

WHAT EDUCATION BUILDS AS NATION IN AFGHANISTAN:
A CASE OF NATION-BUILDING

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A CASE OF NATION-BUILDING**

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ABSTRACT

WHAT EDUCATION BUILDS AS NATION IN AFGHANISTAN: A CASE OF NATION-BUILDING

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The departing point of this thesis is to understand the implications of nation-building as a Western initiative in contemporary Afghanistan in the post-2001 period. Based on this larger question, the thesis investigates the meaning of ‘nation’ as concept that is externally introduced to this country. In this framework, the goal of this thesis is to reveal the idea of nation as presented particularly in the discourse of education constructed by the state of Afghanistan. To this end, the thesis employs three major primary resources: (1) official state documents; (2) school textbooks; and (3) expert interviews conducted at the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan. The thesis poses three major research questions on what the content of the idea of nation is; what it tells about the society of Afghanistan; and whether it suggests the modern idea of nation as defined in the West. Pursuing a qualitative research methodology, the thesis interprets the data through several themes that emerge as the constituents of the *millat-e Afghanistan* (‘nation of Afghanistan’). More specifically, the thesis uncovers and examines: (1) three national symbols including the national flag, national anthem and national heroes, as well as national history; (2) four national concepts including national unity, citizenship, national will and national interests; and (3) four major elements of the nation including Islam, *qawm*, *Afghaniyat* (Afghanness) and *watan* (homeland). Findings of this study clearly reveal that the Western-imposed *form* of nation has a local *content* in Afghanistan which is a product of its own context.

Keywords: Afghanistan, nation-building, nation of Afghanistan, education

ÖZ

AFGANİSTAN'DA EĞİTİMİN İNŞA ETTİĞİ MİLLET: BİR MİLLET İNŞASI ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tez çalışması, Afganistan'da 2001 sonrası dönemde Batılı güçler tarafından başlatılan millet inşası politikasının gerçekte ne ifade ettiğini anlama çabasından doğmuştur. Buradan hareketle, çalışmada Afganistan'a dışarıdan dayatılmış olan 'millet' kavramının anlamı araştırılmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, Afghanistan devleti tarafından kurgulanmış olan eğitim söyleminde ortaya koyulan millet fikrini açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu amaçla üç temel birincil kaynak incelenmiştir: (1) resmi devlet belgeleri; (2) ders kitapları; ve (3) Afganistan Eğitim Bakanlığındaki uzmanlarla yapılan mülakatlar. Bu kaynakları eğitim söylemi olarak kabul eden çalışmada, bu söylemdeki eğitim fikrinin içeriğinin ne olduğu; bu fikrin Afganistan toplumu hakkında ne söylediği; ve bu fikrin Batıda tanımlanmış haliyle modern bir millet kavramının izlerini taşıyıp taşımadığı üzerine üç temel araştırma sorusu sorulmaktadır. Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinin kullanıldığı çalışmada *millat-e Afghaniestan* ('Afganistan milleti') fikrinin bileşenleri olarak öne çıkan çeşitli temalar üstünden üç ana başlıkta yorumlayıcı veri analizi yapılmıştır: (1) milli bayrak, milli marş ve milli kahramanlardan oluşan üç milli sembol, ve milli tarih; (2) milli birlik, vatandaşlık, milli irade ve milli çıkarlardan oluşan dört milli kavram; ve (3) milletin dört ana unsuru: İslam, *qawm*, *Afganiyat* (Afganlık) ve *watan* (vatan). Çalışmada elde edilen bulgular, Batı tarafından dayatılan millet *formatının* Afganistan'da kendi bağlamı tarafından üretilen yerel bir *içeriğe* sahip olduğunu açıkça göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afganistan, millet inşası, Afganistan milleti, eğitim

*Sevgili annem Gülnur Sungur'a,
Sen olmasaydın bu rüya gerçek olamazdı...*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the Study

Knowledge, in Social Sciences, accumulates through millions of in-depth studies on specific cases, issues and questions. What is known as ‘established’ and ‘universal’ knowledge today is a result of the combination of innumerable profound studies that have been undertaken, hypothesised, tested, theorised, questioned, criticised, revised and re-established. In other words, *universal knowledge*, that is known to be ‘context-free,’ is constituted by the bits of the *knowledge of the particular* that exists in a specific context, i.e. place and time. That is to say, it is not possible to reach context-free universal knowledge without the contextual knowledge of the particular.

In obtaining knowledge of the particular in Social Sciences, the field that plays a fundamental role is Area Studies which provides a constant contribution for universal knowledge, while shaping and re-shaping it. The power of this field results from its ability to extract first-hand information from specific contexts, such as a country, a region or an area that is defined for a purpose, through field research; on-site observation; participation; interviews; use of primary resources in vernacular languages and so on. Only in that way is it possible to obtain the knowledge of the particular *in its own context* and *in its own terms*. In other words, the field of Area Studies pays utmost attention to the particular context while employing universal knowledge in examining an issue. Where there is a gap in the knowledge of a particularity, Area Studies may be employed as the best way to fill that gap.

As a thesis produced in the field of Area Studies, this study represents an effort to examine and understand a specific issue in a specific country through an examination of its native resources as well as on-site field research. The country in question is contemporary Afghanistan which remains an under-studied country in the global academia. Among the reasons behind is lack of security which is a primary factor

determining the issues to be studied in relation to this country. In general, academic studies on contemporary Afghanistan typically focus on terrorism, fundamentalism, the Taliban, political Islam, regional and international security, conflict resolution and Afghan refugees in the world. Many of these academic works are produced by foreigners who serve in Afghanistan either as military personnel within the NATO or as civil personnel working at the UN institutions, international NGOs, international mass media outlets or foreign embassies. It is becoming increasingly difficult especially for foreign scholars or students to do long-term field research in Afghanistan primarily for academic purposes. Consequently, on-site research conducted on Afghanistan is shaped by the professional and institutional needs of those who are able to stay in the country. Meanwhile, foreign scholars and students, few of whom are fluent in the vernacular languages of Afghanistan, generally remain limited to desktop research carried out in online secondary resources such as reports and statistics. It is only through the efforts of a group of native and foreign scholars, most of whom are based in Western countries, that on-site research undertaken *primarily for academic purposes* is still carried out in Afghanistan, no matter how limited. As a result of all these factors, there are many gaps in the knowledge of Afghanistan. For this reason, this study has been designed as an Area Studies research to extract information from the context of Afghanistan through native resources as well as field research.

1.2. Background of the Study

Looking at Afghanistan, we see a landlocked country in Asia, just in the middle of Central Asia in the north and South Asia in the south. Presently, it does not have a bright image in the world, considering all the wars and conflict it has been going through in the last forty years. It is known as an impoverished and backward country from which people have been fleeing to save their lives and live as refugees in other countries. More importantly, it is viewed as a victim of dirty world politics, being the battleground of foreign powers that have been exploiting it in various ways for their own interests.

In fact, until the 1980s, Afghanistan was a country largely unheard of. It was generally viewed as an Asian country on its way to development. It was only with the Soviet invasion in 1979 that Afghanistan appeared in the international scene, and since then it has never disappeared. It has come to be known through the Mujahedeen

fight against the Soviets (1979-1989); the Soviet defeat and withdrawal in 1989; the Taliban regime (1996-2001) and its shelter to the Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden after 9/11; the US-led invasion (2001) and toppling of the Taliban; the resurgence of the Taliban against the NATO and the state of Afghanistan; and the conflict between the two sides since then. It is due to this ongoing conflict that Afghanistan remains an insecure, unstable and aid-dependent country to this day, which lays the ground for many other problems (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan).

Focusing on the post-2001 period in Afghanistan, we see a re-building and re-structuring process initiated under the auspices of Western powers. As the NATO entered this country, the international community including the UN institutions, NGOs from many countries and volunteer organisations started pouring into Afghanistan with high hopes of re-building it. It was also in this period that the term ‘nation-building’ became a buzzword for Afghanistan, with many articles and books written on it. Yet, it remained a vague concept failing to explain who was building which nation in Afghanistan. Were the Western powers building it or the people of Afghanistan? Did it mean that there was no nation in Afghanistan? What kind of a nation was being built? In sum, it was the obscurity around the term ‘nation-building in Afghanistan’ that has been the departing point of this study (see Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework: Nation-Building and Nation).

The motivation to understand the real meaning of nation-building in Afghanistan was soon accompanied by the motivation to understand what ‘nation’ means in this country. It is a critical question, considering the society of Afghanistan which is generally described either as a ‘multi-cultural’ society; or as an ‘ethnically diverse’ society; or as a ‘tribal’ society, depending on the ontological and epistemological stance of the scholar. Leaving aside such labels for now, we know that the society of Afghanistan is locally perceived in terms of groups called *qawm*¹ (or *aqwam* in plural), fourteen of which are officially recognised in its Constitution. The ‘ethnic,’ ‘cultural’ or ‘tribal’ diversity perceived by scholars results from this structure of the society based on *aqwam*. The question here is what would a ‘nation’ mean within such a social structure. This question has been a vital factor in specifying the way this study has been shaped and designed.

¹ English translations of the word *qawm* will be presented and discussed in Chapter 7.

1.3. Research Design

The question of what ‘nation’ means in the context of Afghanistan may only be answered with the help of a resource that reveals the content of the idea of nation. To spot that source, it is necessary to find out where the goal of building a nation becomes most visible and intelligible. A review of the theoretical literature (see Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework: Nation-Building and Nation) shows that nation-building is a huge process operated by the state simultaneously in all its agencies one of which is education. At this point, the *discourse of education* comes forward as an appropriate resource that has a great potential for revealing the content of the idea of nation. For this reason, the discourse of education in Afghanistan has been defined as the main research platform for the purposes of this thesis. For reasons explained in Chapter 2 Methodology, the discourse of education to be examined in this thesis has been defined as the following three sets of primary resources:

1. Official documents:
 - a. Constitution of Afghanistan (2004)
 - b. Curriculum Framework of Afghanistan (2003)
 - c. Education Law of Afghanistan (2008)
2. School textbooks:
 - a. Social Studies (Primary level: Grades 4-6) (2010 edition)
 - b. Civic Education (Intermediate level: Grades 7-9) (2011 edition)
 - c. Patriotism (Intermediate level: Grades 7-9) (2015 and 2017 edition)
 - d. History (Intermediate level: Grades 7-9) (2017 edition)
3. 11 expert interviews conducted at the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan

In the first set of primary resources, we see three official documents of the newly-established state of Afghanistan, ratified after the toppling of the Taliban in 2001. What is presented in the discourse of education is based, first and foremost, on these documents. Thus, they may be considered as the *basis* of the discourse of education.

In the second set of primary resources, we see four sets of school textbooks, amounting to twelve textbooks in total, written in the Dari² language. Providing the

² Dari, or Afghan Persian, is one of the official languages of Afghanistan, along with Pashto.

main body of the data on the idea of nation, school textbooks may be considered as the *core* of the discourse of education.

In the third set of primary resources, we see the interviews conducted by myself with eleven experts working at the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan. Conducted with the policy-makers in the field of education, expert interviews may be considered as a resource revealing the views of the *producers* of the discourse of education.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the research design presented above, three major research questions have been formulated in order to be asked to the discourse of education:

1. What is the content of the idea of ‘nation’ that is presented in the discourse of education at the 9-year compulsory level in Afghanistan?
2. What does this idea of ‘nation’ conceptualised by the Ministry of Education as a representative of the state of Afghanistan tell us about the society of Afghanistan?
3. Does this conceptualisation of ‘nation’ presented in the discourse of education in Afghanistan suggest the idea of a modern nation as defined in the West?

Among these three questions, the first one constitutes the primary research question of this thesis, as the second and third questions are dependent on it. This question seeks to discover the major components of the idea of nation as they are presented in the discourse of education in Afghanistan. In order to answer this question, the entire discourse of education has been analysed with the method of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), as explained in Chapter 2 Methodology. This extensive in-depth analysis has worked towards revealing the major themes observed in the discourse of education, which have been presented as the constituents of the idea of ‘nation of Afghanistan.’ All this detailed data analysis, which forms the bulk of the research to be presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, is supposed to give an extensive answer to the primary research question of this thesis.

In relation to the first question, the second one asks what the idea of nation that has been discovered tell us about the society of Afghanistan. It seeks to find out what this idea conceptualised by the state of Afghanistan reveals about the society in reality.

Deep down, this question tries to understand why the state conceptualises the nation in that way; and the relationship between the society itself and the conceptualisation of it. Chapter 8 Discussion is supposed to give a detailed answer to this question.

Finally, the third question that follows from the first two questions seeks to view the end product achieved at the end, i.e. the idea of the ‘nation of Afghanistan,’ in relation to the larger theoretical discussion outlined in Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework. This question endeavours to find out whether the idea of ‘nation’ reached at the end corresponds to the idea of a modern nation as defined in the West. Chapter 8 Discussion and Chapter 9 Conclusion are expected to give an expansive answer to this question.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study seeks to discover what nation means in contemporary Afghanistan in a specific platform, i.e. education. Overall, it represents a unique and original research in terms of its: (1) research questions; (2) research platform; (3) research methods.

In this study, we primarily see a ‘what’ question to find out the content of nation, which requires a detailed and intensive examination. Answering ‘what’ questions generally takes much time and effort; but at the end, they reveal significant data. Especially where there are important gaps in the knowledge of an issue, ‘what’ questions precede ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. It is not possible to ask further questions on an issue where there is no basic information. Therefore, the primary significance of this study rests on the fact that its major research question is a ‘what’ question. And the focus of this question, i.e. the idea of nation in Afghanistan, is another point increasing the vitality of this research on a country where the conceptualisation of society long seeks to be understood. The findings of this study is also expected to make a contribution to the larger debate on nations and nationalism in the global academia.

Second, this study has specified the field of education as its research platform to observe and examine data. In the case of Afghanistan, education is not a common research platform, as the main focus remains on everyday politics; international actors; the army; the insurgents and so on. This study aims to show that the discourse of education contains significant data on what kind of a society that those in power wish to construct. As a product of the state, i.e. the primary actor of nation-building,

the discourse of education is supposed to reflect the mind-set, way of thinking and ideology of the state of Afghanistan. In other words, the discourse of education is supposed to show us how the state conceptualises the 'nation' or the society at large in Afghanistan. This specific conceptualisation made by the policy makers in the field of education is expected to reveal the general way of thinking about the society in Afghanistan. The local conceptualisation of nation inevitably reveals valuable information about the social structure in Afghanistan. Therefore, this study is expected to make a humble contribution to the sociology of Afghanistan at large, which would, in return, help us make some better interpretations about this country.

Third, the research methods of this study are also original in that they involve a first-hand analysis of the primary resources of Afghanistan written in the Dari language as well as the interviews conducted directly with local people in the field. Especially in recent years, the Western literature on Afghanistan has had to rely on English-language resources due to the difficulty of going to the field as well as the lack of knowledge in local languages. This study overcomes both of these difficulties providing access to the primary resources of Afghanistan written in its own language. After all, the larger purpose of this study as an Area Studies research is to understand Afghanistan in its own context by using its own native resources.

1.6. Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is made up of nine chapters. Here in **Chapter 1 Introduction**, we have presented the main research topic as well as the research questions. Following this step, the thesis starts with presenting the methods with which to study the research questions in **Chapter 2 Methodology** and discussing how those questions may be considered in the light of theory in **Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework: Nation-Building and Nation**. Having these methodological and theoretical tools is expected to pave the way for starting the study of the research questions. But before that comes **Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan** which provides contextual information.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are the core chapters of this thesis, where the main data analysis is presented. In these three chapters, the primary research question of this thesis (What is the content of the idea of 'nation' as presented in the discourse of education in Afghanistan?) is answered with data coming from the primary resources. In order

to present the data in the most meaningful way, these chapters have been ordered in a line that goes from the more concrete and visible to the more abstract. **Chapter 5 What Education Builds in Afghanistan: Symbols & Memory of Nation** starts with presenting the three major visible symbols of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as revealed in the discourse of education: national flag, national anthem and national heroes. This chapter also includes an analysis of the memory, or history, of the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’ Then comes **Chapter 6 What Education Builds in Afghanistan: Concepts of Nation** which presents the four major abstract concepts related to the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as revealed in the discourse of education: national unity, citizenship, national will and national interests. Finally, **Chapter 7 What Education Builds in Afghanistan: Elements of Nation** accumulates the analysis made in Chapters 5 and 6, revealing the four major elements of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as: Islam, *qawm*, *Afghaniyat* (Afghanness) and *watan* (homeland).

These three chapters of data analysis are followed by **Chapter 8 Discussion** which makes an effort to answer the three research questions in relation to one another. At the end, this chapter reveals; (1) the content of the idea of ‘nation’ as revealed in the discourse of education in Afghanistan; (2) the implications of this conceptualisation about the society of Afghanistan; and (3) the question of whether this conceptualisation suggests the idea of a modern nation as defined in the West. Finally, the thesis is concluded with **Chapter 9 Conclusion** that presents some general concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

There are many ways to answer a question. Similarly, a research question may be answered in different ways depending on the preferences of the scholar doing the research; the resources at hand and the nature of the question. The primary research question posed in this thesis seeks to find out what ‘nation’ means in contemporary Afghanistan as it is revealed in the discourse of education. This chapter will be an effort to show how this thesis will answer this question, i.e. with which specific methodology. Starting with an explanation about the preferred ontological and epistemological positions, the chapter will, then, go on to explain the research strategy; the research platform; the data collection methods; the data analysis method; and, finally, the trustworthiness as well as limitations of this study.

2.2. Research Paradigm: Constructivist Ontology and Interpretivist Epistemology

Any research that is undertaken in sciences, be it the social or natural sciences, has an ontological and epistemological basis, as it enters into a relationship with reality and knowledge of that reality. In academic terminology, the nature of reality is described as ontology; while the knowledge of reality is described as epistemology. Here, we will be presenting our own ontological and epistemological standpoints defined for this thesis.

Focusing on social sciences, we see that ontology deals primarily with “the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors” (Bryman 2008: 18). In other words, the major ontological question is whether reality, i.e.

social phenomena, exists independently of social actors or are constructed by those actors. These two views are defined respectively as *objectivism* and *constructivism*.

The primary social entity that this thesis deals with is ‘nation.’ The ontological question to be asked here is whether nation exists independently of the social actors; or it is a construction of those social actors such as the state, the intellectuals, the foreign advisors, the UN, etc. The theoretical framework laid out in the next chapter on the idea of nation helps us answer this question. Especially when we consider the term ‘nation-building,’ we will see that nation is something ‘built’ or constructed by varying actors. Where nation-building is observed as a process in a country, nation is generally constructed by a modern state; where it is observed as a policy goal of foreign actors in the aftermath of a military intervention, it is constructed by foreign advisors and institutions such as the UN. In any case, nation emerges as a construction. Here in this thesis, we seek to uncover the idea of nation constructed specifically in the discourse of education in Afghanistan. Thus, the ontological position of this thesis is constructivism.

