

THE PASHTUNISTAN ISSUE IN LIGHT OF UNEVEN AND COMBINED DEVELOPMENT:  
PASHTUN NATIONALISM AND NATION BUILDING

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PASHTUN NATIONALISM AND NATION-BUILDING**

submitted by **LORENZO BORDONARO** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master Of Science in Middle East Studies, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KIRAZCI  
Dean  
Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. Derya GÖÇER  
Head of Department  
Department of Middle East Studies

---

Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNIŞIK  
Supervisor  
Department of International Relations

---

**Examining Committee Members:**

Assist. Prof. Dr. Derya GÖÇER (Head of the Examining Committee)  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Middle East Studies

---

Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNIŞIK (Supervisor)  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of International Relations

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Merve Seren YEŞİLTAŞ  
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi  
Department of International Relations

---



**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

**Name, Last Name:** Lorenzo BORDONARO

**Signature**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE PASHTUNISTAN ISSUE IN LIGHT OF UNEVEN AND COMBINED DEVELOPMENT: PASHTUN NATIONALISM AND NATION BUILDING**

**BORDONARO, Lorenzo**

**M.S., The Department of Middle East Studies**

**Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNIŞIK**

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The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the historical development of Afghanistan in light of the Uneven and Combined Development Thesis. Focusing on the interrelation between the domestic and the international, this thesis aims to explain how the interactions of Afghanistan with its neighbors and the world, in general, have actively shaped not only the historical form of the Afghan state but also the problem of identity in a multi-cultural region. In this regard, this thesis will actively explain the nexus between the Pashtunistan policy of 1947, initiated by the Afghan government, and the problem of modernization in Afghanistan. In particular, the focus will rest on the Anglo-Afghan Wars since they will be framed as the events that strengthened tribalism and Islam vis a vis other possible identities.

This thesis will therefore address how this policy derives from the contradictions that the combined development has caused within the country, particularly the problem of a state inserted within the international environment with resulting opportunities and tensions, and a society very much inward which represented also a threat in case of drastic reforms.

Therefore, this thesis will also explain how the Pashtunistan policy does not represent only a way to assert a form of ethnic nationalism, but also to transform the Pashtuns into “modern” citizens, in an environment where loyalty, rather than the state, laid mostly in local societies and tribes.

**Keywords:** Nation-Building, Uneven and Combined Development, Nationalism, Foreign Policy

## Öz

### EŞİTSİZ VE BİLEŞİK GELİŞME TEORİSİNİN IŞIĞINDA PEŞTUNİSTAN MESELESİ: PEŞTUN MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİ VE ULUS KURMA SÜRECİ

BORDONARO, Lorenzo

Yüksek Lisans, Orta Doğu Araştırmaları Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNIŞIK

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Bu tezin ana hedefi, Eşitsiz ve Bileşik Gelişme Teorisinin ışığında Afganistan'ın tarihsel gelişimini incelemektir. Diğer bir deyişle, bu tez, uluslararası ve iç faktörler arasındaki ilişkiyi dikkate alarak, Afganistan'ın komşu ülkeleriyle ve daha geniş bir çerçevede uluslararası alandaki diğer devletlerle etkileşimini ele almaktadır.

Böylece hem Afganistan devletinin biçimi hem de söz konusu ülke içerisindeki kimlik meselelerinin Afganistan'ın uluslararası ilişkilerinin ürettiği dinamiklerden nasıl etkilendiğini göstermeyi planlanmaktadır.

Ayrıca, 1947 yılında Afganistan devleti tarafından başlatılan Peştunistan Politikası ve Afganistan'ın modernleşme meselesi arasındaki bağı analiz etmek hedeflenmektedir.

Ayrıca, İngiliz-Afgan Savaşlarının kabilecilik ve İslam'ın güçlendirilmesine sebebi olarak algılanmasıyla dolayısıyla olanaklı farklı kimliklerin zayıflaması bu tezin odak noktalarından birisi olacaktır.

Bu tez, bileşik gelişmeden kaynaklanan sorunların nasıl Peştunistan Politikasının ortaya çıkmasına sebep olduğunu incelemektedir. Bilhassa, uluslararası sistemin ürettiği fırsatlardan yararlanmaya çalışan ve gerilimlerle başa çıkan Afganistan devleti, içine dönük ama köklü bir reform ihtimalini tehdit olarak algılayan Afgan toplumu arasındaki çelişkiyi açıklamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu tez Peştunistan Politikasının sadece bir etnik milliyetçiliği temsil etmediğini, aynı zamanda kendi kabilelerine ya da milletlerine duydukları sadakatin devlete duyduklarından daha yüksek olan Peştunların “modern” vatandaşlara dönüştürülmesi girişiminin bir aracı olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ulus Kurma, Bileşik ve Eşitsiz Gelişme, Milliyetçilik, Dış Politika

*To my father Carmelo, I am sure he would have liked this one*

*Mother life, hold firmly on to me  
Catch my knowledge higher than the day  
Lose as much as only you can show  
Though you've seen me, please don't say a word  
What I don't know, I have never shared*

YES, "STARSHIP TROOPER", 1971

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This thesis is the product of an ongoing questioning that started the day I began my master's program at METU, which has put my theories and concepts to the test and given me the motivation and the tools necessary to continue my studies. For this reason, I would like to thank the University for the amazing course of study which has greatly expanded not only my academic vision but also my scope in life.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

No country can be studied and thought of in isolation from the greater context in which it finds itself. Afghanistan in this regard is no exception to the rule. The borders of what became the Durrani Empire and later the Emirate of Afghanistan were subjected to conquest and clashes between rival powers. Safavids and Mughals, and then the British and the Russian Empire dramatically shaped the country, determined the rise in prominence of some of its groups, the Pashtuns in this case, and played a decisive role in the formation of its state. Thanks to the Safavids and the Mughals, the Pashtun tribes of Afghanistan became integrated into the imperial system, where they became soldiers with complicated relations with their emperors<sup>1</sup>. Their standing granted them the ability to wage war and bring back booty for their groups as well as for their empires<sup>2</sup>. The development that followed this economy of plundering gave rise to a sort of “tribal” aristocracy in cities, which together with the strength of the Pashtun tribes formed the nucleus of the successive state formations of Afghanistan. The king who founded the Durrani empire, Ahmad Abdali, was himself a former commander of Nadir Shah, the Afsharid ruler whose method of governance and organization deeply influenced the future Pashtun emperor. This cultural influence proved to be a strong element in the Durrani empire, where although the tribes of the empire were Pashtuns, the bureaucracy, the court, and part of the military were deeply stylized after the Safavids, with the adoption of Persian as the language of at court as well, having an impact in the contradictions between a developing Pashtun nationalism and a

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<sup>1</sup> Shahrani M. Nazif, *State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan: A Historical Perspective*, in A. Banuazizi and M. Weyner, Eds, *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, Eds, 1987, Lahore, *Vanguard Books*, pp.29-30

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p.29

Persianized culture. Against this background took place the formation of the Afghan state. In 1818 the empire fell into chaos with warring factions, several khanates, and local potentates emerging where once there was feeble unified leadership, letting the Durrani empire become easy prey for external conquest. This was symbolized by the expansion of the Sikh empire, which in the thirties conquered the areas of Peshawar and what became modern Pakistan, depriving the empire of these provinces as well as separating the Pashtuns of the future Pakistan from their “cousins” in Afghanistan.

This separation has not to be understood in terms of modern state separation where crossing the border requires passing through severe controls, rather the border remained highly porous and unstable, but at the same time, it provided the conditions for irredentism and conflict when Pakistan emerged out of India. Although the Durrani Empire cultivated dreams of reconquering the land of the Sikhs<sup>3</sup>, the alliance of the Sikh Empire with the British frustrated any attempt to recover their previous territories without having to face the British and Sikh armies at the same time<sup>4</sup>. From this condition of inferiority, the Durrani Empire was invaded twice by the British Empire. The first Anglo-Afghan war of 1838 and the second of 1878 were part of an attempt of the British Empire to maintain influence over Afghanistan, establish a colonial presence, and limit Russia’s influence over the country, thereby protecting India<sup>5</sup>. These interventions became part of the collective imagination as well as events that dramatically shaped Afghanistan’s development and foreign relations. Not only did the British invasions thwart two attempts to create a new stable central authority against the backdrop of political and economic change that took place outside and inside the borders of the empire, but also forced the empire and later the Emirate of Afghanistan into a position of inferiority vis a vis the British force<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1973, Princeton, *Princeton University*, p.401

<sup>4</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, London, *Palgrave McMillan*, p.59

<sup>5</sup> H. Emadi: *Dynamics of Political Development in Afghanistan: The British, Russian and American Invasions*, 2010, New York, *Palgrave McMillan*, p.13

<sup>6</sup> A. Saikal: *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, *I.B. Tauris*, p.28

This allowed the British with the treaty of Gandomak in 1879 to establish their dominance over Afghanistan's external affairs, and finally in 1893, with the treaty of Rawalpindi, they officialized the border between the emirate and the British Raj, which came to be called the Durand Line<sup>7</sup>. Together with this, the British Empire became the supplier of weapons and funds to the Afghan Shah Abdur Rahman, who utilized these resources to complete the historically arduous task of unifying the country and subduing the tribes and the clergy. The border created by the British became the cause of the Pashtunistan problem, and this issue proved to be a factor that was heavily exploited by the traditionalist and nationalist elite of Afghanistan. Pakistan was born in 1947, and in a climate of emerging Pashtun nationalism both the elder branches of the royal family and the more modernist and nationalist came to criticize the fact that large segments of the Pashtuns lived outside Afghanistan<sup>8</sup>.

While the provocations and escalations became commonplace after 1947, the issue became enflamed when in the 1950s, when Daoud Khan became the prime minister effectively coming to represent a more nationalist and heavily modernist branch of the royal family. Under his leadership, the Pashtunistan problem escalated dramatically with heavy fighting and trade embargos, prompting Afghanistan to drift towards the Soviet Union in search of material and technical help.

The consequences of this dispute cannot be underestimated given the fact that Afghanistan experienced a civil war for 20 years after the PDPA coup, only to be invaded again in 2001 for another 20 years and to experience the coming back of the Taliban in 2021. Claiming that all derived from the Pashtunistan problem would be wrong, but at the same time, its influence must be analyzed considering the consequences it had on Afghanistan's foreign policy and domestic politics.

### **1.1. Argument of the Thesis**

This thesis will argue that the Pashtunistan policy cannot be understood only by considering theories of International Relations such as Realism.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.p.28

<sup>8</sup> F. Bezhani: *The Pashtunistan Issue and Politics in Afghanistan, 1947-1952*, 2014, *Middle East Journal*, Vol.68. No.2. p.197

Similarly, only taking into account only contextual and temporary issues within the domestic politics of Afghanistan is problematic as well<sup>9</sup>. This does not mean that the previous explanations are insufficient, but that considering the historical development of Afghanistan can help shed light on the reason why the Pashtunistan issue came to have such importance to certain segments of the Afghan elites. This thesis will claim that the Pashtunistan policy represented an opportunity to proceed with nation-building in Afghanistan. The heavy nationalist emphasis, censorship applied to opposers of the government's policy, publications, proclamations of Pashtunistan days, and the military escalations represented an attempt at building something that Afghanistan had always dramatically lacked, a shared and common identity that could cut across sectarian and ethnic differences, replacing local forms of allegiance to tribes and groups, the so-called *qawn*, and the larger allegiance to the Islamic *umma*.

This has not to be intended as only an ideological and cultural change, but also something that would complement the industrializing, nationalizing, and modernizing process that was the focus of the young and aggressive branches of the Afghan royal family. The economic, political, and social change had to be accelerated, and affiliation to local solidarities had to be weakened in favor of a shared national identity, which was to be based upon a Pashtun-based view of Afghan nationalism<sup>10</sup>.

The task of strengthening the central "state" was paramount to the centralization efforts. The state itself presented characteristics of both Afghanistan's society and a centralized state structure. The ruling family that governed from 1930 to 1973 represented an important clan of the Durrani tribe, the Musahiban, which had been

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<sup>9</sup> Faridullah Bezhani: *The Pashtunistan Issue and Politics in Afghanistan, 1947-52*, 2014, *Middle East Journal*, Vol.58, No.2, Selig S. Harrison: *"Pashtunistan": The Challenge to Pakistan of Afghanistan*, 2008, Real Instituto Elcano, *Area: Security and Defence*, Anthony Hyman: *Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination: 1964-83*, 1982, London, The McMillan Press LTD, Rashid Ahmad et al: *Pashtunistan: A Construction of an Imaginary Identity*, 2022, *Multicultural Education*, Vol 8, No.6.

<sup>10</sup> F. Bezhani: *Nationalism not Islam: The "Awaken Youth" Party and Pashtun Nationalism*, in N. Green, Eds, *Afghanistan's Islam*, 2016, *University of California Press*, p.167

in a secondary position until the civil war of 1929 dethroned the Muhammadzai clan's ruler Amanullah Khan. Therefore, to some extent, tribal relations permeated the state structure and strategies, but it could be said that despite these elements, the direction of the state gave way to a precise understanding of modernization attempts aimed at making it the sole powerful actor in the Afghan scenario.

The presence of a leadership that was of tribal origin and which had come to power in 1929 during an insurrection of the Pashtun tribes showed to what extent the presence of tribes determined the political life of Afghanistan. These tribes, and more broadly local solidarities, did not lose their power throughout time, and this can be explained by analyzing the impact of the two British invasions of the Durrani empire, which destroyed attempts at centralization and gave rise to a societal reaction that was canalized through the power of the tribes and that of Islam.

Although the Afghan ulama did not enjoy the same power as that of its Iranian counterpart, it was at any rate instrumental in mobilizing forces against invaders, declaring jihads, and bringing together different ethnic and social groups in times of emergency.

The construction of the Afghan state, therefore, had to take into consideration two powerful forces that emerged strengthened out of the Anglo-Afghan Wars, and although momentarily submitted by Abdur Rahman Khan, when the conditions were ripe, they proved able to arouse strong and widespread reactions against the central state.

The question of the central state is also to be historicized and put into question. Central control in Afghanistan's history has to be understood according to the dynamics of the moment. While Dost Muhammad Khan interpreted and made use of "central control" according to its social relations and understanding of it, Abdur Rahman, Amanullah, etc. had a different understanding of it.

Central control, or centralization, for Dost Muhammad Khan, meant the fact that his closed circles, most importantly his sons, retained powerful positions within the

government and the military, enjoying the control of important cities as well as that out modern military outfits<sup>11</sup>.

This is to be drawn from the fact that during Dost Muhammad's era, no centralized government was still available, local khans and chiefs could declare independence and the emir had little resources available to him to enforce his decisions.

The contrary is true for Abdur Rahman and his successors, who enjoyed deeper control over rebellious khans or groups and enjoyed subsidies and taxes that allowed them to keep more intricate state machinery. Therefore, central control is not to be understood as a category that maintains its strict meaning through time, but rather as an abstraction that has to be historicized according to the context.

To make its point this thesis will use a theoretical approach which is going to be found in the so-called Law of Uneven and Combined Development. This law was first elaborated by Trotsky around 1905-6 to give proper explanations for events that were taking place in Russia. This need stemmed from the dominant view within the Second International that had subscribed to a linear understanding of history and therefore of the passage from capitalism and socialism. Stressing the need to wait for the maturity of conditions and a strong bourgeoisie before attempting a socialist revolution<sup>12</sup>. Figures like Kautsky openly subscribed to a view of the socialist revolution that would strictly observe the vision of the evolution of society in terms of the linear development of capitalism, and therefore lead the German socialist to criticize the October Revolution. This strict interpretation of Marx's core theses meant that the Marxian toolset was ill-suited to analyze the conditions that were quickly appearing in the Russian social landscape and their consequences. The feudal conditions of Russia, the lack of a strong bourgeoisie, and the revolutionary situations that had occurred in 1905 kept the social democrats

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<sup>11</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.259

<sup>12</sup> M. Lowy, *The Politics of Uneven and Combined Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution*, 1981, London, *Unwin Brothers Limited*, p.1

busy with understanding how these events could be taking place. Against this background, Trotsky tried to formulate a theory, although partial and in bits that tried to explain the need for the communist movement to pursue an independent route from that of the bourgeoisie, the so-called “permanent revolution”, alias “skip” the liberal democracy “phase” and therefore show the real possibility of bringing about a revolution in a “backward country”. This theory provided a powerful explanation to account for how countries with pre-capitalist economic and political systems were affected by the introduction of capitalist logic into their systems<sup>13</sup>.

The theory rests upon the assumption that human development has always been *unequal*, meaning that at a different point in the development of human societies, societies presented a large array of different economic and political arrangements that presided over different levels and qualities of development. The second term of this law, combined, means that this unequal arrangement allowed countries with more “backward” economic and political arrangements to adapt tools, technologies, and structures from more “advanced” societies, directly skipping the phase of the developments that the more advanced societies had gone through<sup>14</sup>.

The result of this process is a society in which imported practices, economic methods, new arrangements, and so on, mix with the local structures, creating a new hybrid that presents characteristics of the previous system mixed with the newly imported attributes.

Therefore, in Afghanistan in an empire where the tribal *lashkar*, alias a tribal army, was the standard of warfare, the attempts of Dost Muhammad created military workshops and a uniformed and disciplined army that could and did to some degree, match the British outfits on the field. At the same time, although most of

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<sup>13</sup> M. Lowy, *The Politics of Uneven and Combined Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution*, 1981, pp. 1-3

<sup>14</sup> A. Anievas and K. Matin, *Historical Sociology and World History: Uneven and Combined Development Over the Long Durée*, 2016, Eds, Rowman & Littlefield International, p.7

the population lived in a micro-cosmos where local figures and heroes were binding forces and allegiance was due to them, the Afghan rulers and elites preoccupied themselves with the construction of large airports, dams, and the intricacies of the Cold War. Tanks, jet airplanes, and technical knowledge came to exist side by side with nomads and tribal *jirgas*.

The adoption of these modern forms can be attributed to what is called "*the whip of necessity*" the need for governments to adapt military, social, and political arrangements in the face of competition, pressure, and hardships<sup>15</sup>. The compound consequences of these new arrangements being brought to the country create a mix where modernization that would take ages if not centuries to occur is dramatically compressed in a short time scale, generating a developmental pattern that presents characteristics of different epochs and social arrangements. So, the Afghan government was governed by a clan of the Durrani tribes while trying to open its system of government to political parties and creating the condition for modern state planning and private entrepreneurship.

This theory can help shed light upon the difficulties in which the Afghan state found itself. While in no way unique, this experience was shared by every country although at different times and with different intensities. In Afghanistan, the very nature of the historical development of Afghan society made it so that the compelling necessities of socio-political development clashed with the reality of a country with local allegiances and a sustenance economy based upon kinship.

The resulting clash between the modern and pre-modern is paramount in explaining the need of the Afghan state to utilize whatever it could to create a sense of loyalty to the state and weaken the alternative center of powers present in Afghan society. Again, such an enterprise was by no means unique, as the creation of hybrids in the world due to the expansion of capitalism created societies in which no character was purely "modern". Europe itself presented large masses of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p.24

peasants in countries like Spain and Italy, where feudalism remained a feature with which both the Francoist and the Fascist regimes co-lived, at the same time sported heavily industrialized and globally powerful actors like France and the United Kingdom.

In this sense, this theory may also help tear down the barriers erected between development in the West and the “Rest” as well.

The fundamental insights of this theory, although may seem a bit obvious at first, are surprisingly helpful in shedding light on many dynamics that occurred in the past and still occur today. As a matter of fact, the field of Uneven and Combined Development has seen a great number of scholars actively engaged in explaining a great deal of situations through the lenses of UCD. Among the first to publicize the issue was Justin Rosenberg, who has written extensively on the subject.

According to Rosenberg, UCD can also be used in all epochs of human history since unevenness and combination are not phenomena peculiar only to the world in which capitalism developed and develops today but represent an ontological condition of human societies<sup>16</sup>. Rosenberg and Boyle have therefore claimed that UCD helps explain how Brexit was affected by the rise of China<sup>17</sup>. On a similar note, Anievas and Nişancioğlu utilized UCD to explain the geopolitical origins of capitalism<sup>18</sup>, while Anievas and Allison contextualized the Meiji Restoration as taking place within the context of uneven and combined development<sup>19</sup>.

Matin utilized UCD to make up for the errors contained within the classical Marxist argument that structure determined the superstructure, ergo in very vulgar terms,

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<sup>16</sup> J. Rosenberg, *Where there is no International Historical Sociology*, 2006, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.12, No.3

<sup>17</sup> J. Rosenberg and C. Boyle, *Understanding 2016: China, Brexit, and Trump in the History of Uneven and Combined Development*, 2019, *Journal of Historical Sociology*

<sup>18</sup> A. Anievas and K. Nisancioğlu, *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism*, 2015, London, Pluto Press

<sup>19</sup> A. Anieva and J. C. Allison, *The Uneven and Combined Development of the Meiji Restoration: A Passive Revolutionary Road to Modernity*, 2010, *Capital and Class*

that economy determines the form of the state<sup>20</sup>. Matin therefore utilized UCD to explain how the lack of private property in pre-modern Iran and the state form that took root, can be accounted for by the interrelation of Iran with its nomadic neighbors. Further on Iran, Matin has also utilized it to explain the origins of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in terms of the incorporation and interrelations of Iran with capitalism and the subsequent problems that arose out of this process<sup>21</sup>.

On a similar line, Fred Halliday hypothesized that UCD may actually represent a powerful tool to explain the occurrences of revolutions<sup>22</sup>.

On a different set of issues, Bieler utilized UCD to explain the positions of some European trade unions vis a vis free trade agreement. The author argued that while unions in the Global South were conscious that the agreements would bring deindustrialization, “Northern” unions supported them in order to expand the markets for European manufactured goods, to the direct benefit of workers in Europe.

To explain this position, the author argued that the expansion of capitalism has generated an uneven pattern of integration into the global economy for the Southern countries, which in the case of free trade agreements generated more jobs in richer countries while causing poorer countries to experience unemployment etc<sup>23</sup>. Jayasuriya called for a new approach to the study of the new forms of geopolitical contestation that are occurring in East Asia.

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<sup>20</sup> K. Matin, *Uneven and Combined Development in World History: The International Relations of State-Formation in Pre-Modern Iran*, 2007, *European Journal of International Relations*

<sup>21</sup> K. Matin, *The Iranian Revolution in the Mirror of Uneven and Combined Development*, 2017, in Nesrin Değirmencioğlu and James Christie, eds, *Cultures of Uneven and Combined Development*, 2019, Brill, *Historical Materialism Series*

<sup>22</sup> F. Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics, The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power*, 1999, London, McMilland Press LTD, p.319

<sup>23</sup> A. Bieler, *The EU, Global Europe, and processes of uneven and combined development: the problem of transnational labour solidarity*, 2012, *Review of International Studies*

He argues that UCD is a valuable tool if the whip of external necessity that drives broader geopolitical changes and contestation is conceptualized as the conjunction and tensions that originate from the different and combined forms of capitalism. In particular, he applies this method to the current tensions occurring in East Asia<sup>24</sup>. The conceptual toolset of the UCD theory has fulfilled other roles as well, integrating itself with the study of economic phenomena. With a focus on international political economy, Oatley maintained that the American international political economy (IPE) school lost importance since it could not explain the development and consequences of the Great Financial Crisis, as well as anti-system dynamics and the impact of the China Shock. For this reason, he calls for the development of a framework characterized by the use of UCD and Political Economy of Complex Interdependence perspectives to restore IPE's credibility as a framework<sup>25</sup>. De Oliveria suggested that both UCD and Dependency theory could be used together to explain why the "Pink Tide", of left-wing-leaning governments in Latin America failed to extricate the continent from its dependency on core countries, and why this failure was fuelling the rise of new right-wing movements<sup>26</sup>. Lastly, on a totally different issue, Siebert claims that UCD's historical materialist basis contains a distinctly ecological dimension that helps make sense of current ecological problems as well as provides IR with an approach that unites sociological, environmental, and international factors<sup>27</sup>. The variety of uses of UCD, therefore, helps shed light on its usefulness to account for a variety of factors. For this reason, given the very evident "combined" nature of Afghanistan's development, this theory may help to account for many of the issues that the country had to wrestle with historically and does so until today.

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<sup>24</sup> K. Jayasuriya, *Beyond Geopolitical Feticism: a geopolitical economy research agenda*, 2021, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*

<sup>25</sup> T. Oatley, *Regaining Relevance: IPE and a Changing Global Political Economy* in Justin Rosenberg and Milja Kurki, eds, *Multiplicity, a New Common Ground for International Relations*, 2022, New York, Routledge

<sup>26</sup> F. Antunes de Oliveira, *The Rise of the Latin American Far-Right Explained: Dependency Theory Meets Uneven and Combined Development*, 2019, *Globalizations*, Vol.16, No.7

<sup>27</sup> J. Siebert, *The Greening of Uneven and Combined Development: IR, Capitalism and the Ecological Crisis* in Justin Rosenberg and Milja Kurki, eds, *Multiplicity, a New Common Ground for International Relations*, 2022, New York, Routledge

## 1.2. Social Structures in Afghanistan: *Qawn* and Ulama

The two structures that helped shape the development of Afghanistan, the ulama and the tribes, are to be investigated if the country is to be understood. Both these institutions survived the onslaught of the central government and emerged once again during times of change, modernization, and foreign invasion. In particular, this can be seen with the breakout of the civil war in 1978 and the emergence of Islamist parties and *qawn*-based organizations. The concept of tribe is a complex matter, with many variations and disagreements, it is outside the scope of this thesis to investigate this concept, so only the main lines will be highlighted.

As Crone explained, the tribe could be thought of as a society where kinship is the underlying principle of societal organization. This does not mean that tribal societies are characterized by a perfect correspondence between biological and social organization, but rather one in which this principle is both considerable and important in the way biological and societal structures overlap<sup>28</sup>. The tribe is also a “primitive” organization in the sense that it costs nothing to maintain given its lack of bureaucratic structures and one in which social differentiation is almost minimal, although differences in resources may be considerable among tribes. Crone further defines the tribe could be defined as a descent group that constitutes a political community, which may be subdivided into smaller groups but at the same time are part of larger ones. Differentiation among groups is given by many individuals who recognize each other as members of the same group under the same leadership.<sup>29</sup> Crone’s definition rests upon kinship, as does Tapper’s. His definition of tribes identifies them as a localized group in which kinship is the dominant paradigm of organization and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct<sup>30</sup>. They may be politically unified although not under a central leadership, and tribes that come together and enjoy a certain political unity may be called a “tribal

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<sup>28</sup> P. Crone, *The Tribe and the State*, p. 447, in J.A. Hall, *States in History*, 1986, Eds, Oxford, *Blackwell*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p.448

<sup>30</sup> R. Tapper, *Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, 1983, Eds, New York, *Routledge*, p.9

confederation”<sup>31</sup>. Tapper further distinguishes the clan from the lineage, claiming that a clan is composed of people who share a common ancestry, although they may not be able to describe it and belong to a larger ethnic group. A lineage is a localized and unified group of people who share common origins as well and have known their ancestors. A clan may be composed of several lineages. According to Tapper, there is a distinction to be made regarding the clan and the tribe. If tribe is to be used as a term denoting kinship, then its meaning is almost synonymous with that of the clan. For this reason, clans and lineages could be seen as the cultural or ideological section of a tribe when this is politically united<sup>32</sup>. While the previous two definitions highlighted kinship, at least partially, as an ordering principle and their political belonging to the same group, Ahmed and Hart defined a tribe as a rural group that has a name and distinguishes between members and non-members<sup>33</sup>. The tribe occupies a specific space and takes care of all the political and military responsibilities.

This means that the tribe clashes with a state trying to monopolize the same functions over a specific area. For this reason, the authors cite the fact that even though tribes may lose in the clash, as soon as state authority diminishes their old functions may resume as well<sup>34</sup>.

The idea of responsibility is also shared by Crone again, which together with the previous definition, calls tribes “stateless” societies, in which mediation and conflict are resolved within their own political mechanisms, and which rely upon methods of self-help<sup>35</sup>.

Lastly, Barfield’s definition of tribe helps shed light on the issue. His definition highlights the role played by political connections rather than kinship, describing

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p.10

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p.11

<sup>33</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, David M. Hart, *Islam in Tribal Societies*, 2008, Eds, New York, *Routledge*, p.1

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem

<sup>35</sup> Crone, *The Tribe and the State*, p. 448

how the process of creating kinship can be done *ad hoc* with the aim of enlarging political alliances<sup>36</sup>. Barfield claims that while a tribe is a large unit based on genealogy, the actual kinship-based relations are observable only at the base units of the tribe, family, extended households, and local lineages. At higher levels, political unity may be kept by client-patron relations between groups, re-writing of genealogies, cooperation between groups, etc.<sup>37</sup>

Barfield and Tapper also distinguish between tribe and tribal confederacy which they both define as incorporating different tribes that generate a supratribal political entity. Barfield states that the segmentary principle, in this case, is applied in reverse, as the reorganization of the tribes is effectuated by changes at the top rather than increasing connections and alliances between the segments of the tribe<sup>38</sup>.

