernandez, Ivan, et. al 2022. "The Importance of Being Unearnest: Opportunists and the Making of Culture." p. 251

[79] Hernandez, Ivan, et. al 2022. "The Importance of Being Unearnest: Opportunists and the Making of Culture." p. 251-252

In the context of the Taliban, we could use the term "Strong Reciprocators," because they constantly enforce strict laws and regulations to preserve authority and control throughout their clique and the territories they govern. The "Opportunists" might be defined as individuals or groups who take advantage of the situation, possibly by cooperating with or assisting the Taliban for their purposes and gains. This dynamic may be observed in how the Taliban's restricted implementation of their version of Islamic law (Sharia Law) promotes an atmosphere in which opportunistic individuals or organizations can prosper by identifying with the Taliban's ideology or taking advantage of the Taliban's power for themselves. In return, the Taliban moves forward with such individuals or organizations to serve their image. This series of cooperation is crucial due to the current period where the Taliban requires recognition as a nation-state.

To better support his argument, he explains the relationship between both through a game model. The Chicken game, also known as "Hawks and Doves," in which in this game, the Hawk strategy is aggressive, the Dove strategy is peaceful, and the worst-case scenario occurs when both players are Hawks and crash or engage in combat. The interposition of a third player, Opportunists, who are prepared to cheat while also cooperating somewhat if necessary, transforms the game's dynamics. If we exclude the Opportunists, the scenario becomes an even battle between Hawks and Doves, with Strong Reciprocators being only a fraction of the population rather than a majority[80]. In the Chicken Game, the Taliban represented by the Hawks, are constantly seeking their goals, particularly eliminating other ethnic groups such as Hazara or Tajiks or even any individuals who oppose them. The Doves in this scenario could represent several ethnic groups or individuals that desire mutual acceptance and coexistence. However, not

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[80] Hernandez, Ivan, et. al 2022. "The Importance of Being Unearnest: Opportunists and the Making of Culture." p. 235

only they are marginalized by both the Taliban (Hawks) and opportunistic people or organizations (Opportunists) who are prepared to work with the Taliban for personal benefit but the existence of opportunists worsens the situation. Given that they may use the dispute between the Hawk and the Doves to their advantage, raising a confusing image to the rest of the world and challenging the discourse for peace. He concludes that psychologists often see culture as a system that educates individuals on how to act per its norms and values, by rewarding those who follow these guidelines or those who do not comply are frequently perceived as outliers or disruptions. Leading to the frequent overlook of the influential role that Opportunists in establishing a society[81]. In the same way, politics students tend to overlook the role of Opportunists in dynamizing the political history of a state or country. They leave behind major political consequences; challenge the power dynamics, and internal identity glitches, and challenge the international perspective on Afghanistan. A difference is that they do not contribute to identity formation at any stage or throughout the history of Afghanistan, but rather create a glitch within the contemporary Afghan identity. The West and the rest of the world hold different values and behaviors influenced by their upbringing. Thus, they resonate closer with Afghans who were born and raised in the West or share similar colonial interests. While in the perspectives of ordinary people, they are considered opportunists, thieves, or corrupts, I have taken what Rahimi calls briefly the "State Beneficiaries[82]" to refer to them on a political level due to their action's consequences. Although Rahimi calls state beneficiaries in the context of

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[81] Hernandez, Ivan, et. al 2022. "The Importance of Being Unearnest: Opportunists and the Making of Culture." p. 265

[82] Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History*. P. 123

written work done in English, I believe this category can be related to people beyond his definition to a form of an Opportunist on a political level.

     People that fit into this argument range from decision-making levels, local, and individual behavior or identity. I remember when I was working in an English school, my boss's (White American) assistant (Eastern Pashtun) had a meeting with the teachers. I remember asking what would happen if the Taliban came. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, I will grow my beard long, wear a "Lungi", and then transform this building into a Madrasa. Then, I will give you a vacation to stay home." His response seemed way too unworried and I thought to myself, how could someone be this flow in terms of their identity and values? I should also mention that his own brother was killed in a Taliban bombing. While I was in the process of writing my Senior Project, I saw a TedTalk shared by one of my fellow American University of Afghanistan students (AUAF), the title read "The future of AI in Afghanistan". The speaker was Sanzar Kakar. An Afghan American who is considered a businessman. Here is a before and after of his appearance.

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The Future of Afghanistan with AI | Sanzar Kakar | TEDxKabulUniversity

He starts by speaking in Pashto (He has always spoken in English before) saying how useful technology is and then says that now security issues are gone and corruption is gone, the only thing left is to fix employment. State Beneficiaries not only rob the people or corrupt a system, but they willingly and knowingly enforce the interest of the state, especially in this case, the interest of the Taliban.