As for epistemology, it concerns the question of what constitutes acceptable knowledge in social sciences. The central issue here is “whether the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos of the natural sciences” (Bryman 2008: 13). Those who answer this question in the affirmative are adherents to *positivism* which seeks to *explain* phenomena through causality and universal theories. On the other hand, those who claim that there is a difference between the subject matter of natural sciences and that of social sciences, i.e. humans, societies and institutions, which requires two different research logics adhere to *interpretivism*. This position is intellectually indebted to Max Weber’s sociology whereby he focuses on *understanding* social phenomena rather than *explaining* it like the positivists. In brief, positivism claims that reality exists; while interpretivism claims that reality takes shape according to the meanings that people confer on reality.

This thesis tries to achieve the knowledge of the conceptualisation of ‘nation’ as it is presented in the discourse of education in Afghanistan. It accepts beforehand that the idea of ‘nation’ is ontologically constructed and conceptualised in a specific way by the state of Afghanistan. Thus, the subject matter of this thesis, i.e. the idea of ‘nation,’ does not have a concrete structure that may be studied with positivist

methods. This idea may only be interpreted and understood in its own terms. Therefore, the epistemological position of this thesis is interpretivism.

Having presented our ontological and epistemological positions, we may claim that the main research paradigm in this thesis is that social reality is *constructed*; so, we can only *understand* it through *interpretation*.

2.3. Research Strategy: Qualitative Research

As presented in Chapter 1 Introduction, there are three main research questions formulated in this thesis the first of which constitutes the primary research question:

- ***What is the content of the idea of ‘nation’ that is presented in the discourse of education at the 9-year compulsory level in Afghanistan?***

Here, we see a ‘what’ question that seeks to find out the *content* of something, which requires a detailed and in-depth examination. Answering ‘what’ questions generally takes much time and effort spent on the data; but at the end, significant information is collected. Especially where there are gaps in the knowledge of an issue, ‘what’ questions inevitably precede ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, for it is not possible to ask further questions on an issue where there is no basic information. Therefore, the primary goal of this research is to find out the missing basic information on the idea of nation as revealed in the discourse of education in Afghanistan.

The nature of the primary research question of this thesis invites a qualitative research strategy rather than a quantitative one. What we seek to find out in this thesis is the *content* of an idea which may best be understood through an in-depth analysis of the data collected from written texts and people’s expressed views; rather than statistical figures.

According to Creswell (1998: 17), there are three main reasons why a researcher chooses to work with qualitative methodology. The first one is the nature of the research question, as shown above. The fact that the primary research question of this thesis is a ‘what’ question makes it more apt for a qualitative study:

In a qualitative study, the research question often starts with a *how* or *what* so that initial forays into the topic describe what is going on. This is in contrast to quantitative questions that ask *why* and look for a comparison of groups...or a relationship between variables, with the intent of establishing an association, relationship, or cause and effect... (Creswell 1998: 17)

The second reason Creswell cites is the need for an exploration of the topic. As stated above, this thesis seeks to discover the content of the idea of nation, which requires a detailed exploration that has not been undertaken till now. The third reason is the need to present a detailed view of the topic, as “[t]he wide-angle lens or the distant panoramic shot will not suffice to present answers to the problem, or the close-up view does not exist” (Creswell 1998: 17). In our case, there is no such close-up view of the idea of ‘nation’ in contemporary Afghanistan, at least in the Western resources. That is why this thesis aims to lay bare the content of this idea with the help of a qualitative research strategy. Finally, the definition of qualitative research given by Creswell (1998: 15) also confirms that this study is most apt to be conducted with a qualitative methodology:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (Creswell 1998: 15)

It is exactly the goal of this thesis to build up a “complex, holistic picture” of the idea of ‘nation’ in Afghanistan through an examination of three distinct types of resources, i.e. official state documents, school textbooks and expert interviews, to which we now turn.

2.4. Research Platform: Discourse of Education

The question of discovering the content of the idea of nation requires spotting the main resource that would best reveal that content. What matters at this point is to find out where the goal of nation-building becomes most visible and intelligible. The discussions in Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework: Nation-Building and Nation reveals that nation-building is a huge process operated by the state simultaneously in all its agencies one of which is education. More specifically, it is the state-sponsored primary and/or secondary education that is officially defined as compulsory for all. The state, as the main actor of nation-building, operates this process in mass education through: (1) the Ministry of Education as its representative policy-making component; (2) the schools as its physical and institutional components; (3) the teachers as its policy-implementing individual components; and (4) teaching materials, including textbooks, as its discursive components. All of these components combine to create a *discourse of education* that is produced and sustained by the

state. It is this discourse of education that has the biggest potential of revealing the idea of nation that is conceptualised by the state to be presented to students. That is why the discourse of education has been specified as the main research platform to observe the idea of nation in Afghanistan for the purposes of this thesis. It needs to be underlined, however, that the main goal here is only to observe and examine the discourse of education; and not to question or criticise its capacity or quality as an educational tool, since that belongs to the field of Educational Sciences.

This thesis treats the discourse of education as a discourse produced by the state of Afghanistan. Looking at the representative institutions of the state of Afghanistan in the field of education, we see two ministries: (1) the Ministry of Education, and (2) the Ministry of Higher Education. The first is responsible for primary education (grades 1-6), secondary education (grades 7-9 as lower secondary and 10-12 as upper secondary), vocational education, religious education and basic teacher education; while the second is responsible for higher education at the level of undergraduate and post-graduate studies as well as advanced teacher training. Considering all these levels of education, what matters most for the purposes of this thesis is the level in which *all* the inhabitants of Afghanistan are obliged to participate so that the nation-building policy of the state operates. In Afghanistan, the first 9 years of education (6-year primary education and 3-year lower secondary education) are officially recognised as compulsory for all the citizens. As this period falls under the responsibility of the first institution, the Ministry of Education will be treated as the representative of the state of Afghanistan as well as the main producer of the discourse of education throughout this thesis.

In order to understand the underlying ideas in the discourse of education, it is necessary to start with examining the official documents of the state of Afghanistan, such as the Constitution, the Curriculum Framework and the Education Law. These documents, presenting the basic ideology of the state, are supposed to include the fundamentals of the discourse of education in this country. Thus, official documents will be treated as the first component of the discourse of education in Afghanistan.

As a representative of the state of Afghanistan, the Ministry of Education publishes teaching materials, including textbooks, to be used at schools across the country. Especially textbooks come forward as the major resources that are made publicly available for all students. They are also documents that are supposed to reveal the

discourse produced by the state in the most explicit way. Thus, textbooks will be treated as the second component of the discourse of education in Afghanistan.

And finally, the experts working at the Ministry of Education, who are the producers of the discourse of education, are defined as direct providers of data. The first two components of the discourse of education, which have the form of documents, will be complemented by the views and opinions of the discourse producers. In other words, experts working at the Ministry of Education will be treated as the third component of the discourse of education in Afghanistan.

Discourse of education constitutes a huge discourse that is simultaneously produced by all the components of education, including but not limited to the Ministry of Education, schools, principals, teachers, the curricula, teaching materials, textbooks, TV broadcasts, etc. In order to do a meaningful and in-depth analysis on this huge discourse, the best way is to choose its most relevant components and work on them. The discussion above brings forward three major components that have been specified as the three major primary resources of this thesis: (1) official documents, (2) school textbooks, and (3) expert views. What is excluded here are the curricula for each course, teaching plans, teachers' guide books, etc. which focus primarily on how *teaching* should be done. Such resources may only be relevant for other studies in the field of Educational Sciences; not for this thesis which treats education only as a research platform.

2.5. Methods of Data Collection on Primary Resources

In answering the research questions posed in this thesis, a three-step research has been designed based on the three primary resources. The flow of the research has gone in parallel with the order of the primary resources. In order to understand the basics of the discourse of education, the research has started with the examination of the official documents. Based on the preliminary ideas formed in this step, it has proceeded with the examination of school textbooks whereby the core data has been obtained. The data collected from these two types of documents has paved the way for obtaining further data from the discourse producers at the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan by way of interviews. Now is the time to present these primary resources in detail one by one.

2.5.1. Official State Documents

The first set of primary resources constitutes the official documents of the newly-established state of Afghanistan, promulgated in the aftermath of the toppling of the Taliban regime in 2001. Providing the basic premises of the discourse of education, the official documents may be considered as the *basis* of the discourse of education.

Universe and Sample

The universe of this resource consists of all the laws and regulations put into effect by the state of Afghanistan. Following the application of the method of purposive sampling over the full universe, three official documents have been selected as the most relevant resources for this thesis, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample of Official Documents

Sample of Official Documents			
	Name of Document	Ratification Date	Ratified by
1	Constitution of Afghanistan	2004	Drafted by the Constitutional <i>Loya Jirga</i> and formally ratified by President Hamid Karzai
2	Curriculum Framework of Afghanistan	2003	Ministry of Education, Afghanistan
3	Education Law of Afghanistan	2008	Ministry of Education, Afghanistan

The first and foremost document in my sample is the Constitution of 2004, which officially established the new state of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It was drafted and agreed upon by the Constitutional *Loya Jirga*³ of 2003, in which more than 500 delegates from across the country participated, and formally ratified by President Hamid Karzai in 2004. Being the most basic document defining and describing the regime, structure, strategy and ideology of the state of Afghanistan in the post-2001 period, the Constitution is the primary official document to be examined in order to understand what a nation means in Afghanistan.

³ *Loya Jirga*, or the Grand Council, is a traditional form of assembly that has been at use in Afghanistan since the 18th century to achieve consensus on major matters of urgency. For details, please see 6.4.1. *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council).

The second document in my sample is the Curriculum Framework drafted even before the Constitution, which shows the importance placed on education in the aftermath of the toppling of the Taliban regime in 2001. Immediately in 2002, UNICEF initiated a “Back to School Campaign” in Afghanistan which led to a nation-wide movement of students going back to schools. Yet, the curriculum and textbooks were in a state of chaos as a result of the radical change of regimes that took place in the previous years. Curriculum was like a patchwork clumsily brought together, where militant Islamic ideas existed side by side with the Communist ideology (Spink 2005: 199). There was a serious need for drafting a new curriculum and publishing new textbooks. The first step taken in this regard was to draft a new Curriculum Framework in a national work shop “organised by joint efforts of the Ministry of Education (Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan) and USAID, with the technical support of CAII (Creative Associates International) and other international organisations, such as UNICEF Afghanistan and UNESCO Afghanistan” (Ministry of Education 2003: 5). The presence of so many international partners confirms the role of foreign experts in designing the national education system of Afghanistan, even though they are claimed to have acted by “taking into consideration all spiritual, moral, cultural and historical values of the Afghan people and Afghan society” (Ministry of Education 2003: 5). Specifying the contours of the philosophy and strategy of education in the post-Taliban Afghanistan and showing the interaction between local values and international expectations, the Curriculum Framework emerges as the second official document to be examined in order to understand what a nation means in Afghanistan.

The third document in my sample is the Education Law ratified in 2008 by the Ministry of Education. This Law founds itself on the Constitution of Afghanistan, specifically on the articles on education, giving the state the responsibility of providing free education to all the citizens of Afghanistan. Though focusing more on the details of the provision of education which remains outside the scope of this thesis, this Law still appears as the third document to be examined for understanding what a nation means in Afghanistan.

Availability

All of these three official documents are available online in the official web pages of the state of Afghanistan in their original languages (Dari and Pashto) and in English.

Reliability

The Constitution, the Curriculum Framework and the Education Law are the three basic official documents which show the underlying ideas and ideologies of the state of Afghanistan, including the idea of a ‘nation of Afghanistan.’ All the data presented in the discourse of education in relation to the idea of nation is based, first and foremost, in these official documents. For example, it is the Constitution that primarily defines who an Afghan citizen is. Textbooks present the conceptualisations of Afghanness as well as citizenship based on these Constitution articles. Similarly, the experts base their opinions on these official conceptualisations.

The reliability of these documents in showing us what a nation means in Afghanistan in the discourse of education has been confirmed in the third stage of the research, i.e. interviews. Throughout the interviews, it was these three documents that my respondents constantly mentioned and quoted, which was something that increased their potential for and reliability in answering the research questions of this thesis.

Data Collection Process

In this part of the research, data was collected from the three official documents which were read and studied in detail by myself. Especially the parts related to the idea of nation were highlighted for citation where necessary.

2.5.2. School Textbooks

The second set of primary resources constitutes the textbooks that have been written and published by the newly-established state of Afghanistan in the post-2001 period. Providing the bulk of the data collected for the purposes of this thesis, textbooks may be considered as the *core* of the discourse of education.

Universe and Sample

The universe of this primary resource constitutes all the textbooks used in all the courses offered in the 9-year (6 years for primary, 3 years for intermediate education)

compulsory basic education level in Afghanistan. Full universe of the textbooks presented at the official website of the Ministry of Education may be seen below.

Table 2. List of Courses in Basic Education in Afghanistan

List of All Courses in Compulsory Basic Education in Afghanistan		
Elementary Level		Intermediate Level
Grades 1-3	Grades 4-6	Grades 7-9
Dari Language	Dari Language	Dari Language
	Pashto Language	Pashto Language
	English Language	English Language
		Arabic Language
Islamic Studies (for <i>Hanafis</i> ⁴)	Islamic Studies (for <i>Hanafis</i>)	Islamic Studies (for <i>Hanafis</i>)
Islamic Studies (for <i>Jafaris</i>)	Islamic Studies (for <i>Jafaris</i>)	Islamic Studies (for <i>Jafaris</i>)
The Holy Quran	The Holy Quran	<i>Tajweed</i> ⁵
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
Skills	Social Studies	Civic Education
		Patriotism
		History
		Geography
	Sciences	Physics
		Chemistry
		Biology
Arts	Arts	Arts
Handwriting	Handwriting	
		Profession

**Sections coloured in grey show the sampled courses in this research.*

What needs to be reminded here is that the official languages presently at use in Afghanistan, Dari and Pashto, are also recognised as the two languages of instruction. Therefore, there are two sets of textbooks, the Dari-language textbooks and Pashto-language textbooks, which have the same content. Based on my language skills in Dari language, this thesis focuses on the Dari-language textbooks.

Considering the focus of this thesis on discovering how the idea of nation is presented in the discourse of education, the method of purposive sampling over the full universe has been employed to retrieve the most relevant data. In selecting the textbooks, those that would be the most fit to reveal the idea of nation have been

⁴ People of Afghanistan adhere mainly to two Islamic sects: the Hanafi and the Jafari sects.

⁵ This course covers the rules governing the correct pronunciation during the recitation of the Holy Quran.

prioritised. At the end, the four courses that are coloured in grey in Table 2 above have been selected as the sample for this thesis. These four sets of textbooks amount to 12 textbooks in total.

Table 3. Sample of School Textbooks

Sample of School Textbooks				
	Name of School Textbook	Level	Grades	Publication Date
	1. Social Studies (SS)	Primary Level	4-6	2010
1	Social Studies Grade 4 (4-SS)			
2	Social Studies Grade 5 (5-SS)			
3	Social Studies Grade 6 (6-SS)			
	2. Civic Education (CE)	Intermediate Level	7-9	2011
4	Civic Education Grade 7 (7-CE)			
5	Civic Education Grade 8 (8-CE)			
6	Civic Education Grade 9 (9-CE)			
	3. Patriotism (PA)	Intermediate Level	7-9	2017 (except 7-PA published in 2015)
7	Patriotism Grade 7 (7-PA)			
8	Patriotism Grade 8 (8-PA)			
9	Patriotism Grade 9 (9-PA)			
	4. History (HI)	Intermediate Level	7-9	2017
10	History Grade 7 (7-HI)			
11	History Grade 8 (8-HI)			
12	History Grade 8 (8-HI)			

Throughout the thesis, textbooks have been treated as the carriers of the discourse of education. Thus, they have not been examined separately but as a whole. As it is not among the goals of this thesis to make an assessment of the content of the textbooks at different levels and in different grades, the textbooks have been examined holistically to see what kind of a discourse of education they produce at the end.

Below may be seen the book covers and contents of the textbooks of Social Studies:



Figure 1. Book Covers of the Textbooks of Social Studies (Grades 4-6)

Table 4. Contents of the Textbooks of Social Studies

Contents of the Textbooks of Social Studies (SS)			
Chapter	Grade 4 Social Studies (4-SS)	Grade 5 Social Studies (5-SS)	Grade 6 Social Studies (6-SS)
1	Social Life	What is a Community?	The State
2	School	Social Services	Neighbouring Countries
3	Village	Economic Activities	History of Islam
4	City	Environment and Natural Resources	The Caliphs
5	Our Homeland	Peace and Human Rights	
6	Our World		

**Chapters coloured in grey are the ones providing the main data for this research.*

Below may be seen the book covers and contents of the textbooks of Civic Education:



Figure 2. Book Covers of the Textbooks of Civic Education (Grades 7-9)

Table 5. Contents of the Textbooks of Civic Education

Contents of the Textbooks of Civic Education (CE)			
Chapter	Grade 7 Civic Education (7-CE)	Grade 8 Civic Education (8-CE)	Grade 9 Civic Education (9-CE)
1	Our Needs	Education	The State
2	Family	Economy and Life	Democracy
3	Social Groups	Institutions of Social Services	United Nations
4	Ways of Life in Afghanistan	Mass Media	Human Rights

**Chapters coloured in grey are the ones providing the main data for this research.*

Below may be seen the book covers and contents of the textbooks of History:



Figure 3. Book Covers of the Textbooks of History (Grades 7-9)

Table 6. Contents of the Textbooks of History

Contents of the Textbooks of History (HI)			
Chapter	Grade 7 History (7-HI)	Grade 8 History (8- HI)	Grade 9 History (9- HI)
1	Basics of History	Afghanistan and Islam	Political, Social and Economic Situation in Afghanistan before Ahmad Shah Baba
2	Ancient Civilisations in Afghanistan	Autonomous Islamic Governments in Afghanistan	Historical Events in Afghanistan in 1747-1879
3	Civilisations of the Ancient World	Relations between Afghanistan and Her Neighbours before Qandahar Uprising	Historical Events in Afghanistan in 1880-1973
4	History of Islam	Qandahar Uprising	Modern History of Afghanistan's Neighbours

Table 6. (Continued)

5		History of Neighbouring Countries in Medieval and Modern Ages	
6		History of Europe	
7		History of America	

*Chapters coloured in grey are the ones providing the main data for this research.