The differentiation among tribes does not rest only upon kinship, clan, etc., which have been subjected to critical investigation, but also on their organizational structure. Lindholm in his work of comparison between inner Asian and Middle Eastern tribes defines the former as influenced by a Turco-Mongolian structure, which is at its core hierarchical. At the same time, the Middle Eastern tribes are more egalitarian<sup>39</sup>. The organizational difference made the difference in terms of the ability of the tribes to create and sustain large empires or to create a supratribal structure only for a short time. Turco-Mongolian tribes accepting a hierarchical kinship legitimacy transformed clans and lineages into the building blocks of political-military coalitions with hereditary leadership. By contrast, the Middle Eastern-type tribes, had a relatively egalitarian lineage in which chiefs acted more

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<sup>36</sup> T. Barfield, *Tribes and State Relations: The Inner Asian Perspective*, p.153, in P. Khoury, J. Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, 1991, Berkeley, University of California Press

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem

<sup>39</sup> Charles Lindholm, *Kinship and Political Authority: The Middle East and Central Asia*, 1986, *Journal of Comparative History*, Vol.28, pp.334-35

as mediators rather than commanding figures. Thus, their ability to expand was poor, and most successful non-tribal organizations managed to survive through the mediation and unification role of religious figures<sup>40</sup>.

In Afghanistan, the term utilized to define tribe is *qawn*. This word connotes not only tribes, but also any form of local solidarity, which is aplenty given the nature of Afghanistan's society, in which the majority of the population lives in rural areas where micro-cosmos are the norm, and revolves around the guidance of local figures and other forms of *asabiyyah*<sup>41</sup>. This situation is compounded by the fact that the Afghan state has often been unable to break up these micro-societies, but has also been unwilling to do so. This stems from the fact that these micro societies prove easier to incorporate and can be prevented from joining larger coalitions, and given the limited means of the Afghan state, this has proven a system of control exerted by a weak state<sup>42</sup>. In this sense the state did not oppose the *qawn* per se, rather it utilized it or opposed it according to its situation. The *qawn* term describing any form of solidarity may also be applied to non-Pashtun populations that have no tribal organization, like the Tajiks.

The Pashtuns are remarkably close to the Middle Eastern model. They are a segmentary tribe, where political connections between the lineages are maintained and created through the use of marriages and hypergamy. Being the kin focused upon agnatic lines, clusters of agnatic cousins form strong connections and increase the family's patrimony or may divide into intense intra-family divisions. These connections provide a strong tool for mobilization where upon offense or need, entire segments will mobilize<sup>43</sup>. The code that regulates the life of the Pashtuns who are tribalized is called the Pashtunwali. This codex not only regulates matters regarding daily lives but also the resolution of conflicts within the tribes. In this

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<sup>40</sup> T. Barfield, *Tribes and State Relations*, 1991, p.153

<sup>41</sup> Barnett. A. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 2002, Yale, *Yale University Press*, p.25

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p.28

regard, crucial institutions are the *jirga*, the tribal assembly that is used to solve disputes between the tribes and the *Loya jirga* functions as a great assembly that is summoned in moments of critical necessity, such as when it is tasked with electing a new Shah or Emir.

The strong divisions among the tribes and the lack of a shared identity in Afghanistan meant that Islam was by far the strongest unifying force in the country. Its ability to summon forces at times of emergency, provide meaning and a universal version for the inhabitants of the country, and its political role meant that Islam was a fundamental part of the organization of Afghanistan<sup>44</sup>. Coexisting together with codes such as the Pashtunwali, Islam stood as a mediating force that monopolized judiciary and educational apparatuses. This does not mean that Islam in Afghanistan was a centralized structure that presented a well-condensed structure and institutions of higher learning, rather it had found a way after centuries of coexistence to find its *modus vivendi* among tribal society. Pashtunwali and Sharia differed from one another, leaving the members of the Pashtun tribes suspicious of the interference of the mullahs in their affairs, but also being religious figures outside tribal organization made their role as mediators requested<sup>45</sup>. This allowed the religious men to play an important role in solving disputes among tribes and unifying them in times of crisis. The ability of Islam to mediate between tribes and call to jihad also non-Pashtuns proved a great advantage in the history of Afghanistan, unifying every *qawn* despite differences in situations like the British invasions<sup>46</sup>.

The structure of Islam in Afghanistan revolved around low-level madrasas where children would get their first and often last rudiments of education. These madrasas were independent and centered upon a local *mawmlawi*, a teacher<sup>47</sup>. The absence

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<sup>44</sup> O. Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 1990, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.33

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*35

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidm.*45

of important centers of higher learning in Afghanistan meant that gifted students would have to get their education abroad, often in India, at the Naqshiband madrasas<sup>48</sup>. The relative lack of a strong learned class was not only due to the traditional outlook of higher ulama, but also to the wars that cut across Afghanistan, changes in trade routes, and domestic instability, which impeded the creation of important religious schools<sup>49</sup>. As a matter of fact, important cities in Afghanistan drew their role from economic and political authority, not religious institutions<sup>50</sup>. This did not mean that the ulama was not present. *Alims* fulfilled roles as judges, scholars, counselors, etc.... they also owned some endowments which made them independent of the state for sustenance and the state itself granted tax exemptions to the ulama. Together with this independent ulama, another one that was dependent upon the state existed and grew in numbers during the modernization period. The functionaries were salaried and fulfilled a variety of administrative tasks, although their political role was questioned since they were state employees. The existence of the ulama was side by side with the presence of low-ranking mullahs, who were not considered part of the state. These did not complete any religious education and were chosen based on a collective decision because of their wisdom, piety, etc.<sup>51</sup> This figure in tribal zones was considered to be outside the tribal hierarchy, since being Pashtun means being part of the tribe, and may or may have not been involved in tribal affairs. Its sustenance was dependent upon the local community, for he had no salary and received various forms of compensation<sup>52</sup>. Together with these characteristics, Afghanistan had a strong presence of religious orders that belonged mostly to Sufism. This was particularly popular in Afghan society, and three important orders, *Naqshibandiyya*, *Qadiriyya*, and *Cheshitiyya* flourished among the middle classes of larger villages

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.99

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>51</sup> O. Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 1990, p.32

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem.

and suburbs of towns. Although those three orders were extensively developed not all of them played a political role in the country. The *Naqshibandis* were mostly associated with politics and the Mujaddidi family, descendent of the reformer of the order Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, played an important role in the mobilization against the reformist politics of Amanullah Khan (1919-29), opposing its reformist and Westernist tendencies<sup>53</sup>.

### **1.3. Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is articulated over a structure of three chapters. Chapter one coincides with the introduction to the general history of Afghanistan, a quick reappraisal of the most important social structures in the country, as well as the definition of the methodology of the research and its object.

Chapter Two will explore the dynamics of Afghan development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It started with the imperial disintegration of 1818 and ended in 1901, with the death of Abdur Rahman. It will explore the difficulties at centralization, foreign interventions, the limited ability of a kin mode of production to expand itself, the occurrences that compounded the already presented difficulties, and the impact of these events upon the social structure of the country.

Chapter Three will delve into the inability of the reformist regime of the Young Afghans, 1919-29 to modernize the country and the failure of the pan-Afghan nationalist idea. The study brief of the strategies of development and ideology of the Musahiban royal family will follow. The main part of this chapter will be dedicated to the study of Afghan nationalism, its different variants, the ability it had to emerge, and the way it contrasted with local structures, namely *qawn* and Islam. This part will also explore the way a Pashtun-centered form of nationalism became an adjunct to the modernization process of the royal family. The between these

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p.43

policies and the Pashtunistan issue will be explored, and the argument of the thesis clarified in this chapter as well.

A general reappraisal of the work done and the inferred conclusions will be presented in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AFGHANISTAN

#### 2.1. Introduction

The history of current Afghanistan cannot be comprehended without looking at the way international and domestic factors shaped the internal composition of the current country. Having been a land disputed among many empires, starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Safavids, the Uzbeks, and the Mughals contested each other's supremacy over Afghanistan.

As a matter of fact, the Safavids played a strong role in influencing the way the nucleus of the Afghan empire would look like. The Safavids employed a wide array of foreign troops, Turks, Persians, Qizilbash, and Pashtun in their campaigns against the Uzbeks and the Mughals. The presence of the Pashtuns within these ranks would prove to be a dramatic factor for Afghanistan since they were responsible for the fall of the Safavid Empire and the founding nucleus of the Afghan state, the Abdali tribes, would heavily draw inspiration from the Safavids.

The empire was formed in 1747, and not before long it incurred in many crises, due not only to the changing regional landscape but also because of internal limitations. The empire's richest provinces fell one after another to the Sikhs and the Qajars, and the limitations of the mode of production present within Afghanistan, a kin-based economy, together with the historical decline of commercial routes and the devastation of centuries of wars, left the empire with its core lands, which were much poorer than its outer provinces. Finally, the empire succumbed to the civil war for the right of accession to the throne at the death of Zaman Shah and the

following civil war split the kingdom into several local potentates. This dramatic situation was compounded by the arrival on the scene of the British and Russian Empires with which the Afghans would have to deal throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Anglo-Afghan wars and the Russian aggression to northern Afghanistan in 1869 became not only symbolically important watersheds but also moments in which the future structure of the Afghan state would be defined and came to be. Therefore, Afghanistan was a “country” that would constantly find itself under economic and military pressure. The two went often together, and Afghanistan’s predecessor states’ ability to cope was always hindered by both external and internal factors. The intervention of foreign powers hindered the development of a central state that was already taking place after the succession war and the rise to power of Dost Muhammad Khan. At the same, British intervention not only proved fundamental in the destruction of the weak attempts at building a centralized administration, but also, ironically, the necessary tranquility and financial support to build a strong central government in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a matter of fact, although Afghanistan was never colonized in the classic sense of the word, the attempts at establishing a colonial administration over the country and proceeding with the “rationalization” of the extraction of the resources helped establish a more efficient system of revenue extraction.

## **2.2. The Durrani Empire**

In order to understand the way Afghanistan was born and the struggles it faced it is necessary to look at the contributions that external powers had in the construction of the social structure upon which the country was built.

While the Uzbeks and the Mughals entertained relations with the Pashtun and had several agreements with the border tribes, it was the Safavids who managed to change the social composition of the country in such a profound way that it would have long-lasting effects on the political life of Afghanistan<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, *Princeton University Press*, p.96

When the Mughals, the Safavids, and the Shaybanids, the current Uzbeks, started to compete with each other over Afghan lands, each faction recruited soldiers from the local milieu and while the effects were not universally the same, the Ghilzai and Abdali tribes under the Safavid rule managed to reserve important roles for themselves. The Ghilzai tribe, a more egalitarian group, managed to obtain high positions within the Safavid Empire, so much so that several clans within the tribe, the Hotaki in particular, obtained the governorship of the city of Qandahar. At the same time, the Abdali tribes, much more hierarchical, through war, booty, and commerce enriched their own communities to the extent that they managed to settle down many nomads and create an “aristocracy”<sup>55</sup>. The two tribes played instrumental roles within the Safavid Empire, but it was the Ghilzai who retained a stronger position within the empire. This strength was very well shown when in 1704 a Safavid Georgian army was sent to repel a Baluch invasion and alienated the population of Qandahar, which was under Ghilzai leadership. The subsequent rebellion was followed by another one in 1709 when the Ghilzais instigated an uprising against a now weaker and more dysfunctional Safavid Empire<sup>56</sup>. The rebellion managed to make Herat independent and in 1722 the Ghilzais, after having defeated the Abdali tribe in battle, finally overthrew the Safavid Emperor. Although unable to form a stable government they were finally displaced by Nadir Shah in 1736, who using local tribes managed to create an empire that stretched from Iran to India. Finally, when Nadir Shah was killed in 1747, the Abdali tribe managed to elect through a *loya jirga*, a sort of “high assembly”, Ahmad Abdali as Shah, and following that moment the Abdali tribe’s name would change into that of Durrani<sup>57</sup>.

1747 is usually referred to as the date in which the first nucleus of the Afghan state was constructed, and as a matter of fact, a sort of centralized control was instituted.

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<sup>55</sup> M. N. Shahrani, *State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan*, p.29, in A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner, *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, 1987, Lahore, Vanguard Books

<sup>56</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1973, Princeton, pp.321-322

<sup>57</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, I.B. Tauris, p.22

The form of the state and the relation between the leader and the tribes were very much based upon a hierarchical structure, which was in contrast with the more egalitarian structure that the Pashtuns had. Succession was made hereditary, and polygamy heavily complicated the choice of the future leader among the sons of the emperor. This latter element proved to be a cause of great discord among the potential successors to the throne and was the reason for instability when the conditions of the empire worsened.

Ahmad Shah's empire-building efforts were facilitated by his ability to capture the territories formerly belonging to the Afsharid Empire, while at the same his skill in maneuvering within a society of which he understood the functioning very well. The empire was not a heavily centralized structure resting upon some sort of divine sanction, rather it was a tribal confederacy that put together different forms of government and culture. It was a hodgepodge of Pashtun tribes, minorities like Tajiks, Qizilbash, and Hazaras, Turks from the Khanates of current Uzbekistan, Persians, Sikhs, and Hindus from the empire's lands in India<sup>58</sup>. The ability of Ahmad Shah was therefore in keeping this complicated structure from falling apart, which he did remarkably well by combining a patrimonial structure with a legitimacy that was drawn from the Pashtun tribes and the minorities who served in his army<sup>59</sup>. He accepted many Pashtun tribes in his ranks and co-opted them through power and marriages, and when this was not possible such as the Ghilzai, he ventured into military campaigns to submit his enemies<sup>60</sup>.

The constant plunder and pillaging he undertook served many functions as well. On one side he gained legitimacy through these acts, instigating many khans and chiefs to join his ventures in the hope of gaining booty and favor with the shah<sup>61</sup>. This coalesced around him a series of chiefs who were faithful to him given the favors

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<sup>58</sup>ibid.p21

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>60</sup> M. N. Shahrani, *State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan*, p.30

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem.

and prestige he brought them through campaigns. The pillaging served also as a measure to maintain the expenses of the empire, which forced him to be on campaign most of the time<sup>62</sup>. These wars also directed outside tensions that would otherwise manifest within the empire, as his two successors would later experience. This scheme, together with Ahmad Shah's skill managed to keep the Durrani Empire on its feet for a large part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This ability was required of the leader since the very fabric that constituted a big part of his empire revolved around the structure of a kin-based economy, whose inability to produce large amounts of surplus constantly required new venues to find revenues, and whose social relations could potentially lead to fragmentation given the largely local and kin-related loyalties. This was the cause since the limit of the kinship mode is posed by the necessity to keep alive a system of alliances by subsidy and favors, requiring wealth to be redistributed to such effort and leaving little to centralization, which represents the only way out of such an arrangement<sup>63</sup>.

The empire lands' economic structure differed from each other given the conditions in which they had developed, so the central, western, and eastern provinces were not similar to one another<sup>64</sup>. The empire however was part of a larger economic system, which showed great sophistication in its economic integration, and which helped determine the cohesiveness of the empire granted through the "corridor" role it fulfilled given its central position in commerce of the gigantic Eurasian mass<sup>65</sup>. The wealth of the Afghan cities had heavily depended on their strategic position within important trade routes which were the centers of connections between South Asia as well as the Middle East and therefore the Mediterranean world as well<sup>66</sup>.

In this large network, caravan duties represented an important share of the economy since they came to represent a large part of customs duties collected by

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<sup>62</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.p.25

<sup>65</sup>B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, London, *Palgrave McMillan*, p.70

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem.

the city rulers and of course, their supplies were vital for the economy of the cities. In the longwave of these trade routes, important banking institutions were developed as well, Non-Muslim communities present within Afghanistan, especially Jews and Armenians, were renowned for their important role in trade, and Hindu traders acted as middlemen with the extensive banking network present within India.<sup>67</sup> Northern India was particularly important to the Durrani Empire, not only because it absorbed a great deal of its exports, but also because the long reach of northern Indian products had to find its way to their markets through Afghan cities, therefore Northern India proved to be both an excellent source of plunder as well as the reason why the Afghan corridor retained much importance. Afghanistan's economic order, therefore, was heavily dependent on its transit role between large economic blocs, this made its economy dependent on passage and heavily reliant upon economic changes that took place within these different blocs. The Durrani Empire's economy produced several exports, but it lacked the capital to produce more important artifacts. Within this context, traders fulfilled a vital role and their strategies to cope with change and competition decided the rise and fall of areas of the country. The export items of these traders were also particularly important and consisted of horses, fruits, and mercenaries, the latter, in particular, fulfilled a great role until the need to have standing armies progressively phased them out<sup>68</sup>. This large trading network was extensively kept up by several banking houses such as the Shikarpuri and Multani, which had ties from India to Persia<sup>69</sup>. The representatives of these houses, named *hindikis*, numbered many thousands in the empire<sup>70</sup>. This banking network was also heavily integrated with the Afghan traders who maintained a virtual monopoly over transportation within the borders of the Durrani Empire. The Afghan traders also enjoyed advantages due to their being

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<sup>67</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946, 1969*, Stanford, *Stanford University Press*, p.38

<sup>68</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.70

<sup>69</sup> Shah Mahmud Hanifi, *Connecting Histories: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier*, 2008, Stanford, *Stanford University Edition*, pp.8-11

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

Muslim, which allowed them to enjoy discounted tax rates when compared to Non-Muslims, and of course, although they could not match the Indian banking houses' extensive networking capabilities<sup>71</sup>. The intricate nexus between the Afghan commercial system and the Indian reality made it so that Indian traders and notables became not only tax farmers but also managers of war spoils and finances within the empire. Their position allowed them not only to collect tributes but also sell the war spoils with which many endeavors were financed, ranging from luxury items for the "nobility" to financing wars for the shah. The Durrani Empire was therefore integrated into a living economic system, in which their existence was based upon tribute, booty, and taxes. The tribal nature of the Durrani Empire meant that centralization in the empire was very low since its political legitimacy was heavily dependent on the favors, grants, and wealth Ahmad Shah allocated. For this reason, his empire maintained different political arrangements where his tribe, the Durrani, would be dispensed from paying heavy taxes, and in exchange, the tribes supplied him with the majority of his troops.

Land granting was also based on the ability of the tribe to supply soldiers, and formally the right to possess the land was only attributed via the shah's permission<sup>72</sup>. This system at its core therefore a decentralization of political and military power which held the ruler "responsible" in front of his chiefs. Given the heavy reliance upon tribal levies, the shah's attitude towards non-tribalized populations such as the Tajiks and the Qizilbash was particularly favorable since he could counterbalance the power of the Durrani's notables through them.<sup>73</sup> A vital element to keep the Durrani empire on its feet with. While the Ghilzai Pashtuns were seemingly "content" with their position within the empire and did not cause unrest, also because they did not own any major city center anymore, the Durrani

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<sup>71</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.117

<sup>71</sup> Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, *Connecting Histories: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier*, 2008

<sup>72</sup> P. N. Fedoseyev, *Afghanistan Past and Present*, 1981, Moscow, *USSR Academy of Science*, pp.76-79

<sup>73</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.29

Pashtuns were kept at bay by booty and concessions, although several clans within the Durrani would later contest the hierarchical principle which organized succession in the empire. These present tensions would reveal themselves with the death of Ahmad Shah in 1772. The death of the *Padishah* meant that his son, Timur, would succeed him, but the task that had befallen the new shah was going to prove the beginning of the end for the empire.

### 2.3. The End of the Empire

The decline of the Durrani Empire started with the necessity of Timur Shah to put down several large rebellions within the imperial domains. He seldom ventured outside to wage war, as he was busy fighting internal enemies, therefore, the empire did not expand and gradually the outer provinces, which lacked a solid means of political or administrative control, started to drift away<sup>74</sup>. He also started to rely more and more on his non-Pashtun forces, in particular the Qizilbash soldiers who were the basis of his non-tribal power. As a result of this disengagement, tribal chiefs who were left to their own devices started accumulating more power, and the regions that were on the fringes of the empire, the Amu Darya and the Sind region, became *the facto* independent, leaving Timur Shah only nominally in power<sup>75</sup>. Timur Shah also acknowledged his difficult position and decided to move away from the capital from Qandahar to Kabul, which was outside the tribal influence sphere, where started an attempt at centralizing revenues to strengthen his position.<sup>76</sup> Eventually, Timur Shah left the throne to his son, Zaman Shah.

When Zaman Shah came to the throne, the empire found itself in a different position. On the east, the Sikh Empire, a successor state to the Mughals, was formed in 1779, and on the West, the Qajar had risen to power in 1789. The ascendance of powerful competitors to the Durrani Empire meant that it would find

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<sup>74</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.106

<sup>75</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, 2001, Richmond, p.27

<sup>76</sup> M. N. Shahrani, *State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan*, p.30

itself engaged in wars in order not to lose precious domains. Barfield defined the Durrani empire as a “coat worn inside out” since the wealthiest parts were located outside Afghanistan and were mostly concentrated in Northern India, in particular, Delhi and Kashmir were the richest provinces<sup>77</sup>. Those wealthy provinces had been contested by the Sikh Empire and had lost part of their profitability. To make up for this, Zaman Shah decided to increase taxes over the eastern provinces of the empire and increase the centralization of the empire. While this creeping attempt at centralization was up, Zaman Shah decided also to blind and expel from the court Payinda Khan, his vizier a member of the Barakzai clan of the Durrani tribes as well as viziers and close advisors of the Sadozai emperors. Payinda Khan had been instrumental in the ascension to the throne of Zaman Shah, who had battled his brothers to become shah. The killing of Payinda Khan caused a struggle for power between the Barakzai clan of the Muhammadzais lineage and the Sadozai which precipitated a civil war. The result was that Zaman Shah was executed and, in his place, Shah Shuja was installed. The new shah’s reign was inaugurated with strong sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shias, and this proved to be a fundamental period since it marked the use of religion by leaders for political roles<sup>78</sup>. Although the ulama had a very important role and influence in Afghan society, it marked the beginning of the involvement of the ulama in politics, a constant that will be exploited to incite to fight back against invading forces, as well as toppling down rulers<sup>79</sup>.

Eventually, Shah Mahmud came to the throne in 1809 after the Barakzais deposed Shah Shuja and under his reign, the imperial decline came into full force. Not only the Sadozais and the Barakzais had started a war for the throne after Zaman Shah executed Payinda Khan, but the Sikh Empire did not stand idle and instead attacked the Indian territories of the empire. Punjab, Kashmir, and Sind were lost to the

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<sup>77</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, pp. 99-100

<sup>78</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, London, *Routledge*, p.27

<sup>79</sup> M. N. Shahrani, *State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan*, p.34

Sikhs, while Baluchistan, Afghan Turkestan, Badakshstan, and the Hazarajat were lost to independent khans and chieftains<sup>80</sup>.

This situation caused the empire to fall into a political fragmentation from which it did not recover, as a matter of fact, the Durrani Empire's capital, Kabul, remained the center of power from which impotent shahs assisted in the dissolution of their reign.

The Barakzai brothers started another fight for the throne which left them in possession of different cities independent from one another, such as Qandahar, and Shah Mahmud was toppled down and fled to Herat where he founded an independent principality. The latter also came under attack by the newly founded Qajar Empire, which managed to take the region of Khorasan away from the Durrani. By 1818 the Durrani Empire was reduced to few cities within current Afghanistan's lands since what remained of its Indian possessions was Peshawar and the empire territories had broken up into independent powers<sup>81</sup>.

In a matter of years therefore the Durrani Empire had fallen into a civil war for succession, had been attacked dramatically by two strong opponents, and had lost the most profitable of its provinces. These losses put enormous pressure on state coffers, further contributing to the shifting loyalties of khans, therefore, creating a vicious circle from which the empire never recovered. Military reasons were not the only ones that had generated a crisis, rather it was a series of factors that developed together and brought the end of the Durrani Empire. Wars devastated cities and bazaars, rendering trade routes unsafe and creating an economic division among cities. Starved for revenues local rulers decided to heavily tax the caravans hoping to draw most of their revenues from the payment of customs duties<sup>82</sup>. Furthermore, roads became unsafe, tolls came to be extorted along the way, and

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<sup>80</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, p.74

<sup>81</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.111

<sup>82</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.97

when rulers would find themselves cash-strapped they would not hesitate to extort capital from merchants being them Muslims or not<sup>83</sup>. This combination of elements compelled the traders to search for safer and alternative routes to export their goods, causing the empire's economy to shrink. Another important factor that came into play as well, was the growing presence of the East India Company in India which had a profound impact on the local economy and therefore heavily impacted its trade with Afghanistan.

The East India Company (EIC), reshaped the Indian economy and therefore its banking networks as well according to its needs and revenues, creating a long-lasting crisis between 1820 and 1830. At the end of the crisis managed to keep Indian capital within the peninsula and therefore invest the amount of capital that remained in place rather than circulating, opening new trade routes in which the Durrani Empire was not included and influencing the tastes of the local elites, especially Mughals, which affected the Afghan exports<sup>84</sup>. Given that Afghanistan mainly traded dry fruits, horses, and mercenaries, the socio-political and cultural change that the EIC had brought about in the Indian subcontinent was to reveal itself as decisive in the ulterior decline of the Afghan economy. Mercenaries were not requested since the definitive establishment of an EIC's paramountcy over the successor states of the Mughal Empire rendered mercenary work unnecessary.

This was given by the company's preference to rely on locally drilled and infantry-based armies, which were trained according to British standards and were kept in service for years. For Afghans used to volunteer for mercenary work, it meant the end of remittances and the brewing of new social tensions<sup>85</sup>. The changing tastes of local elites as well as the arrival of many British bureaucrats also meant that some Afghan products like dry fruits were not in demand like in the past anymore and these constituted a large part of the exports together with horses which required

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p.98

<sup>84</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.128

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p.129

large pastures of which India had none<sup>86</sup>. The company's preference for other breeds of horses as well as political and economic reasons meant that this trade declined as well.

Lastly, the new trade routes that the company preferred to maintain were based around the passage through the Persian Gulf, and for this reason, part of the Central Asian trading system fell, ultimately damaging the transit-based Afghan economy. The Chinese and Indian trade route which was created under the company's influence given its monopoly over the Chinese economy also meant that the new trade route followed British-preferred waterways rather than passing from Central Asia, further excluding Afghanistan from regional trade<sup>87</sup>.

Although the company's actions damaged Afghanistan irremediably, British intentions aimed at flooding the empire's markets with British manufactures such as cloth, which would ideally constitute a rival for Russian textile products in the Central Asian region. The EIC tried therefore to influence Afghan bazaars and the political elites of the country with the new trends of consumption that were forming in the colonial territories, as well as redirecting the flow of trade towards the British Raj where they would constitute a new part of the EIC's colonial market.<sup>88</sup>

#### **2.4. Attempts at Centralization**

The fall of the empire by 1818 meant that each Durrani leader would find himself in an impasse from which there was no exit. The Durrani leaders were divided among several important cities and their tribal affiliation would change, as the civil war put an end to the Sadozai actual rule. The Sadozais were the clan that had founded the empire and had relied in the years on the help of the Muhammadzai clan's Barakzai lineage.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.p.128

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.p.4

<sup>88</sup> S. M. Hanifi, *Connecting Histories: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier*, 2008, p.35

The Barakzais, having entered a strong conflict with the Sadozais in 1800 after their leader, Payinda Khan, had been executed by Zaman Shah, managed to control Kabul when Dost Muhammad Khan tightened his grip over the Kabul with the help of the Qizilbash in 1818. In 1823 the Muhammadzais finally decided to stop using the name of the Sadozai as an excuse for their own ventures and officially claimed power, although the hierarchical nature of the Durrani would only allow the Sadozais to be claimants to kingship<sup>89</sup>.

In 1826 Dost Muhammad Khan finally assumed control of Kabul but did not attempt to make himself viewed as shah. As a matter of fact, he reigned over what was called the Kingdom of Kabul, which still owned some external possessions, namely Peshawar, but otherwise was greatly reduced when compared to the Durrani Empire. He instead assumed the title of emir, which did not imply a direct link to the hierarchical succession to the Sadozai-founded empire. The rise of power of Dost Muhammad Khan was not particularly easy, not only because the claim to power proved to be particularly arduous and inter-tribal struggles were the common norm, but because the kingdom's ability to gather revenues was severely impeded by the lack of territories and the "social pact" which had been present for most of the Durrani empire's existence. India and her rich provinces provided many revenues to the empire, which in turn allowed the shahs not to engage in violent disputes with their tribal khans, therefore keeping the understanding that the Durrani were privileged within the Pashtun organizational hierarchy and that minorities like the Qizilbash, given their important role in both bureaucracies and the military, they served as the bodyguards and functionaries of the shahs, would be well paid<sup>90</sup>.