Another Afghan born American is Ali M. Latifi. A twitter user reflects on his relation with Ashraf Ghani and his lobbying for the Taliban government. Latifi, on the photo on the left,

Pic.Twitter.Com/Ssihfszxkt." Twitter, Twitter, 26 Dec. 2021, twitter.com/IeaOffice/status/1475111435483160580?s=48.

states that people must be aware of those who wish to continue the war in Afghanistan. The user

points out his dual positionality on the situation calling him as the "most morally corrupt person

on twitter[84]".

[84] Biruni. "Ali M. Latifi Is Probably the Most Morally Corrupt Person on Twitter from Afghanistan/Khorasan. Pic.Twitter.Com/H8bplv9nh9." Twitter, Twitter, 2024, twitter.com/rayhan_biruni/status/1743794280119042325?s=48&t=mIyR3GJhhQzZoZhXufHXMQ.

Another example is Diva and her brother Pamir Patang. Diva Patang seems to have a company, maybe in combination with her role as a broadcaster for RTA sports. There are allegations that she has gained advantages from associating with powerful people. She received criticism for promoting the idea of giving the Taliban an opportunity in August, which was seen as a strategy to improve her business, regardless of the activities of the Taliban. She is associated with General Khushal Sadat, who is renowned for his outspoken opposition to warlords and his more sympathetic attitude towards the Taliban. Furthermore, there are allegations linking her romantically with Omar Zakhilwal, a government official who collaborates with the Taliban. Her family has been engaged in Afghan politics, with one brother purportedly gaining financial advantages and subsequently moving to London to construct a new estate. The family is said to have misappropriated cash during the Ghani government. It is rumored that they reside in London and have made investments in other enterprises, such as a restaurant and a cricket team. She has also been featured in the case of a woman named Nikbakht who suffered years of domestic violence and was saved by the Taliban.

A twitter user says "Oscar Level Acting by @divapatang Jan! 😃 👏 the Only Thing Diva Patang Has in Common with the Taliban Is Their Language and Ethnicity, No Conscience Accepts to Indirectly Support a Misogynistic and Human-Killing Group.#talibanareterrorist[85]"

[85] Pic.Twitter.Com/Y26yn0ldpx." Twitter, Twitter, 21 Apr. 2024twitter.com/kachkula/status/1782164196320297407?s=48.

Media Game of the Taliban Group, from Nikbakht to Diva Patang

RASC Viewpoint

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Similarly, the Taliban started another PR game during Nikbakht and the protesting women. The Taliban asked their lobbyist, Diva Patang, to visit Afghanistan and travel to Kabul from European casinos and cabarets. Fazli Group's Diva Patang. She offered sexual services to the Fazli Group and lured girls and women. After the Fazli Group lost power, Diva lobbied the Taliban from European cabarets. Diva supported the Taliban prohibition on Afghan women's education and employment by dancing with Iranian rappers in London cabarets and gambling houses.

She entered Kabul, whitewashed the Taliban, and headed to Bamyan. She drove by a Taliban-destroyed Buddha site and took a snapshot. This Taliban lobbyist went to Bamyan and took pictures in front of this empty Buddha place to celebrate their ethnic victory and pretend to the Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbeks that our people won and that a Pashtun was a Taliban ethnic lobbyist. She may travel anywhere in Afghanistan. The Taliban used this female Taliban ethnic lobbyist's trip as a media game to silence Afghan protesters. This has two causes. First, the Taliban wants to silence women protesting for education and jobs. Their second goal is to show support for women's rights. By supporting women's rights, the Taliban hopes to prevent media coverage of women's oppression.[86]

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[86] EnNews, "Media Game of the Taliban Group, from Nikbakht to Diva Patang