Below may be seen the book covers and contents of the textbooks of Patriotism:



Figure 4. Book Covers of the Textbooks of Patriotism (Grades 7-9)

Table 7. Contents of the Textbooks of Patriotism

Contents of the Textbooks of Patriotism (PA)			
Chapter	Grade 7 Patriotism (7-PA)	Grade 8 Patriotism (8-PA)	Grade 9 Patriotism (9-PA)
1	Praise to God, Almighty	Prayer to the Court of God	Prayer
2	Morals of the Prophet of Islam	Description of the Prophet of Islam	Great Morals of the Dear Prophet of Islam
3	Historical Background of Afghanistan	Homeland and Patriotism	Historical Position of Afghanistan

Table 7. (Continued)

4	Description of Beauties of the Homeland (poem)	National Unity	National Values
5	Patriotism (poem)	What is Freedom?	Commonalities of the Nation of Afghanistan
6	Professor Khalilullah Khalili	National Identity	Mirwais Nika, A National Leader
7	Homeland Forward (poem)	Patriotism from the Perspective of Islam	Preference for National Interests over Personal Interests
8	National Interests	Treasury and its Protection	Nation of Afghanistan as an Inseparable Part of the Islamic <i>Ummah</i>
9	National Heroes	Role of Science in the Progress of Nations	Right to Life in Islamic Shariat
10	Martyr Muhammad Musa Shafiq	Qandahar Walls and the Role of Zarghuna Ana	National and Historical Glories
11	Soil of the Homeland (poem)	Remembering Martyrs	Ahmad Shah Baba, a Religious King
12	Unity and Solidarity of Afghans in Defending the Homeland	Mir Masjidi Khan	Patriotism, not Homeland Fanaticism
13	Constructing the Homeland (poem)	<i>Ghazi</i> Muhammad Jan Khan Wardak	<i>Ghazi</i> Mir Bache Khan Kuhdamani
14	Features of Afghans	Constructing the Homeland	Declaration of <i>Ghazi</i> Amanullah Khan about Freedom
15	Martyr Muhammad Hashim Maiwandwal	Importance of Freedom and Independence	Qualities of Courage and Leadership
16	Why Do We Love Our Homeland Afghanistan?	Kariz Ayno	Factors behind Nations' Progress and Decline
17	Freedom, a Divine Gift and a Human Right	Cultural Heritage	Civil War, Reason behind the Ruin of Nations
18	Islamic Brotherhood, Basis of National Unity	Unknown Servants of the Homeland	Allama Sayyid Jamaladdin Afghani
19	Heart of Asia (poem)	Abdul Rahman Pajwak	Patriotism and Merchants' Responsibilities
20	Remembering Martyr Professor Gholam Muhammad Niyazi	Progress of the Country, Desire of Every Afghan	Role of the <i>Jirgas</i> in Resolving Conflicts and Struggles
21	<i>Jihad</i> of the People of Afghanistan against the Attack of Soviet Union	Welfare	Protection of the Property and Honour of People
22	Religion of Islam, Basis of Muslim Unity	Some of the Scientist Statesmen	Doctor Abdul Hakim Tabibi

Table 7. (Continued)

23	Faiz Muhammad Katib Hazara	Tolerance and Accepting Each Other	Unity and Solidarity, A Vital Necessity
24	Peace and Rebuilding the Homeland	Importance of the Geographical Position of Afghanistan	Salahaddin Seljuqi
25	Participation in Prosperity of the Homeland is Our Religious and National Duty	Importance and Status of the <i>Shura</i>	Law as a Pivotal Guarantee for the Consolidation of National Unity
26	Mutual Rights and Obligations Between Individuals of the Society	Remembering the Sincere Servants of Dear Homeland	Justice as a Firm Foundation of Society
27	Independence and Freedom	Islamic Brotherhood	Obligations of the Media in Consolidation of National Unity
28	Afghanistan, Cradle of Science and Civilisation	Protecting the Environment	Bias as an Ugly and Unfair Phenomenon
29		People's Obligations towards the Government	Doctor Muhammad Yusef
30			Rights of Homeland

**Chapters coloured in grey are the ones providing the main data for this research.*

Availability

All textbooks are available online at the website⁶ of the Ministry of Education.

Reliability

School textbooks used primarily at public schools as well as some private schools in Afghanistan are written, published and distributed by the Ministry of Education. There are textbook writers employed within the Ministry, who are responsible for writing, editing and revising the content of the textbooks. In other words, textbooks are produced by the employees of the Ministry, who are the representatives of the state of Afghanistan. It means that the textbooks are the carriers of the official views of the state of Afghanistan. Therefore, they are reliable resources in showing us how the state conceptualises the idea of the 'nation of Afghanistan.'

The reliability specifically of my sample of textbooks in showing what a nation means in Afghanistan has also been confirmed in the third stage of the research, i.e.

⁶ Official web page of the Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: [moe.gov.af/en/]

interviews. Throughout the interviews, it was the textbooks of Social Studies, Patriotism, History and Civic Education that my respondents mentioned and quoted, which was something that increased their reliability in answering the research questions of this thesis.

Data Collection Process

The data collection process consisted of the reading of the 12 Dari language textbooks in my sample. First half of this process took place during my stay in London, The Institute of Ismaili Studies where I read and examined some of the textbooks under the supervision of my co-advisor, Dr. Yahia Baiza. Starting this part of the research with my co-advisor, who himself worked at the Ministry of Education in Kabul for a while, has been a facilitating factor, as he assisted me where necessary. I continued reading the second half of my sample back in Turkey.

At this point, it also needs to be underlined that the English translation of all the textbook content quoted throughout this thesis belongs to me.

2.5.3. Expert Interviews

The third set of primary resources of this thesis constitutes the expert interviews conducted by myself at the Ministry of Education in Kabul, Afghanistan in September 2018. Conducted with the representatives of the state of Afghanistan in the field of education, the expert interviews may be considered as a resource revealing the views of the *producers* of the discourse of education.

Universe and Sample

The universe of this primary resource constitutes all the producers of the official discourse of education in Afghanistan working at the Ministry of Education at the time of my field research in Kabul in September 2018. Starting with several gate keepers and then continuing with the method of snowball sampling, I was introduced to the experts of the Ministry step by step through my respondents. My main goal was to contact the right experts; not to contact a great number of respondents; for I was after in-depth data. In total, I was able to interview eleven officials all working at the Ministry of Education.

As seen in Table 8 below, my sample had a good level of variation, consisting of two top officials; three senior officials; five officials and one intern. The two top officials of the Ministry, who were among the top producers of the discourse of education, were just the right people to talk about the state policies of education in Afghanistan. The senior officials were working at the level of Director General, acting as intermediaries between the top officials and officials. It was also a good idea to hear the opinions of officials working under them in order to see how far the state policies were spread over the base. Finally, I also included an intern in order to hear the views of the younger generation.

Table 8. Sample of Experts Interviewed

Sample of Experts Interviewed						
Respondent	Interview Language	Sex	Position	Level of Education	Speaking Language	Qawm
EXPERT-1	English	Male	Senior Official	Master's Degree	Dari speaker	Tajik
EXPERT-2	English	Male	Official	Bachelor's Degree	Dari speaker	Hazara
EXPERT-3	English	Male	Senior Official	Master's Degree	Pashto speaker	Pashtun
EXPERT-4	English	Male	Senior Official	Master's Degree	Dari speaker	Hazara
EXPERT-5	Dari	Female	Official	Bachelor's Degree	Dari speaker	Qizilbash
EXPERT-6	Dari	Female	Intern	Master's Degree	Dari speaker	Hazara
EXPERT-7	Dari	Male	Top Official	Doctor of Philosophy	Dari speaker	Uzbek
EXPERT-8	Dari	Female	Official	Master's Degree	Dari speaker	Tajik
EXPERT-9	Dari	Male	Official	Bachelor's Degree	Pashto speaker	Pashtun
EXPERT-10	English	Male	Top Official	Doctor of Philosophy	Pashto speaker	Pashtun
EXPERT-11	English	Male	Official	Doctor of Philosophy	Dari speaker	Qizilbash

Among these officials, two were specifically related to the UNESCO, confirming the role of international organisations overseeing the state of Afghanistan and its bodies. It was claimed that the UNESCO does not interfere with the content of the textbooks;

they just provide the form. As stated above, textbooks are written by the employers of the Ministry of Education. In my sample, two experts were textbook writers while four experts were directly or indirectly involved with writing or assessing the content of the textbooks. That is also the reason why my sample of experts have been treated as the producers of the discourse of education in Afghanistan.

In terms of ethnic or *qawmi*⁷ background, my sample had a good level of variation, as I interviewed three Pashtuns, three Hazaras, two Tajiks, two Qizilbash and one Uzbek. As the main focus of this research is on the idea of nation, the *qawmi* variety among my respondents is an important feature, increasing the quality of the data obtained. In terms of gender, however, my sample reveals an overwhelming majority of males, consisting of eight males and only three females, as the majority of the staff working at the Ministry of Education consisted of men.

Availability

This part of the research consists of my fieldwork in Kabul, Afghanistan where I stayed for almost a month in September 2018. All the experts in my sample were, at that time, actively working at the Ministry of Education in Kabul. I interviewed all of them at the various buildings of the Ministry, with the sole exception of one whom I interviewed through Skype after returning to Turkey.

Reliability

My sample consists of the officials working at the Ministry of Education, including some of the top officials. In other words, it includes the major producers of the discourse of education in contemporary Afghanistan. Therefore, my sample of experts emerges as a reliable resource that is capable of answering the research questions of this thesis.

Data Collection Process

In this final part of the research, data was collected through expert interviews which had the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews that generally took one or two hours long. I had a number of already-formulated questions which accompanied the spontaneous questions that were asked depending on the position or attitude of my

⁷ For a detailed explanation and discussion about the term *qawm*, please refer to 7.3. *Qawm*.

respondent. My questions were asked in the order going from the more general to the more specific. I would start with more general questions about the state policy of nation-building through education in Afghanistan and then pass on to ask what kind of people the state wished to foster through basic education. Through this question, the issue would be taken into the issue of identities, more specifically to national, *qawmi* and religious identities, which all constitute delicate issues in the context of contemporary Afghanistan. To the extent that my respondent would open up, I would collect the data about the conceptualisation of nation.

In order to help my respondents feel comfortable, I never used tape recorders during my interviews; but took long notes. I have also kept the identities of my respondents anonymous. What matters for the purposes of this thesis is not the identities of my respondents; but what the discourse of education reveals on the whole.

In terms of language, as I have the command of both English and Dari, I conducted the interviews wholly by myself, without the help of any translators. I conducted six of my interviews in English and five of them in Dari with those who could not speak in English. The fact that I did not use tape recorders or translators turned out to be a facilitating factor that built up a relationship of trust between me and my respondents, helping me obtain the in-depth data that is needed for this thesis.

2.6. Method of Data Analysis: Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

As stated above, this thesis seeks to uncover the idea of ‘nation’ presented in the discourse of education that is defined through three primary resources, i.e. official documents, school textbooks and expert views. In order to answer the research questions posed in this thesis, all the data coming from these different primary resources will be treated as an entire discourse and subjected to a specific method of data analysis that is *Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)*.

The main reason why this method has specifically been selected is hidden in Bryman’s short description of QCA as a “searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analysed” (Bryman 2008: 529). This is exactly what makes QCA fit for this research which looks for themes related to the idea of ‘nation’ in the discourse of education. It is through the themes waiting to be uncovered in the discourse of education that this study reveals the idea of the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’

In more general terms, QCA is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1278). This definition explains all the steps that have been taken to analyse data in this thesis.

What I have basically done during the process of data analysis has been to read all the data obtained from the three sets of primary resources, which has brought certain terms and concepts to the foreground such as national unity, homeland, etc. With the help of basic computer programs, including the NViVo software only in the case of the interview data, I have coded the data, bringing together the related terms under specific themes to act as the components of the idea of ‘nation of Afghanistan.’ Here, my primary motivation has been to reveal this idea as it comes out of the discourse of education. I have not imposed pre-defined themes on the data; instead, I have demonstrated the themes that emerge from the discourse and employed them to show what kind of an idea of ‘nation’ they help construct. In brief, I have followed a data-driven strategy. My main motivation here is to show that although an idea of nation is imposed on Afghanistan by the international world order, the discourse of education produced and sustained by the state of Afghanistan shows that it is a locally constructed idea of nation which is very different from the one expected by the international parties.

2.7. Trustworthiness of the Study

Creswell (1998) claims that there are eight procedures that may be pursued to establish the trustworthiness of a study, at least two of which must be used. In establishing the trustworthiness of this research, I employ the following two procedures: (1) triangulation and (2) thick description.

Triangulation means the use of different resources and methods to provide corroborating evidence for the main argument of a study. In this thesis, I collect data from three different primary resources, i.e. official state documents, school textbooks and expert views, with two different methods of data collection, i.e. document analysis and interviewing. Under each theme that is presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, data coming from all of these three primary resources is examined and discussed in relation to each other. Legal codes seen in the official documents are reflected onto the textbooks, which are, then, evaluated or criticised by the experts working at the

Ministry of Education. For example, the form and shape of the national flag of Afghanistan is specified in the Constitution, which is explained in the school textbooks exactly in the same line, which is, then, discussed, evaluated or criticised by the experts in the interviews. In a way, the interviews play the role of filling the gaps, by showing what is not presented in the official documents or the textbooks. In sum, my sample of primary resources works towards the triangulation of data, increasing the trustworthiness of this study.

As for *thick description*, it is a term borrowed from the famous anthropologist Geertz (1973) who actually borrowed it from Gilbert Ryle⁸ (1949), a British philosopher of linguistics. Geertz employs the term thick description to describe the intellectual effort involved in doing ethnography. For him, culture is like the web of a spider which the spider spins and then is suspended by it. That is to say, culture is man's own construction of webs by which he is suspended. As there are multiple layers of meaning in the web of culture, we need thick descriptions to understand these meanings. The data analysis conducted in this thesis is involved in giving a thick description of the society of Afghanistan as it is revealed through the discourse of education. The most obvious example is the major effort to understand, examine and discuss the local term *qawm* in its own context, which is not even translated into English throughout the thesis. All the themes presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, such as national heroes, national unity, *Afghaniyat*, etc., are presented in thick descriptions with the help of data that is triangulated. And all these thick descriptions increase the trustworthiness of this study.

2.8. Limitations of the Study

As the case with every study, this study has also encountered certain limitations in terms of data collection as well as data analysis. The major limitation on data collection was related to my language skills as a researcher on Afghanistan whose native language is Turkish. In order to collect data out of the primary resources of Afghanistan, I needed to have a working level of either Dari (Afghan Persian) or Pashto, the two official languages used in this country. To this end, I started learning

⁸ Ryle explains thick description through the difference between a twitch and a wink. A movement of the eye, through a thin description, may be regarded only as a movement of the muscle, with no other meaning. However, a thick description reveals that it may have the meaning of a secret. In other words, a thin description reveals a text; while a thick description reveals a context.

Persian as soon as I started PhD in 2013. Following the language courses I attended in Ankara, Turkey for three years, I went to Iran for two consecutive summers in 2016 and 2017, taking intensive Persian language courses at the Dehkhoda Institute, International Centre for Persian Studies at University of Tehran. Here, I completed the advanced level, graduating from the Dehkhoda Institute in August 2017. All this effort has enabled me to read the school textbooks used in Afghanistan in Dari language as well as conduct interviews in Dari during my field research in Kabul. Acquiring the necessary language skills has helped me overcome the language limitations to a great extent.

Another limitation in terms of data collection has been on the difficulty of conducting a field research in Afghanistan. In line with the design and purposes of this thesis, I needed to travel to Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, and visit the Ministry of Education there. The fact that Kabul is one of the most insecure cities in the world where blasts, explosions and suicide bombings are a part of daily life has been a great pressure on me as an academic researcher. Despite the severe security conditions, I was finally able to travel to Kabul in September 2018 and stay there for almost a month for field research. In line with the purposes of this thesis, I have interviewed experts working at the Ministry of Education, which has provided me with ample data for this thesis. My own observations in the field have also added much to the quality of this study. All in all, this research has been conducted in the most feasible way possible, overcoming, to a great extent, the limitations related to the field research.

In terms of data analysis, on the other hand, the major limitation of this study may result from the fact that it is the product of a qualitative research based on an interpretivist epistemology. Conceptualisation of the 'nation of Afghanistan' reached at the end may seem to be resulting predominantly from my own subjective interpretation. Yet, it is in the nature of any qualitative research that the researcher has an undeniable role in constructing meaning. According to Yurdakul (2016: 2), it is something already acknowledged that qualitative data analysis is directly influenced by the creativity of the researchers, their skills of analytical thinking and their proficiency in giving meaning to data. In other words, a qualitative research produces *the researcher's own construction of reality*. As Bryman (2008: 19) claims, "the researcher always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than one

that can be regarded as definitive.” What needs to be emphasised here is that the idea of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ that is discovered at the end constitutes only an “interpretive framework,” in the words of Ezzy (2002: 28), which “provides a unifying account of events observed in the world, that is temporary, uncertain and limited.” In other words, my interpretation is bound by the framework of place, i.e. Afghanistan, and time, i.e. 2001-2020, which may not be universalised.

2.9. Conclusion

This chapter has been an effort to present the methodology that has been employed in order to answer the research questions posed in this thesis. For reasons that are explained in detail, the research paradigm of this thesis has been defined on the basis of a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology; while the main research strategy has been defined as qualitative research. The research platform being described as the discourse of education in Afghanistan, the three primary resources have been specified as the official state documents, school textbooks and expert interviews. Following that, the general method of data analysis employed in this thesis has been described as Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). All these steps have helped lay the methodological grounds of this thesis, taking us to the next step: the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NATION-BUILDING & NATION

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is expected to lay the theoretical foundations of this thesis in an expansive way. Based on the main research questions of understanding what nation-building means in Afghanistan and what kind of an idea of nation is being built through education, this chapter will examine two major concepts in two parts: nation-building and nation. The first part will give a glimpse of the big debate on nation-building with all its meanings in the past and present. That is to say, this part will show what nation-building originally meant; what it has come to mean through the transformations in its meaning; and what it means today in relation to Afghanistan.

This discussion will be followed by the second part which will examine that which is being built, i.e. the nation. Here, the concept of nation will be analysed within the framework of various Western theories. At the end, this part will have equipped us with various tools to view the phenomenon of nation in different ways, preparing us for our analysis of what nation means in Afghanistan. In sum, the examination of both concepts, i.e. nation-building and nation, are expected to lay the theoretical grounds on which our examination of the case of Afghanistan will be placed.

3.2. What is Nation-Building?

The first thing to be said about the term nation-building is that it is surrounded by a conceptual chaos. In today's world, we hear it in the statements of politicians especially about war-torn countries like Iraq and Afghanistan which have gone through NATO interventions. We see it employed in different meanings ranging from democratisation to reconstruction in the aftermath of military operations. On the whole, nation-building is "used today in a markedly vague and inconsistent

manner” (Hippler 2005: 6), employed as a catch-all phrase to denote the varying processes of a foreign intervention.

We see the same vague discourse being reproduced through dozens of popular books and even ‘guidebooks’ on nation-building written by Western policy-makers; retired generals; journalists; or anyone with some ‘experience of nation-building.’ Although the term gives the impression that some nation is being built by someone, it is not being used in its literal sense today. Rather, this term is currently used in a sense that is far from its original meaning, which implies a semantic shift. In order to understand this shift, we need to go back in history to find out what this term originally meant.

To make things easier, I suggest employing Hippler’s (2005: 6-7) classification of the meanings of nation-building. Hippler reveals two main uses of this term: (1) nation-building as a process of socio-political development; and (2) nation-building as a political objective, or policy, as well as a strategy. The first one shows the original and literal use of the term; while the second one reveals a specific use of the term for specific reasons. In between these two uses, I propose to add a third use of the term that is ‘nation-building as a model’ to be internally adopted or externally imposed. Thus, I will be discussing three uses of the term nation-building: (1) nation-building as process; (2) nation-building as model; and (3) nation-building as policy. This classification will be accompanying my analysis of the historical journey of the term nation-building.