The scarcity of revenues forced the empire to violate this non-written agreement and extort taxes with methods that would not tell them apart from a pillaging army<sup>91</sup>. These attempts at centralization had not been unknown to the Durrani

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<sup>89</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.15

<sup>90</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.98

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.* p.111

Empire, since after the death of Ahmad Shah his successor had tried to concentrate in their hands part of the lands, helped by the fact that the land was the king's domain and only he had the ability to distribute it.

Dost Muhammad Khan's efforts to centralize previous imperial lands became partially successful, although the expansion of his emirate proved to be the reason for the end of his first period as a ruler. The reason does not lie in his internal politics, which although had been characterized by intrigues, shifting loyalties even among his troops, and a long-standing battle against the Sadozai's legitimacy to the throne, had mostly been successful, proven by the conquest of Jalalabad, Ghazni, and the defeat of Shah Shuja's attempt at getting back the throne at Qandahar in 1838.

The appointment of trusted figures to the government of the cities was also relatively simple, with only Ghazni proving to be harder to manage but eventually being fully incorporated by 1837<sup>92</sup>. The amount of revenues of Dost Muhammad Khan had also steadily increased, and while well below the total that the empire collected at the nadir of his time, it was a substantial increase from the relatively meagre introits of only the holdings of Kabul.

Meanwhile, the Sikhs, having been prevented from expanding into Indian territory because of the paramountcy of the Company, directed their efforts westward in an attempt to gain possession of Peshawar. The city was held by Dost Muhammad's brother, but after a brief battle in 1834, it was lost by the Sikhs who installed a governorship. Peshawar became a major point of contention between Dost Muhammad Khan's will to regain lost territories and the Sikhs. Since the matter had turned to a stalemate the Afghan emir decided to have the British advocate for his cause<sup>93</sup>. This matter however could not be easily settled for a series of reasons which were both related to the company's own calculus over its relationships with both the emir and the Sikh emperor, as well as a matter of Sikh expansionism which

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<sup>92</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan, 1973*, Princeton, *Princeton University*, p.370

<sup>93</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.114

had to be checked and lastly Russian contacts with the Emirate of Kabul<sup>94</sup>. The British decision to go to war with Afghanistan has been analyzed from many perspectives, ranging from poor decision-making, little comprehension of the events unfolding, structural reasons why the company eventually supported an invasion plan, and the actual plan of the EIC to expand its trade into Afghan lands by opening the navigation in the Indus River and monopolizing the trade from to and out of India. However, the decision-making process that brought the empire to fight Dost Muhammad Khan lies outside the scope of this thesis, but the effects that this war played on both social structures (Islam and the tribes), as well as the impact of British colonial administration are important to explain the subsequent events in Afghanistan.

## 2.5. The Anglo-Afghan War

When the war broke out the British armies quickly dispatched the forces of the Emirate of Kabul. The strength of the limited emirate was not sufficient to match the British in battle and the war took a radical turn when in August 1839 the British arrived at the outskirts of Kabul forcing Dost Muhammad to flee. The war which had started in April seemingly ended with Shah Shuja's reinstatement to the throne in August of the same year, *de facto* bringing back the Sadozai primacy over the realm. In 1840, after Dost Muhammad Khan managed to reorganize with first a contingent of Uzbek troops and later on Kohistani Tajiks, the Afghan emir faced the British in two battles, the last one a battle in the north of Kabul was won by the emir, though after the victory he presented himself to the British camp and subsequently surrendered. This led to the strengthening of Shah Shuja's position which was already seemingly solid given the fact that ascension to the throne in the Durrani Empire had been a matter solely reserved to the Sadozai lineage. The fact that the Muhammadzais had taken over the throne was accepted but the legacy laid on shaky foundations when compared to the descendants of Ahmad Shah<sup>95</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.79

<sup>95</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.16

The British campaign did not end up in a victory, rather it became a total fiasco from which very few troops came back alive. Compounded on the military disaster, the British attempts to restructure Afghanistan to suit their interests were not a particularly successful endeavor either. As a matter of fact, Shah Shuja's return to the throne had been sought by the EIC, although the figure of the shah quickly became associated with foreign domination, leading to discontent among the Afghans regarding their situation<sup>96</sup>. Shah Shuja's insistence over the need to obtain more resources, which were siphoned off EIC's coffers, eventually after a series of rebuttals led the company to directly take command of Afghanistan's resources and reorganize both its military and finances as well as its trading system<sup>97</sup>. Seemingly an attempt to warden off Russian presence from Afghanistan, the mission became a full-blown colonial endeavor, which saw the coming of personnel from India, the establishment of British-style locales as well as the settling down of the wives of both the officials and the military officers<sup>98</sup>. British endeavors to render Afghanistan's polity suitable to colonization involved a series of areas, in particular among the most important was the revenue collection which not only impacted the way the kingdom would gather its resources later on but also its relationship with the tribes. Kabul was seen not only as the political capital of the kingdom but also imagined as the most important location within the trading system of the country, which the capital had given its central role in the transit economy<sup>99</sup>. For this reason, Kabul's customs house saw its role amplified since revenue collecting was centered upon this office, and road and passage tolls that were in the hands of local notables were transferred to Kabul<sup>100</sup>.

At the same time, the Company's officials envisioned a way through which taxes could be collected and put into "trustworthy" hands. It happened to be that the tax

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<sup>96</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1973, p.378

<sup>97</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.66

<sup>98</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, 2001, Richmond, p.48

<sup>99</sup> S. M. Hanifi, *Connecting Histories: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier*, 2008, p.16

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem*.

farmers chosen for the occasion were Indian commercial brokers and traders, who were tasked with their new role given their important position within the central Asian trade and by virtues of this connection, were also important in establishing a new form of the colonial economy within the kingdom<sup>101</sup>. The Company's efforts extended to spread its own currency in Afghan lands, although such an endeavor eventually failed because of the hasty retreat as well as the complicity of such an operation.

Together with financial restructuring, which also underlined the removal from office of previous shah's officials, the British undertook a military restructuring of the shah's forces. In particular, the British recognized the importance of having a military force solely faithful to the shah rather than sporting tribal allegiances<sup>102</sup>.

For this reason, the occupants reorganized the Afghan forces along standardized military outfits which were responsible only to the shah and directly financially dependent on the coffers of the state. These units were better paid and provided a continued service compared to the tribal cavalry which was only mustered in times of need<sup>103</sup>.

Although this continued alongside the lines of Dost Muhammad's previous intentions, this maneuver caused unrest among tribal chiefs, as the tribal cavalry contingent was not only a military outfit but also a way for the chiefs to receive payments according to the number of cavalymen supplied<sup>104</sup>. Therefore, despite these irregular units not being effective on the battlefield, given the dramatic technological and therefore organizational changes, these contingents represented a way for the chiefs to keep getting payments for a service that was at best obsolete. Restructuring the military and reducing the spending allocated for these

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p.27

<sup>102</sup> M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, Vol.27, No.2, p.339

<sup>103</sup> Ibidem

<sup>104</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, 2001, Richmond, p.47

units caused political unrest, therefore, not for the centralized effort itself, but rather for the lifeline that was being interrupted. The tribal chiefs were also on the losing side of the progressive centralizing efforts, as the Kabul customs house had assumed new functions in the taxation of traders and Indian tax farmers were becoming part of the state administrative machine<sup>105</sup>. Political attempts at isolating them were also taking place since the British put figures they trusted in the state machinery and quickly concentrated political power in their hands. Together with this, the Tory government in 1841 decided to reduce the level of public spending, which meant that the Company decided to decrease the amount of money allocated to its Afghan adventure as well.

The consequence was that tribal chiefs saw their pensions reduced greatly, although they still received more than they would get under Dost Muhammad and entered a state of unrest.<sup>106</sup> This tribal agitation was also compounded by the economic effects that the occupation forces brought on centers like Kabul and Kandahar, where together with behavioral codes that were alien to Afghan society, they also drove prices of primary goods upwards given a large number of troops and inflation became rampant all over the city centers<sup>107</sup>. Among the discontented with the occupation, there was also the ulama which was divided into two fields. One was heavily subsidized by the British side and was being co-opted into the colonial governance, the other, remained outside the patronage and was the one that bore the brunt of the economic crisis as well as the British interference with administrative and judicial matters<sup>108</sup>.

The war was far from being a full-blown nationalist revolution, although in the revolt Tajiks, Uzbeks, Pashtuns, etc. participated, it was a fragmented operation that struggled to keep a united front and eventually managed to have a semblance

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<sup>105</sup> S. M. Hanifi, *Connecting Histories: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier*, 2008, p.27

<sup>106</sup> M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964,

<sup>107</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.120

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*p.121

of unity under the banners of jihad. This is because several tribes had different arrangements with the British, and therefore different treatments were in place. For this reason, it is important to notice that the first to rebel were not the Pashtuns as a whole, but the Ghilzais, who did not like the presence of British troops on Afghan soil, their ruling with Shah Shuja and the diminishment in power they had assisted to because of British policies. The first event happened when the British government under Disraeli decided that public spending had to be reduced and therefore the Company reduced the allowances it paid to the chiefs as well. Together with rampant inflation caused by the invasion, the Turan Ghilzai chiefs saw their tenure of life diminished, and the number of followers they could keep decreased as well.

Therefore, they organized in September 1841, declared jihad, and occupied several passages in the road Gandomak-Kabul, it is however important to notice that not all the chiefs revolted<sup>109</sup>. The British intervention was successful, but in the middle of negotiations the greater Kabul revolt started, and the Ghilzai became only one part of the bigger picture. The Kabul rebellion started on the second of November, and swelled quickly, to the point where religious figures called for jihad and a mob started sacking and killing British soldiers and officials. An assembly of tribal chiefs, independent ulema, mostly brotherhoods' headsmen, Barakzai nobles, Qizilbash chiefs, and court nobles came together and decided to revolt, following a mail that allegedly said that the British government intended to deport the tribal chiefs to India<sup>110</sup>. The mail was not the only cause, but a series of reforms that the British army had brought about was the main driver of the unrest. The institutionalization of infantry and cavalry corps belonging directly to the shah, although under British control and pay, the diminution of payments to the chiefs, the reorganization of the tolls and road fees, as well as the interference in the official affairs of the ulama, together with rampant inflation became the main reason why they rebelled<sup>111</sup>. The

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<sup>109</sup> M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964, p.335

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.p.338

<sup>111</sup> Ibidem.

creation of the Janbaz and Hazirbash, put in danger the revenues that the chiefs were granted by their land holdings in accordance with the number of cavalymen supplied<sup>112</sup>. As the British reports had referred, the irregular cavalry was a means by which the chiefs would siphon money off the shah rather than an effectual fighting force<sup>113</sup>. For this reason, when the payments allocated to the cavalry diminished and the chiefs complained, the British officials stated that their function was about to be over since the new regular corps would substitute them<sup>114</sup>. British-supported officials also took charge of affairs in Kabul, revamping old rivalries as these new officials exploited their position to prop up their family power. Following this reason, after several clashes over the Janbaz and Hazirbash, the chiefs gained possession of the mail and decided to rebel in September. When the rebels assembled, Tajiks, Ghilzai, and Durrani Pashtuns led by religious leaders and tribal chiefs started the rebellion, although the unity of the rebels quickly shattered after a series of defeats and money started to become scarce. Muhammad Akbar, Dost Muhammad's son, arrived just in time to reorganize the rebel front and open a negotiation with the British in which he asked for immediate withdrawal while besieging the British cantonment in Kabul<sup>115</sup>. This position was not however liked by the other chiefs, who feared that this may have led to another Barakzai primacy and therefore entered secret negotiations with the British army, receiving bribes and abandoning the rebellion<sup>116</sup>. When eventually under the agreement the British troops left Kabul, and were ambushed and massacred along the way, this left the field open for inter-tribal struggles, with the Popalzais and the Barakzais contending for the throne and important figures such as Mir Hajiji, a religious man with vast follow, to enter Kabul's politics and eventually reach a temporary agreement. The importance of Mir Hajiji to the coalition cannot be underestimated, as he had vast

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<sup>112</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, 2001, Richmond, p.49

<sup>113</sup> M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964, p.339

<sup>114</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>115</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History*, 2001, Richmond, p.49

<sup>116</sup> M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964, p.348

influence over the Kabuli artisans and bazaaris, as well as over the Tajiks of Kohistan, given by his family *sayyid* heritage, representing one of the figures outside the official religious hierarchy, that wielded great power in Afghan society<sup>117</sup>. As a matter of fact, the renewed calls to jihad and fights against the British were done by mullahs who would roam the villages calling the tribesmen to the holy war<sup>118</sup>. This was also accompanied by Muhammad Akbar's heavy religious tone, hell-bent on destroying the British and dislodging them from Jalalabad. The ranks of the opposition grew restless as also Muhammad Akbar was defeated in Jalalabad and entered negotiations with the British army for the release of his family and his father. In the background of this struggle, the Sadozai-Barakzai dispute went on, with the killing of Shah Shuja and the nomination as emir of his son, Fath Jang, who found himself powerless in intrigues to gain the throne by several rivals among whom Muhammad Akbar was one of the prime figures. It is interesting that in the rivalry for the throne, the Qizilbash garrison of Fath Jang, together with Mir Hajiji, made a proposal in favor of Fath Jang, only for sectarian violence be threatened by both the Saddozais and the Barakzais in case the Qizilbash would not accept Fath Jang surrender of the royal palace<sup>119</sup>. Only for part of the Barakzais to side with the Qizilbash against the possible takeover of Muhammad Akbar, and Mir Hajiji calling for the British to help against a possible Barakzai conquest of Kabul. Eventually, Muhammad Akbar's ability and support from Ghilzai troops allowed him to wrestle control out of his Barakzai and Sadozai opponents, and this was helped when his most important rival, the Barakzai Zaman Shah, asked the chiefs and ulama to read his name as shah, but when asked to go fight the British he refused, while Muhammad Akbar rekindled the flames of revolt. Although the rebellion in Kabul was determining, it took place in Ghazni and Qandahar as well. While in Ghazni, startled by a religious leader, the insurrection drove the British out of the city, in Qandahar the matter was more complicated given the balance of power between

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p.339

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.p.363

<sup>119</sup> Ibidem.

Ghilzai and Durrani, as well as the presence of the Hazaras<sup>120</sup>. Ata Muhammad, the leader of the rebellion, appealing to religious rhetoric managed to get the tribesmen to be in favor of a revolt when their chiefs were more perplexed about the outcome. The news that Shah Shuja officially endorsed the revolt was received with relief and pushed many to join the rebel cause. On the second of February, a government was set up and chiefs swore in front of an important mullah "Huzrutjee"<sup>121</sup>. The rebellion, however, did not generate much enthusiasm, in many districts, it did not manage to raise more than hundreds and subsequently, the Indian troops defeated the rebels and restored order. Several attempts at conquering the city failed, and an army raised by a Barakzai chief started to raid the villages of those chiefs sympathetic to the British. The want of supplies forced the rebel troops to plunder and pillage the Farsiwan villages which had been plundered already by the Ghilzais and caused hostility between villagers and the *ghazis*. As reported, the ulama started fearing the rebel troops as much as the British<sup>122</sup>. Eventually the British retreated from Qandahar in August and left the city to the Saddozais. Causing yet another struggle between Saddozais and Barakzais for control of the city. Eventually, even though Muhammad Akbar was successful, the "Army of Vengeance" of the British defeated once again the coalition in battle and conquered Kabul, leaving a weak government in place led by Emir Sharpur, brother of Fath Jang, supported by the opponents of Muhammad Akbar and retreated hastily. The retreat of the British from all Afghan territory spelled the end of the war together with the release of Dost Muhammad Khan, who settled again in Kabul and was nominated emir once again.

## **2.6. The Consequences of the Anglo-Afghan War**

The first Anglo-Afghan showed how fragile was the legacy that the Durrani Empire had left, not only in terms of military capability but also in terms of social structure.

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<sup>120</sup> M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964, p.366

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*368

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*371

The first reign of Dost Muhammad Khan was an attempt at making up for these deficiencies of which the emir was very aware given the rump state he had to govern compared to the extension of the Durrani Empire only a few years before his coming to power. Militarily the reforms of Dost Muhammad Khan had been inspired by his clashes with the Sikhs, which compared to the Afghans had proven receptive towards new techniques and weapons. This military revolution that took place in Central Asia, the Middle East, as well as the Indian subcontinent, started when many soldiers and officers found themselves unemployed after the fall of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo<sup>123</sup>. Many officers and aspiring adventurers who did not have the possibility to advance their ranks in their respective armies decided to try their luck by traveling around the world and offering their services to various rulers. These officers found fertile terrain in the Indian subcontinent where two happenings had made this military change possible, first the dissolution of the Mughal Empire and the birth of its successor states, the arrival of the Company, and the presence of an established military tradition<sup>124</sup>.

Both Afghans and the inhabitants of India were renowned for their military prowess and their seeking of fortune through military means. This combination of factors had rendered change inevitable as new technologies also required the states to modify their social contract, rendering landholding progressively obsolete as the cavalry's role declined and masses of infantrymen took their place as the main protagonists of battles. Dost Muhammad had already noticed the disparity in terms of discipline between his levies and a driller army when fighting the better-organized Sikh units which had a high level of organization and discipline thanks to the presence of French officers<sup>125</sup>.

Dost Muhammad after the Anglo-Afghan war did so too, recruiting French officers, Company deserters, and "*Hindustanis*" who had been recruited and drilled under

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<sup>123</sup>B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, pp.70-73

<sup>124</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>125</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969,

the Company's arms. Given the structure of Pashtun society, it was particularly hard for Dost Muhammad to create such a military equivalent, not because of the inability to do so, a small corps of soldiers drilled according to European war precepts existed already, but because landholders coincided with tribal chiefs, which meant that withdrawing concessions would destabilize tribal agreements as well as causing infights between the ruler and the tribes<sup>126</sup>.

For this reason, under British invasion, the formation of new corps was directly financed through the Company's coffers giving *de facto* independence to the new regular soldiers. In his second reign, therefore, the number of soldiers directly under the dependence of the emir as well as drilled by European standards increased considerably. This pattern however did not concern only Afghanistan or India, but also Persia, with which the Afghan emir would have to clash until the last years of his reign<sup>127</sup>.

To conclude, the war revealed many weaknesses, that hampered the Afghans' ability to defeat the British Empire. In fact, the Afghan social structure was unable to be cohesive in the face of external danger, infighting, and claims to the throne, as well as the constant shifting of alliances, which caused them not to enjoy a stable coalitions vis a vis the British. However, as a matter of fact, the Company decided to retreat from Afghanistan given the high cost of maintaining a direct intervention in place rather than a proper defeat on the battlefield. This latter element also proved how needed the modernization of the tribal levies was, and that the switching from a tribal *ad hoc* mustered army needed the change from a diffuse situation of *sovereignty* to one in which the central authority would be able to muster as many resources as necessary to face such challenges. The *whip of necessity* was, therefore, an ever-present issue that would also plague the attempts at centralizing authority. The necessary ideological framework through which to make sure that

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<sup>126</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.135

<sup>127</sup> S. Cronin, *Importing Modernity: European Military Missions to Qajar Iran*, 2008, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.50, No.1, p.204

such a change was accepted was not also provided by any secular ideology but by religion.. The lack of constant contact and the indecision among the rebel cadre was synonymous with a lack of a bigger political project that would envelop not only the provinces under the control of the emir, Kabul, Qandahar, and Ghazni but also the entire country<sup>128</sup>.

## **2.7. Modernization and Centralization and The Second Anglo-Afghan War**

Although the war had proven the inability of the decentralized and patrimonial emirate to face better-organized opponents, Dost Muhammad's project to revitalize his fragile state and recover lands did not succeed in terms of structuring an organized state that would supersede the tribal and loose binds that held the emirate. Dost Muhammad may be classified as one of the last patrimonial rulers of the Durrani, as his son, Sher Ali, would try to implement different practices to bring about a stronger centralization<sup>129</sup>. Dost Muhammad after the war had found its emirate in a better position in terms of organization as the reorganization that the British realized improved Kabul's financial situation, but much like the invaders had experienced for themselves, the tribal links were still strong after the war. For this reason, Dost Muhammad tried to centralize all power into the hands of his restricted and most trusted relatives, passing power and fortunes onto the hands of his son and granting them land as well as military units<sup>130</sup>. This empowered the Barakzai's claim to the throne by the facto excluding the Sadozais and concentrating the actual strength of the emirate into the hands of a restricted circle close to the emir. Did this also mean that his sons had the power to challenge their father's decisions, although this never happened despite Muhammad Akbar's warring claims to take back lost territories of the Durrani empire<sup>131</sup>. This move, therefore,

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<sup>128</sup>M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964, pp.380-381

<sup>129</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.135

<sup>130</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.59

<sup>131</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1973, Princeton, p.409

strengthened the Barakzai's position vis a vis other Durranis but set the preconditions for yet another civil war among Durranis.

Dost Muhammad had also taken a cue from his experience from his war against the British and the organization of Shah Shuja's forces under the British empire. He set out to form small units of soldiers drilled according to European standards who had Persian, Indian, or European personnel overseeing their training. Although these units remained fairly small in size, they proved to be the nucleus of the more modern Afghan regular forces. These outfits according to the tribal organization were set out to be distributed among his sons who also managed the irregulars and the levies in case of war<sup>132</sup>. The expansion of the regular forces also set up an interesting precedent which was the collaboration between the emirate and the British Empire, since the British side supplied Dost Muhammad with small allowances to acquire weapons and to organize his army. This was triggered by Persian advances on Herat, which was an independent city under the Sadozai administration<sup>133</sup>. The fact that the Persians had been supported by the Russians during their attempts aroused the British administration's fears that they had been losing ground to the Russians who would then set foot in Afghanistan. For this reason, they decided to supply the Afghan side to support Herat against Qajar attacks, providing ammo, rifles, money, and supervisors to oversee how the help was being utilized<sup>134</sup>.

Throughout these events, another pattern started to emerge once again, the impossibility of reform within the emirate given the lack of revenues and therefore also the need to rely upon patrimonial organizations to sustain its life. This understanding showed its shortcomings when in 1863 Dost Muhammad died, leaving the emirate in a civil war among his sons. Sher Ali who emerged victorious

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<sup>132</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.259

<sup>133</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.249

<sup>134</sup> Ibidem.

became the next ruler and also the one who would be dispossessed by the British of his throne like his father.

When Dost Muhammad came to power his reign had recently sustained the difficulties of the Anglo-Afghan war, with the economy in ruins and inflation rampant, pillage and plunder at the hands of the British coalition as well as tribal armies, and of course, the death toll that the war had taken, but when Sher Ali took over, the situation was different. Although a civil war had broken out, it was only among brothers and did not turn into infighting among different lineages of the Durrani Barakzais and Sadozais, it was limited to those who had the right to access the throne as the son of the deceased emir. The situation, therefore, was much more stable than it had been in the past and greatly favored Sher Ali's first serious attempts at creating a centralized structure. The first endeavors of the emir were directed towards building a stronger army that would have been directly responsible to him. The emir before the outbreak of the second war with the British had almost 60 thousand soldiers at his disposal and had started capital accumulation in Kabul through the deployment of workshops that produce military-grade equipment<sup>135</sup>. This brought about a drastic modernization of an army largely dependent on levies and irregulars. Together with this, there was an attempt at creating a military "caste" composed of Barakzai nobles, who would have to replace their court functions with military duties, although this attempt eventually was unsuccessful<sup>136</sup>. The strengthening of the Afghan army was not carried out only by Afghan forces alone, the British Empire decided to invest in the effort as well, sending almost 1.4 million rupees, ammo, and weapons to the emir<sup>137</sup>. The creation of this army required an officer corps and therefore also structure to form officers and a shared medium of communication. This medium was found in Pashto, which became the official language of the army and the civil servants<sup>138</sup>. Through a series

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<sup>135</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, Leiden, Brill, p.17

<sup>136</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>137</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, pp.87-88

<sup>138</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, p.18

of academies aspiring functionaries and officers learned their disciplines not in Farsi as it had been custom in the Sadozai courts but in Pashto. Farsi became considered “borrowed feathers”<sup>139</sup>.

The modernization effort required a substantial increase in revenues which meant that taxation was increased and the method through which taxes were collected was perfected. Districts came to be organized along ethnic lines and several new taxes were introduced, a state council with ministerial functions was launched and a state school was also built. Together with this, the first Afghan periodical *Shams al-Nahar* was published<sup>140</sup>. Through this period Sher Ali managed to increase its influence over cities and their dependencies since the formation of modernized armed forces and the substantial increase in revenue had permitted the emir to become more independent vis a vis the Muhammadzai princes and tribal chiefs<sup>141</sup>. This centralization process was then again stopped in its tracks by another foreign intervention, that of the British army once again. The relationship between the British Empire and the emirate in the thirty years that passed between the two wars had not been negative, on the contrary, some steps had been taken towards normalization a full recognition of the emirate had never taken place. In 1855 and 1857 the British side and the Afghan one held two meetings which were concluded with the signing of a treaty. This latter date was particularly important since in 1857 the Indian Mutiny had occurred, and the ulama had been calling for an intervention in India<sup>142</sup>. However, the emir conscious of British strength and his past encounters with their army decided not to get involved in a war he may have lost, although as British sources would later recall, an Afghan victory would have been possible. Due to the emir’s non-intervention, the British decided to “reward” him with the promise not to interfere in the domestic affairs of the emirate, to be enemies of the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>140</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1973, Princeton, p.405

<sup>141</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, p.20

<sup>142</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, p.84

emir's enemies, the same was also expected of the emir, and to supply the emirate with weapons and rupees for as long as the war with the Qajars kept on going on<sup>143</sup>.

This policy however came to an end with Russian expansionism and Russian diplomatic engagement with the emirate. The "Forward Policy" as it came to be known, was the strategy that supported the idea that to stabilize relations with Russia a "scientific frontier" had to be drawn, leading the British empire into a second war with the emirate in 1878<sup>144</sup>. It was a matter of fact, that a Russian mission to Kabul that aroused British fears prompted the empire to ask Sher Ali to accept a British mission as a counterbalance. Since Sher Ali was unable to send the Russian mission away, the British issued an ultimatum, but on the emir's refusal, they decided to invade the country<sup>145</sup>.

The war was different from the others, in the sense that this time was a higher preparation in the British army and more awareness compared to the mistakes made 40 years earlier. After a series of battles, the British forces occupied Ghazni, Qandahar, and Kabul and eventually, much like in the past settled in Kabul at the royal palace<sup>146</sup>. The treaty of Gandomak of 1879 marked the entrance of Afghanistan under the British sphere of influence, since under the norms of the treaty, the British Empire had control over the foreign policy of the country as well as integrated it into the free trade zone of India<sup>147</sup>. Sher Ali died of illness in 1879 in exile, and his place was taken by Yakub Khan, who signed every proposal the British submitted, *de facto* becoming a puppet. The British aims did not stop there, as some of the official voices asked for Afghanistan to be integrated within Indian territories, and Cavignari, a British noble, was sent to Kabul where he became the

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<sup>143</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1973, Princeton p.402

<sup>144</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.140

<sup>145</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>146</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, p.29

<sup>147</sup> Ibidem.

unofficial ruler, although Afghanistan was to keep its internal sovereignty as the treaty had promised<sup>148</sup>.

It was once again the Afghans, this time led by Afghan soldiers whose pay was in an arroy that took to the streets and sacked the royal palace killing the British delegation and Cavignari. The death of Cavignari prompted a British revenge that materialized under the occupation of Kabul when General Roberts ordered the killing of anyone who had partaken in the insurrection as well as the arrest of Yakub Khan and his family and their deportation to India<sup>149</sup>. This caused another great insurrection in Afghanistan, led by Kohistani Tajiks and Ghilzai Pashtuns. Their large army did not manage to take Kabul, it instead went to Ghazni where it set its headquarters and officially became known as the "National Party"<sup>150</sup>. This mobilization was realized through the ulama, which after the arrest of the shah, decided to call for jihad, especially in Kohistan, Ghazni, and Kabul<sup>151</sup>. The resultant leadership was drawn both from tribal chiefs and ulama, Mullah Din Muhammad, the most important *pir* in the Hindu Kush region, became the spiritual leader of the revolt, Mullah Mushk-I Alam declared jihad in Ghazni and moved to Kabul together with an army of tribal levies<sup>152</sup>. Alam became the commander of the forces in Kabul and battled the British when he forced them to the cantonment of Sharpur and prevented General Stewart from entering Kabul. It was the unexpected arrival of Abdul Rahman, with Russian aid, that changed the situation and led to a compromise in which he was nominated emir with British consensus as well, thereby changing Afghan history once again.