As an AUAF alumni's parent, Ismail Yoon[87] who is a famous anti-Tajik person that I grew up watching him discuss in the news does not fail to include himself in this definition. Similar to the rest, he followed a similar pattern. "Ismail Yoon and his TV station have been controversial names in Afghanistan's public space for the past twenty years. Many have accused him of inciting hatred and creating rifts between Afghanistan's ethnic groups. He recently told the Taliban leaders that he would give 95 marks for the performance of the Taliban in providing
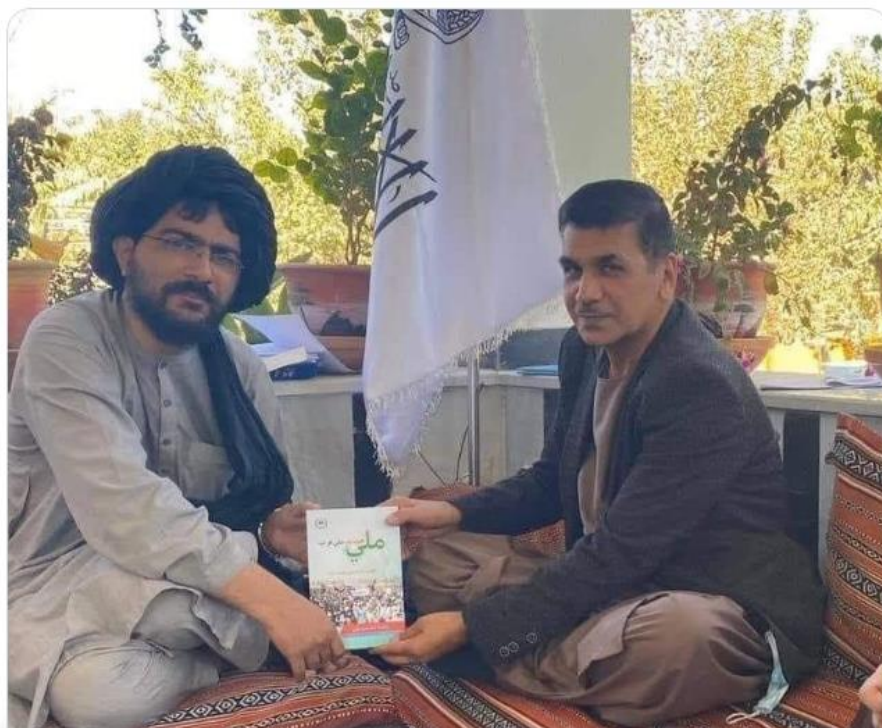

Qais Alamdar ✔
@Qaisalamdar
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Does anyone remember Ismail Yoon? He is the founder of Zhwandon TV and a Pashtun hardliner. He provoked the youth for 'Afghan identity' by discriminating other ethnic groups in Kabul and elsewhere in AFG!

Now, he is gifting his book to the Taliban - a friendly gesture!

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[87] Alamdar, Qais. "Does Anyone Remember Ismail Yoon? He Is the Founder of Zhwandon TV and a Pashtun Hardliner. He Provoked the Youth for 'Afghan Identity' by Discriminating Other Ethnic Groups in Kabul and Elsewhere in AFG! Now, He Is Gifting His Book to the Taliban - A Friendly Gesture! Pic.Twitter.Com/lIAlfB9hei." Twitter, Twitter, 17 Oct. 2021, twitter.com/Qaisalamdar/status/1449810576406949895?s=48&t=mIyR3GJhhQzZoZhXufHXMQ.

security in Afghanistan.[88]" There are far more people similar to Diva and Pamir Patang, Ali M. Latifi, Ismail Yoon, and many others who hold legal citizenships from Western or European countries, worked and corrupted in the Karzai or Ghani era, and now are lobbying the Taliban. The only purpose of this visual comprehension is to emphasize the importance of keeping an eye on such actors.

The future of this backward journey to the past is no different than a loop of conflict to preserve a confused image of the country that is in continuous need of foreign aid. Through Shahir Sirat's publication on the "Etlaatat Ruz" I would like to remind my fellow Tajik first, whether they live in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, China, or any other places around the world that Tajiks must escape their current conditions to avoid greater marginalization. This requires a deliberate countermeasure against Afghan and Pashtun nationalism, which is profoundly rooted in the Taliban narrative and defined by authoritarian political Islam. As mentioned above, the Tajiks' counter-narrative must be strategically deceptive and transcend political Islam rather than internalizing Afghan nationalism. The Tajiks can create a counter-narrative by using their political and cultural skills and relationships to other ethnic groups to change power relations, ideologies, and social interactions. A non-Pashtun adopting and propagating Afghan nationalism blindly would fuel tyranny and fascism, opposing the noble goal of social justice.

Max Weber defines a state as a legal entity that has exclusive control over the lawful practice of physical force within a certain region. Nevertheless, when it comes to justifying the

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[88] Owner of Private TV Station Lambasts Taliban's Affiliation with Pakistan.

use of violence by the Taliban, Afghanistan does not meet the criteria of being a nation-state.

The absence of a properly functioning nation-state framework in Afghanistan does not provide

justification or legitimacy for the activities of the Taliban. Understanding the complex nature of

governance and violence in Afghanistan requires a clear recognition of this divide. The argument

that Afghanistan lacks the characteristics of a nation-state will also not justify or rationalize the

acts of brutality committed by the Taliban. Instead, it emphasizes the necessity of adopting an

effective approach to solving the fundamental reasons for war and instability in the area.

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