3.2.1. Origins: Nation-Building as Process

The idea of nation-building originally belongs within the discourse of modern nationalism which emerged in the period surrounding the French Revolution (1789) in Western Europe where the modern states of today were formed. It was not only the mere emergence of an idea, however; there was a huge structural change behind, which had started much earlier with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Abolishing religion as a pretext of war between European states, this Treaty had replaced the role played by religion with the phenomena of nations and nation-states with all their national borders, national economies, national armies, etc. It was what gave birth, eventually, to the European system of nation-states in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Within this context, nation-building can be defined as the establishment of the ideal model of a modern nation-state where a nation, i.e. people, becomes sovereign in its own state, in which the politico-economic unit is the ‘nation-state’; the social unit is the ‘nation’; and the individual unit is the ‘national’ as well as the ‘citizen.’ Nation-building generally refers to the process of forming or building up all these units simultaneously within the larger process of modernisation. We take modernisation here as a grand change of social order that encompasses the large processes of industrialisation; capitalism; urbanisation; secularisation; rise in literacy; increase in communications; expansion of mass education; rationalisation; legalisation; formation of citizenship; and so on. In the very first cases of nation-building in Western Europe, the rise of nations and nation-states took place in parallel to the process of modernisation.

It needs to be underlined, however, that explanations about the process of nation-building were made later on by looking back at the past. People who went through the process of nation-building in the earliest cases such as England were not aware of what was happening. In other words, nation-building was a spontaneous and endogenous process in these earliest cases. For scholars like Gellner (1983: 19), this is exactly the reason why this experience cannot be repeated elsewhere. On the contrary, however, this experience has been propagated as a model through the discourse of nationalism, which is expected to take place everywhere in the world.

3.2.2. Diffusion: Nation-Building as Model

The earliest diffusion of the nation-state model began in Western Europe and then in the larger continent of Europe as well as America. By the end of the World War I, Europe was, to a large extent, a continent that was made up of nation-states, which was institutionalised with the establishment of, first, the League of Nations in 1920; and then the United Nations in 1945. Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations⁹ declares one of the purposes of the UN as: “To develop friendly relations among *nations* based on respect for the principle of equal rights and *self-determination* of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace” (italics mine). The Charter defines members of the UN as “nations” while the term

⁹ United Nations Official Web Page. Available at [<https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>], retrieved on May 28, 2019.

“self-determination of peoples” generally refers to the sovereignty of a nation in its own state, i.e. nation-state. In the post-1945 world, then, polities are expected to have the form of nation-states in order to be internationally recognised by the United Nations. Basically, this is how the polity of modern nation-states as well as the process of nation-building has gained the status of a model that spread into the world.

What needs to be underlined here is that the nation-state model has diffused into the larger world through power relations between Western states, i.e. the founders of this system, and the rest of the world. More specifically, this model has either been imposed on a country through Western colonialism or adopted by the country in question out of obligation. As Western states stepped into the realm of nation-states, other states in the world have also been obliged to articulate into the same realm due to global economic relations. They have had to become nation-states one way or other in order to be able to carry out commercial and diplomatic relations with the ‘established’ nation-states. That is to say, they have become nation-states not as a matter of choice; but as a matter of recognition by the world order propagated by the United Nations. In the words of A. D. Smith (1986: 1), a prominent scholar of nationalism, “the claim to nationhood is, of course, the claim to equality of international treatment, at least in theory.” For an international order to operate, the units of this order need to be mutually recognisable polities, at least in form, even though not in content.

The issue here is that these ‘not-yet-established’ nation-states, while articulating into the order of ‘established’ nation-states, have not become nation-states in the same way that the Western countries have. These states did not have the same historical baggage nor did they go through the same historical experience of modernisation that the Western countries went through in becoming nation-states. Inevitably, their form of nation-states was to be different from that of the ‘established’ nation-states. Some of them lacked the fundamental parts of the modernisation process such as rationalisation, industrialisation, urbanisation or secularisation. Still, they had to imitate the Western model no matter how they were incompatible with it. In other words, as nation-building became a model, it was no longer a spontaneous process like in the earliest cases; but an imitative and engineered one. The consequence is that even a ‘tribal state’ like Saudi Arabia is also viewed as a nation-state today as long as it is compatible with the world order, no matter how undemocratic it is. For

the world order has been established as an order of nation-states whether ‘genuine’ or ‘engineered.’ This is the point where the form of the polity, i.e. nation-state, becomes more important than the content.

This is how things went on until the end of the Cold War (1946-1989) which was a period of geopolitical rivalry between the two superpowers of the world: the US and the USSR. The collapse of the USSR in 1989 also meant the collapse of the bipolar world of the Eastern bloc and the Western bloc. As the leader of the Western bloc, the US emerged as the sole power in the world to spread its own ideology of free market principles and liberal democracy. No more blocked by a rival, this ideology was now free to diffuse into the whole world and *globalise*. That is why the ‘New World Order’ which was to rule the post-Cold War world has been identified with the phenomenon called ‘globalisation’ which has been viewed as a threat to the order of nation-states.

3.2.3. Change: Nation-Building in Face of Globalisation

The 1990s commenced with the buzzword ‘globalisation’ which is generally described through the ‘globalising’ trends in the world such as international organisations, multinational companies and transnational movements transgressing the borders between nation-states. Some scholars have even claimed that the world now had the form of “a global village” (McLuhan and Powers 1992) defined by a general trend of integration and assimilation among the countries in economic, political, cultural, intellectual and technological terms. Many have been eager to proclaim the end of the nation-state or, at least, the transcendence of the nation-state through the rise of an international civil society (Calhoun 2007: 11).

Globalisation talk, however, got gloomier in the 2000s, as the nation-state hasn’t gone anywhere. In cases of emergency like global terrorism, refugee influx or economic sanctions, nation-states still come forward in full force along with their national borders, national armies and national markets (N. Smith 2010: 38). It seems that we have a supposedly ‘globalising’ world of the internet, international capital and transnational migrations; but the components of this world still have the form of nations and nation-states. The simple reason is that “[o]ne can eat Chinese tomorrow and Turkish the day after; one can even dress in Chinese and Turkish styles. But *being* Chinese or Turkish are not commercially available options” (Billig 1995: 139).

The globalisation thesis has clashed most with the ideas of nations, nation-states and nationalism. In this clash, the globe and the nation-state have been made into binary opponents exclusive of one another, proposing life either in a 'global village' or in a world of nation-states. However, there have been other scholars (Billig 1995; Calhoun 2007; Greenfeld 2016) who have shown that this is not an either-or issue, as globalism and nationalism belong in the same world order. What is even more, it is the same power relations that has produced and imposed the order of nation-states, which is producing and imposing the global order today.

Billig (1995) claims that nationalism still plays an active role in the daily life of all those countries that claim to be globalising. Modernised states of the West, which Billig calls the 'established nations,' believe that they have 'overcome' the nationalist fever which, now, belongs to the peripheral states that we may call the 'non-established nations.' In other words, these established nations describe nationalism as a 'problem of others' and push it into the periphery, clearing their own name. Yet, in reality, Billig (1995: 6) claims that "[n]ationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition." That is why he coins the term "banal nationalism" to show how the discourse of nationalism operates in the everyday lives of the established nations:

In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building. (Billig 1995: 8)

In other words, it is through this "continual 'flagging', or reminding, of nationhood" (Billig 1995: 8) that the 'established nations' continue to be daily reproduced. What is more, their existence and reproduction of themselves as nations also binds others. To make his point clearer, Billig refers to a speech¹⁰ made by the US President George Bush while announcing the start of the Gulf War on Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 1991. He claims that Bush's statements made it clear that the 'American nation' was fighting on behalf of the 'Kuwaiti nation;' "not fighting on behalf of God or a political ideology. They claimed, on both sides, to be fighting for rightful

¹⁰ "Address to the Nation on the Invasion of Iraq," available at [<https://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/ghwbushiraqinvasion.htm>], retrieved on June 10, 2019.

nationhood” (Billig 1995: 3). The overlying rhetoric here made it clear that *rightful nationhood* was not something to be questioned; it was something taken for granted:

George Bush, in announcing the start of the Gulf War, was addressing ‘the world’. He was speaking as if all nations would (or should) recognize the *morality of nationhood* – as if this morality were a *universal morality*. Nationalism in the contemporary world makes universal claims. The talk of a new world order suggests how intertwined the national and the international are. Yet, one nation, in particular, is seeking to represent this order. At the present juncture, special attention should be paid to the United States and its nationalism. This nationalism, above all, has appeared so forgettable, so ‘natural’ to social scientists, and is today so globally important. (Billig 1995: 9) (italics mine)

In this statement, Billig underlines the role of the US in setting the rules of the game in the ‘New World Order’ in the aftermath of the Cold War. It means that as long as the US, the game-setter, exists as a nation and nation-state, all the other political entities in the world will continue to exist as nations and nation-states. The simple reason is that the US seeks to represent as well as establish the current world order of nation-states as a “universal morality” in its own reflection. That is why globalisation is, actually, the globalisation of the Western norms represented by the US; hence the term “McWorld” coined by Barber (2003). In sum, globalisation is not simply a process of spontaneous integration of world countries; but a deliberate imposition with further implications.

Globalisation doesn’t just mean online overseas shopping or mobile banking although that is the way it is presented as well as perceived. In reality, globalisation implies an enforced imposition of a specific world view. As Calhoun (2007: 17) claims, “[g]lobalization doesn’t just happen. It is to a large extent imposed.” At times, it is imposed through economic sanctions; at other times, through direct interventions. It may even be imposed through military operations in places that fail in integrating into the world order, to which we now turn.

3.2.4. Today: Nation-Building as Foreign Policy

The ‘New World Order’ has brought forward the US as a country that is capable of employing certain ‘international’ institutions in order to realise her policies of ‘globalisation.’ The two international institutions of the Cold War rivalry, the NATO (1949-) of the Western bloc and the Warsaw Pact (1955-1991) of the Eastern bloc, no longer compete since the dissolution of the latter in 1991. Established as a

political and military alliance between 29 member states of North America and Europe, the NATO has not only continued its existence after the Cold War but has also assumed an increased role. The official web site¹¹ of this organisation describes the early 1990s as a period of great change in the international security environment: “With these changing conditions came new responsibilities. From being an exclusively defensive alliance for nearly half a century, NATO began to assume an increasingly proactive role within the international community.” That is how the NATO’s operational roles started, beginning with the military intervention into Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992.

Time has shown that an increased role of the NATO means an increased role of the US in the global scene. As the world’s single superpower with its military strength as well as its defence budget, the US has played an outsized role in the NATO. As Calleo (1989: 19) claims, “[m]ilitarily, NATO is a hegemonic American protectorate.” As for the post-Cold War period, Colbourn (2019) claims that “[a]fter the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Alliance remained vital to US foreign policy objectives...Over the last seven decades, NATO has symbolized both US power and its challenges.” We may see similar claims about the role of the US in the UN, as well. Being a charter member of the UN and one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the US provides the largest share in the total budget of the UN as well as the UN budget for peacekeeping operations. In sum, the UN and the NATO come forward as two important tools of US foreign policy in the post-Cold War period.

Another major event, besides the Cold War, that has contributed to the emergence of a ‘New World Order’ was the 9/11, or the Al-Qaeda attacks in the US on September 11, 2001. Following this incident, the US initiated not an ‘American’ war; but a ‘global war on terror’ by involving the UN and the NATO. It was for the first time that a country invoked the Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty stating that an attack on a NATO member means an attack on all the NATO members. Its wider implication was that the whole world was to take revenge on the Al-Qaeda attacks on the Western values of free trade and capitalism. So started the NATO intervention into Afghanistan in 2001. Since that time, we have been going through a new

¹¹ NATO Official Web Page, available at [https://www.nato.int/cps/ra/natohq/topics_52060.htm], retrieved on June 10, 2019.

dimension of the ‘New World Order’ whereby “[t]he world’s one superpower has announced and implemented a doctrine of pre-emptive invasion of those it sees as threatening” (Calhoun 2007: 11). As the world’s single power, the US holds the authority to define who is threatening and who is not; and thereby defining the world policy. It is a matter of defining; and defining is power.

It is also within this context that concepts such as ‘failed states’ and ‘rogue states’ have gone into circulation. A failed state is described as a state that fails to integrate into the world order of nation-states, thus becoming a terrorist state or a state that shelters terrorism. That is why Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen and Libya defined as ‘failed states’ “have become one of the top concerns of foreign policymakers around the globe, mostly because such states have often served as launching grounds for international terror organizations” (Wimmer 2018: 249). In other words, a state’s international recognition today is associated with its relation to global terror that has an impact transgressing its own borders. Therefore, a ‘failed’ state may legitimise the ‘right of intervention’ by international organisations like the UN and the NATO:

The underlying assumption of much of this debate in the United States [is] that its government is entitled to overthrow threatening regimes around the world as it sees fit as long as it then “rebuilds” these nations in its own capitalist and democratic image and “teach[es] these peoples to govern themselves,” as a well-known public intellectual put it (Fukuyama 2004: 162). (Wimmer 2018: 2)

And hence the popular catch-phrase in the US: “Be nice to America; or we’ll bring democracy to your country!” What is meant by ‘bringing democracy’ in today’s world is intervening into a foreign country with military troops under the NATO, which is generally accompanied by a toppling of the regime in power and establishment of a new political order that is supposed to be a ‘friendly regime.’ This is exactly the point where the term nation-building achieves its present meaning as a foreign policy goal today:

It is especially in these contexts that *nation-building is discussed at international level*: either as a preventive political option to avoid the breakup of the state and social fragmentation, as an alternative to military conflict management, as part of military interventions or as an element of post-conflict policies. Accordingly, a policy of nation-building constitutes a hinge between foreign, development and military policy for the purpose of preventing or managing violent conflicts, achieving local and regional stability, and facilitating development. (Hippler 2005: 4) (italics mine)

In the 'New World Order,' "nation-building is discussed at international level," as Hippler claims. It has become a foreign policy goal of the US and other world powers, which is implemented in a failed or failing state after a military intervention by the NATO. That is to say, nation-building no longer denotes an endogenous *process* within a country; or an endogenously imitated or engineered *model*; but an exogenous *policy* of foreign powers on that country. More specifically, it is a policy of integrating a country into the present world order of nation-states through military interventions and enforced impositions. One step further, *nation-building as foreign policy* may be regarded as the newest form of colonisation today. In the words of Hippler (2005: 13): "As presently used, 'nation-building' can be a euphemism for imperial control."

To cite some of the cases of nation-building as foreign policy, it is enough to remember the NATO interventions into various countries such as Kosovo, Kuwait, El Salvador, Cambodia, Namibia, Haiti, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. All these cases have been employed to produce some 'formulas' for the global policy of nation-building. There are even some 'guidebooks' such as *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* which are "designed to assist the aspiring nation-builder" (Dobbins 2007: ix). Such tragicomic 'guidebooks' are significant indicators of the huge semantic shift in the understanding of the term nation-building. Here is a definition taken from one such 'guidebook:'

Nation-building, as it is commonly referred to in the United States, involves the use of armed force as part of a broader effort to promote political and economic reforms with the objective of transforming a society emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbours. (Dobbins 2007: xvii):

In this definition, we see nation-building as a component of foreign military intervention, whereby it is regarded by the occupying forces as an "inescapable responsibility" (Dobbins 2007: vi) to achieve post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction. Far from the original definition of nation-building that denotes a spontaneous progress in centuries through an endogenous initiative, this definition shows us a way of subjugating a people who seem to be the passive receivers of an external mechanism of imposed transformation. Thus, nation-building is generally understood today as 'foreign-led nation-building' or 'third-party nation-building,' getting further and further away from the originally spontaneous process.

Such view of nation-building as foreign policy involves the pitfall of carelessly reducing its duration from centuries to decades. The question of ‘how long nation-building takes’ which we encounter in an article titled “United Nations: Nation-Building” (Pan 2005) is answered as follows: “At least a decade or more, many experts say. The social cohesion and tolerance necessary for building a new nation are difficult to cultivate, especially among citizens of formerly closed, totalitarian systems where mistrust of authorities ran high.” Even while admitting that achieving social cohesion is a difficult task, this article naively offers ten years’ time to overcome this difficulty. This period actually refers to the lifespan of a US government, as Wimmer (2018: 264) claims:

...[O]ne cannot fix failed states or build nations within the time span of an American presidency or two. Nation building is a *generational project* because the facilitating conditions take time to emerge: states capable of providing public goods, an organizational infrastructure for building alliances across ethnic divides, and an integrated communicative space. (italics mine)

Underlining that nation-building is a generational project, Wimmer actually refers to its original meaning which is ‘nation-building as process.’ It is the current colonial view of ‘nation-building as foreign policy’ that distorts the original understanding. This distortion may lead to dangerous consequences for the country in question. That is why, Hippler claims, original meaning of this term should still be kept:

...[I]t is not helpful to rid the nation-building concept of its essence and use it merely as a collective category for all non-military political instruments or as a synonym for peace-keeping, which is what frequently happens. The process of integration or fragmentation of societies and states is too important a matter in foreign, development and peace policy terms for it to be lost sight of through schematic usages of the term. (Hippler 2005: 13)

In other words, a systematic use of the term nation-building as a foreign policy goal may eventually cause us to lose sight of what this term originally means. That is why, this study will make the utmost effort not to fall into that trap.

3.2.5. Meaning of Nation-Building in this Study

Having examined all the three uses of the term nation-building, it is now time to reveal in which meaning this term will be employed throughout this thesis. Reading a study on nation-building in contemporary Afghanistan may, at first, give the wrong impression that one will read an analysis of the NATO intervention. After all, Afghanistan stands at one of the crucial points that has transformed the meaning of

nation-building. More specifically, Afghanistan's story from 2001 to today is a case in point, showing us how *nation-building as foreign policy* has been initiated in the aftermath of a NATO intervention into a far-away country that 'threatened' the world order following the 9/11. Interestingly, the state of Afghanistan actually had international legitimacy until that time, no matter how badly people suffered under the reign of the Taliban for more than 5 years (1996-2001). As soon as the Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden took shelter in this country right after the 9/11, Afghanistan started 'threatening' the world order and automatically 'invited' foreign military intervention. That is how the US-led NATO intervention into this country started in 2001. In a very short while after the intervention, the Taliban was toppled by the NATO forces under the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force). According to the web site¹² of the NATO, ISAF was:

...established under a request for assistance by the Afghan authorities and by a UN mandate in 2001 to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists. In addition, ISAF was tasked to develop new Afghan security forces and enable Afghan authorities to provide effective security across the country in order to create an environment conducive to the functioning of democratic institutions and the establishment of the rule of law. (Official Web Page of NATO)

Notice that the primary goal of the ISAF was to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a 'terrorist state' once again and contribute to her transformation into a secure state where Western values such as democracy may be established. This goal is indicative of the plans for establishing a new political order in Afghanistan, which would be compatible with the world order. That is how the process of *nation-building as foreign policy* started in Afghanistan in the post-2001 period.

Today, we see many popular as well as academic books written on nation-building in contemporary Afghanistan, where the term nation-building is used with reference to the NATO intervention. Such books tell the story of Afghanistan by outsider policy makers, whereby Afghanistan is presented as a passive receiver of all the policies of the West at their face value. Yet, these books fail to show what is really going on inside the country. And this situation has further implications for the country.

¹² "NATO in Afghanistan," available at [https://www.nato.int/cps/ra/natohq/topics_52060.htm], retrieved on June 10, 2019.