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<sup>148</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>149</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.142

<sup>150</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>151</sup> S. Nawid, *The State, The Clergy, and the British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, 1997, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.29, No.4, p.590

<sup>152</sup> S. Nawid, *The State, The Clergy, and the British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, 1997, p.590, M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, p.34

## 2.8. From Empire to *Centralized Emirate*

The building of the Afghan state underwent several different moments, each one carrying and bringing a different understanding of the nature of the state and the source of its legitimacy. As mentioned before, the birth of the Afghan state is not imputable to processes that had arisen from a single dynasty claiming the right to power, rather it was based on an understanding which was based on the tribal links of the shah to his chieftains. The Durrani leader Ahmad Shah was a shah but one with limited powers, whose ability to keep the entire confederacy together relied upon the conquest of new lands. Therefore, revenues and wealth were redistributed according to military success as well, therefore, the ability of the shah rested upon his charisma to bring about military conquest and new ventures, as well as his ability to redistribute booty and grants wisely<sup>153</sup>. Ahmad Shah had inherited all these characteristics, although one of the early problems that the Durrani had to cope with was immediately identified with the striding dissonance between an egalitarian society which was that of the Pashtuns, and the hierarchy that had been created among the Durranis. The Durranis had inherited throughout the time the structure typical of the Safavids and Afsharids, making their livelihood reliant on booty and having an internal hierarchy that determined which lineages were “suitable” for power<sup>154</sup>. The Durrani in the new empire founded by Ahmad Shah formed a sort of warrior “caste” since the role of the Durrani *sardars* was that of supplying soldiers to the shah’s enterprises, and in exchange receiving part of the booty and of course land-grants. This understanding, however, was not generalized to all the Pashtuns, since among the different tribes there was a different social stratification and role<sup>155</sup>. The Ghilzais under Ahmad Shah were those who paid the taxes, while under Dost Muhammad formed the core of his armies. The different agreements were also dependent on the physical positioning of the tribe. The closer to the center, the more the possibility that it would be subjected to more control

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<sup>153</sup> M. N. Shahrani, *State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan*, p.31

<sup>154</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.98

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*p.99

and become more hierarchical. On the contrary, tribes that remained outside the range of the cities or in more remote places remained faithful to their egalitarian nature and found themselves in a struggle with the state<sup>156</sup>. It was the relationship between the state and tribe that therefore influenced each other and empowered or weakened groups, although, throughout history, the Durranis remained the main “state builders”. The common link between the state and the tribe, evident even when the title of the shah was dropped in favor of the emir, was that the legitimacy was still resting on tribal consideration<sup>157</sup>. Although the shah was considered *primus inter pares* among several chiefs, the conception of the emir was still reliant on tribal consensus. *Pashtunwali*, the code that regulated the public and private life of the Pashtuns, was still the accepted framework, together with Sharia, under which the relationship between the ruler and the chieftains had to be mediated<sup>158</sup>. Islam and the *Pashtunwali* were therefore not opposed to each other, but formed a complementary system in which they modified and sometimes overrode each other<sup>159</sup>. The source of power came still from God, but this sanctioning was not operated by the ulama alone, but through the consensus of the jirga, namely the *sardars* who acknowledged the operate and the right of the emir. Therefore, the role of a *jirga* in determining the “fitness” of a ruler to govern was still instrumental, although, of course, this role may have been more cosmetic rather than effective in certain cases<sup>160</sup>. Also, the ability of Islam to overcome the borders of the tribes and unite the Muslims irrespectively of their own *qawn* was of great importance given the strong binding and the role of the ulama in the country.

This intricate web was complicated by polygamy, which was sanctioned by Islam and heavily encouraged by the tribal system since the politics of marriage

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<sup>156</sup> Z.T. Sungur, *Early Modern State Formation in Afghanistan in Relation to Pashtun Tribalism*, 2016, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol.16, No.3, p.439

<sup>157</sup> A. Olsen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 1995, Abington, *Routledge*, p.34

<sup>158</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>160</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.88

determined alliances with different lineages and the strengthening of one's position. For this reason, the great number of sons that were born out of several rulers proved always a problematic issue for the dying rulers, as not only the rulership was given according to the level of preference according to one's wife, but also to the *qawn* and ethnicity<sup>161</sup>. This system as shown by Afghan history came under intense pressure when the promises of booty did not materialize, and the outside environment made plunder a hard task the shortcomings of such an arrangement became evident with the civil war that left the empire divided in a constellation of khanates and potentates.

In this system, the legitimization provided by the *jirga*, and Islam was therefore central to one's ability to rule, but it also restricted the consensus on who has the right to rule solely on Pashtuns, given their historical importance. It is therefore not a surprise that when the First Anglo-Afghan War broke out the ability to wage a "national" war was not only severely hindered, but rested on a complicated nexus of antipathies, privileges, and disunity and was mostly overcome through the appeal of *jihad*. The First Anglo-Afghan War therefore while showing a "national" character, given the participation of almost all the ethnic groups in the fight, was far from being a nationalist one, as the legitimization was still resting on the hands of Islam and tribal chieftains were the main force that mobilized thousands of soldiers. The role of Islam as a sanctifying force that turned war into a cross-sectarian affair is to be understood through understanding the importance of Islam in Afghanistan. The structure of Islam was not centralized as that of the Catholic Church, it was much looser, and religious leadership was formed by a mixture of ulama, *pirs*, and so on<sup>162</sup>. The personnel who had received religious training was in charge of much of the administration and were both sanctioned by the state or played an official role without the state's legitimization. Figures like the *Mullah Bashi* provided a direct connection between the mullahs and the ruler, the *Shayk al-Islam*

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<sup>161</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.12

<sup>162</sup> O. Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 1990, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.30

administered stipends and pensions of the mullahs in accordance with the local governors and *Sadrs*, who were akin to magistrates, administered religious land by the king's order<sup>163</sup>. These figures were state bound as were the figures of judges and those involved with judicial matters as well as enforcing public morals and controlling the adherence to the Sharia norms<sup>164</sup>. These state employees were not alone in the sense that a certain number of independent religious figures were present and exercised great influence as well. People like the *sayyid*, said to be descendants of the prophet held great sway on people, as did figures like the *pir*, people who held religious descent and possessed esoteric knowledge gained through initiation in Sufi orders or through inherited *Barakat* (a kind of spiritual power)<sup>165</sup>. Scores of independent scholars and teachers and "priests" were also present. Most of the *mullahs* working as *imams* had rudimentary religious training from a local *madrasa* or lower-ranking *maktab*. Sufi centers and mosques, as well as independent schools of religious learning and shrines, constellated the panorama of Islam in Afghanistan, creating a powerful network as well as providing the tool through which to understand the world for the majority of the people<sup>166</sup>.

This world was not only dependent on state salary but was self-sufficient. The religious endowments constituted an economic powerbase of the independent orders that provided revenues and power, as well as a powerful tool for the rulers who co-opted independent scholars through the promise of pension of endowment, creating the fact a self-sufficient world that held a monopoly over education, judicial matters, and public life<sup>167</sup>. This variety of figures was not however equal in the sharing of power, a family of *sayyids* could have been very rich and the *pirs* could have thousands of devotees which meant power. Families of *sayyids* were

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<sup>163</sup> A. Olsen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 1995, p.37

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. p.38

<sup>165</sup> O. Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 1990, Cambridge, p.30

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.p.34

<sup>167</sup> A. Olsen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*,1995, p.38

also important as they married members of the Afghan royal family<sup>168</sup>. The role of the tribe and that of Islam was therefore of paramount importance in society, but these two were more than just the sum of their parts. It was as a matter of fact, through the role of Islamic officials and *mullahs*, who were outside the tribal structure, that the tribes found their common unity in times of need. The *mullahs* were never considered within the structure, as Roy said, a son of a khan could not become a *mullah*, they were either below or above it.<sup>169</sup> Their ability was to negotiate between the different lineages by using the power derived from their status as religious figures.

This made them negotiators and conjunction points that could cross the inter-tribal and sectarian boundaries. The *sayyids* and the *pirs* enjoyed a great following, especially because the *sayyids* were not bound by vows of poverty, they were often rich families, and therefore the families could exercise both spiritual power in the form of engaging in *barakat* and secular power in terms of patronage<sup>170</sup>. It was the combination of these elements that constituted the ability of the Afghans to give, although inarticulate and fragmentary, response to the British invasions.

Afghanistan's Islam scholastic knowledge was never that of India's Muslim community or as high as that of Iran. As a matter of fact, to pursue higher studies most of the Afghan scholars had to reach out to schools in India and Iran, giving place to a strong contamination which resulted in the prominence of Deobandism in Afghanistan and contaminations<sup>171</sup>. The reason why Afghan ulama was never able to reach the level of sophistication was due once again to the restructuring that had taken place in India and more broadly speaking to the "discovery" of India and the end of the Silk Road as the main trade route passing through central Asia. The economic decline, the continuous wars, and the devastation that have been

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.p.46

<sup>169</sup> O. Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 1990, Cambridge, p.33

<sup>170</sup> A. Olsen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 1995, p.46

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.p.50

omnipresent in the history of modern Afghanistan heavily impacted knowledge production as well. The division and parcellation of the empire meant that fewer resources were available, cities were abandoned, and this also contributed to the decline of centers of religious learning<sup>172</sup>.

This system was set to change with the advent of Abdur Rahman, who managed, through generous British subsidy, to finally impose a strict order over Afghan society, utilize Islam to prop up his rule, and submitted the tribes. The “*absolute emirate*” of Abdur Rahman was also innovative in the sense that Islam did not only fulfill the role of societal cement, rather it became the very foundation of the state.

This is not to be intended in the way of modern Islamism, but rather a way with which the emir was considered the “Shadow of God on Earth”, and therefore, serving him was tantamount to gaining favor in the eyes of God<sup>173</sup>. This was a drastic change from the more subtle tribal “religious” and ulama’s acquiescence to the emirs that governed, in a sense this became an emirate with connotations of an absolute monarchy.

## **2.9. Abdur Rahman’s centralization and the British intervention**

The emirate of Abdur Rahman was characterized by a new way of dealing with the issues of the country as well as a resigned position of weakness vis a vis the British Raj. While Abdur Rahman has passed to history as the emir who unified Afghanistan, this intervention was due to a drastic revision of the way politics were conducted within the country, making the country look more like an absolute monarchy rather than an emirate. Abdur Rahman’s coming to power meant that with a strong subsidy, weapons, and raw materials the British gave him, he was able to raise a standing army armed in modern fashion. This new standing army proved

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.41

<sup>173</sup> A.Ghani, *Islam and State-Building in Afghanistan:1880-1901*, 1978, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.12. No.2 p.281

much more capable of facing yet another set of tribal rebellions and challenges, which he faced with brutality and hard power<sup>174</sup>. His first intention was set on dominate the Ghilzai Pashtuns who were resisting the new tax schemes the emir had set up to dramatically increase the flow of revenues to state coffers.

Abdur Rahman's policies, backed up by a new military arm, were not aimed at solving the eternal problem of the insufficiency of resources that every Afghan ruler had to face. The new tax on agriculture meant that 1/3 of the revenues from irrigated lands were now destined for state coffers<sup>175</sup>. This policy irritated the Ghilzais among whom many had fought in the war against the British, both in the first and second Anglo-Afghan wars.

The Ghilzai elders in particular had become very powerful during the war because of their role, with figures such as Mohammad Jan Wardak who had been one of the prominent leaders<sup>176</sup>. Abdur Rahman, therefore, feared the Ghilzais and exploited the opportunity to destroy their power and decapitate their leadership<sup>177</sup>. A rebellion broke out in 1886, and the ranks of the rebels swelled to one hundred thousand men, a figure that in times like those of Dost Muhammad Khan or Sher Ali would have put down any ruler stubborn enough to continue in his policies<sup>178</sup>.

The new flow of recruits propped up by a new conscription system, and modern weapons supported by state military workshops meant that the Ghilzais were pressed continuously against a new regular army<sup>179</sup>. The result was the death of twenty-four thousand Ghilzais, more than those who had died the British on the

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<sup>174</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.147

<sup>175</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, p.91

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* p.90

<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* p.92

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* p.94

battlefield<sup>180</sup>. The Ghilzais were the first in a series of internal campaigns. The second concerned his cousin Ishaq Khan, governor of Turkestan who would have been the likely heir to Abdur Rahman in case of the emir's death and given the fact that the emir's sons were still children. After a series of provocations made by Abdur Rahman, Ishaq Khan finally rebelled and was nominated emir. After a war in which the odds favored Ishaq Khan, finally he was defeated and left the country, thereby eliminating a possible pretender to the throne. His last wars were characterized by a dimension of sectarian, ethnic, and religious, violence, which was used against the inhabitants of the Hazarajat, a region within central Afghanistan, and the denizens of Kafiristan, in eastern Afghanistan.

The Hazarajat was a region historically inhabited by the Hazaras, an ethnically Turkish group, which was divided into tribes and were both Shia and Sunnis. The Hazaras had also done the humblest jobs in the history of the country, as recorded by Elphinstone during his first visit to the country in 1809<sup>181</sup>. Together with this, the Hazaras had always managed to evade the control of the rulers, retreating to their mountains when the occasion rose, and during the Anglo-Afghan wars, their role had been ambiguous, siding with the British on several occasions<sup>182</sup>.

In the quest to establish absolute control over the emirate the Hazaras represented a space that highly contrasted with the emir's vision, and a major campaign was initiated as a consequence. The war lasted three years, from 1891 to 1893, and was caused by the Afghan military behavior against the local population, given that the Hazara tribes had already surrendered in 1890 accepting submission.

The revolt gave the emir the to utilize religious overtones, an occasion had as precedent the 1808-1809 sectarian conflict in Kabul, declaring the Shias as

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<sup>180</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>181</sup> A. Olsen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 1995, p.54

<sup>182</sup> C. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan(1826-1863)*, 1987, p.55

disbelievers and therefore rendering null any sort of code of conduct that may have applied to them and raising an army of Pashtuns to fight them as well<sup>183</sup>. Since Islamic war laws did not apply, the Hazaras were made slaves, their property was confiscated, and a large number of refugees escaped to Iran or Baluchistan<sup>184</sup>.

The Hazarajat became also a spoil of war to the Pashtun tribes that the emir decided to settle there, distributing fertile land and pastures to tribes. The war in Kafiristan lasted from 1895 to 1896 and was conducted in a different manner, although they were disbelievers as well, the emir prohibited the pillaging of property or the enslavement of individuals, forcing a mass conversion in the region which changed its name to Nuristan, "Land of Light".

The former Kafirs were then recruited into the army and held the role the Qizilbash held before as a small but important military asset<sup>185</sup>.

Military force was not the only way through which the emir dominated, he forced the provinces such as Qandahar, Turkistan, and Herat to accept a governor directly sent tasked by the emir, ending their autonomous role and putting a stop to the accumulation of wealth in the ruling "dynasties" of the cities. Therefore, solving the historical problem of rebellious city elites.

The city elites were not the only targets of these campaigns, while rulers would content themselves with dispossessing the old elite or recycling it somehow as the Durrani had done with the previous rulers of Delhi.

This time the emir aimed at dramatically shifting the local balance of powers, moving populations from one place to another, therefore the Ghilzais were set in northern Afghanistan, where they found themselves among hostile tribes and lords

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<sup>183</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.150

<sup>184</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>185</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, Boston, p.155

in new lands. This move caused them to ally with the state, becoming the emir's new partners in recently conquered lands and dominating other minorities<sup>186</sup>. The Hazaras were deported to Kabul where they kept on doing the most menial jobs and the Nuristanis became a new small military elite<sup>187</sup>.

Upsetting the balance of power meant that the emir did not face the traditional challenges that his predecessors, rendering his power *de facto* hardly challengeable, at least during his lifetime. The emir's dreams of finally centralizing revenues came real as well, a new more severe taxation regime was enacted by 1891 he had a total of fifty million revenues, far more than any Durrani ruler could dream of, given their previous political agreements<sup>188</sup>.

He took great care in rendering foreign trade something to be controlled by the state and therefore took steps to make so that frontiers be controlled and set up a financial structure to check it.

The impressive amount of new revenues that were collected did go to finance the military industry, the first serious accumulation of capital that the country had experienced, as well as both an enlarging army and bureaucracy. Some revenues were utilized in the amelioration of the conditions of living or for an attempt at creating a basic economic infrastructure<sup>189</sup>. Military workshops, carpet, soap and leather industries sprouted in Kabul, together with some basic hospitals, although the amount of investment allocated to social and economic spending was far below the necessary<sup>190</sup>.

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<sup>186</sup> Z.T. Sungur, *Early Modern State Formation in Afghanistan in Relation to Pashtun Tribalism*, 2016, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol.16, No.3, p.444

<sup>187</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, Boston p.155

<sup>188</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.152

<sup>189</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, pp.142-152

<sup>190</sup> *Ibidem*.

The emir feared that exploiting the country's natural resources meant attracting unwanted attention from the neighboring countries, inviting another invasion. For this very same reason roadbuilding was shunned given the fact that paved ways meant faster movement for rebel and invading armies and therefore the end of the emirate and possibly the independence of Afghanistan.

Despite offers to install telegraphic lines and communication systems the emir stubbornly decided to let Afghanistan live in a perennial state of backwardness<sup>191</sup>.

The improvements that were taking place in India did not spill over to Afghanistan, and British foreign investment was also forbidden, rendering Afghanistan's vast iron resources, vital to the war machine of the emir, a material which Afghanistan was dependent on the British Raj to import<sup>192</sup>.

The nascent bureaucracy was created out of nobles and landed elites, incorporating notables of rich lands as civil and military bureaucrats. These ranks swell when the emir reached an agreement with the Muhammadzais *sardars* finally incorporating them in the state structure not as independent power holders who would threaten the succession to the throne of the emir's sons, but as "partners"<sup>193</sup>. They fulfilled political and military functions, received a stipend, and gave up military power, and therefore as they lost power over their tribes, they became more dependent on the state. Together with this, members of vanquished populations such as the Kafirs, were incorporated into the bureaucracy as well, as slaves, drawing from the Mamluk system, which the emir was familiar with<sup>194</sup>.

These innovations represented a big step in the changing political landscape of Afghanistan, and they further broke down power relations that had held back

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<sup>191</sup>V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, p.154

<sup>192</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>193</sup> B.R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 2002, edn, Yale, *Yale University Press*, p.52

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. p.51

previous rulers, in association with these practices, the emir also decided to clamp down on religious power. The leadership provided during the wars with the British, the presence in the power struggles as well as the position taken by some figures during the Ghilzai revolts prompted the emir to destroy the base of the ulama and independent clergy<sup>195</sup>. For this reason, all the endowments were nationalized, and the revenues were added to the state's income<sup>196</sup>. Given the large presence of clergymen who were both independent and state bound, the emir decided to introduce a test that checked whether or not the candidate was suitable for religious duties. This exam consisted of theories and ideas of Islam that were explicitly approved by the emir, and without the full acceptance of these propositions, state positions were forbidden<sup>197</sup>.

Links between state clergy and religious orders were prohibited as well, given the large and influential presence of Sufi orders within Afghan society. *Sayyids* and prestigious religious figures coming from Arabia or India were barred access to the country, pensions were refused, and strong suggestions were given to governors not to accept such figures<sup>198</sup>.

The ulama itself was strictly controlled by government-appointed functionaries who would sanction any attempt at straying from approved orthodoxy, and the special committee of the emir, formed by his most trusted allies in the religious and tribal camp, had the function of checking on any deviation from what the emir decided it was meant to be taught<sup>199</sup>. This bending of Islam towards the justification of the emir's power was accompanied by a total ideological "revolution", such that

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<sup>195</sup> A. Ghani, *Islam and State Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan:1880-1901*, 1978, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.2, No.2, p. 274

<sup>196</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>197</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid. p.275

<sup>199</sup> A. Ghani, *Islam and State Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan:1880-1901*, 1978, *Modern Asian Studies*, p. 276

everything now was meant to justify obedience to the emir, and national and religious duties were melded into one<sup>200</sup>. In the pamphlets and the books, the emir decided to publish and redistribute, executing the emir's orders, serving in the army, carrying out prayer, fasts, etc. were considered to be duties not to the head of the state, who was enjoying such a position by divine approval<sup>201</sup>. Therefore, anything done according to the will of the emir would favor the Afghans in the eyes of God as well. This meant that the ability to wage jihad was not in the hands of every ulama or religious man, but it was to be declared only by the emir's will, putting an end to the string of holy wars that had mobilized the country against invaders<sup>202</sup>. This legitimization came also with the idea that absolute obedience was to be given to state figures, being them governors, functionaries, or the emir itself. The fact that under Abdur Rahman many crimes were punished with death served to reinforce such ideas. Although this strengthened the monarchy, it also led to a definitive Islamization of the legal system, given the fact that *rawaj*, customary law, and the *Pashtunwali*, did not apply anymore, and disputes were solved through the use of Sharia<sup>203</sup>. The judges and the *muftis* were now the only ones who would settle legal disputes and in accordance with Islamic law and tradition. Anything that was outside the tradition, would be referred to the emir who would then take a decision. The emir himself became an "interpreter of Islam", and his ability to override the courts' decisions, together with the nomination of non-religious figures to assist and work in courts reaffirmed the paramountcy of the state in religious affairs as well<sup>204</sup>. These policies therefore gave a new look to Afghan lands, although economically the country would still experience a huge lag with the rest of the world. The new political and judicial system, together with the new legitimacy

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<sup>200</sup> S. Nawid, *The State, The Clergy, and the British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, 1997, p.592

<sup>201</sup> A. Ghani, *Islam and State Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan:1880-1901*, 1978, *Modern Asian Studies*, p.277

<sup>202</sup> A. Olsen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 1995, p.88

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. p.65

<sup>204</sup> Ibidem.

approach meant that religion played a stronger role in unifying all the subjects under the emir's will. For this very reason, the emir decided to eliminate all the Shias as well, harassing the Qizilbash as well, after having accused them of collaboration with the rebel Hazaras<sup>205</sup>. The Sufi orders were attacked as well, and the number of allowances and grants was reduced given that the Naqshbandiyya Order had supported Ishaq Khan against the emir<sup>206</sup>.

The ulama in this process found herself in a very hard position as well, while they could object to the Islamization of the state, their powers were being curtailed, and their influence increased as they had more power in legal matters, but their ability to use it independently was being severely reduced, and without allegiance to the emir their position would be in severe danger. Their powers were increased, as later history will show again, and the increase in their power was related to the decreased importance of the tribal chiefs.

The Islamization of the state served as a counterweight to the tribal legitimacy which would have kept the state in a perennial state of fragmentation.

## **2.10. Conclusion**

The history of Afghanistan, much like every country on this planet, is condensed with both external factors that shaped its development. The core of this is to be found in the interactions between the Uzbeks, Mughals, and Safavids' quest for domination over the land of Afghanistan and their interaction with the tribes. If the Mughals never subdued, moved, or destroyed the mountain tribes, which remained fiercely independent, the Safavids on the contrary, deeply integrated the Pashtuns into their system, shaping the development of the Abdalis, the hierarchy within and between Pashtun and becoming a source of inspiration for the Durrani empire.

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<sup>205</sup> M. H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, 2006, p.137

<sup>206</sup> A. Olsen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 1995, p.80

It is therefore upon this pillar that the Durrani empire was built and because of this it had to suffer the consequences as well<sup>207</sup>.

The tribal recognition that went together with a plunder-based polity became a unifying force as much as a disintegrating one. When the possibility of raiding diminished, so increased the problems within the polity, and this change forced the rulers to adopt different strategies to survive<sup>208</sup>. Although the Afghan rulers tried to combat the tendencies that kept on fragmenting their empire, the *coup de grace* given by the changing pattern of trade present within Asia contributed dramatically to the already critical condition of the Durrani empire, which 53 years after its foundation found itself in a civil war from which it never recovered. Although the empire died, the social structure that had underpinned it did not. The power of the different principalities was not given to foreign rulers or independent princes, it was still in the hands of families, Sadozais for Herat, Peshawar for the Barakzais for example, that although bound by kinship remained independent from one another. Dost Muhammad's relatives governed Peshawar and Qandahar, but he only managed to conquer these cities after the first Anglo-Afghan War, after the Sadozais had lost much of their power in the struggles within the Anglo-Afghan war.

This model which relied on kinship, and extremely decentralized governance had become extremely problematic for the attempts of the emir to centralize their country. As many revenues were given to support independent chiefs for their military service, taxes were not collected because of grants and exemptions, and the ulama required both subsidies and exemptions from payments, the coffers of the Durrani rulers had always required particular attention<sup>209</sup>. It was no mystery that Ahmad Shah had to spend much of his life on campaign to maintain such a pact alive. This structure received its first shock when the entirety of the Durrani kingdom fell apart and the second when the British invaded. Once again, the history

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<sup>207</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.103

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.p.105

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.p.97

of Afghanistan has been linked to global and bigger dynamics of which the country was not aware, but of which decisively became part. The shakiness of the Barakzai rule, the shifty terrain that underpinned the tribal links, and the interests of the single khans united with those of the two struggling Durrani lineages, transformed the Anglo-Afghan War into a religious war, a war for independence, and a civil war. It was only through jihad that Tajiks and Pashtuns, for the most part, had fought the British troops, and had pushed their chiefs to do the same overlooking their immediate interest<sup>210</sup>.

At the same time, it was only through jihad that the Barakzais managed to overpower the Sadozais in the competition to regain access to the throne<sup>211</sup>. A fact that had seen the tribal front, together with the state-integrated minorities like the Qizilbash, split into opposite sides. The result of this war, therefore, was as much a newly found urge for modernization as a strengthening of the role of religious figures within the country and the absolute dominance of the Barakzais.

Although the war was somewhat “national”, it was not a nationalist one. Islam remained the common framework and even more so since the ruler was an emir, not a shah, and the Islamic clergy, and non-ecclesiastic figures, gained prestige, to the point that they pushed for intervention in 1857 against the British<sup>212</sup>.

The four decades between the two British interventions marked a remarkably stable period in the history of the country, which was only disturbed by smaller inter-dynastic struggles for power that never expanded to a full-size civil war. Upon the achievements of his father Dost Muhammad, Sher Ali was able to introduce the first reforms, especially militarily, although the rest of the program remained half-hearted and mostly ineffective.

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<sup>210</sup> M. E. Yapp, *The Revolutions of 1841-42 in Afghanistan*, 1964, p.356

<sup>211</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>212</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.83

It was eventually the British second intervention that opened new scenarios for Afghanistan. While it was officially incorporated into the imperial system, it was *de facto* almost left alone to the point that it was the inter-dynastic struggle that presented a new emir. Abdur Rahman had to move in a totally different context, bowing towards greater pressure such as the division of the Pashtuns through the Durand Line, and the ratification of the treaty of Gandomak. Although these setbacks deeply influenced Afghanistan's politics both internally and externally, being a part of the British imperial system meant that the emirate had resources to a scale that was not possible before, and this allowed the emir to finally pursue his dreams of centralization and absolutism thanks to weapons and allowances supplied by the British empire. The emir's efforts shaped dramatically Afghanistan's future since the country had been shaken by large-scale brutality and the uprooting of entire communities for opposing the emir's will, weakening the emirate's enemies and paving the way for the work of his successors.

In light of this, the utility of Uneven and Combined Development provides some powerful insights into the nature of the historical development of Afghanistan. First of all, the encounter of different empires with dramatically diverse histories and with an extremely high degree of "unevenness". On one side, the Mughal, Safavid, and Shaybanids, on the other the British and Russian empires. While the firsts, by exploiting the Pashtuns, in particular Ghilzai and Durrani, created powerful forces that became the central pillar of the construction of modern Afghanistan, the British empire, after two attempts at creating a fully established dominion, eventually decided to fund the winner of the succession struggle and allowed the first centralized government of Afghanistan to be born. This is not only related to international politics per se but also to the difference in substance of mostly agricultural empires and an expanding colonial power. Therefore, in the first case, the Pashtuns became part of the elite by becoming soldiers and enriching themselves through the loot gained during the campaigns of the Safavids/Afsharids, and this allowed them to establish hierarchical relations within the tribe, in this case, the Durrani, and also empowered the Ghilzai enough to eventually cause the

fall of the Safavid empire<sup>213</sup>. In the second case, the British Empire directly engaged in modifying the customs barriers, and trade and actively appointed officials to manage this process. It sought to make Afghanistan a part of a larger economic zone integrated with the processes of capitalist development of India which would also make Afghanistan a conduit for the expansion of British trade within Central Asia<sup>214</sup>. The differences, as a matter of fact, are quite stark, as well as the consequences and the reactions. In the first case the Ghilzai tribes brought down the Safavids when they became vulnerable, in the second case, the Afghans caused much annoyance to the British which eventually made them reconsider their occupation but did not decisively defeat them in battle. The consequences were also very different, as while the Durranis created an empire created by a confederation of tribes, in the second, eventually through British help, the emirate of Afghanistan became an authoritarian government which albeit powerful, shared a litigious sovereignty with the many tribes. Another consequence, immaterial in this case, is the everlasting impression that the British left on the Afghan rulers. Their powerful weapons and tactics as well as great means, allowed the British to face the Afghans even after the defeat of their first expedition, during the first Anglo-Afghan War, and only left the Afghans when the Army of Retribution swept the country once again. This created not only paranoia and hostility towards the British but also a fear of them in the rulers, who would be hesitant to face them in battle or challenge them radically, given the encounters of their predecessors with British arms on the field. This feeling became extremely important as when Afghanistan got caught in the fast developments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was no longer a highly decentralized emirate, but a state with many problems which was nevertheless included in the developments of that century. The “semi-colonial” nature of Afghanistan, the creation of a centralized state with foreign relations, albeit informal given the fact that formal relations were only established in 1919, and an intelligentsia aware of the changes in the world and of the necessity of

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<sup>213</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1973, Princeton p.324

<sup>214</sup> B.D. Hopkins, *The Makings of Modern Afghanistan*, 2008, p.38

independence as the only road to the “modernity”, became one of the most important sources of worry for rulers like Habibullah and Amanullah. The contradiction between state interests and societal pressure became one of the distinguishing elements of the combined development of Afghanistan, which as explained in the next chapter, constituted one of the reasons that pushed the nationalist elite to pursue a Pashtunist policy.

## CHAPTER 3

### NATION BUILDING AND PASHTUNISM

#### 3.1. Introduction

The Twentieth century represented a watershed for Afghanistan. Already plagued by the events of the previous century, the country would go through dramatic civil wars, coups, and the rise of powerful groups such as the Mujahidin and the Taliban. At the beginning of these fateful 100 years, the country was under the reign of Habibullah, son of Abdur Rahman Khan, who was trying to continue his father's legacy and not upset the local balance of power.

However, the trends present in the world would also leave their marks on Afghanistan, as Pan-Islamic tendencies were rising in the Islamic world, requiring following Islam and Pan-Islamic solidarity as the antidote against the onslaught of Western powers.

Western-inspired modernism such as that of the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire, left a great impression on the Afghan elite and caused them to try to imitate the successes of the Young Turks in modernizing Afghanistan along similar lines.

Against, this backdrop larger events unfolded, The Great War broke out and Pan-Islamists as well as pro-Turkish factions pushed the country towards the Central Empires and calls for jihad against the British Empire were once again heard. It was right after the Great War, that the Third Anglo-Afghan War, also known as the Afghan War of Independence, took place finally liberating Afghanistan from the British influence.

The formation of the new Afghan Kingdom under Habibullah's son Amanullah would mark a watershed in terms of the legislation and scope of changes. However, Amanullah's impatience with change, reforms that challenged the basis of Afghan life, such as the land reform, and those that would diminish the ulama' power aroused great resistance, determining the fall of Amanullah's regime and bringing on the scene of the Musahiban clan.

The Musahiban were advisors, soldiers, and important functionaries under Habibullah and Amanullah, and therefore they entrenched themselves in the newly developed Kabuli political life and intellectual elite while maintaining links to their tribal roots. Aware of Afghanistan's social realities they would endorse the need to control a strong military and a far more cautious behavior in reforms than Amanullah.

The regime that was founded by the Musahiban would inherit the contradictions of Afghanistan's unchanged social landscape but also bring about new dynamics. Slow-paced economic growth, the creation of an urban middle class, although limited to Kabul and the major centers, foundation of universities and schools, etc. these changes are important in the way that they contributed to the Pashtunistan problem.

The creation of a large bureaucracy informed the middle class and primordial political life in 1947 with the formation of several parties are all elements that contribute to the understanding of the government's insistence on the Pashtunistan issue.

The winds of nationalism in its more ethnocentric way, Pashtun nationalism, became part of the political and cultural life of the country and became embodied in discriminatory practices against non-Pashtuns and the attempts at Pashtunization of the other groups as well.

The new nationalist elite bent on creating an Afghanistan that would show greater unity under Pashtun language and cultural traits, allowed this nationalism to flow

outwards as well, declaring the Pashtunistan issue to be one of the major problems of the country in 1947.

### **3.2. Habibullah's period and the birth of modern ideologies**

Abdur Rahman's successor, Habibullah, played another important role in the country's social and economic life. Having inherited a more stable and pacified Afghanistan, the new emir set out to relax the repressive dynamics of his father's regime and broaden the coalition that supported its rule. For this reason, while he pursued new modernist policies, although in a fairly limited manner, he tried to appease the traditionalists present within the court and the religious establishment. The foundation of the *Habibiya* College, a higher learning institution, together with a military academy, the teaching of modern sciences as well and religious courses, was meant to set Afghanistan on a path of modernization as well as maintaining its traditions in place. The source of inspiration became the Ottoman Empire, with many manuals translated from Turkish, and personnel from the empire came to instruct the Afghans in medical, military, and technical matters. The presence of Turkish personnel represented not only a way for Afghanistan to reconcile its own identity with the need to modernize the country but also to extricate itself from the bulky presence of British India as well as the Russian Empire, which were still seen as inherently bent on conquering the country had the opportunity arose<sup>215</sup>.

These modernization efforts also became a matter of discussion among the first "modern" currents of thought within the royal court and the *Habibiya* College. The development of a small Afghan intelligentsia aware of the country's position when compared to modernizing Muslim powers, Japan's successes in both industrial and military affairs as well as the developments of the Western power, created room for discussion regarding the path the country should have taken to catch up with rest of the world<sup>216</sup>. This included not only the advancements in economic and military

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<sup>215</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.186

<sup>216</sup> F. Bezhan, *Pan-Islamism in Afghanistan in the Early Twentieth Century: From Political Discourse to Government Policy, 1906-22*, 2014, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol.25, No.2, p.195

matters but also the role of the emirship in this process<sup>217</sup>. Groups like the *Jamiyat Seri Melli*, Secret National Party also known as the Constitutional Party, having observed what the Young Turks had managed to achieve in the Ottoman Empire, decided that Afghanistan should have had its constitutional government as well. This was also proven by the fact that the Japanese had defeated the Russian empire a few years early, in 1905, and the presence of a constitutional government in Japan, although presided by the emperor, had created the idea that the constitutional government provided the best solution for modernization and development<sup>218</sup>. The examples of the Japanese and the Ottoman experiments, therefore, functioned as the polar star for the Afghan modernists.

The various groups of modernists that formed in Habibullah's Afghanistan were by no means uniform. Some currents wanted a slow transition centered upon tradition and the role of the emir, some others aspired for a republic and a quick path to industrialization.<sup>219</sup> Therefore some groups represented not only a challenge to the emir's authority, who would dismantle the Constitutional party in 1909, but also a more modern trend that was taking place within the elite's political view that was being influenced by world events, and trends within the Islamic world. Representing a shift from the more "grassroots" politics that had characterized Afghanistan's landscape, the rooted ability of *qawn* and religion to mobilize people, the new Kabuli elite of the Constitutional Party, of which the emir's sons were members as well, came to embrace Pan-Islamism as the remedy not only for Afghanistan's situation but for resistance against the Western powers' encroachment. The return to the country of the previously extradited elites, like the Tarzi and the Musahiban families, brought fresh intellectual forces to the debate. Mahmud Tarzi, one of Afghanistan's leading intellectuals, had spent his life between Damascus and Istanbul, where coming to contact with the Ottoman exploits, had decided that

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid. p.194

<sup>218</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.208

<sup>219</sup> F. Bezhani, *Pan-Islamism in Afghanistan in the Early Twentieth Century: From Political Discourse to Government Policy, 1906-22*, 2014, p.197

Afghanistan should have done the same. His views, published on the *Siraj al-Akhbar*(1911-19) became immediately popular with the modernist factions since he tried to show the compatibility of modern progress with Islamic tradition as well as local, and national, sentiment with a larger belonging to the *umma*<sup>220</sup>. These views, inspired also by al-Afghani's elaborations on Islamic unity, resonated within the Afghan ulama as well, which was still a primary force in the country, given its role in education, judicial matters, and the still strong presence in the economy.

These views were at first encouraged by the emir, who had understood the necessity of following the steps undertaken by other nations to survive, but who was extremely wary of both challenges to his authority as well as the lack of education present within the administrative cadres<sup>221</sup>. For this reason, the efforts to rid Afghanistan of the emirate were not successful, to the point that members of the Constitutional Party were executed and the modernist faction, seeing the improbability of a constitutional turn, decided to back up a sort of enlightened emirate whose duty would be to bring Afghanistan to industrial modernity<sup>222</sup>. However, the emir's plans for a stable kingdom and the happenings in the world challenged both Habibullah's vision as well as the modernists and traditionalists. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, decisively put Iran into the Anglo-Russian sphere of influence and positioned Afghanistan within the domain of the British empire, causing a great upheaval in the court and among the ulama. Calls for jihad and indignation for the fate of Persia were common talk, but Habibullah, still remembering the power of British arms, decided to ignore the calls for a war and instead turned a blind eye to the activities of many mullahs and members of the court in the Durand Line, where they started disturbances against the British<sup>223</sup>. This

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<sup>220</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.80

<sup>221</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, *I.B. Tauris*, p.44, F. Bezhan, *Pan-Islamism in Afghanistan in the Early Twentieth Century: From Political Discourse to Government Policy, 1906-22*, 2014, p.195

<sup>222</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.213

<sup>223</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.83

situation was amplified by the Turco-Italian and the Balkan Wars, which once again saw the rallying of both the ulama and Tarzi-led modernist factions underlying the necessity of Muslim countries like Iran and Afghanistan to strengthen themselves against the increasing aggression against Islam<sup>224</sup>. Pan-Islamism therefore became quickly a stressful agent for the emir who had to balance between the incessant calls for reform and modernization and a decisively more interventionist foreign policy. This had begun to make his position as emir less secure since his position of great caution and limited solidarity to the Pan-Islamic causes was checked by the fear of British and Russian intervention. Therefore, under his leadership, a common front started to take shape, one that united traditionalists and modernists of many guises and who were becoming restless with Afghanistan's inaction and unpreparedness for the challenges that laid ahead<sup>225</sup>. Although at first glance contrasting, Pan-Islamism proved also a force which strengthened the sense of belonging to a nation that was ethnically very divided but religiously homogenous. However, even though Pan-Islamism enjoyed great fortunes, the world developments quickly caused its fall when the Great War broke out.

The First World War and its consequences proved to be an event that would greatly shape the political developments of present Afghanistan. First of all, the war shattered the conviction that Europe was a united Christian dominion bent on destroying the Muslim world. The slaughter *en masse* on the fields of Europe tore apart any idea of European unity, but at the same time, it caused a problem for millions of Muslims who were called to duty by their colonial masters and had to serve in wars against other Muslim powers. Chief example would be the Muslim Indian soldiers who served under the British army on multiple fronts<sup>226</sup>. Another problem was that despite the apparent unity in fighting against the Entente, the Arab populations had rebelled against the Ottoman Empire, putting a dent into any

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<sup>224</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.186

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.p.217

<sup>226</sup>R. Sheikh, *Forgotten Muslim Soldiers of World War One 'Silence' Right*, 9 November 2018, BBC, Retrieved on date, 31/07/2023 from BBC.com

idea of Pan-Islamism as well. This situation became more complicated when the Ottoman troops eventually invaded Persia and the successive catastrophe that occurred. During the unfolding of the events, Afghan intellectuals had decidedly shifted to a pro-intervention idea. Both the traditionalists and the modernists wanted the emirate to support the Ottoman empire and mobilize its troops for the liberation of India<sup>227</sup>. At the same time, a large number of publications called the emir to finally abandon neutrality. This was compounded by a very strong pro-Turkish sentiment which was also fostered by the presence of a Turco-German delegation in Kabul. This embassy aimed at providing diplomatic and military assurances to the emir that both Germans and Turks would assist in his campaign against the British and Russian troops. The delegation mixed forces with the local interventionists and created the so-called “War Party” which intensified the pressure on the emir to join the Central Powers in the war<sup>228</sup>.

What happened instead was a constant reassurance by the emir to the British side of his loyalty and at the same time, conditioning the Afghan entry into the conflict on the side of the Central Powers on the supply of large amounts of gold, weapons, and allied contingent to the emirate<sup>229</sup>. When this support did not materialize and the Ottoman Empire’s difficulties became more evident, the emir gave up on the idea of intervening on the side of the Central Powers. However, history has proved Habibullah wrong, since the 1917 revolution eliminated the conflict as one of Afghanistan’s biggest threats.

The revolution caused once again another cry to effectuate an about-face and finally achieve impence from the British empire since the Revolution of October meant that Russia would not interfere with Afghanistan. Tarzi’s newspaper incessantly asked for war and linked the fact that Afghanistan was officially part of

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<sup>227</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization*, 1880-1946, 1969, Stanford, p.218

<sup>228</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization*, 1880-1946, 1969, Stanford, pp.219-223

<sup>229</sup> Ibidem.

the British dominion with the impossibility of achieving full independence.<sup>230</sup> The 14 points as well as the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty both endorsed the Afghan independence supporters of ridding Afghanistan of its limiting British control and finally becoming an independent country. However, once again the emir refused to back down from its treaty obligations and was rewarded by the British Empire. Despite having held fast against any interventionist temptation, Habibullah's popularity decreased fast, and he became very unpopular. The idea that Afghanistan failed to intervene in the crucial moment of need of the Muslim countries and that the emir was responsible for the dependence of Afghanistan on the British Empire caused a court intrigue to finally kill him in 1919<sup>231</sup>.

When the very quick struggle for succession was over, with Amanullah, one of the emir's sons, announced as the emir, he quickly moved to seize the moment and finally achieve independence. What was called the Third Anglo-Afghan War became a "national" struggle, which a nationalist-religious propaganda put into motion to mobilize the entirety of the Afghan people and the arming of the Pashtun border tribes, who had always escaped central control and caused unrest and troubles for the British border forces. The idea of mobilizing Indian nationalists to the cause was also proposed, given the number of Indian soldiers who fought and died in the war, as well as the Indian resources used to wage war on other countries<sup>232</sup>. The mobilization of the Afghan tribes was not successful, however, and the mobilization of the Afghan army only revealed bigger problems in logistics and training for fighting a war against an industrialized power<sup>233</sup>. The war developed along the lines of small skirmishes which were mostly won by the British Empire and eventually, an armistice was put into effect on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May of 1919. Although the Afghan army had not proven victorious, independence was nevertheless granted in August, which caused Afghanistan to lose the subsidy as well as the control of the Pashtun

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid. p.224

<sup>231</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.86

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.p.88

<sup>233</sup> Ibidem.

border tribes which came to be under strong British influence, with great consequences over Afghan development as well.

### **3.3. Amanullah and Nadir: Politics of Reform and Consolidation**

Amanullah Khan's efforts to modernize Afghanistan are well known. An ardent modernizer, he encircled himself with like-minded figures and operated in tight contact with Mahmud Tarzi, who was his father-in-law. Historically linked to figures like Atatürk and Reza Shah, Amanullah's plans for Afghanistan were as visionary as unrealistic to achieve in a short time. At first, Amanullah's reputation was extremely positive among the modernist and conservative circles in the countries, given the political victory that was the Third Anglo-Afghan War. Exploiting his fame, Amanullah went on to make Pan-Islamism the official policy of his government. He decided to back the Basmachi movement against the Soviets in Central Asia and supported the Indian Muslims who joined the fight against the Soviets and those who opposed the British Empire<sup>234</sup>. By supporting the Khilafat movement, he encouraged thousands of Indian Muslims to move into Afghanistan, where he provided them with land. When eventually Turkey abolished the caliphate in 1924, he considered the idea of moving the caliphate to Afghanistan<sup>235</sup>.

Thus, at first, Amanullah's policies were aimed at consolidating his position using Pan-Islamism, and this also strengthened his position vis a vis the ulama, which was still very strong and considering the privileged position it enjoyed under Habibullah and Abdur Rahman. Although this plan could have enhanced Afghanistan's position, it did not materialize for several reasons. One is that Amanullah himself understood that having the Caliphate based in Afghanistan would mean that other Muslim countries could meddle in Afghanistan's domestic politics by virtue of the universality of the caliph. The second was that the Soviets had managed to establish

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<sup>234</sup> F. Bezhan, *Pan-Islamism in Afghanistan in the Early Twentieth Century: From Political Discourse to Government Policy, 1906-22*, 2014, p.197

<sup>235</sup> *ibid.* pp.203-204

themselves in Central Asia, and therefore became a powerful entity that could threaten Afghanistan because of the support to the Basmachis<sup>236</sup>.

The meagre resources were not enough to start a modernization in the country proper, let alone bear the brunt of long-range Pan-Islamist policies. Lastly, the Arab opposition to the transfer of the Caliphate to Afghanistan would have to be overcome. The end of the Pan-Islamist dream meant also that Amanullah and his circle were now focused on the reforms in the country, which would prove both the hardest and the downfall of the Young Afghans Regime. Still, Amanullah's decade left a profound mark on Afghanistan's politics, directly contributing to the shaping of the Musahiban behavior in domestic politics. The fast way through which he promulgated a large number of edicts and laws, the new constitution that changed Afghanistan to a kingdom abolishing the emirate as well as the economic reforms intended to bring capitalistic relations into Afghanistan dramatically marked his short-lived kingdom. Together with his father-in-law, Mahmud Tarzi, as well as a close circle of Young Afghans and modernists the new king set out to radically transform the country with disastrous consequences. This was nothing new in Afghanistan's political life, as already underlined, in the previous century stability came through brute strength, compromise, and alliance with tribal forces as well as minorities like the Qizilbash. However, Amanullah's awareness of Afghanistan's desperate need for reform prompted the king to introduce a new constitution by 1921. The new constitution abolished the emirate, but it was also accompanied by a flurry of laws that aimed at demolishing the fundamentals of tribal strength and ulama<sup>237</sup>. Subsidies, exonerations, and fiefs that were handed to the tribal chiefs were withdrawn, honorary titles abolished and *waqf* lands nationalized. The Afghans would now become citizens of Afghanistan and came to be officially recognized as equals by the law and required to carry themselves an identity card. Slavery and forced labor were declared illegal<sup>238</sup>.

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<sup>236</sup> F. Bezhani, *Pan-Islamism in Afghanistan in the Early Twentieth Century*, 2014, p.201

<sup>237</sup> . Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, *I.B.*, p.80

<sup>238</sup> B. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 2002, London, p.56

These attempts at creating the foundation for a centralized state were also accompanied by other major reforms in every sector of Afghan society. Through the employment of Turkish and Egyptian teachers, he tried to lay the foundation for a modernized educational system and by the hiring of French specialists and professors, he aimed at creating a system of higher education. This was accompanied by the expansion of the *Habibiya* school and the construction of other three other schools modeled after the latter. These schools presented a mix of Afghan, German, and French professors and teachers and were accompanied by the creation *ad hoc* of administrative personnel modeled after the Turkish educational system<sup>239</sup>. Amanullah's efforts to establish a university eventually turned to nothing after he could reach an agreement with the ulama on the subjects to be taught in the institution. Particularly hard was dealing with the ulama<sup>240</sup>. The latter wanted classical Islamic subjects to be taught in every school and the most traditionalist elements opposed any modern curriculum<sup>241</sup>. Efforts were made to expand primary education outside the capital and challenge the influence of the traditional *maktabs* as well.

The economic reform Amanullah adopted aimed at creating the fundamentals for primitive accumulation and establishing the basis of capitalism. He raised customs on foreign products entering the country and established the release of receipts and reports for the goods that came in from the outside to limit the widespread corruption plaguing the customs offices<sup>242</sup>.

He undertook several more initiatives to make the government workshops produce the essentials needed not only for the army as his father and grandfather did but also other commercially oriented activities.

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<sup>239</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.240

<sup>240</sup> A. M. Malik, *The Modernisation Process in Afghanistan- A Retrospective*, 2011, *Strategic Studies*, p.38

<sup>241</sup> *ibid*, p.310

<sup>242</sup> *ibid*. p.252

A national currency, the Afghani was created, projects aimed at developing hydroelectricity, telegraphic and telephone lines as well as postal and road services were undertaken, and a basic import-substitution strategy was started as well. Despite the best intentions, the scale of the projects remained limited, not only because of the lack of complete statistics and pertinent offices to take care of such a process but also because of the very own policies that the king enacted. The lack of funding necessary and the reliance on heavy taxation complicated the efforts as well. The refusal of the king to allow significant foreign investments for fear of implications in sovereignty meant that the kingdom was unable to undertake any major efforts such as the much-wanted railway. Afghanistan was therefore on a seemingly contradictory policy where its elite wanted the country to blossom but was undermining the very efforts to do so<sup>243</sup>. Aware of the need for roads and rails to foster trade and communication and the lack of funding that was hampering such efforts, the palace elite decided to collect the revenues for these enterprises from Afghan society. Therefore, the king turned to taxing agriculture and reforming it in an attempt to foster development and increase revenues<sup>244</sup>.

The land reform aimed at establishing the conditions to develop capitalist relations in agriculture and was presented with the fact that the property, and social, relations present within the countryside reflected the arrangement of a pre-capitalist society where property rights were dependent upon the relationship with the ruler. Private property could be revoked at the will of the king/emir, communal and *waqf* lands were very common and the latter represented a means through which the ulama had been historically economically very influential. Royal property was also common, especially in northern Afghanistan, but also given as a concession to tribal khans who did not pay taxes. This arrangement had proven stable in the sense that it guaranteed a system of relations that was functional to keep up a society where tribal and religious arrangements determined the fall and rise of

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<sup>243</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946, 1969*, Stanford, p.254, A. M. Malik, *The Modernisation Process in Afghanistan- A Retrospective*, 2011, pp.36-37

<sup>244</sup> B. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 2002, London, p.55

leaders, but when it came to creating the foundations for a capitalist and centralized society whose need for resources far outstripped the productive capacity of these arrangements, then these relations became obstacles. Given the fact that only 20% of the peasants were proprietors of the lands they were cultivating, and there was a labor surplus in the countryside, the government set first to render land transfers and sales possible, and at the same time, it started a wide cadastral investigation together with the monetization of the agricultural tribute<sup>245</sup>. The king decided to sell for extremely low prices his royal lands to propertyless peasants as well, settling them in Northern Afghanistan. This created a new landed class that had resulted from this reform, one that was completely alien to the social background of Afghanistan and whose authority did not lie in the sanctioning of religious or tribal authorities but in land titles released by the state<sup>246</sup>.

The land reform went even further and nationalized the religious *waqfs* as well, thereby directly touching the ulama's economic interests<sup>247</sup>.

Lastly, another major reform, the military reform, caused great distress among the Pashtuns and the tribal khans. Having decided to scrap the old system altogether, where one of every ten men was to become a conscript and it was decided together with the village khan, Amanullah decided to make conscription mandatory for those from the age of 21 who were chosen a universal lottery system<sup>248</sup>.

The government decided that conscripts had to register themselves using an identity card as well, thereby allowing the government to keep track of the individual's actions.

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<sup>245</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, *I.B. Tauris*, p.75

<sup>246</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.* p.76

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.* p.78

This was also compounded by the major changes that the Afghan army underwent since pay was dramatically cut, soldiers' families were to provide for themselves during the men's absence, many veteran units were disbanded, and the military academy was transformed as well<sup>249</sup>.

This reform added to the problems existing within the army already. Despite his predecessor's peculiar attention to military matters and care for the military, Amanullah let the rank and file of the army be under-fed, underpaid, and work in a very corrupt environment, where high-ranking officers would pocket funds and utilize soldiers for their private works. Desertion rates were high and discontent endemic among the ranks, therefore. In the high echelon as well, the situation was not idyllic, since the contrasts between local gradual modernizers, represented by the Musahiban and the pro-Turkish officials and generals paralyzed the military reforms<sup>250</sup>.

The reforms paralyzed all the powerful existing groups in the country. Under this situation when the first rebellion emerged in host in 1924 it was no surprise that both local mullahs as well as tribal forces merged in the Khost region, in eastern Afghanistan on the border where state control was very weak, and therefore it was easier to challenge Amanullah's regime. The Khost rebellion saw the participation of many of the border tribes, who were historically more unruly and fiercely independent, conducting raids against the British from time to time and exacting tolls for passage as well as merchants that crossed the Afghan-Pakistan border. This rebellion was strengthened by the participation of the Ghilzai tribe, historically the second most important but also never central to power<sup>251</sup>. As soon as the rebel armies started to advance and Amanullah's forces were defeated, the king claimed that it was the British who were helping the rebels to gain control over Afghanistan again. This allowed the government to call up many tribal militias, led by Nadir

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<sup>249</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>250</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>251</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, Curzon Press, p.94

Khan, which eventually defeated the rebellious khans and mullahs, thereby keeping the regime intact<sup>252</sup>.

Although the regime survived the onslaught, Amanullah was forced to roll back many reforms, to scale back on secular laws, to adopt a regressive attitude towards women's rights as well as let his major program progress at a glacial pace. The rebellion shaped the regime's internal dynamics as well as the outlook the population had of it. Mahmud Tarzi, whose efforts to convince Amanullah to introduce a slower-paced modernization, found himself gradually isolated as the Musahiban members of the government accrued greater powers for themselves<sup>253</sup>. Nadir Khan, Hashim Khan as well as Wali Khan, represented important figures within the cabinet, fulfilling the role of minister of war and generals. Their ties and traditionalist outlook on reform and life made them very popular among the Pashtun tribes, and their ability to mobilize Pashtuns was crucial in defeating the rebels<sup>254</sup>. A comparison with Amanullah's conscript army where many soldiers came from ethnic minorities, was hardly possible. Mahmud Tarzi, whose suspicion of the Musahiban family's aims was very explicit cautioned against them but exhausted by many years of duty as foreign minister and negotiations with the British Empire on Afghanistan's independence, decided to ask for a transfer to Paris, where he kept himself at bay from Afghanistan's public life<sup>255</sup>. The alienation of his former mentor, the presence of a strong family with tribal ties, and the disillusion that the Young Afghans experienced after Amanullah backed down on his reform project hampered any reform attempt and caused very little activity from the government until 1928.

Amanullah's last years were marked by a slow approach to the modernization efforts that suddenly gained traction in 1927, when he set out in December 1927 on

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<sup>252</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.255

<sup>253</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, *I.B. Tauris*, p.83

<sup>254</sup> *ibidem*. pp.83-84

<sup>255</sup> *ibidem*.

a trip to the Middle East and Europe. There he gained widespread attention from most of the leaders and was deeply impressed with what he saw. Convinced that Afghanistan had to set out on a radical modernization path as fast as possible to catch up with the rest of the world, he came to Afghanistan with ideas of pushing the efforts as fast as possible. Although he had been cautioned against making such radical moves in so a short time, Ataturk himself had advised him to strengthen the army before attempting any meaningful reform<sup>256</sup>. Instead, the king listened little to this advice and decided to summon a *Loya Jirga* where he actively tried to pass several more laws that would alienate his remaining power base. He decided that polygamy was to be banned in government officials' marriages, the court system would become secularized and the *qazis* would be replaced by government-trained judges<sup>257</sup>. The decision to terminate stipends to high-ranking ulama, refusal to meet its most notable members, prohibition of membership in Sufi orders for government officials, and strict condemnation of the religious establishment further pejorated the situation<sup>258</sup>. The economic burden that these efforts were also taking was too much for the frailty of a pre-industrial economic system. Most of the burden was directed at the peasantry, who came to hate the government officials who created new forms of taxation and whose corruption was also widespread<sup>259</sup>.

In this situation, Rubin argues that even ethnic minorities failed the king in his hour of need since they were negatively affected by his economic reforms too. However, for a different reason, the Tajiks of northern Afghanistan, affected by the changes in land property because of pro-capitalist development, decided to defy the king when the second revolt broke out<sup>260</sup>. This time, instead of prioritizing the armed forces to face the likely rebellion, as forecast by his advisors, the king increased the military

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<sup>256</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.451

<sup>257</sup> A. M. Malik, *The Modernisation Process in Afghanistan- A Retrospective*, 2011, *Strategic Studies*, p.39

<sup>258</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.202

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.* p.190

<sup>260</sup> B. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 2002, London, p.56

service term by one more year, bringing it to a total of three, and did not do much to improve the soldiers' desperate condition<sup>261</sup>.