Departing from the situation at hand, this thesis suggests to employ the term nation-building in its original sense as a process. Obviously, the case of Afghanistan does not display a spontaneous process like the earliest cases of nation-building in the 19th century Western Europe. On the contrary, it shows an enforced, engineered and imitated case of nation-building. Still, this thesis aims at looking deeper at nation-building in contemporary Afghanistan as a process by employing primary resources in a qualitative manner; rather than producing a report on nation-building as a foreign policy goal by employing secondary resources like reports or statistical figures produced by international institutions to be used as indicators of progress. Therefore, this thesis will not yield a conclusive report on the workings of the foreign policy goals in Afghanistan. Rather, it will be a thorough examination of how the process of nation-building internally goes on in the country; how it is implemented by the state of Afghanistan specifically in the field of education; and how a discourse on the 'nation of Afghanistan' is constructed in education. That is why the term 'nation' that is seen in the term 'nation-building' needs to be thoroughly examined so that what is really being built in a process of nation-building is better understood. Having completed our analysis of what nation-building means, we may now turn to see what nation means.

3.3. Nation: That which is Being Built

Following the debate on nation-building, now is the time to dig deeper into the crux of the issue to understand *that which is being built*, i.e. nation. The question of what constitutes a nation is not a plain one that yields only one answer in only one dimension. Numerous scholars have attempted to define, describe and conceptualise this phenomenon to produce some theories in their own particular ways, some of which will shortly be presented. But before that, some warnings will be useful.

3.3.1. Some Reminders on Western Theories and Afghanistan

First and foremost, we need to locate the theory that we are supposed to present and discuss. All the conceptualisations of nation that are to be revealed here in this thesis will be the ones produced within the Western academia. That is to say, what we are to examine here is *Western* theories of nation. Since the phenomenon of nation originally emerged in Europe so did the earliest efforts to examine it and develop ideas about its form and content. As later cases of nation-building as model started to

take place in other parts of the world, Western theories of nation were transplanted into those countries where they were synthesised by local intellectuals in conceptualising their own nations in their own vernacular languages. For instance, in Turkey of the early 20th century, thinkers like Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura, who were influenced by Western theorists like Ernest Renan, offered their own conceptualisations of the phenomenon of a 'Turkish nation' in their own vernacular language which was Turkish. In other words, they employed the Western discourse of nationalism in forming a Turkish discourse on nationalism. Still, the core of the idea of nation was a Western one, no matter how it was employed in a different context like that of Turkey.

We encounter such circulation and transplantation of the ideas of nations and nationalism in both cases of nation-building as process and nation-building as model. On the other hand, in cases of nation-building as foreign policy, we no longer see the transplantation of the Western discourse of nationalism in the same way. As the process of nation-building becomes a policy, it is disembodied from the discourse of nationalism. The simple reason is that it is a foreign-led process followed by a military operation. It would be paradoxical to expect foreign forces to introduce a discourse of nationalism which requires: full independence of the country in question; full sovereignty and autonomy of the state in all its internal and external relations; and rejection of any foreign influences. That is why in cases of nation-building as foreign policy, we just see the *form* of nation offered by foreigners; but not the *content* of nation offered through a discourse of nationalism. These cases involve the articulation of the *form* of nation into the society in question however it is locally conceptualised. At the end, we see the generation of a *local content* of nation that is formed based on local ideas and discourses; instead of the Western discourse of nationalism.

Contemporary Afghanistan is also one such case where we see the implementation of nation-building as foreign policy without the Western discourse of nationalism, so that foreign occupiers may continue their presence in this country. This leads to the generation of a local content of nation based on the local conceptualisation of society in Afghanistan. Primary goal of this thesis is to uncover and examine this local conceptualisation that is presented specifically in the field of education. Before examining this conceptualisation, however we first need to comprehend the content

of nation that is originally conceptualised in the Western context. Only then would it be meaningful to show how the specific case of Afghanistan reveals a different understanding of nation.

3.3.2. Western Theories of Nation

The phenomenon of nation constitutes an interdisciplinary theme in social sciences, which has been examined by scholars from varying fields such as history, sociology, anthropology, political science, etc. The main reason is that it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that requires a simultaneous examination of many other related phenomena such as society, ethnic groups, tribes, the state, etc. Any researcher on nations inevitably gets entangled with these other phenomena while trying to find out what a nation means. Therefore, scholars who have attempted at theorising and conceptualising this phenomenon have had to disentangle many knots before revealing what a nation is.

It is not our purpose here to travel all the way they have travelled. The debate on nations constitutes a huge discussion where a scholar asserts an idea, which is followed by the criticisms of other scholars, and then s/he replies back. It is out of the scope of this thesis to track such a long path. Our goal here is, rather, to present the various ways of defining the phenomenon of nation in order to have a general understanding about it.

The first thing to say is that the phenomenon of nation is surrounded by many *-isms*. It is one of those complex phenomena that offer themselves to be defined and explained in many different ways depending on one's ontological, epistemological and political viewpoint. It is possible to group the scholars of nations and nationalism under different schools of thought, such as primordialism, perennialism, modernism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism. In very brief terms; (1) primordialists claim that nation is something primordial in all the communities, waiting to be awakened; (2) perennialists claim that nation is a form of society that can be encountered in all the epochs of history; (3) modernists claim that nation is a new form of modern industrial society; (4) constructivists claim that nation is something constructed by the elites and the state; and (5) ethno-symbolists claim that nation is a modern phenomenon feeding upon pre-modern ethnic myths and symbols. Özkırımlı (2016: 256) offers a simpler classification between: (1) essentialists, referring to the *essence*

of a nation; and (2) constructivists, referring to the *constructed* nature of a nation. No matter which classification we prefer to employ, the main debate centres on three issues, as shown by A. D. Smith (2000: 2):

1. the nature and origin of the nation and nationalism,
2. the antiquity or modernity of nations and nationalism,
3. the role of nations and nationalism in historical and social change.

What we aim to do in this part is not to give all the different schools of thought in detail; but to show the different ways of defining the nation in the light of these central debates.

Nation as Nationem

Etymology of the word ‘nation’ constitutes our starting point, which has been examined by scholars such as Connor (1994) and Greenfeld (1992). Literally, the word ‘nation’ comes from the Latin word *natio* or *nationem* which means ‘something born.’ It is derived from the past participle of the verb *nasci* that means ‘to be born’ in Latin (Connor 1994: 94). In other words, this word is originally related to birth. Referring to the Italian scholar Zernatto (1944) in tracing the etymological journey of this word, Greenfeld (1992: 4) states that the initial usage of the word was derogatory, as it was reserved for groups of foreigners coming from the same location to Rome. In brief, *natio* meant a group of foreigners united by place of birth.

Later on, claims Greenfeld (1992: 4), the same word came to denote the communities of students studying at the universities of Western Europe. Similarly, Connor (1994: 94) states that “at some medieval universities, a student’s *nationem* designated the sector of the country from whence he came.” This word was introduced into the English language in the late 13th century with its primary connotation of breed or race (Connor 1994: 94). It was much later in the 16th century England that it was applied to the whole population of the country as ‘people’ (Greenfeld 1992: 6). By the early 17th century, “*nation* was...being used to describe the inhabitants of a country, regardless of that population’s ethnonational composition, thereby becoming a substitute for less specific human categories such as *the people* or *the citizenry*” (Connor 1994: 94-5). The word ‘nation’ is still used in this sense today. On the other hand, original meaning of the word *nationem* as birthplace is employed by primordialist scholars as proof that nation is a blood-related phenomenon.

Nation as Blood and Kinship

Earliest scholars who examined the phenomenon of nation generally treat it as a given; as a natural social formation. Rather than questioning its emergence or existence, they take it as granted, viewing it as a form of community in the same category with tribes and ethnic groups. These scholars are, today, grouped under the primordialist school, as they take nation to be a primordial bond. Contributions of the primordialist school to the debate on nations and nationalism have greatly been imported from the discipline of anthropology through the works of anthropologists such as Geertz (Özkırımlı 2016: 91). “For Geertz, ethnic and national attachments spring from the ‘cultural givens’ of social existence – from contiguity and kinship, language, religion, race, and customs” (A.D. Smith 2000: 21).

Contributing to the debate on nations and nationalism from the primordialist school with his book titled *Ethnonationalism* (1994), Connor takes nation to be a ‘self-aware’ ethnic group. His equation of nation with ethnic group makes Connor the founder of what is called ‘ethno-nationalism.’ Claiming that nationalism and ethno-nationalism are one and the same thing, he uses the two terms interchangeably. More specifically, Connor claims that it is the belief in kinship and uniqueness that differentiates a community as a nation from other nations. Here is Connor’s definition of nation:

[Nation] is a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group that can command a person’s loyalty because of felt kinship ties; it is, from this perspective, the fully extended family. (Connor 1994: 202)

Connor claims that common traits such as blood lineage derive their power from people’s *belief* in them, no matter they are true or false. That is the reason why politicians continually make references to common blood in mobilising a nation. Connor (1994: 198) reminds Bismarck’s famous call to the Germans to unite in a single state by exclaiming: “Germans, think with your blood!” He says that this is what mobilises people, no matter what the scholars of nationalism claim. In fact, Connor is right in saying that this is what people *believe*, for people are actually *made to believe* in that way, as it is claimed by other scholars.

Nation as Homeland

There is another thread of scholars who define nation on the basis of *patria*, or homeland, being influenced by the ideas of German Idealists such as Fichte (1762-

1814) and Herder (1744-1803). These scholars are generally primordialists treating land as a given like skin colour or race. For them, nations are natural divisions of humanity and homeland constitutes the geographical dimension of nations. In this understanding, a nation comes into being as a result of the bonding between people and land. Here, nation is explained as love of homeland, i.e. patriotism.

Coming closer to today, we see Anthony D. Smith who is not a primordialist but an ethno-symbolist that underlines homeland as a defining feature of modern nations. As an ethno-symbolist who admits the modernity of nations while underlining the role of ethnic heritage in modern nations, Smith defines nation as follows:

[Nation is] a named human population occupying a historic territory or homeland and sharing common myths and memories; a mass, public culture; a single economy; and common rights and duties for all members. (Smith 2000: 3)

In Smith's understanding, a "historic territory or homeland" is a prerequisite for the formation of a nation. At the same time, a nation also needs to have "a mass, public culture; a single economy; and common rights and duties for all members." These are, in fact, the features of a modern state even if Smith doesn't name it. A single economy is the defining feature of a modern state; a mass public culture is viewed as national culture by scholars like Gellner; while common rights and duties refer to modern citizenship.

As to be presented below, modernist scholars clearly express the need for a modern state for the existence of a nation. After all, a tribe or an ethnic group may also identify with a specific piece of land and fight to defend it. A state would be the one thing to concretise that land into the bordered homeland of a nation. In modernist understanding, therefore, a homeland by itself is not enough for the formation of a nation which needs to be attached to the state so that a nation-state is established.

Nation as Will

There is another group of scholars who found the nation on the basis of common will. Renan is typically the most well-known figure in this respect, being one of the earliest thinkers on nation with his seminal essay "What is a Nation?" dated as far back as 1882. In Renan's understanding, for a community to be considered a nation, there must be a conscious will by its members in the first place. A community cannot simply become a nation by coincidence; it is a conscious and rational process of

deciding to be a nation. What needs to be underlined here is that this conceptualisation takes us into the realm of rationality which is the hallmark of modernity. Here is Renan's definition of nation:

A nation is a grand solidarity constituted by the sentiment of sacrifices which one has made and those that one is disposed to make again. It supposes a past, it renews itself especially in the present by a tangible deed: the approval, the desire, clearly expressed, to continue the communal life. The existence of a nation (pardon this metaphor!) is an everyday plebiscite; it is, like the very existence of the individual, a perpetual affirmation of life. (Renan 1882: 17)

For Renan, nation is a soul made up of two parts: the past and the present. The past is visible in the memory of common glories and sacrifices; while the present is revealed in the common will to do the same again. Here, Renan doesn't limit nation to common memory, claiming that the continuous will to add on to that memory is also a part of what nation is. This conceptualisation offers a dynamic process of 'nation-becoming' in which the members have an agency. Renan describes nation as an *achieved* status gained through the agency of its members, which stands in contrast to the primordialist conceptualisation of nation as an *ascribed* status based on common kinship. The one basic problem with Renan's formulation, however, is the difficulty to differentiate it from other types of communities. As Gellner from the modernist school states:

If we define nations as groups which *will* themselves to persist as communities, the definition-net that we have cast into the sea will bring forth far too rich a catch...Will, consent, identification, were not ever absent from the human scene, even though they were (and continue to be) also accompanied by calculation, fear and interest. (1983: 53-4)

For Gellner, common will is not enough to form a nation. For the modernists in general, there must be a systematic external effort of putting that common will in the hearts of masses. For that will cannot emerge spontaneously in people's hearts; but it is something *constructed*. It was Weber who formulated this idea much earlier than the modernists. Here is a part of Weber's definition of nation:

A nation is a community of sentiment... (Weber 1946: 176)

Weber defines the nation as "a community of sentiment" of two types: (1) sentiments of prestige and (2) the sentiments of responsibility towards next generations. He assigns the role of cultivating these sentiments in people's hearts to intellectuals.

That is to say, it depends on intellectuals to establish the uniqueness of a nation through these sentiments:

The earliest and most energetic manifestations of the idea [of a nation]...have contained the legend of a providential 'mission'...Another element of the early idea was the notion that this mission was facilitated solely through the very cultivation of the peculiarity of the group set off as a nation...It therefore goes without saying that the intellectuals...are to a specific degree predestined to propagate the 'national idea,' just as those who wield power in the polity provoke the idea of the state. (Weber 1946: 176)

In Weber's formulation, a community may be constructed as a nation by intellectuals through a discourse of nationalism. In that case, the 'will-to-nation' becomes the will that is *constructed* by the ideas of nations and nationalism which are also underlined by Gellner. In sum, while Renan defines nation through the will-to-nation in people; Weber and Gellner point to the producer of the will as a defining factor.

Nation as Nation-State

Nation and state, especially in modernist conceptualisations, are closely related phenomena. That is why the primary efforts of some scholars have been to differentiate between these them. Connor (1978: 36) claims that it is easier to define the state, since "[t]he state is the major political subdivision of the globe" while "[d]efining and conceptualizing the nation is much more difficult because the essence of a nation is intangible." For this reason, Connor criticises those who associate nation with "the very different and totally tangible concept of the state" (Connor 1978: 36). The peak point of this association is the interchangeable use of the words 'nation' and 'state' where "national income, national wealth, national interest, and the like, refer in fact to statal concerns" (Connor 1978: 39). Yet, there is a reason behind that association. Constructing the interests of the state as 'national interests' has the function of making people adopt the interests of the state as their own interests; i.e. national interests, since they are the members of that nation. In *grosso modo*, this is what nation-building is.

In fact, the fundamental concept of 'nation-state' is what gets the phenomena of nation and state so close to one another. Nation-state means that people residing in a country, who are defined as the nation of that country, are the sovereign rulers of that country. That is why the concept of nation-state implies the sovereignty of a nation in its own state. Such conceptualisation of sovereignty was "born in an age in which

Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm” (Anderson 1991: 7). That is why it is a product of the culmination of many modern social theories since the Enlightenment, such as the ideas of “social contract” and “popular sovereignty” examined by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), John Locke (1632–1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). Feeding upon these theories, scholars such as Giddens (1985) and Hobsbawm (1990) hailing from the modernist school, examine the interweaved nature of the nation and the state in history. Much earlier than them was Weber who defined nation on the basis of the state:

A nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own. (Weber 1946: 176)

In other words, the state provides the framework needed for a nation to manifest itself. A community (of sentiment) may not be counted as a nation if it does not exist in a state of its own. With this conceptualisation, Weber becomes one of the earliest scholars drawing the limits of nation with a state, as the term “a state of its own” implies the sovereignty of a nation in its own state, i.e. the nation-state. That is how Weber defines nation through a covert reference to nation-state as far back as the end of the 19th century. A century later, Giddens follows the same trend in defining nation as follows:

By a ‘nation’ I refer to a collectivity existing within a clearly demarcated territory, which is subject to a unitary administration, reflexively monitored both by the internal state apparatus and those of other states...A ‘nation’...only exists when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed. (Giddens 1985: 116, 119)

According to this definition, a nation is a collectivity of people existing in a bordered homeland and being subject to a unitary administration that is the state. This state does not exist on its own; but is part of a collection of states that form the international world order, as discussed in the section above on nation-building. Having a closer look at Giddens’ definition, we see that a nation achieves its real meaning only when the state is able to access the entire the territory that it rules. Such access may only be ensured with the help of a centralised administrative mechanism. In other words, a nation cannot exist out of the sovereignty of a state. A fully sovereign state is what makes a *nation-state*: “A nation-state is, therefore, a

bordered power-container” (Giddens 1985: 120). It is both the state and the nation sovereign in its own state, which contains the power.

Hobsbawm (1990: 9-10) also confirms the association between a nation and a state, further specifying what kind of a state may be considered a nation-state: “Nations only exist as functions of a particular kind of territorial state or the aspiration to establish one – broadly speaking, the citizen state of the French Revolution – but also in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development.” According to Hobsbawm, nation may only be a function of the state or an aspiration to build a state. Hence Weber’s claim that a nation “tends to produce” a state of its own. In other words, even while a nation does not, yet, have a state; its nature requires it to establish one. Furthermore, in Hobsbawm’s specification, the state of a nation, i.e. nation-state, is not just any state but a “citizen state” that is at a particular stage of technological and economic development. That particular stage is to be explained by Gellner below.

Nation as Modern Industrial Society

Gellner is one of the most prominent scholars on nations and nationalism with his seminal book titled *Nations and Nationalism* (1983). What makes him such an important figure is that he examines the emergence of the phenomenon of nation within the process of modernisation, which makes him a leading figure of the modernist school.

Gellner (1983: 5) analyses the history of mankind in three stages: the pre-agrarian, the agrarian, and the industrial. Among the three, only in the industrial stage do we see a progress-oriented society that is continually after economic growth, i.e. capitalism. Gellner compares how people are ‘produced and reproduced’ in agrarian and industrial societies. In the agrarian society, professions are learnt within the community and they are for life, meaning that an iron smith learns his profession from his master within the community and remains an iron smith all his life. Industrial society, on the other hand, offers mass education outside the community and produces *mutually substitutable individuals* who can move between professions. So is generated the *modern division of labour*, “requiring men taking part in it to be ready to move from one occupational position to another, even within a single life-

span, and certainly between generations” (Gellner 1983: 140-41). Such dynamism enables *social mobility* and *social homogeneity*.

Gellner’s comparison of agrarian and industrial societies based on their way of reproducing people reveals the huge difference between community training and modern education. For Gellner, “the one-to-one intra-community training” is a process of “acculturation;” while the “specialized exo-training (on the analogy of exogamy), which calls for skills outside the community” is what is meant by “education” (Gellner 1983: 34). Education received outside the local community enables one to be employable and substitutable in the larger community, i.e. nation. Gellner (1983: 38) calls this process “exo-socialization” which means “the production and reproduction of men outside the local intimate unit.” In modern societies, “each individual is trained by specialists, not just by his own local group, if indeed he has one” (Gellner 1983: 34). Thus, in a modern society, sub-communities can no longer reproduce themselves through acculturation:

Modern society is one in which no sub-community, below the size of one capable of sustaining an independent educational system, can any longer reproduce itself. The reproduction of *fully socialized individuals* itself becomes part of the division of labour, and is no longer performed by sub-communities for themselves. (Gellner 1983: 32) (italics mine)

Here, we see modern society conceptualised as one which is equal to the size of an education system, since *all* the members of society are supposed to receive the same standard education. In a modern society, then, no sub-community will be able to reproduce itself through acculturation. Only a single community, i.e. the nation, will be reproduced through an all-inclusive education system that produces “fully socialised individuals” or “mutually substitutable individuals.” What we need to underline here is the presence of *individuals* which is vital to a modern society. Following Gellner’s line of thought, we may claim that only when people are educated and socialised outside their local communities do they become individuals. Similarly, only when the sub-communities are no longer reproduced through acculturation can a single community called nation be formed through a mass education system.