The revolt broke out immediately, especially after in 1927 before the king went on his trip, the government officials had received the order to collect taxes and arrears as well, aggravating the condition of the peasantry<sup>262</sup>.

This time, the rebellion was not located only in eastern Afghanistan but quickly enveloped most of the country, as the forces of the Kohistani Tajiks, led by a Tajik former recruit, Habibullah Kalakani, who after a series of small defeats managed to inflict a decisive defeat on the king's forces and took Kabul.

After a short-lived attempt to come back after he had abdicated, Amanullah was defeated and decided to go to exile to India and then to Italy where he spent the rest of his days. Mahmud Tarzi, who had grown disillusioned with the monarchy and many Young Afghans, departed to Turkey where he spent his remaining days in Istanbul. In this situation were laid the foundations of the longest-lasting modern Afghan government, the one led by the Musahibans.

The rise to power of the Musahibans resulted from several factors, among which their respected and powerful position within the kingdom's administrative, military, and political ranks as well as their strong links to the tribal chiefs. Compounded with a conservative understanding of modernization, the Musahibans ruled for almost 50 years. Their reign was marked by the deepest changes that Afghanistan underwent, the entry into the political scene of the middle class, the presence of ideologies like ethnic nationalism, socialism, Islamism, and liberalism, as well as a more marked presence in the international arena. Although such developments took place, the beginning of the Musahiban period was marked by a clear opposition to Amanullah and his reforms, The new ruler, Nadir Shah, since he had given up the title of king, came to terms with the opposition that had ousted Amanullah.

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<sup>261</sup> ibidem.

<sup>262</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, 2010, Princeton, p.190

Nadir acted in close contact with the Society of Ulama, quickly restoring mandatory heavy veiling and seclusion, and affirmed the laws that Habibullah Kalakani had mandated, which in the case of women's rights included the closure of only-girl schools, recalled female students from abroad as well as reinstating polygamy<sup>263</sup>. The Ministry of Justice was tasked with enforcing of Islamic law throughout Afghanistan, and enforcing moral codes became one of the government's official policies<sup>264</sup>. The abolition of the secular law reforms meant that Sharia became the only reference in penal and civil matters. The rollback on secular reforms was enshrined in the new constitution of 1931 which asserted that primary education was mandatory, but it was to be conducted in a manner that was compatible with Islam as well as with new modern sciences. Another article stated that the press could not contravene Islamic principles as well. Foreign newspapers were permitted circulation as long as they did not contravene any of the prescriptions, and foreigners were prohibited from opening and directing schools or educational facilities and may have fulfilled roles in the education field only if officially requested by the government<sup>265</sup>. The measures to appease the traditional sectors of society were not limited to the Islamic establishment, but it was also shown in the construction of the new state. The 1931 constitution envisioned the creation of an assembly divided into two houses, the upper house, the House of Peers, and the National Consultative Assembly. The National Assembly held great power and had the power to decide upon the legislation made by the House of Peers, which was handpicked by the Nadir Shah. Although this system enjoyed some autonomy it was subjected to the decision of Nadir Shah, who had the opportunity to veto and reject laws, as well as the ability to call in the state of emergency which granted him great powers<sup>266</sup>. The Parliament's body was mostly composed of khans, and representatives of tribal, religious, or commercial interests, rendering the body

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<sup>263</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.295

<sup>264</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid. p.296

<sup>266</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, *I.B. Tauris*, p.100

effectively a tool in the hands of traditional classes<sup>267</sup>. Together with a strong extra-parliamentary source of power, the parliament's power was also hampered by the fact that the *Loya Jirga*, which was to be convened once every three years, was granted very important prerogatives. The *Loya Jirga* had the right to be called every time new taxes and radical changes were made, and without its consent, no legislation could be approved<sup>268</sup>. The fact that to change the constitution only the *Loya Jirga* was to be summoned and was granted the right to modify it only strengthened the power of the traditional elements in society<sup>269</sup>. The appeasement to the conservative establishment was brought forward in terms of policies directed to the non-Muslim Afghans since they could not become members of the cabinet and Afghans abroad were barred from marrying aliens. Although the new constitution officially treated every Afghan citizen as equal in front of the law, the Hanafi Rite was institutionalized, and everyone irrespective of their faith had to follow the ordinances of the official rite. The status of Afghan citizens was attained only through conversion to Islam or being Islam, and several obligations and discriminations occurred in case one was not a Muslim, especially in the case of women<sup>270</sup>. Together with this, the respect towards the injunctions of the ulama as well as those coming from Islamic law were to be observed by the king as well who was supposed to govern with the advice of religious luminaries of Islam and men of religion<sup>271</sup>. The structuring of the state along conservative lines did not mean the end of reform, but rather the attempt to slow it enough to make it palatable for the conservative circles. At the same time, Nadir Khan tried to keep a very low ideological profile that would not cause any blatant violation of what the traditionalists and conservatives considered to be Islam, and not to infringe on the tribal sensitivities regarding their domains and customs. This order consolidated the

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<sup>267</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946, 1969*, Stanford, p.307

<sup>268</sup> *ibid.* pp.300-305

<sup>269</sup> *ibid.* p.305

<sup>270</sup> *ibid.* p.307

<sup>271</sup> *ibid.* pp.300-305

old social forces in the developing centralized states, bringing to the surface the old tensions as well. Although Afghanistan's government was getting more "modern" with the reforms, its nature was essentially tribal, since the legitimization was still coming from the consensus of the tribes and that of the ulama, now enshrined in the newly formed parliament and the *Loja Jirga*<sup>272</sup>. Without these two constitutive elements, together with an insufficient economic base and a sufficiently strong army, the Afghan government was still dependent on these two institutions to be able to govern. This attempt to create a stable kingdom,, lasted for more than a decade and was marked by the figures of Hashim and Mahmud Shah, who under the nominal rulership of King Zahir tried to steer the development along a conservative and later on limitedly liberal governance. That this system rested upon a fragile basis was already shown by the murder of King Nadir and by the insecurities and opportunities that arose from the Second World War.

### **3.4. The Interwar and War Years: Pashtunism and Pashtunistan**

Although the relationship between the British Empire and Afghanistan during Nadir's era was more or less cordial, as it was with the Soviet Union also because of the détente reached between the two great powers, the tribes in the frontier area became a problem for the relationship between the two countries<sup>273</sup>. By 1930, the British authorities were paying subsidies for the border tribes and realized military interventions when the money did not suffice<sup>274</sup>. The policy of keeping the tribes at bay became insufficient when among the Pashtuns, the Servants of Gods, also called Red Shirts, movement arose. The movement called for non-violence and the end of British colonialism in India<sup>275</sup>. To do so, it also aimed at strengthening the ties between the Muslim and Hindu communities of the country, while at the same

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid.305

<sup>273</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.103

<sup>274</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>275</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.323

time, carrying forward a progressive social agenda<sup>276</sup>. When the British crackdown became more intense, several tribes rebelled and in May 1930, the British army intervened in the Peshawar province. When a British soldier killed a woman with her children many other tribes raised their levies and mobilized, effectively starting a revolt against the British. At this moment the tribesmen asked King Nadir for help, but he decided against it<sup>277</sup>. This created a sense of hostility and resentment among the ulama and the tribes, as well as among the new nationalist cadre, a situation which was worsened by the killing of Ghulam Nabi, an Amanullah supporter who was asked to leave Afghanistan given the suspect that he may have been involved in a plot against the king. Ghulam Nabi was executed and a blood feud among the Musahibans and Nabi's family the Charkis. The situation escalated when a young nationalist student, Kemal Seyed, assassinated Nadir's brother because of the king's inactivity against the British Empire and lack of support for the border tribes. Another student attempted to kill the British envoy but instead killed several British clerks. The following reaction caused many arrests among the student militant body, which resulted in the killing of Nadir Shah during a ceremony at a school<sup>278</sup>.

The death of Nadir prompted his son, Zahir, to become king, while his brother Hashim became prime minister. Under the leadership of Hashim Khan, the government prioritized education, devolving roughly half of the military budget to the development of public education<sup>279</sup>. The extension of the education period by two years more combined with the opening of more schooling facilities meant that the student population increased, even though not much, from 60,000 in 1940 to 93,000 by 1945, the number of teachers increased as well, although it remained fairly limited<sup>280</sup>. Hashim made also sure to open several new high education

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid. pp. 323-326

<sup>277</sup> Ibid. p. 329

<sup>278</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. p. 351

<sup>280</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p. 355

establishments, which included engineering, natural and political sciences as well as theology. Many of these posts came to be filled with foreigners. The government tried to rationalize education by also establishing government-edited textbooks on several subjects including religion and theology<sup>281</sup>. However, Hashim Khan's years were also marked by a creeping form of Pashtun nationalism, which came to be predominant in the cultural life of the country as well. The founding of the *Pashto Tulana*, Academy of Pashto, promoted Pashto as the distinguished language of Afghanistan, which was to be learned in schools and which all government employees had to master within a few years, starting from 1936<sup>282</sup>. Together with the Academy, the government set out to create textbooks that would be used in primary school to teach Pashto to children and gave every teacher classes as well<sup>283</sup>.

Pashto was to become the official medium of the entire country, which was supposed to unite the different groups composing Afghanistan's plural populations it became the official language in 1937<sup>284</sup>. This move to proclaim Pashto as one of the foundations of the country, and the original language of Afghanistan, was already underway under Amanullah's government, and in the writings of Tarzi, Pashto takes a special place compared to Persian<sup>285</sup>. This position is also renewed in the new "wave" of Pashtun nationalists that started writing in the thirties. These new scholars shouldered in part their predecessors' efforts to make Islam compatible with progress and modernization but also found interest in the origins of Afghanistan. This had been rendered knowable also through the efforts of a French archaeological mission that had unearthed ruins of the previous kingdoms

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<sup>281</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>282</sup> E. Leake, *Constitutions and Modernity in Post-Colonial Afghanistan: Ethnolinguistic Nationalism and the Making of the Afghan State*, 2023, *Law and History Review*, Vol.41, p.303

<sup>283</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>284</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.352

<sup>285</sup> E. Leake, *Constitutions and Modernity in Post-Colonial Afghanistan*, 2023, *Law and History Review*, p.301

that existed in current Afghanistan<sup>286</sup>. The discovery of Bactrian and Kushan's heritage and the richness of the latter, allowed the nationalists to finally claim that Afghanistan had always enjoyed an independent culture than that of the Persians and Arabs or other neighbors<sup>287</sup>. Nationalists claimed that Afghans had richly contributed to the development of the caliphates through science and administrative skills.

Afghan kingdoms had also contributed to the development of Persian against Arabic, and thanks to this effort had allowed the world to enjoy Persian literature<sup>288</sup>. The early inhabitants of Afghanistan settled in the northern regions and were called Bactrians, which is the etymological origin of the word Pashtun. The claim that the Pashtuns were of Aryan descent and had lived within the borders of Afghanistan demonstrated the historical importance of the Pashtuns for the development of Zoroastrianism, and its impact on Persian culture. Some went as far as to claim that Pashto remained a pure language that was not influenced by Sanskrit or Pahlavi Persian, and, Dari, one of the Iranian languages, provided the foundation for the development of Farsi<sup>289</sup>.

The conclusions that these nationalists came to be that Pashtuns had been historically a united people that had a deep cultural history and that they were experiencing distortions at the hands of those who wanted to drive a wedge between them<sup>290</sup>.

The Academy of Pashto together with literary circles and government initiatives disseminated these ideas in Afghanistan, and they became popular with the

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<sup>287</sup> Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946, 1969*, Stanford, p.345

<sup>288</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>289</sup> Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946, 1969*, Stanford, p.347

<sup>290</sup> Ibidem.

Pashtun bourgeoning middle class that was resulting out of the expansion of government offices as well as economic growth<sup>291</sup>. This growth was fuelled by the sustained efforts of Hashim Khan in the creation of a national economy. The National Bank was created in 1933 through private capital, the Overall Economic Development Plan, as well as many more advanced industries, were established throughout the Hashim era, and the influence of important early entrepreneurs was also felt<sup>292</sup>. One of them, Abdul Majid Zabuli, contributed greatly to the development of the first private enterprises, as well as to the establishment of the National Bank<sup>293</sup>. His position as a rich entrepreneur who was outside the royal family as well as his knowledge of Germany, where he had spent considerable time, allowed him to become the first rank individual in the government, he became minister of the economy, as well as a leading figure in the contacts between the Afghans and the Germans. As no British or Russian foreigners were accepted in the country given the longstanding antipathies that the population felt and the not-clear aims that both powers shared towards Afghanistan, third-party specialists were called to fasten Afghan development. Germans fulfilled many important roles, ranging from engineering to communication to teaching, together with Turks in the military and medical field, Italians and Frenchmen in agriculture, and Japanese engineers as well, The Hashim government attempted to vary the nature of its international connections<sup>294</sup>.

However, the role that the Germans were fulfilling in the country was far more profound than that of any other group. German firms were winning most of the bids, the German government was subsidizing them to make up for eventual losses and buying materials that would be sent to the Afghan government.

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<sup>291</sup> F. Bezhan, *Nationalism not Islam*, The 'Awaken Youth' Party and Pashtun Nationalism, 2017, p.171 in Nile Green, editor, *Afghanistan's Islam, From Conversion to the Taliban*, 2017, *University of California Press*,

<sup>292</sup> F. Bezhan, *The Second World War and Political Dynamics in Afghanistan*, 2014, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.50, No.2, p.183

<sup>293</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>294</sup> Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946, 1969*, Stanford, p.354

German planners, doctors, engineers, communication experts, soldiers, and architects were contributing dramatically to the construction and development of projects and infrastructure, and by 1939, a treaty between Afghanistan and Germany allowed Afghanistan to repay its debts by exporting cotton to Germany<sup>295</sup>. The penetration of German capital was not perceived as dangerous or minacious, rather it was thought to be under control and far more benign for the country than that of the Soviets or the British. For this reason, Germany was much more welcome, and it was not until 1941 that both sides had to break communication because of the invasion of the USSR. In this seemingly peaceful climate, Afghanistan developed its external relations, trying to lure the USA into investing in the country as well but attempting to maintain a strict neutrality that would have avoided dangers with its powerful neighbors. The treaty of Saadabad of 1935 the Afghan-Soviet treaty and the relations with Turkey and Iran underpinned a reality of seemingly cooperation with its neighbors and Muslim countries against foreign threats, namely, Fascist Italy. In this moment the government of Hashim was prone to keep on its politics of domestic development without getting involved in international affairs, however, the outbreak of the Second World War dramatically changed the situation for Afghanistan. The royal family split into two camps, on one side Hashim and his brother Mahmud, and the other Zabuli, Naim, and Daoud Khan<sup>296</sup>. The former was strictly neutral and did not want to expel the Germans because of their contribution, Germany had not invaded the USSR yet and aid was still flowing to Afghanistan, while the latter was heavily pro-intervention. A dramatic fissure was taking place in the royal family representing the dilemma that Amanullah and his associates had experienced only a few years earlier when it came to the management of the country.

While Hashim and Mahmud were wary of British power and extremely conservative, Daoud and his circle were far more militantly nationalist, advocating

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid. pp.379-380

<sup>296</sup> F. Bezhan, *The Second World War and Political Dynamics in Afghanistan*, 2014, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.50, No.2, p.176

for faster-paced modernization and siding with the Axis to regain Pashtunistan and finally putting the irredentist adventure to an end<sup>297</sup>. This split characterized most of the war years when Daoud and Zabuli would take contacts to join forces with Germany and assure continuity to the Musahiban regime, while Hashim and Mahmud would try to reassure the British of their non-intervention<sup>298</sup>. When the USSR was drawn into the conflict the interventionist position became even more unstable because the Soviet Union immediately asked for the removal of all Axis personnel from the country and started gathering its forces near the border. To avoid the fate of Iran, Hashim expelled all the “undesired” guests thereby maintaining Afghanistan outside the war.

However, the war brought many other effects, since the split was now getting wider and Daoud and Naim, together with Zabuli, were accumulating power for themselves, and in 1946 when Hashim left the premiership and Mahmud became prime minister although he had to contend with Daoud and his associates who had become more restless over time. This did not mean that Daoud was the favored candidate of Afghan society, he had terrible relationships with the tribe having handed the 1944-46 Safi rebellion a heavy hand and was a staunch nationalist who was keener on using the state apparatus to quickly change the social environment rather than a traditionalist like the old guard<sup>299</sup>. Daoud had grown up in a different environment compared to King Zahir and the Musahiban traditionalists. While King Zahir had been raised in a French school and the Musahiban older generation in British India, Daoud was raised in a German school. He came into contact with Nazism very quickly and was fascinated with the idea of building a country modeled after the “One Country One People” idea<sup>300</sup>. Rather than being a proponent of *lasses-fare* he also concluded that a strong central planning was also central in

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<sup>297</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>298</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.p.183

<sup>300</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London,,p.111

building Afghanistan quickly. Thus, he represented a different generation compared to his relatives.<sup>301</sup>

Zabuli was very much in the same position and while his nationalist fervor was very strong, he made sure it propagated into society by funding nationalist parties in 1947<sup>302</sup>. Mahmud was therefore in a difficult position having to contend power with his more aggressive nephews, furthermore, the end of the war did not help his position. The retreat of the British Empire meant that when the Pashtunistan borderline issue emerged with Pakistan, he decided that the best way to solve the problem was to negotiate with British officials given their importance in the region. After London rebutted him, he found his position weakened, while most of the state apparatus was solidly in the hands of his antagonistic trio. In a maneuver to weaken Daoud and seek support external to the monarchy, Mahmud decided to finally give in to the voices that had asked for a liberalization of the Afghan political system. This was caused by the amount of middle-class people, mostly government employees, that was gradually swelling in the country, as well as the result of the politics of education which was creating an embryonic middle class with an educational background.

As a matter of fact, in 1947 the creation of the first political parties happened and the most prominent became the vehemently nationalist *Wish Zalmayan* (Awakened Youth).

### **3.5. Pashtunistan and Nationalism: Rise and Fall of the Nationalist Elite**

The Pashtunistan issue coincided with several very important moments in Afghanistan's political life both in terms of domestic and foreign policy. Internationally, the consequences of the creation of two blocs created a historical opportunity for Afghanistan to insert itself in international affairs even more,

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<sup>301</sup> *ibid.* p.112

<sup>302</sup> F. Bezhan, *The Second World War and Political Dynamics in Afghanistan*, 2014, p.185

especially during the Pashtunistan issue, and created the possibility of exploiting the two different powers to modernize itself.

Regionally the departure of the British Empire finally allowed the pent-up nationalist feeling to express itself and be explicated in regional events creating a series of affairs which would then cause the USSR's influence over Afghanistan to increase dramatically.

Lastly, on a domestic level, Afghanistan's internal situation was finally taking a different turn, with the explosion of political parties and newspapers and the creation of a short-lived first democratic experience. Also, the freeing up of resources in the international arena meant that Afghanistan tapping into these new sources could finally speed up its development with important consequences over the years.

These eventful developments dramatically changed Afghanistan's course in the next years, from a country whose most meaningful contacts were with revisionist and colonial powers and a relatively stable political life, to one where the contradictions between the emerging new life, traditionalism, and the tensions brought up by the Cold War were starting to make themselves felt.

As underlined by the message of previous modernists, one of the problems that the modernists identified was the way traditionalism at the hands of the clergy and tribal chiefs kept progress from fully taking place in Afghanistan. This first problem had caused the first generation of modernists to bring the battle on religious grounds trying to root their vision of modernization in the prescriptions of the Quran and of the Prophet<sup>303</sup>. This effort had been more successful under the Musahibans than Amanullah's regime given the penchant for a fast-paced change that upset all the existing balances. However, the first generations of modernists

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<sup>303</sup> Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, 1969, Stanford, p.349

also engaged critically with the role of the Pashtuns and Pashto in Afghanistan. To find a historical legitimization for the existence of Afghanistan as an independent entity Pashto had been elevated to the level of Farsi and had become one of the two official languages of Afghanistan<sup>304</sup>. The struggle to make Pashtun identity central can be looked at from several angles.<sup>305</sup> Another element can be that of nation-building, which requires the population of the country to feel its roots in something that has a stable historical foundation. Pashto was not spoken by the national elite as well, as Farsi had dominated the courts for a long time, except for times like during Sher Ali, when Pashto rose to prominence<sup>306</sup>. Therefore, the elevation of Pashto could be identified as an element that would put Afghanistan and Iran in stark contrast, given the historically deep ties between the two countries. Lastly, Pashto and Pashtunism can be identified as elements cross-border and outside the tribal system, therefore a very national, or at least as part of the nation, one. This form of national solidarity could frame the Pashtuns as people prone to look to modernity and whose allegiance lay in their common Pashtun identity rather than ties to their tribes and *qawns*.<sup>307</sup>

These elements help keep in mind that the promotion of Pashto and Pashtun identity bore the tensions of modernism with itself, and considering the historical period under which this was taking place this was not something peculiar to Afghanistan. The promotion of specific ethnic groups in the country over others, and the rise of nationalism whose character was also ethnic is also common in that time frame, where the universalisms of the late 1910s and 1920s were slowly giving in to specific forms of national identities. Efforts in the immediate neighborhood, such as Reza Shah's Persian nationalism, Turkish nationalism, and Arabism can all be identified with the tensions that modernization brought with

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid.p.351

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> E. Leake, *Constitutions and Modernity in Post-Colonial Afghanistan*, 2023, *Law and History Review*, p.301

<sup>307</sup> Ibid, p.299

itself, especially the clash between the need for the culture and language in industrial countries to be shared and previous forms of discrimination and networks of power. This thesis argues that Afghanistan is a part of this latter example, the vision of a society where Pashto and Pashtun culture were to represent the bedrock of the country was not universally felt, as a matter of fact, within *Wish Zalmayan* and *Hezb-I Watan*, the issue had caused many discussions, and several splits<sup>308</sup>. *Wish Zalmayan* had become the most modernist and militant nationalist party of the parliament, extremely supportive of the government's policy towards Pashtunistan and also linked with the royal family<sup>309</sup>. Another feature of *Wish Zalmayan*, and the other parties in the period, was the fact that the religious element had been dropped in favor of a secular logic. This caused some tension between the clergy in the party and its secular elements and eventually helped create the first strands of political Islam in Afghanistan<sup>310</sup>. The party's focus was centered on the Pashtuns and the way their social organization contributed to damage and slow the modernization process<sup>311</sup>. Their critique of the tribal organization and the benefits that it had brought over to the chiefs and khans in terms of political and economic power aimed at showing how this not only advantage the masses of Pashtun, and Afghan, peasants and toilers but the tribal elite as well<sup>312</sup>. This arrangement was now outdated considering how the two world wars and the interwar period had shown the implications of capitalist modernity and the rise of its opponent, the USSR. The role of the tribes was now to be fought with several means, also cultural given the vocation of the party towards educational missions<sup>313</sup>. Among the projects that the party proposed, was the idea of proposing Pashto as a language of scientific knowledge, which meant publishing

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<sup>308</sup> F. Bezhani, *The Pashtunistan Issue and Politics in Afghanistan, 1947-1952*, 2014, p.203-208

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* p.202

<sup>310</sup> F. Bezhani, *Nationalism not Islam, The 'Awaken Youth' Party and Pashtun Nationalism*, 2017, p.166

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.* p.173

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.* p.172

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* p.173

and writing in Pashto on several scientific themes, as well as translating manuals and textbooks into Pashto<sup>314</sup>. The term Afghanistan itself, Afghan meant for a long time Pashtun, was used as the “Great Land of the Pashtun” and several practices of economic protectionism were to be set to allow the development of a national industry.

This program allowed several government officials and members of the royal family to feel particularly close to AYP, the Awakened Youth Party, and this created a sort of synergy regarding the political and social action of the government, although AYP remained a staunch constitutionalist<sup>315</sup>.

The difference regarding the functioning and ordering of the state did not prevent the government and the party from cooperating on the Pashtunistan problem, which was according to AYP a purely national matter that the party set out to resolve even if it meant funding guerrillas on the other side of the border<sup>316</sup>. This position clashed with the diverse leadership the party claimed to have, since the innermost circle and most of the members were from Pashto-speaking regions, that is southern and eastern Afghanistan.

The consolidation of a nationalist bloc between the royal family and the AYP became the object of discussion and critique of the other parties that had formed. *Hizb-I Watan*, Homeland Party, was a liberal-nationalist party, whose ethnic base was diverse and included members of the royal family as well. The party’s official position was however one that did not agree with the government and the AYP’s position, quite the opposite it refused to join the nationalist fanfare and declared the Pashtunistan matter to be one of colonialism like Indochina, Algeria, etc. in that sense, the Pashtunistan case was to be subjected to an international court and Afghanistan’s position ought to support independence but not actively engage in

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<sup>314</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.p.169

<sup>316</sup> F. Bezhan, *The Pashtunistan Issue and Politics in Afghanistan, 1947-1952*, 2014, p.205

it<sup>317</sup>. Some members of *Watan* thought that the affair was only an excuse to shut down the opposition very early and take away the attention from the real issues of the country as well as the non-existing progress towards the establishment of a constitutional monarchy<sup>318</sup>.

Another party *Hizb-I Sirri Ittihad*, which was constituted only by minorities, saw the issue as merely another step to consolidate a nationalist regime in Afghanistan which would, despite assurances of the opposite, further create more discrimination towards the non-Pashtun<sup>319</sup>.

The unfolding of the events in Pashtunistan had been particularly complicated as in June 1947, the Congress Party controlled most of the North-West Frontier and had promised the tribal khans more autonomy was the Indian subcontinent to keep its integrity. However, when Pakistan's birth could not be avoided the tribal khans decided to vote the union with Pakistan. This vote was heavily contested by Afghanistan which claimed that the British side had influenced the results of the voting through bribes, as Afghanistan had supported the idea that the tribal area should have had the ability to choose also for a complete independence<sup>320</sup>. However, this latter option was only offered as a temporary choice before making the ultimate decision of whether to join Pakistan or India. Pakistan's domination was mostly accepted by the tribes, with some notable exceptions, most importantly the *Fakir of Ipi*, who had struggled for an independent Pashtunistan before, supported Amanullah's projects and revived a guerrilla against the British first and the Pakistanis later in the tribal area<sup>321</sup>. The Pakistani government to ease the tensions decided to withdraw its army from the tribal area and grant the tribes the

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<sup>317</sup> *ibid.*p.207

<sup>318</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*208

<sup>320</sup> R. Ahmad, R. Waseem, S.A. Afridi, *Pashtunistan: A Construction of an Imaginary Entity*, 2022, *Multicultural Education*, Vol.8, No.6, p.230

<sup>321</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.491

much-wanted autonomy. A seemingly brief period of understanding came out when Pakistan and Afghanistan recognized each other and exchanged ambassadors, as well as agreed on a referendum that would lead the Pashtuns to decide for themselves. The referendum's result in favor of Pakistan caused much anger on the Afghan side, which secretly started smuggling ammunition and money to the Pashtun guerrillas, in turn Pakistan started to provoke Afghan minorities by claiming that a referendum was to be held in Afghanistan too since the Pashtuns were to form an independent nation<sup>322</sup>. Therefore, The Afghan government nominated the 31 of August as Pashtunistan Day and initiated a Pashtunistan radio, as well as proclaiming having accepted a "Government in exile"<sup>323</sup>. It established several guesthouses along the border to allow Pashtun activists to come to Afghanistan as well as granting a living to them<sup>324</sup>. The issue was enflamed when in 1948 Pakistan arrested a Pashtun dissident and tribal leader, Abdul Ghafar Khan, closed down several newspapers that were pro-Pashtunistan, and bombed a *jirgah* inside an Afghan village causing the death of several people. The incident caused great tensions, in 1949, Afghanistan convened a *Loya Jirga* that rejected the validity of the Durand Line since it was a treaty that Afghanistan had not signed with Pakistan but with the British Raj and affirmed Pashtunistan as a national matter. A large assembly of Afridi Pashtun met on the Pakistan side of the border and elected the *Fakir of Ipi* as the president of Pashtunistan<sup>325</sup>. Pakistan in retaliation established "Radio Free Afghanistan" in 1949 in Quetta inciting the national minorities to fight for their rights and asked for a referendum for the independence of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan.<sup>326</sup> When in 1950 and 1951 three tribal columns of led by an Afridi leader crossed the Pakistani border and planted Pashtunistan flags on Pakistani soil

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<sup>322</sup> H. Emadi, *Dynamics of Political Development in Afghanistan*, The British, Russian and American Invasions, 2010, New York, *Palgrave McMillan*, p.56

<sup>323</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>325</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.491

<sup>326</sup> H. Emadi, *Dynamics of Political Development in Afghanistan*, 2010, New York, p.56

Pakistan decided to temporarily slow down incoming and outgoing trade from and for Afghanistan. In 1951 when Pakistan's prime minister Liyaqat Ali was killed by a Pashtun from Afghanistan the relations between the two countries further deteriorated and eventually, Pakistan stopped gasoline exports to Afghanistan for three months and put on a semi-embargo on Afghan exports and imports. All this diplomatic and physical saber rattling caused several countries to intervene in the matter with scarce success. However, one cause of this was that given the US' reluctance to engage with the matter, as Pakistan was tightening relations with the United States, Afghanistan decided to turn its attention to the Soviet Union, through which, thanks to a series of treaties, Afghan goods could circulate freely<sup>327</sup>. Soviet-Afghan trade increased steadily, despite the attempts of Pakistan to relax the slow-down of Afghan goods. By 1952, Afghan-Soviet trade doubled, and the Soviets established an office in Kabul and started exporting gasoline into the country rendering Pakistan's partial blockade useless. The circulation of Soviet goods replaced the previous European and Indian products circulating in the country, and paved the way for teams of Soviet experts, in small numbers, to contribute to the development of Afghanistan<sup>328</sup>. He wanted to make Afghanistan independent by modernizing it through the help of the superpowers but fundamentally unaligned in the bigger clash between blocs. In 1955 he let Afghanistan participate in the Bandung Conference and in 1961 he led the delegation at the Belgrade Conference<sup>329</sup>. He also admired the USSR for her achievements and sought to adopt an economic model that would create fast-paced economic growth in the country, although he remained wary of left-wing and communist ideology. He had turned to the US first to achieve his goals, when both in 1953 and 1954 he asked for economic aid and arms to be sent to Afghanistan<sup>330</sup>. Washington refused on the ground that this aid would be provided once the Pashtunistan issue was settled, given the role

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<sup>327</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.493

<sup>328</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>329</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, p.121

<sup>330</sup> Ibidem.

of Pakistan in the US anti-communist alliances in Asia. Afghanistan had been regarded as less important compared to Pakistan and Iran, and this caused the entire Afghan government to feel the US as a country that had turned its back on Afghanistan<sup>331</sup>. Furthermore, Afghanistan's unwillingness to join the Baghdad Pact and therefore jeopardize its independence vis a vis the Soviet Union prejudicated the outcome of the negotiations<sup>332</sup>. This prompted Naim and Doud to quickly turn to Moscow which quickly became Afghanistan's main supplier and market. Given the long borders that the USSR shared with many countries including Afghanistan, as well as the potential disrupting role that minorities within her borders may have played, the Soviet Union decided to approach the matter in more friendly terms to Afghanistan<sup>333</sup>. The areas of government, planning, and military affairs were the sectors where the USSR decided to help Afghanistan. By 1955, Kabul dispatched 100 students to the USSR, although Afghanistan's scholarships and exchange programs were mostly maintained with the West. However, given the historical importance for military training that the USSR fulfilled for the Afghan military, its help was crucial in the shaping of the 1978 coup orchestrated by left-wing officers.<sup>334</sup>

USSR's role in Afghanistan quickly became more and more prominent given the US' reluctance to intervene and offer its aid as well. Low-interest loans, infrastructural development, and absorption of many of Afghanistan's products meant that the two countries grew closer, and when Daoud's plans to set in motion the first 5 years plan in 1956 were ready, the Soviets helped the Afghans with their capital-intensive projects<sup>335</sup>. The results of such plans and development became the fact the USSR figured as one of Afghanistan's most important trade partners. This course of events allowed the Afghan state to become an important economic actor and to

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<sup>331</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.111

<sup>332</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.510

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.* p.123

<sup>334</sup> A. Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan, A History of Struggle and Survival*, 2004, London, p.124

<sup>335</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.112

finally be able to rely on a powerful army supplied by Eastern Bloc countries' arms. In the countryside, new developments were also taking place when the concentration of land into state or private hands led to the increasing proletarianization of many smallholders and the increasing number of sharecroppers<sup>336</sup>.

Afghanistan was undergoing a dramatic transformation whose first effects started to affect the balance of power as well. Demonstration of the changing power in Afghan society was the comparison between the Safi rebellion near Jalalabad in 1946 and the Qandahar rebellion of 1959. In both cases, taxes were involved, although in the Safi rebellion conscription was also questioned, and in both cases, an initial protest became a rebellion. In 1946 it took several years and many defeats for the Afghan army to win the resistance. In 1959 as soon as Qandahar started rebelling, the new mechanized forces of the army quickly restored order<sup>337</sup>.

Daoud's Pashtunistan fixation was revealed in the effort he put into the Pashtunistan matter once gained in 1955, after Pakistan's One Unit policy, which merged Pakistan's four western provinces, creating de fact two main regions, the Eastern and the Western. This had arisen from the difficulty of managing such a big country with many influences inside and to counterbalance the influence of the Bengalis in Pakistani politics<sup>338</sup>. However, this development was not well received in Afghanistan, since it was feared that Pashtunistan would be further integrated into Pakistan, although the tribes had not been officially included in the amalgamation. Rioting erupted in Afghanistan, in Kabul, Kandahar, and Jalalabad, and in the capital, the mob burned Pakistan's flag, while in the other two cities, the Pakistani consulates were sacked<sup>339</sup>. The two countries broke off diplomatic relations, Pakistan closed the border and both the two contenders prepared for war.

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<sup>336</sup> H. Emadi, *Dynamics of Political Development in Afghanistan*, 2010, New York, p.60

<sup>337</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.537

<sup>338</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, Curzon Press, p.112

<sup>339</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.538

A commission of 5 Middle Eastern countries prevented the war from breaking out but the consequences were deeply meaningful for Afghanistan. The 5-month embargo meant that Afghan products could not circulate at all. Thus, a foreign currency crisis ensued, creating an explosive situation. Afghanistan got even closer to the USSR which started an airlifting program to ease the burden and alleviate the situation.

Towards the end of 1955, the duo Bulganin/Khrushchev visited Afghanistan and officially endorsed the Pashtunistan issue, the two also promised a 100-million-dollar loan to Afghanistan at a very convenient interest rate<sup>340</sup>. By the end of the 50s, Daoud's regime was in a very strong position, together with new assertive strength they had confronted one insurrection and arrested the mullahs who protested the unveiling of Daoud's female relatives during a state celebration. The arrest caused no tension and the mullahs accepted that total veiling was a matter chosen by the family. Unlike Amanullah's case, the regime faced no protest, whereas only 30 years before a revolt would have broken out.<sup>341</sup> As much as 80 percent of the state developmental budget came from foreign resources, and both Soviet and American teams were at work in the country to improve many of its aspects<sup>342</sup>.

However, this "idyllic" situation was not to last too long as the Pashtunistan issue reached a military dimension in 1960 when following an intra-tribal dispute, the issue degenerated and led to several clashes between Afghan and Pakistani forces. Daoud sent a small army composed of both tribesmen and Afghan soldiers to help the tribesmen close to his regime, but the intrusion into a tribal affair generated stiff resistance in the region Bajaur of West Pakistan<sup>343</sup>. Having been repulsed, the next year following another request for help, he sent other tribal and regular units.

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<sup>340</sup> H. Emadi, *Dynamics of Political Development in Afghanistan*, 2010, New York, p.56

<sup>341</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, Curzon Press, p.115

<sup>342</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>343</sup> Ibidem.

However, the fighting became much fiercer, with local Pakistani Pashtuns joining the efforts against the Afghans and the arrival on the scene of the Pakistani army<sup>344</sup>. The event turned out to be a total defeat with several prisoners and deaths for the Afghans. This time, however, the border skirmishes continued, with regular attacks on Pakistani outposts and heavy propaganda on both sides. This border war became a complicated affair since Pashtuns in the Pakistani frontier repelled any regular unit of Pakistani or Afghan origins<sup>345</sup>. Their refusal to let anyone meddle in their affairs, especially with such heavy-handed attempts, meant that it became a confused affair in which weapons shipments of the Afghans to the tribesmen were used against the Afghans themselves<sup>346</sup>. This small war degenerated in 1961 when Ayub Khan, a Pakistani Pashtun, became the president of Pakistan and closed all of Afghanistan's consulates in Pakistan and that of Pakistan in Afghanistan.

The border was completely sealed and that caused an immense hardship on Afghanistan's economy and the stop of any international aid save for that of the Eastern Bloc. Attempts at recruiting the US to mediate with Pakistan and find alternative trade routes in Iran did not work and soon the Afghan economy started experiencing heavy debt and inflation. Dependent as it was on international aid Afghanistan could not sustain its developmental expenditures by itself and came to rely on the USSR even more. The Soviets started an ambitious program of airlifting Afghan products to transport them to the international market, while at the same time, Afghan civil aviation would freight goods to India.

However, this situation was far from sustainable, Daoud's autocratic rule had caused a lot of chagrin among the intelligentsia and the royal family. The break of relationships with Pakistan, which was much more powerful than Afghanistan, and the fear that the growing middle class may have attempted an insurrection against the regime was highly feared, given the coup against the Hashemites in Iraq in

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<sup>344</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>345</sup> L. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 1980, eds, Princeton, p.540

<sup>346</sup> Ibidem.

1958<sup>347</sup>. When confronted with this rising hostility Daoud offered King Zahir to transform Afghanistan into a constitutional monarchy with a single-party system, and Daoud would be the general secretary of that party. The king refused and Daoud offered his resignation in 1963, thus ending his autocratic rule and the 16 years of confrontation with Pakistan.

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<sup>347</sup> M. Ewans, *Afghanistan, A New History*, 2001, Richmond, *Curzon Press*, p.116

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 4.1. UCD Theory and Afghanistan

The history of Afghanistan shows very well that far from being an insulated reality, the country was very well immersed in the events of its epochs and actively contributed to the development of events that unfolded in its region.

The Uneven and Combined Development theory in this sense represents the method through which the understanding of the events that took place in Afghanistan can be made sense of.

Understanding unevenness as the ontological basis from which relationships between human societies arise, and contextualizing their tensions in terms of this unevenness can help shed light on the processes that take place among societies and within them.

Such a claim could lead to UCD being read as a historical abstraction that states, the non-so-much, obvious issue that the international is not linked to the domestic, but actively constitutes it.

However, these claims that UCD makes have to be grounded in the specific historical context in which they take place.

That is the analysis of the mode of production and the geopolitical system in which such events take place, the risk being that of highlighting merely a series of external influences without analyzing their impact in a contextualized manner.

Key examples of this are tensions and the results that are present in the development of the Durrani empire in this sense was profoundly influenced by that of the Safavid and Afsharid empires, which take place in a historical context, and that of the influence of the British on Afghanistan which has completely different effects in a much-changed world and regional environment. The pressures and the use of the Pashtuns to fight in the name of the Safavids and Afsharids meant that the Durrani Pashtuns would become highly hierarchical compared to other Pashtun tribes, causing them to become much more apt at governing large territories with a plethora of tribes and other polities. At the same time, the integration of the Ghilzai into the Safavid empire meant that the very Pashtun soldiers would cause the downfall of the Safavids, but they were not transformed in the process, thus remaining highly egalitarian but giving way to in-fights when they conquered the capital of the Safavids. Thus, determining their fall. Comparing this with the results of British influence on the Durrani Pashtuns after the Second Anglo-Afghan War gives way to completely different results. Highly fragmented and prey to fights among the main Durrani clans, the British Empire helped Emir Abdur Rahman and startled the creation of modern Afghanistan. How this started was also, something that can be traced back to the “privilege of historic backwardness”, that is the ability of a society to appropriate techniques and structures and utilize them in their context. This generates what is called a combination, in this case, the peculiar form of the Afghan state. Such process, however, remains highly based on the balance of forces within society, and therefore the outcome of such events remains influenced by agency.

Afghanistan thus, cannot be considered fully to have achieved the dynamics of a sovereign state where the central administration is the only power, but one where a multitude of local sovereignties co-existed through a series of links of blood, marriage, and incorporation of one lineage into another’s through modification of tradition, etc. This administration made use of these links and in turn was also wary of them. In this context, the analysis of the kin-mode of production and its revolving social relations is an essential element, that has to be analyzed in tandem with

historical developments from outside. Claiming Afghan society to be just based on such a mode of production does not help shed light on the complex relations between the Durrani and the Ghilzais, the use of Pashtun nomads against Hazaras by Abdur Rahman or how the struggle for succession involved one tribe and a multitude of lineages. In light of this, Afghanistan cannot be considered a total “pre-modern” society as well. The existence of a central state that was then involved in international and regional affairs meant that the Afghan state was not responsive to internal pressure alone anymore but had to calculate what happened on the outside as well. If Abdur Rahman had the “luck” to worry only about developments in Afghanistan and tried to seal the country off from the world, it was not so for Habibullah who had to “omni-balance” the risks for the Afghan state and the pressures from traditionalists and modernists. In other words, Afghanistan was the *combined* result of many pressures, that in the case of UCD are passed as “*whips of external necessity*” and the agency of the local actors’ whose ideas and power shaped the form of the state.

In turn, these necessities generated many tensions with Afghan society. Here the combined nature revealed its full complicacies when UCD generated tensions echoed into the social relationships underpinning Afghan society. If modernization meant Westernization and adoption of not only a centralized powerful state but also reforms bent on the creation of capitalism, then, this generated incurable issues between Afghan society and the Afghan state, which was nevertheless grounded in that society, it was still reliant on tribal and Islamic blessing to a certain extent as Amanullah and Nadir showed. This thesis, for the lack of data in the period concerned, could not show the implications of capitalistic development in Afghanistan, although it is safe to say that Afghanistan became a *social formation*, that is a society where there is not only one mode of production but several which coexisted at the same time. This gave way to a society where temporalities and production modes were starkly different, although the predominance of the kin mode was still largely felt, but the state had decided to pursue on clear path and had to face opposition while doing it.

It is therefore interesting to see how Afghanistan's history is composed of these micro-relations that echo in the reasoning of its modernizers and epochal processes like the expansion of capitalism and colonialism which shaped to the core the existence of Afghanistan and transformed a scarcely centralized emirate into an authoritarian state under religious sanction. The Russo-Japanese War, the Great War, the Italo-Turkish War, the Balkan Wars, the Great War, and the Russian Revolution were also elements that became constitutive of Afghan reality and their impact greatly affected the thinking and actions of the likes of Amanullah, they also changed their regional environment letting new opportunities arise, like eventually the independence of Afghanistan from British India.

It is therefore understandable that in this chaotic process of creation and destruction of new and old patterns, Afghanistan was unprepared to face the consequences of having a centralized state with new necessities and the historical problem of finding an identity for itself and its people. The problem arose from the fact that not only the historical Pashtun elite was very much unwilling to give way to a more democratic system of government for fear of losing its privilege in power, but also that Pashtunism was a very secular ideology centered on the idea of the modern Pashtun citizen as someone loyal to the state and its people, irrespective of borders and lineage. This however was not the case for the Pashtuns since inter-tribe fighting was very common and fights in and between the lineages degenerated into blood feuds.

Loyalty rested not in a sense of belonging to a general Pashtun population, but in the lineage to which each Pashtun belonged, mobilization against foreigners and invaders was therefore prompted not by a sense of shared identity, although the *Pashtunwali* indicated what it meant to be a Pashtun, but by Islam. Against this very delicate balance of forces, the state elite had been fighting since the times of Abdur Rahman, and therefore under Amanullah first and Nadir then, a heavy campaigning of what it meant to be a modern Muslim citizen first, and later on, a Pashtun began. This propaganda effort was not easy as shown by the fact that the state could try to reach as many Pashtuns as it tried to through modern media, but the enormous

illiteracy and a life centered upon rural activities, village, and stringent *qawn* relations did not make the effort easy.

The spread of literary circles, newspapers, publications, and societies arguing for Pashtunism meant that such a conception spread mostly to the Pashtun-dominated areas where the middle class was mostly Pashtun, but it failed at reaching the minorities of Afghanistan which were excluded from such a process and important state positions.

The spread of Pashtunism was therefore marked by the failure to reach society in a capillary way and the exclusion of a significant half of Afghanistan. It is not surprising therefore the effort of nation-building passed through a significant shift in the way the economy was intended and through other radical means, such as escalating border tensions with Pakistan. Daoud was very conscious of this as he had been raised in a German school and followed Germany very closely, he was aware of the achievements of the Nazi Party and the planning economy emerging out of the USSR and party as well as from Germany.

His decision to launch 5-years of plans and using every means available to engage in fast modernization should therefore be separated from the logic of propagating an official state ideology to all society. The result of the lack of national cohesion and the disempowerment of the tribes was not a soft threat to the state, but it could have, and it did in 1978, meant a drastic civil war whose outcome could have been uncertain. As detribalization meant also the transfer of Pashtuns to cities where they would become “detribalized”, so the spread of factory jobs where family roles became less important and hierarchical industrial relations more prominent could have meant the weakening of tribes.

When therefore in 1947 the opportunity arose for Mahmud Khan, his nationalist government set out in a propaganda campaign to make Pashtunistan independent and maybe even annex it to Afghanistan. This caused many problems with the non-

Pashtunist components of the parliament who were convinced that Pashtunism meant autocracy and racism, but who did not hold any real power in Afghan society. Under Daoud Khan, both the international conditions and a series of (un)fortunate conditions allowed him to play a much more aggressive policy inwards, the repression of the Qandahar rebellion in a swift manner, as well as the repression of every independent outlet, and the escalation that eventually cost him his position. The effort to make Pashtunistan independent as any, likely, attempt to annex it could have also meant finally putting Pashtuns, albeit tribalized, in the top position of the country's ethnic minorities, as Afghanistan's demographic balance showed the Pashtuns to be a significant minority in the country but not the dominant group, although statistics were uncertain.

Therefore, Pashtunistan was, and still is, a significant problem for those two countries, one that became "structural" in the epoch of nationalism in post-independence colonies and today represents an issue of radicalization and terrorism between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is important to notice that less radical nationalists like King Zahir decided to ignore the matter, although they were convinced of Pashtunism. It remained a problem for pan-Pashtunists, if such a term may be used, but one that became thorny only for those most radical, here This thesis argues that the sociological and ideological differences in groups were very important, especially in Afghanistan where the personalized dimension of power meant that leaders' views and flaws were important.

However, despite these optimistic claims, UCD is not a flawless theory. Some major issues severely hinder its ability to explain pre-capitalistic historical development. Even within a capitalistic era, the theory (or law as Trotsky called it) remains potentially insufficient because of several factors.

These critiques are not directed at Trotsky's conception of the UCD, but at its more "modern" use of it, the one started by Justin Rosenberg in 1994 with the *Deutscher Lecture*<sup>348</sup>. This concept has made its way, albeit in different forms, through several

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<sup>348</sup> N. Davidson, *The Conditions for the Emergence of Uneven and Combined Development*, p.33, in A. Anievas and K. Matin, *Historical Sociology and World History: Uneven and Combined Development Over the Long Durée*, 2016, Eds, Rowman & Littlefield International

authors whose work has been partially quoted in the introduction of this thesis. One thing that has unified some of the authors quoted in this thesis, which is by no means an exhaustive list, is the conception of UCD as a trans-historical theory, capable of capturing the essence of the “international” throughout the eras and the mode of productions<sup>349</sup>. This thesis work has been greatly influenced by this vision as well, although, a critique of it is necessary to expose the flaws of this method, but also its interesting insights on human development.

The first critique that this modern vision of UCD has aroused is the issue of trans-historicity. This has been present within articles that established UCD as taking place only within the temporal limits of the development of modern capitalism, but not before<sup>350</sup>.

The issue is not that societies before capitalism were not interacting with each other, that they influenced each other’s forms of development, or that international events taking place in one region could affect another one. Rather, the critique of whether or not UCD’s predictable and all-explaining pattern of investigation precludes historicizing the very relations of the period<sup>351</sup>.

Although Rosenberg claimed that mode of production analysis is fundamental to the understanding of UCD, and Anievas and Nişancioğlu spoke of *trans-modality*<sup>352</sup>, referring to the understanding of UCD within several modes of production, rather

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<sup>349</sup>J. Rosenberg, *Why is There no Historical Sociology*, 2006, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.12, No.3, p.317

<sup>350</sup> N. Davidson, *The Conditions for the Emergence of Uneven and Combined Development*, in A. Anievas and K. Matin, *Historical Sociology and World History: Uneven and Combined Development Over the Long Durée*, 2016, S. Ashman, *Capitalism, Uneven and Combined Development and the Trans-historic*, 2009, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, S. Rioux, *The Collapse of “International Imagination”: A Critique of the Trans-historical Approach to Uneven and Combined Development*, 2015, *Theoretical Engagements in Geopolitical Economy*

<sup>351</sup> B. Teschke, *IR Theory, Historical Materialism and the False Promise of International Historical Sociology*, 2013, *Spectrum Journal of Global Studies*, Vol.6, No.1, p.27

<sup>352</sup> Anievas and K. Nisancioğlu, *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism*, 2015, London, Pluto Press, pp.61-62

than trans-historicity, it is doubtful whether or not this very same pattern occurred flawlessly throughout the human era<sup>353</sup>.

As Kees van der Pijl argued, in pre-capitalistic societies, which were essentially agrarian, major differences between them were at the level of state and inter-ruling class relationships. Therefore, it was possible for them to fully absorb the *borrowings* of other societies, creating an “amalgamated state” form<sup>354</sup>. This is explained through the fact that industrialization and capitalism need the complete, or at least the domination of new forms of social relations over prior ones because of the creation of a capitalistic market and the total dependence of individuals on it. The “early form of UCD” that took place in Afghan lands was generated through the interaction of the Mughal, Safavid/Afsharid, and Shaybanid Empires. The implication was the use of the Safavids of kinship as an administrative unit and the incessant wars determined the rise and fall of several clans within the Abdalis and the Ghilzais. This policy therefore laid the basis for the rise of the Durrani Empire in 1747. Therefore, the Safavids and Mughals generated a form of “UCD” but the problem with this claim lies in the fact that this very form did not radically change the dominating social relations in the country, but actually exploited them to create a new political, and to a small extent, a social structure which would go on to determine Afghanistan’s future<sup>355</sup>.

The problem with the issue therefore lies in the fact that by simply taking into account the mode of production dominant both in the Safavid Empire and in historical Afghanistan, the issue of the rise of the Pashtuns cannot be accounted for, because of the internalist view that the mode of production implies. However, it is not clear how UCD would meaningfully add some to the theorization except by

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<sup>353</sup> A. Callinicos and J. Rosenberg, *Uneven and Combined Development: The Social-Relational Substratum of the “International”?* An Exchange of Letters, 2008, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, p.79

<sup>354</sup> Kees van der Pijl, *Nomads, Empires, States: Modes of Foreign Relations and Political Economy, Vol. I, 2007*, London, Pluto Press, p- 63.

<sup>355</sup> Shahrani M. Nazif, *State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan: A Historical Perspective*, p.28

pointing out how the Safavid/Afsharid influences the Abdali Pashtuns. As a matter of fact, despite the historical significance of the Safavid dominance over historical Afghanistan, the behavior of the Pashtun tribes when the Durrani Empire was created cannot be explained only through this form of historical “borrowing”. Much like Robert Brenner had argued that the expansion and creation of states in feudal Europe occurred because of “geopolitical accumulation” mechanisms present within the feudal system itself, somehow the theorization of why the Durrani Pashtuns had to invest energies and men into costly war campaigns has eventually to fall back to a theory of the social<sup>356</sup>. But then the question begs whether or not UCD may be utilized as a pointer that avoids the pitfalls of internalist views and actively helps take into account a plethora of factors generated from the “outside”. Much like Gregorian or Shahrani did, accounting for the historical development of Afghanistan may be done without even referring to the concepts of *combination* or *unevenness*.

The problem of historicity becomes also theoretical once the problem of unevenness, combination, and whip of external necessity, plus the privilege of historical backwardness are brought to the fore. This becomes an issue since UCD tends to impress this pattern throughout human history, classifying it according to the ontological principle of unevenness that exists among human societies, the interaction between them, and the subsequent combination it seeks to derive from the interaction of uneven societies. However, the risk with this pattern is that, first historical specificities risk being left behind by actually impressing the pattern of capitalism itself into pre-capitalist societies and secondly, this becomes a tautology. Given the fact that, while UCD has been acclaimed as the potential response to Realism’s eternal conception of anarchy throughout human history and its subsequent appeal, it may repeat its same mistakes by applying an a-temporal logic to the entirety of human history<sup>357</sup>. For this reason, some scholars have instead

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<sup>356</sup> R. Brenner, *The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism*, 1982, *Past & Present*, No.97, pp.37-38

<sup>357</sup> B. Teschke, *IR Theory, Historical Materialism and the False Promise of International Historical Sociology*, 2013, p.27, J. Glenn, *Uneven and Combined Development: A Fusion of Marxism and Neo-Realism*, 2012, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol.25, No.1, pp.76-77

proposed of utilizing UCD as a theory, or at best a conceptual toolset, for understanding development within the history of capitalism rather than a general theory of human history.

UCD could be used to account for the difficulties experienced by Afghanistan from Habibullah's era onwards until the outbreak of the civil war and the following Soviet Invasion. It could be used to account for the tension experienced between the central government and its attempts to bring about social change and the resistance operated by society. However, doing this incurs the same problems listed above. If UCD is utilized in order to account for the social tensions generated by the attempts of several governments to create an industrial and infrastructural base then, the issue becomes one that the concept of "catch-up industrialization" has already been well specified before UCD became the object of many investigations. Other concepts such as the developmentalist state have already well established the role in societies where private capital could not jump-start the industrialization process. The concept of combination may be the one concept that has a greater validity since, against the more static analysis of the mode of production for example, it holds greater usefulness since it can account for transitory forms of state and society.

Therefore, it is doubtful whether or not this thesis has effectively fully taken advantage of the concepts that UCD had to offer. Scholarship in the field of Afghanistan has, quite to a large degree, underlined the role of external factors in shaping the construction of Afghanistan, given the particularly woeful history of the country. The results may have been the same without utilizing the conceptual apparatus of UCD as demonstrated by the skillful work of Shahrani in explaining the rise of the Pashtuns and their structural dependence on booty and the limits of the kinship mode of production. Hopkins' work in detailing the intricate nexus of relationships between the Sikh and the British Empires on the one side and the Durrani on the other, and still the Durrani and the Safavids/Afsharids, has already greatly described the entire process of "combination" taking place within the

political and social structure of the Durrani Empire. Lastly, Gregorian's extensive and deep historical analysis of the Afghan modernization process greatly took into account many international elements, including revolutions and ideologies, and how they shaped the perception and actions of the Afghan people and ruling classes.

What has therefore UCD to offer in this scheme? Given the largely internalist explanations that have been given to explain the causality of events taking place within and between societies, the conceptual tool of the UCD helps recognize the fact that social development between societies remains highly correlated if not directly mutually constitutive. It helps tear down the barriers to actually account for phenomena that are otherwise unexplainable by nationalist methodologies and its concept of combination retains its usefulness as an *explanans* of forms that internalist methodologies would be unable to account for. It does not represent a fully-fledged theory though, and its trans-historical validity, as much as its validity within the current world, remains one of the conceptual tool boxes, and even in this case, it contains many shortcomings. UCD therefore may function as a powerful pointer to the way the international shapes societies, generating unique patterns of development which in turn affect global development as well.

Given the above critical stance taken against Uneven and Combined Development as a theory and its, limited, usefulness in explaining Afghanistan's woes, some alternatives will be offered as counterfactuals to account for this thesis.

The first critical assumption that could be made is that the centralization of Afghanistan was not necessarily related to a common identity or a more stable polity later on. This thesis has stated that the Anglo-Afghan Wars have caused a strengthening of Islam and tribalism which has hindered the development of a shared identity. However, it is hard to see how this would have been the case given the fact that historically speaking, Afghan elites reached the idea of a common identity only with the advent of Pan-Islamism articulated through a modernist

discourse. Not therefore the absolute obedience of the Muslim subject to the emir as in the case of Abdur Rahman, but that of a dynamic and educated citizen that would build a modern Afghanistan. Thus, considering Afghan history, the breakdown of centralization efforts has brought about a strengthening of traditional identities and social relations in Afghan society but historically may have impacted little on the development of a shared identity since the latter came much later on and its failure was related to questions outside Afghanistan's reach. The failure of Pan-Islamism after the invasion of Iran by the Ottoman, Russian, and British Empire, the Arab's upheaval against the Ottomans, as well as the fight of millions of Muslims in the ranks of the Entente, determined the failure of Pan-Islamism, and therefore its viability for Afghan rulers to use it as a tool of nation-building. Therefore, rather than blaming the Anglo-Afghan Wars as the main culprits for Afghanistan's lack of a shared identity, the lack of unity in the larger Muslim world during the Great War could have been blamed for this.