In a society where people are wrenched from their local units, which may be a tribe, an ethnic group or a village, they are supposed to identify not with their local cultures; but with another culture which they are exposed to. It is because the state,

through the efforts of the intellectuals, makes a high culture common for all the people. It needs to be underlined, however, that what is meant here is not folk culture; but a *literate high culture* that is reproduced through modern education, which “can no longer be a diversified, locality-tied, illiterate little culture or tradition” (Gellner 1983: 38). It is this high culture that becomes the *national culture*:

[W]hen general social conditions make for standardized, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. (Gellner 1983: 55)

In other words, when a high culture pervades the entire population, it becomes the only unit with which people willingly identify. And that unit is the nation. Therefore, it is not simply any common culture that provides the basis of a nation; but a “...shared high culture which defines a ‘nation’. Such a nation/culture *then* and then only becomes the natural social unit, and cannot normally survive without its own political shell, the state” (Gellner 1983: 142-43). At this point, Gellner joins the other modernist thinkers like Giddens in claiming that a nation cannot survive without the state which he calls the “political shell of nation.” In this conceptualisation of nation-state, Gellner ties culture, which he calls nation, to the state.

In Gellner’s thought, the drive for homogeneity in industrial society comes up to the surface as the idea of nationalism. As peasants migrate to cities to work, they encounter reactions from the urban inhabitants. The newcomers might have a different skin colour; speak a different language or dialect; or have a different religious faith, which may give rise to social conflicts. That is why, Gellner (quoted in Smith 2000: 30) maintains, “nationalism is an objective, practical necessity; and...though it may be logically contingent, nationalism is sociologically necessary in the modern world.” Therefore, the age of industrialisation is also an age of nationalism (Gellner 1983: 40) which, in turn, produces the idea of a nation: “It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round” (Gellner 1983: 55). Here is Gellner’s definition of nation:

Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: that is a reality, for better or worse, and in general an inescapable one. (Gellner 1983: 48-49)

With this statement, Gellner criticises the primordialist school for producing a “myth” of nation as an inherent destiny for all communities. For Gellner, nation is something either invented or transformed from a pre-existing culture, while also obliterating that culture.

Gellner is generally criticised on two dimensions: first, for his ‘overemphasis’ on industrialisation as a prerequisite for nationalism; and second, for his insistence on the modernity and novelty of nations. In the first line of criticisms, other scholars claim that not all nationalisms precede industrialisation, such as the Greek nationalist movement seen in the 1820s. In his “Reply to Critics” (quoted in O’Leary 1998: 73), Gellner extends the influence of industrialisation, claiming that it “...casts a long shadow over preindustrial peoples, enabling certain communities to anticipate its consequences and reorder their identities and actions accordingly.” In other words, Gellner underlines that industrialisation is not a process that starts at a pinpointed time with a toll.

In the second line of criticisms, we see ‘ethno-symbolist’ scholars who, even while admitting the modernity of nations, insist that they have ethnic roots. The most prominent of these scholars is A. D. Smith who argues that the *modern* form of nations feed upon their *ethnic pasts*. The reason is that Smith sees “the need for a type of analysis that will bring out the differences and similarities between modern national units and sentiments and the collective cultural units and sentiments of previous eras, those that [he terms] *ethnie*” (Smith 1986: 13), by which he means ethnic symbolism. He claims that ethnic heritage plays an important role in the formation of a modern nation:

...ethnicity is largely ‘mythic’ and ‘symbolic’ in character, and because myths, symbols, memories and values are ‘carried’ in and by forms and genres of artefacts and activities which change only very slowly, so *ethnie*, once formed, tend to be exceptionally durable under ‘normal’ vicissitudes and to persist over many generations, even centuries, forming ‘moulds’ within which all kinds of social and cultural processes can unfold and upon which all kinds of circumstances and pressures can exert an impact. (Smith 1986: 16)

Thanks to its durability, *ethnie* forms the basis of the phenomenon of nation, no matter how modern it may be. That is the reason why “...modern nationalisms are seeking to revive (or have sought to do so) the earlier ‘myth-symbol’ complexes and

mythomoteurs, with varying degrees of serious intent and success, or to combine these with later complexes and *mythomoteurs*” (Smith 1986: 16).

Although Smith defines himself as an ethno-symbolist who admits the modernity of nations, the modernist school generally views him as a primordialist for his emphasis on the ethnic roots of nations. Modernists like Brass (1991 quoted in Özkırmılı 2016: 92-3) claim that it is impossible for ethnic elements to remain the same throughout centuries. By deconstructing the ‘myth of invariance’ of ethnic identity, Brass shows how it is re-defined in every generation.

Turning back to Gellner, we see that he revises some of his theory in his later writings such as “Nationalism and Modernity” dated 1997, whereby he recognises that some pre-modern cultures are better equipped to become modern national cultures (quoted in O’Leary 1998: 72). In this essay, Gellner makes an analogy between Adam’s navel and the ethnic pasts of nations, asking whether nations may also have navels:

My own view is that some nations possess genuine ancient navels, some have navels invented for them by their own nationalist propaganda, and some are altogether navel-less. My belief is also that the middle category is by far the largest, but I stand open to correction by genuine research. (Gellner 2005: 44)

In other words, Gellner admits that ethnic roots may play a role in certain nations; yet, certain other nations may not have those ethnic roots at all. What is for sure is that ethnic roots of most nations are *invented* through nationalism. Gellner’s admission of the significance of ethnic roots in some nations comes closer to Smith’s (2000: 63) claim that “modern nations are not created ex nihilo; they have premodern antecedents that require investigation in order to establish the basis on which they were formed. The relationship of the past, especially of the ‘ethnic past’ or pasts, to the national present is crucial.” Even if the ideas of Gellner and Smith seem to be merging with these statements, Gellner (1999: 35) still insists that “the modernists have a greater sense of how nations invent their navels, as opposed to how they inherit them.” That process of invention is examined by Hobsbawm, as to be presented shortly.

Nation as Imagined Community

We now turn to Anderson who is one of the most important scholars on nations and nationalism with his famous book titled *Imagined Communities* (1991). Entering the

debate from the modernist school, Anderson distinguishes himself with his argument that it is not only the rise of industrialism, but also that of a specific technology that gave birth to nations: print capitalism. The printing industry, through the publication of newspapers, novels, etc., gives a *uniformity to language* and addresses an anonymous reading public, which creates the idea of a homogeneous society as nation: “Through the printed word, individuals who do not know each other can appear to inhabit the same homogenous, empty time and an identifiable space by belonging to an imagined community and posterity” (Smith 1986: 10). Print capitalism, therefore, makes it possible to produce and sustain an imagination of nation in the minds of people. Here is Anderson’s definition of nation:

A nation is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. (Anderson 1991:6)

Here, Anderson underlines four vital features of nation: (1) an imagined community; (2) a political community; (3) imagined as limited; (4) imagined as sovereign. A political community that is limited and sovereign quickly evokes the concept of a bordered nation-state in which nation is sovereign. What Anderson adds into this picture is the *imagined* nature of nation, which he attributes to print capitalism. In his view, a nation is constructed through an imagination process that goes on in the minds of its members. Even if these members do not know or see most of their fellow-members, they still have an image of their community as nation, which is kept alive in their minds through a constant imagination process. In this conceptualisation, a nation is what its members make of it, even while the imagined nation may be different from the existing society.

This conceptualisation of nation as an imagined community gives agency to individual members of nation, since imagination takes place in the minds of the individuals. Other scholars, however, turn the other side of the coin and claim that those images are, in fact, constructions. We see the earliest traces of this idea in Weber who claims that nation is a community of sentiments that are generated through the efforts of intellectuals. Then comes Gellner who asserts that nation is a product of the ideas of nationalism. Finally comes Hobsbawm who coins the term “invented traditions” to explain the *constructed* nature of the idea of nation in contrast to the *imagined* nature of the idea of nation. It means that the ‘imagination of nation’ does not take place spontaneously in the minds of people as Anderson

claims; but by people's continuous and systematic exposure to the "invented traditions" in the words of Hobsbawm to whom we now turn.

Nation as Invented Tradition

Hobsbawm is another prominent scholar on nations and nationalism, contributing to the debate from the constructivist school. In the famous book that he edited with Ranger, which is titled *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), Hobsbawm shows how the idea of a nation is constructed through the "invention of tradition" as well as "social engineering." In his conceptualisation, nation-building is a process of inventing traditions and social engineering. Here is how Hobsbawm explains the phenomenon of nations:

[Invented traditions] are highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the 'nation', with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest. All these rest on exercises in social engineering which are often deliberate and always innovative.
(Hobsbawm 1983: 13)

As a modernist, Hobsbawm reads the story within the framework of modernisation. Although he admits that humans have always invented traditions; he adds that it is especially during transition periods that such inventions increase. That is why many new traditions are invented during the transition to modernity. The need for new traditions stems from the fact that old traditions do not answer the needs of the time. Modernisation is a huge social change and humans, by nature, wish to keep certain things the same within such a gross change in order to preserve their bonds with the past. In very basic terms, this is the story of a "contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant" (Hobsbawm 1983: 2). Thus, traditions are invented as if they are ancient traditions in order to fulfil that desire of people going through the process of modernisation. To this end, ancient materials are used in the invention of new traditions, "by borrowing from the well-supplied warehouses of official ritual, symbolism and moral exhortation – religion and princely pomp, folklore and freemasonry" (Hobsbawm 1983: 6). It is also how the modern nation-state invents its three major symbols: national anthem, national flag and national emblem.

Hobsbawm is generally criticised for his constructivism. In his view, nation is "the product of 'cultural work' on the part of elites; without that cultural work, without

such elite narratives, the nation is unimaginable and incommunicable” (Smith 2000: 53). Still, his contribution to the debate on nations and nationalism has been fundamental in showing us how even in the earliest cases of nation-building in Europe nations were also invented. In other words, while those earliest cases are believed to ‘genuinely’ generate *nation-building as process* in contrast to the imposition of *nation-building as model* or *nation-building as policy*; Hobsbawm reveals the constructed nature of nation in all the cases of nation-building. His conceptualisation of nation as invented tradition that is socially engineered is what makes the concept of nation-building most meaningful.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has been an effort to lay the theoretical foundations of this thesis, examining two major concepts: nation-building and nation. First part of the chapter has presented an analysis of the concept of nation-building; its original meaning as a process; its diffusion as a model; its semantic shift in the age of globalisation; and its final meaning today as foreign policy. Then, the meaning of nation-building specifically in this thesis has been specified as a ‘process’ even while it is generally viewed as ‘foreign policy’ in relation to Afghanistan. This choice is believed to help us equip with an insider’s view to study what is locally being built in Afghanistan, rather than just viewing what is externally being built in the aftermath of the NATO intervention.

The second part of this chapter has been an effort to examine what nation means in Western theory, which is expected to act as background information in understanding the local meaning of nation in Afghanistan. To this end, different conceptualisations of nation by different scholars, including the primordialists, the ethno-symbolists, the modernists and the constructivists, have been examined in relation to one another. What we have at the end is that the analysis of the term nation reveals the *content* of nation as it is defined in the West; while that of the term nation-building shows how this Western *form* of nation has become a globally imposed form for all the world states including Afghanistan. In Chapter 8 Discussion, we will, once again, turn to see how the local content of the idea of nation in Afghanistan appears in relation to the Western theories.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT: HISTORY OF MODERN AFGHANISTAN

4.1. Introduction

Following the methodological and theoretical chapter, it is now time to introduce the case of Afghanistan through an introduction to its historical context. This chapter will be presenting some basic facts as well as historical information about Afghanistan so that the core data and argument of the thesis makes sense in the following chapters. Without the contextual and historical background to be presented here, it would be impossible to comprehend the content of what constitutes a nation in Afghanistan, as revealed through the discourse of education. In that sense, this chapter will play the role of a bridge between theory and data, linking the two through context. Even if the reader is not able to read the whole of this chapter, they are invited to read 4.9. Summary and Conclusion seen at the very end in order to have a basic idea about the historical context.

It should, however, be emphasised that it is impossible to present a full-scale history of Afghanistan here. The main focus will be on the general political and social history of modern Afghanistan. As the process of nation-building is largely intertwined with the process of modernisation, the periodization of the history of Afghanistan will also be made on the basis of modernisation, as seen in Table 9.

This study originates the emergence of modern Afghanistan in the year 1879 when it was designed as a buffer state between British India in the south and Russian Empire in the north. This chapter will be an effort to read the history of Afghanistan after 1879 as a journey of modernisation. Each period shown in Table 9 will present the political and social history of the related period, including references to the progress (or decline) of modern education in that specific period. It is believed that the information and analysis to be presented in this chapter will provide the background

information needed to understand the educational discourse of nation-building in today's Afghanistan.

Table 9. Periodization of the Modern History of Afghanistan

Periodization of the Modern History of Afghanistan			
	Period	Date	Duration
0	Establishment of Afghanistan as a buffer state	1879	-
1	Early efforts at modernisation	1879-1929	50 years
2	Modernisation maturing	1929-1979	50 years
3	Modernisation under foreign intervention: USSR in Afghanistan	1979-1989	10 years
4	Modernisation interrupted: Mujahedeen and Taliban	1989-2001	10 years (app.)
5	Modernisation under foreign intervention: US (NATO) in Afghanistan	2001-ongoing	20 years (app.)

4.2. Introduction to Afghanistan and Its Society



Figure 5. Map of Afghanistan

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Persian/Dari: *Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Afghanistan* (جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان)) is a landlocked country located at the intersection of South Asia and Central Asia, neighbouring Pakistan in the south and east (2430 km, longest border); Iran in the west; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the north; and China in the east (76 km, shortest border). Capital city of Afghanistan is Kabul.

As seen in Figure 6, the territory of Afghanistan can be imagined as an inverted triangle surrounded by three big civilisations: (1) Persian civilisation in the west; (2) Turkic civilisation in the north; and (3) Indian civilisation in the south and the east, at the hypotenuse. From past to present, Afghanistan has been influenced by these three

neighbouring cultures. Being a place of encounter between Indo-Iranian and Turkic peoples, Afghanistan has historically been defined as ‘the heart of Asia.’ Within this heart is found a rich mixture of ethnic groups and tribes; languages and dialects; religions and sects; and different forms of settlement, which all influence cultural traditions and practices like the cuisine, clothing, housing, sports, literature, etc.



Figure 6. Map of Afghanistan as Triangle

Ethnic or tribal affiliation, which is locally known as *qawm*, is a very sensitive issue in Afghanistan where the last official population census was held as far back as 1979. It means that there is no official statistical data about the exact proportions of the *aqwam* within the total population. Presently, the only official information is provided by the 2004 Constitution which recognises fourteen *aqwam* (tribes or ethnic groups) living in Afghanistan: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Baloch, Turkmen, Nuristani, Pamiri, Arab, Gujar, Brahui, Qizilbash, Aimaq, and Pashai.

Thanks to such social diversity, Afghanistan is a multi-lingual country where two languages are officially recognised: Dari, also known as Afghan Persian, and Pashto. Both are Indo-European (of the Indo-Iranian branch) languages written in Arabic script. Total number of minor languages spoken in Afghanistan is estimated to be between thirty and forty. Bilingualism, and even trilingualism, is prevalent among the people of Afghanistan, while Dari acts as the *lingua franca*.

Islam is the official state religion in Afghanistan which, as a political unit, is an Islamic republic. Almost the entire population is Muslim (99.8%) with circa 85-90% adhering to the Sunni sect and circa 10-15% adhering to the Shiite sect. There are also some non-Muslim minority groups such as the Hindu and Sikh.

In Afghanistan, form of settlement is a major factor that shapes the social structure. The country shelters a significant number of nomads, called the *kuchi*, who constitute 1.5 million, that is 4.8%, within the total population of 31.6 million as of 2019, according to the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) of Afghanistan. Within the total population, 22.6 million (71.5%) live in rural areas while only 7.5 million (23.7%) live in urban areas. In other words, around three quarters of the total population of Afghanistan are rural; while only around one quarter is urban. These figures show that Afghanistan is largely a rural country where urbanisation is still very limited, which is a fundamental factor conditioning the modernisation process.

Afghanistan has a large diaspora in the world due to the high number of refugees residing outside the country. Since the Soviet invasion of 1979, over 6 million Afghans were forced to leave their country to live as refugees mainly in Pakistan and Iran as well as Western countries. With 2.56 million refugees residing in 86 countries, Afghanistan remained the leading country of origin of refugees in the world for 33 consecutive years until 2014 when the Syrian War aggravated, according to the *UNHCR Global Trends 2013* (2014). Since then, almost 6 million Afghan refugees have returned home.

4.3. Establishment of Afghanistan as a Buffer State

Until the 18th century, history of Afghanistan largely remained tied to the histories of Iran, India and Central Asia, where the main actors were tribes and tribal confederacies combining to form empires. These actors moved across the territory of today's Afghanistan, conquering lands, plundering cities, constantly negotiating and struggling for power. As Barfield (2010: 1) claims, the lands of Afghanistan have served as “the gateway for invaders spilling out of Iran or central Asia into India: Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, Mahmud of Ghazni, Chingis Khan, Tamerlene, and Babur, to mention some of the most illustrious examples.” Located in these lands were some ancient cities like Balkh, Bamiyan, Ghazni, Herat, Kandahar and Kabul which were exchanged between local rulers. Further into the medieval era, northern cities like Balkh were generally tied to the Uzbek Khanates; western cities like Herat were tied to the Persian Safavid Empire; while Kabul and Kandahar were tied to the Mughal Empire. This situation continued until the mid-

18th century when Pashtuns of Afghanistan emerged as a separate political power with the consolidation of the Durrani¹³ (Abdali) Dynasty in 1747 under Ahmad Shah Durrani (Abdali), a Pashtun general in the Safavid army, who united the Pashtun tribes and took the non-Pashtun tribes under his authority. This formation, however, was not different from the traditional structures of the Safavid and Mughal Empires which were conquest empires. The Durrani just articulated into this chain of tribal confederacies to continue conquering lands on their own. As an unstable confederation, the Durrani depended on temporary negotiations and situational alliances. It was not the establishment of the Durrani Empire to change the picture in the region radically; but the rising competition between two foreign powers: the British and Russian Empires.