The second critical point that could be made is that the government of Afghanistan got engaged in the Pashtunistan issue because of some elements that remained the same throughout Afghanistan's history. First and foremost, the issue of the Pashtun at the government. Although Pashtuns at the government did not signify a general climate of sympathy between central government and tribes, as exemplified by Abdur Rahman's campaigns, Amanullah's misfortunes and the several campaigns of Daoud, the prominence of the Pashtuns meant that despite the changes an overall hostile and prejudiced reaction against any "foreigner" was still common within Pashtun society. The issue of Habibullah Kalakani, the short-lived leader of Afghanistan after Amanullah's fall, who was a Tajik who quickly condensed upon himself the antipathies of a system that was used to see rulers coming from the Durrani tribes as leader, and which eventually caused him to lose his life<sup>358</sup>. On the second point, despite the modernization efforts, the prominence of Pashtun ethics within the royal government meant that elders were favored in their selection as leaders over young members of the family. For this reason, the Pashtunistan issue,

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<sup>358</sup> T.J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 2010, p.197

as claimed by Bezhani, could have been utilized as a tool for solving intricate matters of power within the royal family<sup>359</sup>. This consolidated the royal family's position vis a vis other groups in society and also became a point of contention which eventually led to the dissolution of political parties in 1952<sup>360</sup>.

Following the continuity line, the meaning of being Pashtun could have also changed. Some intellectuals embraced the idea of reconquering the territories historically related to the Durrani Empire, therefore relating the issue to a greater Afghanistan that would have also represented its former past glory by actively owning what the Sikh Empire and British imperialism had denied to them. Therefore, for some members of the royal family, the issue became a sentimental one, while to Pashtun nationalists it became a matter of recovering lost territories through which to reconnect the "lost Pashtuns" to their original homeland<sup>361</sup>. This, according to Harrison, arose out of the fact that the Durrani Empire was a Pashtun Empire, which shielded the Pashtuns against competing identities and politics. The loss of Peshawar and the Durand Line Agreement truncated the Pashtuns into two, therefore rendering the ethnic character of the Afghan state uncertain<sup>362</sup>. This was also historically justified by the fact that when Abdur Rahman founded the first centralized state of Afghanistan, it had to submit the Hazaras, Tajiks, Kafirs, etc. which left Afghanistan with a built-in legacy of ethnic conflict<sup>363</sup>. Therefore, given the historical primacy that the Pashtuns enjoyed, the issue of Pashtunistan became one that was directly linked to national identity as formulated by the conservative and nationalist governments between the 30s and 50s. This issue is compounded by the fact that no census has ever been able to fully account for the actual presence of Pashtuns and of the other ethnic tribes in Afghanistan, since the official census of

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<sup>359</sup> F. Bezhani, *The Pashtunistan Issue and Politics in Afghanistan, 1947-1952*, p.199

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.* p.209

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.* p.200

<sup>362</sup> S.S. Harrison, *"Pashtunistan": The Challenge to Pakistan and Afghanistan, 2008, Real Instituto Elcano*, p.2

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.* pp.2-3

1979 increased the number of Pashtuns to the detriment of the other ethnic groups<sup>364</sup>.

To conclude, the use of Uneven and Combined Development can point to several helpful directions that avoid the mistake of falling to internalist explanations, although, as already mentioned above, Afghanistan's historical work has already pointed out the interconnectedness of the country with the broader trends in the world. Conceptual tools such as combination may still retain some descriptive power to account for transitory forms of society and government during periods of dramatic change, but overall, UCD seems to be an addendum that does not bring much in terms of contribution to the scholarship on the country. This latter topic, as shown by counterfactual topics, can be expanded by including other forms of explanations based upon lines of historical continuity, which accounts for the stability of some, very important, elements that maintained their identity and did not change significantly throughout Afghanistan's history. One of these is the historical role of the Pashtuns in the history of the country, together with the later interpretation of Afghan history as that of Pashtuns dominating the country by the means of the Durrani Empire.

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<sup>364</sup> S.G. Simonsen, *Ethnicising Afghanistan?: Inclusion and Exclusion in Post-Bonn Institution Building*, 2004, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.25, No.4, p.706

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## APPENDIX

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Bu tez, bölgesel ve küresel düzlemde cereyan eden gelişmelerin Afganistan'daki gelişmeleri önemli ölçüde etkilediğini ve sonuç olarak Afganistan'da güçlü bir ortak kimliğin oluşmasını engellediğini ve dolayısıyla Peştunistan meselesinin bir ulus kurma aracı olarak araçsallaştırıldığını göstermiştir. Bu tez, Eşitsiz ve Bileşik Gelişme (EBG) teorisini kullanarak Safevi, Babür ve Özbek imparatorluklarının Afganistan'ın sosyal yapısının dönüşümünde önemli bir rol oynadıklarının altını çizmektedir. Özellikle Sefeviler Afgan toplumunun parçalanmış halinden ve akrabalık temelinde oluşmuş niteliklerinden faydalanarak, akrabalık kurumunu siyasal ve yönetsel bir araç olarak kullanmış ve Peştunlar'ın içerisinde var olan grupların yükselişi veya düşüşünü belirlemişlerdir. Bu yönetim tarzından özellikle iki grup yükselmişti: Sefevi imparatorluğunun düşüşüne sebep olduğu Gilzay kabilesi ve Dürrani İmparatorluğu kurucusu olan Abdali kabilesi. Bu çerçevede, Eşitsiz ve Bileşik Gelişme teorisinin ilk katkısı, söz konusu "kombinasyonun" sağladığı temel bağlantıya, yani farklı sosyal, teknolojik ve politik uygulamaların dış baskılar sonucunda yerel dinamiklerle bir araya getirilmesine dayanmaktadır. Bu teoriye göre Afganistan'daki ilk kombinasyon örneği Dürrani ve Safevi etkileşimidir. Dürrani İmparatorluğu, ağırlıklı olarak Safevi/Afşari mirası tarafından koşullandırılmıştır ve kendisi de Safevi politikasının bir ürünü olan Abdali kabilesinin hiyerarşik doğası, Abdaliler'in bir imparatorluk yaratmaya uygunluğunu belirlemiştir.

Tez daha sonra imparatorluk içindeki dinamiklerin küresel faktörlerle birlikte, yani Kaçar ve Sih İmparatorluklarının oluşumu ve kapitalizmin ilerleyişi ile, Dürrani İmparatorluğu'nun büyük bir krize girmesine ve sonunda çökmesine neden olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu durum imparatorluk içindeki çelişkiler nedeniyle ortaya

çıkıştır. Örneğin, çok eşliliğe dayalı evlilik politikası bu nedenle tahtın varisleri arasında ve yönetici kabilenin çeşitli soyları arasında kavgalara neden oldu. Öte yandan Sih ve Kaçar İmparatorluklarının kurulması, bu iki imparatorluğun çok güçlenmesi nedeniyle Dürraniler'in komşularına baskınlar yapıp yağmalamalarını imkânsız hale getirdi.

Bir diğere önemli gelişme ise İngilizlerin Hindistan'ı fethetmesiydi. Bu durum, Orta Asya Koridoru olarak adlandırılan bölgenin kalbinde yer alan Hindistan ekonomisinde genel bir değışime neden oldu. Bu rota içerisinde Afganistan'ın büyük bir rolü oynadığı için, Hindistan'da vuku bulan gelişmeler Dürrani İmparatorluğunun sonunu getirmeye büyük katkıda bulundular.

İmparatorluğun parçalanması, Dürraniler'in kraliyet ailesini oluşturan Sadozailer'in ve Barakzailer'in ailelerinin birleşik bir liderlik olmadan farklı şehirleri yönetmesine neden oldu. Bunun üzerine yeniden merkezileştirilmiş bir siyasi yapı yaratma girişimi Dost Muhammed Han tarafından üstlenildi. Dost Muhammed Han bunu Kabil Emirliği'nin kurulması ve diğere şehzadelere ait şehirlerin fethi yoluyla başardı. Ancak bölgede İngiliz sömürgeciliğinin genişlemesi ve Rusya ile rekabeti, İngilizlerin dikkatini aynı zamanda Orta Asya'daki İngiliz ticaretinin de önemli bir parçası olan ve tampon bölge olarak görülen Afganistan'a çevirmesine neden oldu. Bu nedenle Sihler ve Afganlar arasındaki savaşın neden olduğu birçok diplomatik temaslardan sonra Britanya İmparatorluğu 1838'de Kabil Emirliği'ni işgal ederek Dost Muhammed Han'ın devirdi ve Kabil'de kukla bir hükümetin kurdu. Ancak İngilizler'in yönetim biçimi ve kabileleri güçsüzleştirme çabaları, Afgan topraklarında İslam ve kabileciliğın güçlü harekete geçirici faktörler olarak kullanılmasıyla sonuçta bir isyana neden oldu. Bu durum, Dost Muhammed karşısında kabilelerin güçlenmesine ve yabancı istilalar sırasında Afganistan'daki farklı kabileler ve etnik gruplar arasındaki zayıf bağlantıyı kurabilecek güçlü bir siyasi güç olarak İslam'ın önemli bir rol oynamasına neden oldu.

Bu tezin amacı, İngilizler ile Afganlar arasındaki bu ilk etkileşimin iki nedenden dolayı Afganistan'ın geleceğini şekillendirmeye neden olduğunu göstermektir. Birincisi,

Afganistan'ın stratejik konumu ve İngilizlerin Afganistan'ı bir tampon bölge olarak kontrol etme isteğidir. İkincisi ise, İngiliz-Afgan savaşları, Dost Muhammed ve Şer Ali'nin merkezi gücüne karşı kabilelerin ve İslam'ın sürekli güçlenmesidir. Böylece Afganistan, Abdur Rahman'ın yönetimi altında merkezi bir varlık haline gelince, krallığı birleştirebilecek tek unsur İslam olmuştur. Bu durum, emirlik ilan edildiğinde kabile meşruiyetinin yerini İslam'a bırakmasıyla zaten gerçekleşmişti ve bu durumun kökleri ülke dışında meydana gelen değişimler karşısında fetih ve yağmacı bir kabile toplumunu sürdürmenin imkansızlığında görülmektedir. 1880'de İkinci İngiliz-Afgan Savaşı'nın sona ermesi ise tamamen merkezileşmiş otoritenin Afganistan'da ilk defa ortaya çıkmasıyla yeni bir dönemi başlatmıştır.

İngiliz sömürgeciliği Peştunlar'ın iki ayrı ülkeye bölünmesini de belirledi: Afganistan Emirliği sınırları içinde kalan aşiretler ve Hindistan Raj ile bütünleşmiş olanlar. Bu durum yalnızca sınırdaki kabilelerin en bağımsız kabileler olması ve bu nedenle sınırın bu kabilelerden arındırılmaması nedeniyle değil, aynı zamanda iki savaş arası dönemde Peştun milliyetçiliğinin yayılması Pakistan irredentizminin ortaya çıkmasını etkilediği için pek çok soruna yol açmıştır. 1879'da imzalanan Gandamak Antlaşması ile Afganistan, dış işleri İngiliz sorumluluğunda olarak doğrudan olmayan bir şekilde İngiliz imparatorluk sisteminin bir parçası haline gelmişti. Abdur Rahman'ın sübvansiyonlar ve silah konusunda İngilizlere bağlı olması, Afganistan'da bulunan halkların çoğunu kontrol altına almasına ve mutlak siyasi güce sahip bir emire dönüşmesine neden oldu. Emir'in gücü birçok siyasi ve idari sorumlulukla tahkim edildi ve böylece Afganistan'da daha önce görülmemiş düzeyde bir güç merkezileşmesi ortaya çıktı. 1901'de ölen emir, ülkeyi oğlu Habibullah'a bıraktı. Ancak Habibullah hükümeti, Batı sömürgeciliğine karşı uyumlu bir İslami tepki verilmesi talepleri, Japonya'nın Rusya'ya karşı başarıları, anayasal hükümet talepleri, bilimsel ve endüstriyel alandaki genel ilerlemelere gibi birçok uluslararası dinamikle karşı karşıya kaldı. Tüm bu gelişmeler Afgan siyasetini şekillendirdi ve yeni oluşan entelektüel elitlerin ülke içinde değişim ihtiyacını vurgulamasına yol açtı. Afganistan tarihinde yaratacakları etkiler göz önüne alındığında, Mahmud Tarzi ve Musahiban kardeşler gibi farklı isimlerin ülkeye gelişi de tarihi bir dönüm noktası oldu.

Tüm bu gelişmeler ve üstüne de Büyük Savaş'ın çıkması dış zorunluluk bahanesini kullanan Emir Habibullah'ı uluslararası meselelerde bir tavır almaya zorladı. Bu çerçevede, Habibullah merkezi imparatorluklardan oluşan İttifak devletleri ile ittifak yapmayı reddetti. Öte yandan hem modernleşmeci hem de muhafazakarlardan oluşan müdahaleci kanadı hayal kırıklığına uğratarak İtilaf devletleri ile de ittifak yapmadı. Habibullah tarafsızlık politikasının bedelini canıyla öderken, oğlu Amanullah da fırsatı değerlendirerek İngilizlere karşı Afganistan'ın bağımsızlığını kazanmasına neden olan üçüncü bir savaş başlattı. Amanullah'ın projesi, Afganistan'ın sosyal yapısı ile Afgan hükümetinin ülkenin ekonomik, maddi ve eğitim alanındaki yeteneklerini yükseltme girişimi arasındaki çelişkiyi bir kez daha ortaya koydu. Bir kez daha Afganistan'ın hem geleneksel hem de modern öğelerini aynı zamanda içeren birleşik doğası, kolayca çözülemeyen bir gerilimler karışımı yarattı ve sonunda reformların uygulanma hızı ve kralın popüler olmayan bazı politika seçimleri sonucunda 1924'te bir isyan patlak verdi ve kısa bir iç savaşa neden oldu. Daha sonra 1929'daki son isyan ise Amanullah'ın krallığına son verdi.

EBG teorisine göre bu durum Afgan toplumunun doğasından ve dışarıdan kaynaklanan gerilimlerin son derece istikrarsız bir toplumsal formasyon üretmesinin sonucu olarak görülebilir. Böyle bir geçişi yönetmenin zorluğunun farkına varılmasının bir sonucu olarak, yeni nesil Afgan yöneticileri olan Musahiban, ağır muhafazakâr tonlarla daha seçici bir modernizasyon biçimini deneyerek meseleye farklı bir yaklaşım benimsedi. Bu girişim o kadar başarılı oldu ki sonunda Musahiban 1978'e kadar hüküm sürdü. Musahibanlar'ın iktidara yükselişi aynı zamanda Peştunlar'ın Afganistan'ın çekirdeğini temsil ettiği fikrine dayanan yeni bir Afgan kimliği anlayışını da beraberinde getirdi. O dönemdeki entelektüellere göre ve yayınlanan tarihi ve arkeolojik eserlere göre, Peştunların Afganistan tarihinin merkezinde yer aldıkları ve İran'la karşılaştırıldığında hem kültürel hem de dilsel olarak farklı bir unsur oldukları kanıtlanmıştı. 1938'de Peştunca'nın ulusal dil olarak yükseltilmesi, Peştunca Akademisi'nin kurulması, Peştunca dergi ve süreli yayınların yanı sıra Peştun olmayanlara yönelik ayrımcılık bu döneme damgasını vurdu.

Bu milliyetçilik biçiminin yükselişi, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın hemen ardından ortaya çıkan Peştunistan meselesinin farklı mercekler altında yeniden çerçevelenmesine olanak sağladı. Nitekim Afganistan'da etnik milliyetçiliğin doğuşuyla birlikte iki savaş arası yıllar, başta Nazi Almanyası olmak üzere dışarıdan da etkileri beraberinde getirmiş ve bu etkiler, başta Davud Han olmak üzere bazı liderlerin görüşlerini etkilemiştir. Bu liderler Nazizm'den ve onun milliyetler hakkındaki görüşlerinden etkilenmiştir. İkinci Dünya Savaşı yılları Afganistan'ı dramatik bir şekilde şekillendirdi; bunun nedeni sadece Musahiban içindeki modernist ve radikal grubun dünyada meydana gelen gelişmelere uygun olarak hızlı bir kalkınma programına doğru ilerlemesi değil, aynı zamanda İngilizlerin zayıflamasıydı. Hindistan'da büyüyen huzursuzluk ve İngiliz İmparatorluğunun İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın ardından büyük güç kaybı, alt kıtanın sömürsüzleşmesi sürecini etkiledi. Bağımsızlık, Pakistan'ın İngiliz Raj'ından doğması anlamına geldi ve bu durum Peştunistan sorununun ilk gerilimlerini de beraberinde getirdi.

1947'de başlayan Peştunistan meselesi, kısa sürede kraliyet ailesi içindeki entrikaları ve güç dengelerini içeren çok boyutlu bir soruna, siyasi partilerin liberalleşmesi ve soruna ilişkin konumlanmalarıyla "ulusal" bir soruna ve nihayet uluslararası bir davaya dönüştü. Kraliyet ailesi içinde sorun, yönetici ailenin genç ve modernist kolunun ailenin yaşlı yöneticilerini zayıflatmak ve iktidara ulaşmak istemesiydi. Bu, Davud ile Mahmud Han arasındaki çatışmalarla iyice su yüzüne çıktı. Öte yandan Peştunistan meselesi, düşmanı meşrulaştıran veya gayrimeşrulaştıran bir araç haline geldi.

Yeni liberalleşmiş ulusal siyasi hayatta, Uyanmış Gençlik Partisi hızlı modernleşmeyi, Peştunların Afganistan'daki merkezi rolünü ve Peştunistan'ın Pakistan yönetiminden kurtuluşunu vurgulayan militan Peştun milliyetçiliği vizyonunu yoğun bir şekilde destekleyen yeni bir ulusal partiydi. Parti yoğun bir şekilde müdahaleci hale geldi ve sınır bölgesindeki askeri hareketleri savundu. Vatan Partisi meseleye büyük bir şüpheyle yaklaştı ve bunun yönetici elitin hükümet çizgisine karşı muhalefeti, yeni doğan siyasi hayatı bastırma girişimi olduğundan şüphelendi. Ayrıca bunun

Peştunlar'ın diđer etnik kökenlilerin statüsünü düşürerek kendilerini yükseltme girişimi olduđu fikri de yaygın bir fikir haline geldi. Son olarak sorunun uluslararası boyutu ise ABD ve SSCB'nin konuya müdahil olmasından kaynaklandı. ABD, Pakistan'la ittifakı ve Afganistan'ın sorunun çözülmesine izin vermemesi nedeniyle Afganistan'a malzeme tedarik etmeyi reddetti. SSCB ise ülke içinde nüfuz kazanmanın bir yolu olarak kendisini Peştunistan'ın bağımsızlığının destekçisi olarak buldu.

1947'de Pakistan doğduğunda, statüleri tanımlanmayan birçok bölgeden ya Pakistan'a ya da Hindistan'a katılmaları ya da başka bir şekilde bir geçiş dönemini kabul etmeleri ve sonrasında iki ülkeden birine katılmaya karar vermeleri istendi. Kuzey Sınır Bölgesi Pakistan'a katılmayı kabul etti ancak bu durum, tam bağımsızlığın da bir fırsat olarak sunulması gerektiğini iddia eden Afgan hükümetiyle sorunlar yarattı. Bu konu, Afganistan'ın sınır bölgesinde yaşayan Peştunlar'ın karar verme hakkını ihlal ettiği gerekçesiyle Afganistan'ın Pakistan'ın örgüte girişini veto ettiği BM Genel Kurulu'na da yansıdı. Sonunda Pakistan üye olmasına rağmen, sorun asla ortadan kalkmadı ve her iki tarafta da propaganda konusu oldu. Afganistan, bir Peştunistan Başkanı atadı, bir Peştunistan Günü ilan etti ve sınır bölgesinde Peştunistan yanlısı aktivistler için çeşitli ileri karakollar ve misafirhanelerle kurdu.

1949'da Pakistan'ın Afganistan'ı bombalamasının ardından, bir kabile meclisi Durand Hattı'nın Pakistan'la değil Britanya Hindistanı ile imzalanmış olması nedeniyle geçersiz olduğunu ilan etti. Sorun daha sonraki yıllarda daha da arttı; 1951'de Pakistan tarafından Afgan mallarına kısmi ambargo, 1955'te ise tam ambargo getirildi. Bu durum Davud Han'ın rehberliğinde Sovyetler Birliği ile Afganistan arasındaki ilişkileri güçlendirdi. İki ülke arasındaki güçlü ilişkiler Afganistan'ın modernleşme çabalarına vesile oldu. Sanayileşme ve ordunun güçlenmesi gerçekleşti, Afganistan'ın kent merkezleri değişmeye başladı ve yeni bir orta sınıf ortaya çıktı. Ancak hükümet milliyetçi söylemleri ve politikaları ile Peştunistan'ın “kurtuluşunu” sağlama konusunda ısrar etmeye devam etti. 1960 yılında sınırın diđer tarafındaki bazı aşiretlerin yardım çağrısına yanıt veren Afgan birlikleri

Pakistan sınırına sızdı ve gerginlikler yaşandı. Savaştan kaçınılmasına rağmen çatışmalar devam etti ve sonunda Davud'un hükümeti, gelirlerdeki düşüş, ekonomik kriz, Pakistan'la gerginlikler ve ayrıca Irak'taki darbe örneği gibi gelişmelerin ortasında istifa etmeye karar verdi. Davud Han hükümetinin düşüşüyle geçici olarak Peştunistan'ın bağımsızlaşması konusu arka plana geçti.

Bu tez, bu sürecin yalnızca iç politika ve Afgan hırslarının bir karışımından, yani kraliyet sarayı içindeki entrika ve dengelerden ve Afgan seçkinlerinin denize açılan bir çıkış noktasına ulaşma hırslarından kaynaklanmadığını, aynı zamanda Afganistan için başka bir kimlik inşa etme ihtiyacından doğduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bu durum sadece Peştunlar'ın ülke tarihindeki merkezi önemine dayanmıyor, aynı zamanda onların kabilelerden arınmış ve devlete sadık modern vatandaşlar olarak yeniden konumlanmalarına da dayanıyordu. Peştunlar'ın sadakati kabilelerine ve kavimlerine dayanıyordu ve merkezi devlete karşı periyodik isyanları onları herhangi bir ciddi merkezileşme çabası için bir sorun haline getiriyordu. Bu yalnızca Peştunlara özgü bir durum değildi. Dolayısıyla mesele, sadece yeni devletin yönetici kadrosundaki Peştunları belli bir ölçüde dönüştürmek değil, aynı zamanda onları devlet çıkarları karşısında kabilesel ve yerel bağlarını takip etmeyen örnek vatandaşlar haline getirmektir. Modern vatandaşlık fikri, Müslümanların bilgi ve bilim aramadaki görevlerini vurgulayan önceki entelektüeller tarafından zaten benimsenmişti ve Peştunları da aynısını yapmaya ikna etmek için benzer söylemler kullanıldı. Bu nedenle tezin argümanı, milliyetçi elitin Peştunistan meselesini kullanmasının, geleneksel toplumla bağlantılardan arınmış modern vatandaşlık vizyonuna dayalı olarak Afganistan için ulusal bir kimlik inşa etme arzusundan kaynaklandığı fikri doğrultusunda geliştirildi. Bunun yapılmasının nedeni esas olarak iki konuya bağlanmıştır: Birincisi, İngiliz-Afgan Savaşlarının geleneksel ilişkilerin güçlenmesine katkıda bulunması ve dolayısıyla Afganistan'ın gelişimini İslami çizgide şekillendirmesi, toplumun kabile karakterini güçlendirmesi ve dolayısıyla başka herhangi bir olası kimliğin oluşmasını engellemesidir. İkincisi ise Eşitsiz ve Birleşik Kalkınma teorisi kullanılarak Afgan merkezi hükümetinin zorlukları ve eylemlerinin analiz edebileceği konusudur.

Uluslararası sistemden kaynaklanan gerilimler Afgan devletini hızla modernleşmeye zorlamış ve bu durum Afganistan'da devlet-toplum ilişkilerinde sorunlara yol açmıştır. Dolayısıyla dış zorunlulukların etkisi ve gerilimleri, devleti ve toplumu buna göre değiştirmeye çalışan yönetici seçkinlerin davranışlarını etkiledi. Bu hem geleneksel hem de modern toplumun unsurlarını aynı anda içeren bir Afganistan'ın yaratılmasıyla sonuçlandı (birleşik). Halen kabile bağlarına dayanan meşrulaştırmaya bürokratikleşme, ekonomik büyüme, sanayileşme vb. eşlik ederken aynı zamanda Afgan toplumunun çoğunluğu içe dönük yaşamaya devam etti ve sürecin dışında kaldı. Toplumun çoğunluğunun sürece dahil edilememesi büyük sorunların kaynağıydı; çünkü reformlar toplumun çıkarlarına dokunduğunda, büyük siyasi sonuçları olan hoşnutsuzluklar ve hatta ayaklanmalar ortaya çıkıyordu. Bu nedenle Afgan devletinin her şeyi dengeleme girişimi, özellikle uluslararası ve yerel bağlam göz önüne alındığında, zorlaştı. Bu nedenle, bu tez, tarihsel olarak toplumdaki kaynaklanan zorlukların iç savaşlara ve yöneticilerin düşüşüne neden olduğu gerçeği göz önüne alındığında, müşterek bir vatandaşlık inşa etme ihtiyacının çok önemli hale geldiğini ileri sürüyor.

Ancak bu tez iki açıdan eleştirilebilir: Birincisi kendi teorik çerçevesi açısından. EBG'nin kendisinin tam teşekküllü bir teori olmadığı, tam tersi, daha çok kapitalist gelişmenin analizi sırasında kullanışlılığını koruyan kavramsal bir alet kutusu olduğu gerçeğidir. Nitekim eşitsizliğin kendisi kapitalist dönemde en belirgin ve aşırı hale gelir. Bu nedenle, Durrani İmparatorluğu'nun doğuşundan önce EBG'nin kullanımı sorunlu olarak görülebilir. Öte yandan, EBG'nin teorileştirmede, yalnızca meydana gelen süreçleri tanımladığı, dolayısıyla kullanılsa da tezin genel argümanında çok az değişiklik olduğu söylenebilir. Bunun nedeni EBG'nin meydana gelen olayları açıklamak için bir sosyal teoriye dayanmak zorunda olması ve bu yaklaşımının kavramsal alet kutusunun dışarıda bırakılmasının olayların açıklanmasını hiçbir şekilde değiştirmemesidir.

İkinci olarak, sadece İngiliz-Afgan Savaşları konusunu merkeze almak sorunlu olabilir. Çünkü bu savaş Afgan toplumunun şekillenmesine katkı sağlasa da aslında

Afganistan'da Müslümanlık zaten ana kimlikti ve başka hiçbir büyük kimlik mevcut görünmüyordu. Dolayısıyla her ne kadar bu savaş sonucunda ikincisi güçlenmiş olsa da böyle bir toplumdan başka nelerin ortaya çıkabileceğini görmek de zordur.

Başka bir konu ise Peştunlar'ın Afgan tarihinin merkezinde olduğu meselesidir. Peştunistan meselesi çeşitli şekillerde yorumlanabilir. Peştunlar'ın ülkenin siyasi yaşamının merkezinde kalması, onların iktidardan vazgeçmek istemedikleri anlamına geliyordu ve bu nedenle Peştun kimliğini güçlendirme fikri, iktidarı ellerinde tutmak için işlevseldi. Durand hattının yaratılması Afganistan'da da belirsiz bir etnik denge yaratmıştı; Peştun seçkinleri bunun farkındaydı ve Peştunları sınırın diğer tarafına entegre etmeye çalışarak bunu telafi etmeye çalıştı ve bu nedenle Pakistan ile tehlikeli gerilimlere girişti. Peştunistan meselesi aynı zamanda elitlerin kaybedilen toprakları geri kazanma yönündeki tarihsel iradesi ve kraliyet ailesinde de nüfuz mücadelesinin gerçekleştiği bir araç olması gibi başka meselelere göre de çerçevelenebilir.

Bu nedenle, bu teze göre EBG, Afganistan'da meydana gelen olaylara ilişkin genel bir çerçeve olarak bir miktar yararlılığını korurken, diğer açıklamaların ve teorilerin, EBG'nin kavramsal kullanımı olmadan da aynı gelişmeleri açıklayabileceğini belirtmek gerekir. Özellikle tarihsel süreklilik fikri, bazı faktörler değişmeden kalsa da Afganistan siyasetinin Peştun toplumu içindeki dinamiklerden ve gelişmelerden bir hayli etkilenmesinin nedenini açıklamak için kullanılabilir.

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### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Bordonaro

Adı / Name : Lorenzo

Bölümü / Department : Orta Doğu Araştırmaları/Middle East Studies

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