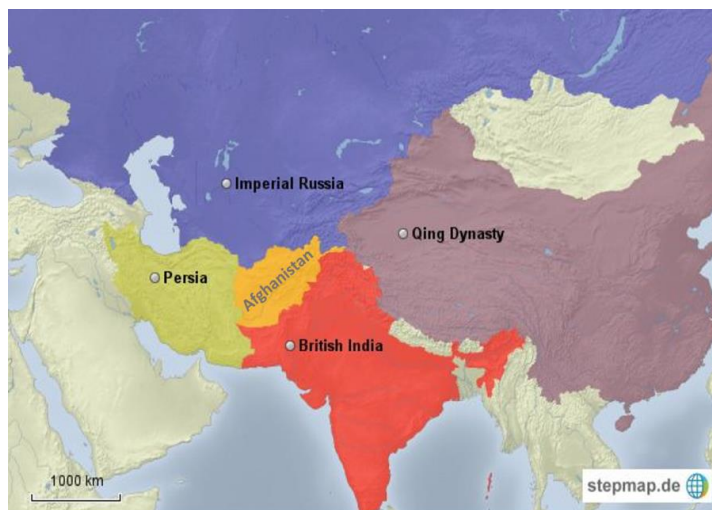


Figure 7. Map of Asia during Great Game¹⁴

Further into the 19th century, the British Empire and the Russian Empire got into a power struggle called the ‘Great Game,’ which was to prove fatal for Afghanistan whose lands were stuck in between the two. As the British and Russians came closer to one another, the possibility of a direct military encounter between the two was increasing. The two powers entered into a long cycle of negotiations on their respective zones of influence from 1869 to 1873 and settled the borders:

¹³ Original name of the founder of this dynasty was Ahmad Shah Abdali. On achieving power, he received the title of “*Durr-e Durrani*” which means the “Pearl of the Pearls.” From that time onwards, Ahmad Shah Abdali and his dynasty came to be known respectively as Ahmad Shah Durrani and the Durrani Dynasty.

¹⁴ Source: [<https://alchetron.com/The-Great-Game#->].

Each power in practice recognised the sphere of influence of the other, beginning on the far bank of the Amu-Darya. Britain thus obtained Russia's promise not to cross Afghanistan's frontier, while Russia secured recognition of her influence over Bukhara and, by inference, Kokand from the only other imperialist power with interests in Central Asia. (Becker 1968: 63)



Figure 8. River Amu Darya on the Map of Central Asia¹⁵

This agreement between the British and Russians came to be recognised as the delineation of the northern border of Afghanistan with the Russian Empire. Following the Amu Darya, or the Oxus River, this border brought everything below the river under the reign of the Afghan Amir. “Thus, autonomous Uzbek principalities of Balkh, Khulmand, Qunduz that hitherto had been in the sphere of influence of Bukhara were gradually absorbed by the Afghan state” (Saikal 2004: 250). That was how the region named ‘Afghan Turkestan’ in the north of Afghanistan, sheltering Uzbeks, Turkmens and other Turkic populations, was formed. Inevitably, these Turkic populations were divided between Afghanistan and the realm of the Russian Empire which, today, constitute the modern states of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Another consequence of the settlement between the British and Russians was “the inclusion of Badakhshan and Wakhan, the territories populated by Mountain Tajiks that did not belong to Afghanistan, into the realm of [the] Amir” (Saikal 2004: 250). With the delineation of the border on the Amu Darya, Tajik and Pamiri populations were divided between Tajikistan, Afghanistan and today's Pakistan. The Wakhan Corridor, the narrow strip in the north-eastern corner of Afghanistan, was formed

¹⁵ Source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/85/Aral_map.png]

with the purpose of separating the realms of the British and Russians. This Corridor is a sign of how the map of Afghanistan was shaped by Anglo-Russian designs.

As for the developments in the south, we see three Anglo-Afghan Wars (1839–42; 1878–80; 1919) in the history of Afghanistan. Afghans got military victories over the British in all these wars; however, the end of the Second Anglo-War (1878-1870) produced some fatal consequences for Afghanistan due to the Treaty of Gandamak signed in 1879. Although the original British designs of dividing the lands of Afghanistan and taking each unit gradually under British rule (M. Kakar 2006: 25-62) failed, they still succeeded in gaining the control of the foreign affairs of Afghanistan with this treaty. Consequently, the Treaty of Gandamak created an Afghanistan that was a British protected state, a position which was to last 40 years from 1878 to 1919.

Afghanistan never became a full British colony; yet, its status as a British protected state produced some vital consequences for its geographical and structural formation: (1) As Russia started dealing with Afghanistan not directly through the Afghan Amir but through British India, it became easier for the two Great Powers to design Afghanistan as a buffer state behind the Amir's back; (2) Controlling the foreign affairs of Afghanistan, the British were able to impose the southern border between Afghanistan and British India, i.e. the controversial Durand Line seen in Figure 9; (3) As a protected state, Afghanistan was entitled to receive subsidies from the British for consolidating the state, which initiated the modern state-building process in this country.

With the demarcation of the Durand Line, populations living in the east and the south such as Pashtuns, the Baloch and the Kafiri (today's Nuristani in Afghanistan) were all divided between different states. The Baloch were divided among three states: Iran, Afghanistan and the British India, or today's Pakistan; while the Kafiri were divided between Afghanistan and British India (Pakistan). As for the Pashtuns, the British left only one-third within Afghanistan while the majority, i.e. two-thirds, was left in British India. It was a consequence of the British divide-and-rule policy which was designed in such a way that even though the majority of Pashtuns were left under the rule of the British India, they constituted only a minority within the larger population of India, or today's Pakistan. On the other side of the border, Pashtuns failed to amount to an absolute majority within Afghanistan. Today, Afghanistan

shelters 12.5 million Pashtuns, representing 42% of its population (in approximation); while Pakistan shelters almost 30 million Pashtuns, representing 17% of its population (*The World Factbook*).



Figure 9. The Durand Line¹⁶

Where borders of Afghanistan were externally drawn by Anglo-Russian designs, the core ethnic populations of Afghanistan (excluding the Hazara) were all divided among different states. Even while neither the British nor Russians officially colonised Afghanistan, they have left such a colonial legacy that it has been a very difficult task for the rulers of this country to form a centralised state and a unified nation. After all, modern Afghanistan was originally created as a buffer state; if not as a colony. It is how this fluid territory which was “an empty space on the map that was not Persian, not Russian, not British” (Cullather 2002: 515) became the Afghanistan of today, added to the list of ‘nation-states’ in the world. Such was the story of Afghanistan in becoming a part of the global transformation of polities into nation-states in order to be treated as a recognised unit in the international system.

¹⁶ Source: [<http://www.khyber.org/>]

4.4. Early Efforts at Modernisation: First 50 Years (1879-1929)

After the Treaty of Gandamak (1879), Amir Abdurrahman, the new Afghan Amir at the Durrani throne, set out to transform his realm into a centralised (buffer) state named the Emirate of Afghanistan with the help of the British subsidies. What he had at hand was a territory with more or less defined borders, where majority lived in villages or nomadic settlements far from one another; politically organised in the form of tribes or tribal confederacies; governed themselves locally; and recognised no central authority.

[The government] controlled only cities, towns and their dependencies as well as those areas where contingents of troops were stationed. Tribal communities, especially those of the frontier regions, remained self-administered as before, and their affairs were settled by elders mainly through *jirgas* in accord with the Shari'a and *Pashtunwali* (Pashtun code of behavior). In cases in which disputes between individuals and tribes were unsettled the conflicting parties often resorted to violence. Thus, in these rural autonomous communities anarchy and order co-existed, and the government intervened only when general order was disrupted. (M. Kakar 2006: 22)

It was in this context that Abdurrahman set out to establish his own rule as the single valid authority across his realm. In doing this, he employed Islam as a stable basis of legitimacy, unlike the instable tribal bases of legitimacy that depended on constant negotiations and persuasions. That is why, Saikal (2004: 35) claims, Abdurrahman was the first Afghan ruler to base his authority on something similar to a divine right of kings. His motivation for “claiming an Islamic basis for the monarchy was to establish the fact that those who opposed the King’s authority in the efforts to build a strong, Muslim nation were committing anti-Islamic acts” (Shahrani 1988: 37).

Abdurrahman initiated a series of basic reforms to break his dependency on tribes and tribal institutions. He introduced a compulsory inscription system; built up a regular army; initiated a taxation system; and appointed governors to cities to collect the taxes. He also reinstated the *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council), the ancient tribal council, as a state institution, by appointing its members himself (Rubin 2002: 51). That was an attempt to reverse the picture of dependencies by making tribes dependent on the state, “whereby the ruling groups (tribal leaders, royal family and clergy) no longer depended for their position on their following, but on the state (and the Amir)” (Vogelsang 2002: 265). All these measures enabled Abdurrahman “to rule the country directly through government officials. He was, thus, the first Afghan

ruler to do so in a country where people resented government control of their autonomous communities” (M. Kakar 2006: 63). The reason is that the preceding Durrani Amirs ruled their lands in the form of a loose tribal confederacy, which Abdurrahman himself described as follows:

‘Every priest, *mullah* and chief of every tribe and village considered himself an independent King, and for about 200 years past, the freedom and independence of many of these priests were never broken by their sovereigns. The Mirs of Turkestan, the Mirs of Hazara, the chiefs of Ghilzai were all stronger than their Amirs.’ (Abdurrahman quoted in Gregorian 1969: 129)

That was exactly the state of the loose tribal confederacy that existed in Afghanistan. It was Abdurrahman who, for the first time, attempted to establish a single authority to an extent unknown before. However, he achieved it through violent and inhuman means such as mass killings, forced migrations, dislocations, exile, etc. That is why he is remembered as the ‘Iron Amir’ today.

The major regions and tribes that Abdurrahman saw as threats to his rule were; the Ghilzai Pashtuns in the east, the frontier Pashtuns in the Durand zone, the Turkestan region in the north sheltering Uzbeks and Turkmens, the Hazarajat region at the centre sheltering Shia populations, and the region called Kafiristan (the Land of ‘Infidels’) in the east sheltering pagan populations. With his central army strengthened through British subsidies, Abdurrahman ruthlessly fought to break the power of the Ghilzai Pashtuns who were the arch-rival of his own tribe, the Durrani Pashtuns. He forced them to migrate to the north to benefit from their fighting skills in the borders with Russia. As for the Durrani Pashtuns, he exiled strong families such as the Tarzi, the Musahiban and the Charki to get rid of all the alternative power centres. As for the Hazaras, he fought a fatal war with them, “...a war that resulted not only in physical destruction but also in enslavement of the Muslim Hazaras at the hands of their own Muslim compatriots” (M. Kakar 2006: 134), which continued until the 1920s when Amir Amanullah finally set them free. As for Kafiristan, Abdurrahman forced the Kafiris to convert into Islam. When he took this region under his rule, he changed its name to Nuristan, meaning the ‘Land of Light.’ At the end of all these wars, Abdurrahman took all these local power centres under his authority through the ‘Covenants of Unity’ which represented “a written contract between himself and the Afghan people that would bind his subjects to his wills in perpetuity” (Barfield 2010: 174).

Abdurrahman, just like the Durrani Amirs before him, was of Pashtun origins. He is known for his preference for Pashtuns over non-Pashtuns, which had been a tradition among the Durrani Amirs. Abdurrahman, however, initiated a kind of ‘Pashtunisation’ policy that was meant to Pashtunise Afghanistan through forced migrations. Thus, in forcing the Ghilzai Pashtuns to migrate to the north and north-west inhabited by Uzbeks, Turkmens, Hazaras and the Aimaq, Abdurrahman was actually trying to have Pashtuns settle down in the borders with Russia, as he was quoted saying:

‘It is proper that as the king is an Afghan¹⁷ [Pashtun], his tribesmen, the Afghans [Pashtuns] should guard the frontiers. The Government is in the hand of Afghans [Pashtuns] therefore no reliance can be placed on any other tribe than the Afghans [Pashtuns]. You should proclaim this truth in your assemblies and impress it on your descendants so that your tribesmen may take a warning.’ (Abdurrahman quoted in K. Kakar 1979: 132)

This quotation perfectly reveals Abdurrahman’s trust in Pashtuns whom he defines as his own ‘tribesmen.’ At this point, it needs to be underlined that Abdurrahman did not treat all Pashtuns in the same way as an ethnic group; but, typical of tribalism, empowered only the members of his own clan, the Muhammadzai, who were treated as the *sharik-e-dawlat*, or partners in the state (K. Kakar 1979: 228). Still, his Pashtunisation project stimulated the rise of Pashtuns as the dominant tribe over non-Pashtuns in Afghanistan. The settler Pashtuns “brought with them ideas of their ethnic superiority which were reinforced by Government support and by the grant of both formal and informal privileges over the other ethnic groups” (N. Tapper 1983: 257). Pashtun settlement areas received better service while positions in the government as well as the army were reserved for Pashtuns. Dominating the local populations such as the Uzbek, Turkmen, Hazara, etc. thanks to their tribal links with the rulers, Pashtuns “acted as representatives of the central state” (Rasuly-Paleczek 2001: 153). In other words, Abdurrahman co-opted the Pashtun tribes by giving them a share and responsibility in the state which had, actually, been something detested by the tribes. It was his way of breaking the power of Pashtun tribalism and containing it within the state. Yet, it was, obviously, to the disadvantage of the non-Pashtun tribes living in Afghanistan. That was why, during Abdurrahman’s reign,

¹⁷ In the past, the ethnonyms Pashtun and Afghan were used synonymously.

“[i]n the eyes of most non-Pashtuns, the Afghan government was now viewed as a Pashtun government and not just a Durrani dynasty” (Barfield 2010: 157).

As for modernisation, Abdurrahman had reserves. Afraid of the possible consequences of modern technologies coming from his imperialist neighbours, he deliberately kept Afghanistan as an isolated and impoverished country. His opposition to the idea of building railways resulted from his belief that they would bring foreign troops. He viewed Afghanistan stuck between two *kafir* (‘infidel’) empires, struggling to be the only *dar-ul salam*¹⁸ (land of peace; land of Islam) between these two *dar-ul harb* (land of war; land of ‘infidels’). That is why he continually explained to his people the need for unity in Afghanistan, acting like a ‘teacher of the nation.’ “To turn Afghanistan from a tribal state into a unitary central state or a nation, the amir passed proclamations, wrote pamphlets and spread his edits through *jarchis* (town-criers) informing his subjects of their duties, first to the king and then to their country” (Misdaq 2006: 57).

These are the reasons, among others, why Abdurrahman is believed to be the first ruler to lay the foundations of the modern nation-state of Afghanistan, no matter how primitive they were. As Barfield (2010: 159) argues, in Afghanistan, “a national identity did not bubble up from below. It was the amir’s standardized taxes, laws, currency, conscription, and administrative structure that put all Afghans into a single system.” In Afghanistan, nation-state polity was a top-down imposition, as it was the general case in the non-West. That is why Abdurrahman “is regarded as the founder of the Afghan ‘nation-state’ because he was successfully applying the same laws and regulations to all tribes and ethnic groups” (Misdaq 2006: 57). Yet, a centralised state reaching out to the entire public, although something new in the history of Afghanistan, was not enough for the emergence of a modern nation-state. Thus, as Saikal (2004: 39) claims, “repression, isolation and reliance on financial assistance from abroad at the cost of sovereignty were his trademarks, not comprehensive modernization and nation-building.”

Amir Abdurrahman’s reign which was characterised by state centralisation as well as Pashtunisation policies, was followed by his son Amir Habibullah who ruled the

¹⁸ In Islam, lands where Islam prevails as a religion are called *dar-ul salam* (land of peace or land of Islam); while the lands where it is non-existent are called the *dar-ul harb* (land of war) because it is the land of ‘infidels.’

country from 1901 to 1919. Habibullah's reign constitutes a vital part in the history of modernisation in Afghanistan, as he initiated the earliest efforts of modernisation in the field of education in the centralised state that he inherited from his father.

Contrary to his father's brutal policies, Habibullah had a more accommodating approach towards the local power holders. One of his first moves was to declare a general amnesty and call back the Durrani families that Abdurrahman had exiled, which was to have fundamental consequences for the history of modernisation in Afghanistan. The exiled families had stayed in the neighbouring countries for around twenty years and witnessed the ongoing modernisation processes there. Inevitably, they compared Afghanistan to their exile destinations in terms of modernisation, raising some questions about their home country (Shir 2012: 35). When they were finally called back by Habibullah, they *imported* their ideas of modernisation as well as nationalism into Afghanistan.

Two of these exiled families are worth mentioning: the Tarzi family which stayed in the Ottoman Empire and the Musahiban family which stayed in British India. In their exile destinations, these two were exposed to differing ideas of modernisation and nationalism. "As a consequence of this process of exile and homecoming, two different approaches to modernization appeared in Afghanistan: the *revolutionary modernist* one centred around Mahmud Tarzi, and the *gradual modernist* one centred around Nadir Khan" (Sungur 2016: 445). Both of these approaches diffused into the narrow elite circles of Kabul, starting with the reign of Habibullah.

While the Tarzi family settled in the Ottoman Empire, Mahmud Tarzi (1865-1933), the eldest son, received modern education in Damascus and Istanbul where he witnessed the revolutionary Young Turk Movement as well as the European waves of nationalism. By the time Mahmud Tarzi returned to Afghanistan, he was equipped with these modern ideas and prepared to become the mastermind of modernisation. Well aware of the value of such a qualified man, Habibullah not only gave Tarzi high posts in his government but also put his sons, Inayatullah and Amanullah, under his tutorage. In his service, Tarzi founded a modern platform for spreading his ideas of independence, nationalism, and modern reform: the bi-weekly journal called the *Siraj al-Akhbar-e Afghaniyah* (The Lamp of the News of Afghanness). Editing and publishing this journal for almost ten years (1911-1919), Tarzi thus became the father of modern journalism in Afghanistan.

As an open-minded ruler, Amir Habibullah was the one who introduced Western-style modern education into Afghanistan. Inspired by the Aligarh College in India, he founded the Habibiyya School, named after himself, in 1904, which was the first modern secondary school for boys in Afghanistan. Run by Indian Muslim scholars and intellectuals, the Habibiyya School kept close relations with the Aligarh College, sending and receiving students as well as teachers (Baiza 2013: 53). Habibullah opened several branches of this school to act as primary schools for boys in Kabul.

The Habibiyya School had more meanings than a simple high school, playing a prominent role in modernisation. In time, it became a centre for young modernists, independence-seekers, intellectuals as well as the elite. Almost all the modernist political circles of the time were to be formed by the earliest graduates of the Habibiyya. Producing a young population educated with modern curricula, the Habibiyya and similar modern institutions, like the *Maktab-e Harbiyya*, or the Military College, founded by Habibullah “marked the beginning of Afghanistan’s critical social divide, between the traditional Afghan society of the tribe and the countryside and that of an increasingly westernized, urban elite” (Ewans 2002:117).

Habibullah’s reign coincided with a fundamental period in the history of Asia as well as the world. It was in 1907, while Afghanistan was still a British protected state, that the Anglo-Russian Convention was signed between the British and Russians concerning the control of Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet. This Convention officialised Afghanistan’s status as a buffer state as well as a British protected state; while making permanent the Durand Line and the northern border on the Amu-Darya. During the Convention, the Afghan Amir was not consulted at all, which was something increasingly criticised by the Kabuli elite formed by the earliest graduates of the Habibiyya School. Influenced by the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1906) as well as the Young Turk Revolution (1908) in the Ottoman Empire, these young college graduates initiated a similar constitutional movement in Afghanistan, by forming a secret circle called the *Jam’iyyat-i Sirri-i Milli* (National Secret Society) in 1907. Their goal was “encouraging the Amir to expand educational, cultural, technological and political modernization of the country, and to reform the political and governance system into a constitutional monarchy” (Baiza 2013: 61). When Habibullah eventually learnt about this circle and was misinformed that their goal was to kill him, he executed all the members.

With the outbreak of the First World War and the Ottoman Caliph's declaration of *jihad* to all Muslims in the world, another political circle was formed: the Young Afghans (*Jawanan-e Afghan*) modelled on the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire. It was like a club of Habibiyya graduates brought together by "their common position as faithful Muslims and Afghans, [and] a shared yearning for national cohesion, stability, progress and independence" (Saikal 2004: 42). The Young Afghans were also a part of the Kabuli elite called the 'War Party,' urging for entry into the war alongside the Ottomans. Their activities increased with the arrival of a Turco-German delegation in Kabul in 1915. Meanwhile, Muslims of India declared their support to the Afghan Amir if he joined the war. Yet, Habibullah chose to remain loyal to the British and kept Afghanistan neutral in the war. The outcome of the war was fatal for the Ottomans, while "[t]here was widespread belief that Afghanistan had betrayed her Islamic principles and had failed to grasp the opportunity to become fully independent" (Ewans 2002: 116).

Following the assassination of Habibullah in 1919, it was his son Amir Amanullah who channelled all those anti-British feelings into achieving full independence. His declaration of *jihad* against the British right upon coronation initiated the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) at the end of which Afghanistan achieved full independence with the Treaty of Rawalpindi signed in 1919. Such a quick achievement gave Amanullah great legitimacy for his rule in the eyes of all the different factions, modernist or conservative.

Amanullah is accepted as the most modernist king in the history of Afghanistan, who made a great effort to modernise Afghanistan in all the ways possible in a very short span of 10 years (1919-1929). Being contemporaries with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran, Amanullah regarded these two Muslim-majority countries as models for Afghanistan. It was also Amanullah who finally opened up Afghanistan into the world, establishing diplomatic relations with world countries, having Mahmud Tarzi as his Foreign Minister. He even went on a tour of European countries with Queen Soraya in 1928-29, which was a first in Afghan history.

Amanullah was a law-maker¹⁹. He enacted the first modern Constitution of Afghanistan in 1923, which was called the *Nizamnama*. Based on the Constitution of modern Turkey, the *Nizamnama* made Afghanistan into a constitutional monarchy. In 1926, Amanullah also changed the name of the state from the Emirate of Afghanistan into the Kingdom of Afghanistan, assuming for himself the title of King, or *Padshah*. Among his further legal reforms was the Conscription and Identity Card Act of 1923 registering all the inhabitants of Afghanistan, which was a fundamental step for nation-building. What is more, Amanullah's laws did not only address males; but also females for the first time in the history of Afghanistan. In 1921, he enacted the Family Code, making the registration of marriages compulsory; giving women the right to divorce; and banning child marriage and inter-kin marriage.

In the field of modern education, Amanullah "had deliberate goals, regarding education as a tool for creating the nascent bureaucracy of the Afghan state through educated people" (Sungur 2016: 448). To this end, he legalised mass education by including an article in the Constitution of 1923 that made primary education compulsory for all the citizens. It was the first official step towards including all the citizens within a national education system, which implied the emergence of a modern nation-state.

While the Habibiyya had been founded with the help of Indian Muslims, Amanullah, allowed Europeans to establish schools in Afghanistan. It was in this framework that the Amaniyya School, named after himself, and the *Isteqlal* School were established in 1921 and 1923 respectively, both modelled on the French education system and taught French as a foreign language. In 1924 the *Amani* School, also named after himself, and the *Nejat* School were established, both modelled on the German education system and taught German as a foreign language. Then, in 1928, the *Ghazi* School was established as an English-language high school (Misdaq 2006: 63). As for higher education, the *Maktab-e Hukkam* (School of Administration) was developed by Turkish education specialists. What needs emphasis here is that all of these foreign schools for boys operated simultaneously within the Afghan national education system. According to Baiza (2013: 84): "[a]lthough these different educational models smoothed the integration of students into European schools, the

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion on Amir Amanullah's laws, please refer to *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empires* (2017) by Faiz Ahmed.

development of these parallel models made it difficult to develop a unified national system for education in Afghanistan.”

Making great effort for emancipating women, Amanullah was the first ruler to extend state-sponsored education to girls. The first formal female-only primary school, called the *Masturat* (Chastity) was established by Queen Suraya in 1920, which was followed by a secondary school, called the *Esmat* (Chastity), established in 1928 also by her. Amanullah established the *Maktab-e Raziah* which was a home management school for girls in 1928 (Baiza 2013: 83). Under Amanullah’s reign, women gradually rose as a social force in Afghanistan. Queen Suraya, Mahmud Tarzi’s wife and Amanullah’s sisters were all “active in women’s projects, establishing *mo’sesah naswan*, the Women’s Institute” (Misdaq 2006: 63) as well as publishing the journal called *Irshad-e Niswan* (Women’s Guide). Near the end of his reign, Amanullah extended female education outside Kabul while introducing co-education which was, according to Misdaq (2006: 63), “Amanullah’s greatest challenge to conservative Afghan society.”

Despite all his efforts, however, modern education remained largely limited to Kabul. To have control over education in rural areas, Amanullah sought to take the *mullahs*, who acted as teachers in mosques or the *madrassas*, under state authority and restrict their role as educators. In 1928, he obliged all *mullahs*, who had been the local authorities in education so far, to obtain teaching certificates from the state to teach in the *madrassas*, which was another thing that brought him face to face with the conservative factions.

Registering his citizens; his soldiers as well as the marriages that took place in the country, Amanullah laid the legal foundations of the modern nation-state of Afghanistan. However, he ratified all his modern laws through an ancient tribal body of consultation, i.e. the *Loya Jirga* (Barfield 2010: 196). His case should not be mistaken with a parliamentary monarchy where the powers of a king are limited by a modern parliament based on election. In the case of Amanullah, his powers as a king were bound by this tribal institution which had been made into a state institution by Abdurrahman. Having been crowned by the *Loya Jirga*, Amanullah also drew his legitimacy, officially, from the same institution. Therefore, Amanullah, even while being a modernist, remained in the realm of tribalism, which was something that prepared his downfall.

Amanullah's modernisation programme lacked another vital pillar: a sound economic basis that would grow strong with industrialisation. "The Afghan state structure had long been accustomed to British subsidies, which were no longer available after the independence of Afghanistan. This radical change caused cracks in the economy" (Sungur 2016: 451). Amanullah needed to generate income to sustain his wide reform programme. Unfortunately, the size of industry in Afghanistan at that time was very limited. While Abdurrahman had deliberately kept away from modern technologies and industries except for a small-arms factory in Kabul (Saikal 2004: 37), Habibullah had taken the first steps in industrialisation whereby "Afghanistan's first hospital and hydroelectric plant were built and a number of factories were established" (Ewans 2002: 117). It was all that Amanullah had as industry. Consequently, he turned to taxation as a source of revenue, requiring taxes to be paid no more in kind, but in cash. He also established a customs tariff which "brought him into further confrontation with frontier tribes living close to the Khyber Pass, who were in control of border trade as well as smuggling" (Sungur 2016: 449).

The economic weakness of Amanullah's reform programme was a major drawback. "Perhaps one of his greatest failings was that instead of concentrating on the economic development of the country, he dissipated his efforts and resources by introducing mere symbols of progress" (Gregorian 1969: 274). He was ordering people to dress in European style in Kabul while stores had few European clothes in stock and people could not even afford to buy them (Emadi 2010: 27). This is a perfect example showing that "symbolic reforms were implemented without the necessary structural reforms, especially in the field of economy" (Sungur 2016: 451). What is more, these symbolic reforms remained limited to the narrow Kabuli population, ignoring the whole lot of Afghanistan which was rural and tribal. In Tapper's (1983: 37) view, Amanullah viewed "Afghanistan as the state he sought to build rather than the tribal society that it was."

As I have discussed elsewhere (Sungur 2016), Afghanistan already had a long history of struggle for power between the institutions of tribe and the state. For its tribal population, the state was perceived as an external force threatening the tribal order mainly in "three directions: taxation, conscription, and perceived interference in family life" (Barfield 2010: 183). As expected, Amanullah received the reaction of the traditional centres of power, such as strong tribal khans; elders of the society as

well as the *mullahs*. Yet, he was so intent on quickly modernising Afghanistan that he ignored the danger that was approaching. Many members of the elite, including Mahmud Tarzi as well as Nadir Khan of the Musahibans, warned him to slow down and give the society some time. Amanullah, however, especially after his return from his royal tour of Europe in 1929, was filled with new ideas of reform and “rushed headlong into his disorganized plans to change Afghanistan from a collection of ethnic groups and tribes into the outward appearance of modern nationhood” (Dupree 1980: 452). Yet, his was an impetuous nation-building programme that lacked the pillars of modernisation like industrialisation and urbanisation. Here do we understand that the process of nation-building does not simply mean establishing the nation just as a category, for that is only the tip of the iceberg.

In consequence of Amanullah’s final rush, a major revolt broke out in 1929 among the frontier Pashtun tribes, which was, later, joined by the Kohistanis led by a Tajik bandit named Habibullah Kalakani popularly known as the *Bacha-e Saqao*. As the *mullahs* also joined the revolt, they announced the Amanullah an infidel, finally dethroning him. Kalakani remained in the throne for nine months, which is known as a chaotic period. Then, Nadir Khan returned from France to unite the Pashtun tribes in both sides of the Durand Line and seized the Afghan throne. In other words, Nadir Khan followed the tradition of employing the power of Pashtun tribalism to restore order in Afghanistan. That was how the revolutionary modernist approach of Amanullah collapsed in 1929, as Afghanistan moved closer to the gradual modernist approach of the Musahiban dynasty.

4.5. Modernisation Maturing: Second 50 Years (1929-1979)

The coronation of Nadir Khan in 1929 started the Musahiban dynasty in Afghanistan, taking the country into a slower pace of modernisation. The Musahiban brothers’ approach towards modernisation gave them a perfect place of moderation between the revolutionary reformist and the conservative factions in the country, which facilitated the establishment of their legitimacy. Nadir Shah’s short reign (1929-1933) may be considered a period of transition in that regard, whereby he immediately set out to dissociate himself from Amanullah’s speedy reform programme, by declaring: “I will not be king but the servant of the tribes and the country” (Barfield 2010: 195). In other words, Nadir chose to cooperate with tribes

in order to achieve stability in the country, while gradually modernising. “Nevertheless, this was not a total retreat; but a type of modernisation in[to] which tribalism was *allowed* to articulate; whereby it would be encapsulated within the modern state” (Sungur 2013: 57). The succeeding Musahiban rulers would adopt the same policy until the end of their dynasty in 1973.

To dissociate himself from Amanullah’s impetuous reforms, Nadir immediately established the *Jamiat-e Mullaha* (Association of Religious Clerics) in 1929 and the *Jamiat-e Ulama* (Association of Religious Scholars) in 1931 (Baiza 2013: 101). He also called back the female students sent to Turkey for education. Under his reign, female education was limited to midwifery only; while male education in modern schools continued, though with efforts to curb the pro-Amanullah feelings of reform among the students. On the whole, Nadir’s reign constituted a significant regression in modern education which slowly recovered during the reign of Zahir Shah.

To bring back peace and stability to Afghanistan, Nadir Shah made agreements of non-aggression with his two foreign neighbours, the British India and, now, the Soviet Union, while he opted to stay away from all the anti-colonial revolts near his borders. In the south, he recognised the Durand Line as an international border between Afghanistan and British India while withdrawing all the support that had hitherto been provided by Amanullah to the Pashtun anti-colonial movement in British India, called the *Khudai Khidmatgaran*²⁰ (Servants of God). Meanwhile in the north, he recognised Bukhara as an inalienable part of the USSR (Saikal 2004: 103) and withdrew all the traditional support given to the Central Asian Muslims involved in the anti-Soviet *Basmachi*²¹ revolts. In this way, Afghanistan kept its position as a

²⁰ The 1930s witnessed the rise of Mahatma Gandhi in British India, who urged for full independence through non-violent resistance. Following his example, Pashtuns living in British India united under the leadership of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as Badshah Khan, and formed an anti-colonial movement called the *Khudai Khidmatgaran* (Servants of God). Urging for reform in the Pashtun society in British India through Pashtun nationalism, Ghaffar Khan was an admirer of King Amanullah, maintaining close ties with him. Nadir Shah, on the other hand, “the same man who had mobilized the frontier Pathan [Pashtun] tribes for the cause of Afghan independence in 1919” (Gregorian 1969: 328) and who had taken Kabul with their help in 1930, withdrew his support from this movement, which ruined his legitimacy among the Pashtun tribes, leading to his assassination.

²¹ The Basmachi revolts took place in Turkestan in the form of anti-Soviet rebellions from 1917, the Russian Revolution, until the early 1930s. A product of the forced conscription of Central Asian Muslims into the Russian army, the revolts peaked with the Soviet destruction of the Muslim government of Kokand in 1918 and that of the Emirate of Bukhara in 1920. Although the revolts were largely repressed by the Soviets in the mid 1920s, some groups remained active near the borders of Afghanistan through Afghan support until the reign of Nadir Shah.

buffer zone of neutrality between the British India and the Soviet Union. Its later decision to keep neutrality in the World War II (1939-45) was also rooted in this tradition of *bi-tarafi*, or being without sides.

Following the assassination of Nadir Shah, his France-educated and 19-year-old son Zahir Shah was enthroned, who was to rule the country largely under the auspices of his uncles, the Musahiban brothers, for 40 years from 1933 to 1973. What differentiated the Musahiban period was their systematic focus on economic development through industrialisation. Achieving economic independence was a priority for them, as seen in a statement by Nadir Shah in 1929:

‘Today we see in our country export, import, transportation, brokerage and everything else are all done by foreigners; only shopkeeping is left for our people. This situation is intolerable and we must have our own nationals engaged in all these activities throughout the country. We must find a way to cut off the hands of the foreigners.’ (Nadir Shah quoted in Saikal 2004: 107)

This mind-set defined the economic reforms of the Musahiban rule. In 1931, the first bank of Afghanistan, the *Bank-e Milli-ye Afghanistan* (National Bank of Afghanistan), was established; while the first private companies were formed. Then in the 1940s, a number of factories including cotton, sugar, textile and cement were established. Onset of the Cold War in the late 40s turned out to be a facilitating factor for industrialisation efforts, as Afghanistan started receiving foreign aid from different countries.

As for political reforms, “[u]nder pressure from the growing strata of merchant capitalists, liberalminded intellectuals, western-educated state officials and other professionals, the government gradually began to open up the political system” (Saikal 2004: 115). It was also in this period that the *Shura*, or the Parliament, was established. Although political parties were not legalised yet, there were several political formations such as the *Wish Zalmayan* (Awakened Youth). With the the Free Press Law enacted in 1951, various journals appeared in the national scene, such as *Watan* (Homeland), *Nida-ye Khalq* (People’s Voice), *Ulus* (Nation), etc.

All these developments in modernisation were fundamentally related to the accession of Afghanistan to the United Nations in 1946. It was with this huge step that Afghanistan was officially integrated into the world order of nation-states. Therefore, it was expected to become a nation-state through certain reforms among which was

education. It was in this period that modern education was finally extended outside Kabul into other major cities as well as the countryside when the state established the *makateb-e dehati* (village schools) in the form of one-teacher village schools for boys in the early 1950s and for girls in the late 1950s. It needs to be reminded, however, that most of these village schools operated in mosques where the *mullahs* acted as teachers and lived on informal contributions from the families of students, instead of a formal salary from the state (Baiza 2013: 104). In other words, modern education outside Kabul still remained outside the national education system in the 1950s and beyond. Although the five-year economic plans of the 1960s worked well to balance the enrolment rates of boys and girls in urban centres, “the disparity between urban and rural education was not addressed adequately” (Baiza 2013: 105), which posed a serious problem for the operation of the modernisation process.

As for female education, it was as far as 1949 that the female school established by Queen Suraya in 1920, renamed as the *Malalai* School or the *Lycee Zanane-ye Kabul* (Women’s Lycee of Kabul), was converted to a French-language high school for girls, along with the establishment of a similar female school called the *Lycee Rabia-ye Balkhi* (Rabia-ye Balkhi Lycee) in 1948 (Baiza 2013: 104). In other words, there was a serious break of 20 years in female education, which was a great loss in terms of modernisation.

In this period, another fundamental change took place in the field of higher education. Kabul University, the first modern university of Afghanistan, was established in 1945, after which modernisation achieved a new dimension. The university campus witnessed the rise of student unions founded on an ideological basis, pointing to a modern formation. The main polarisation was between two groups: the Leftist group called the *Wish Zalmayan* (Awakened Youth) and the Islamist group called *Sazman-e Jawanan-e Musselman* (Muslim Youth Organisation). Allied with their respective intelligentsia, these student unions held discussion groups, published newspapers and organised public demonstrations. Formed by students educated at foreign schools, these unions had links with the international system, as well:

As Afghanistan gradually turned into a rentier state, the increase in foreign education, foreign tourists, foreign advisors, foreign publications and foreign radio broadcasts in the country made their impact on the spread of new ideas...It was inevitable that such diversity led to an enlarging group of

educated youth and discontented intellectuals in Kabul who formed a ‘primitive civil society.’ (Sungur 2015: 176)

In the words of Rubin (2002: 81), “a rentier state produced rentier revolutionaries” in Afghanistan. Yet, we still need to remember that whatever was formed as civil society was largely limited to Kabul, which “as late as 1959, contained circa 75% of the secondary school students in Afghanistan” (Rubin 2002: 70). Although the campus of Kabul University was producing modern ideological conflicts between students, the rural countryside, which constituted the larger part of Afghanistan, was still struggling with tribal conflicts and blood feuds. The main reason was that the tribal society remained mostly untouched in this period, as the Musahibans preferred to ignore it rather than confronting it (Barfield 2010: 232).

Turning to internal politics, we see the rise of an important political figure during Zahir’s reign: Daoud Khan, who would serve as the Prime Minister from 1953 to 1963 and as the President from 1973 to 1978. Successfully exploiting the Cold War opportunities for Afghanistan, Daoud turned out to be a strong politician who secured foreign aid coming from various countries such as the USSR, Germany, France, Italy and the US. He employed these funds primarily in industrialisation and consolidation of his central army to the point that he no longer had to ask for tribal support in times of crisis. Finally breaking the military power of tribalism, he further weakened it economically by imposing taxation on tribes.

Daoud, however, is not as much remembered for his efforts of modernisation as his fierce Pashtun nationalism. Having graduated from the German-led *Amani* School, Daoud had been influenced by the emerging German ideas of national socialism in the aftermath of World War II. He believed that Hitler’s principle of ‘One People, One Nation, One Leader’ was the only possible way for the progress of Afghanistan which could be achieved through the unity of Pashtuns. “Thus, his brand of nationalism was synonymous with ‘Pashtunism’ and called for the ‘Pashtunification’ of Afghanistan and reunification of all Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line” (Saikal 2004: 112). To this end, he initiated a full-scale campaign for Pashtun nationalism, cooperating with Pashtun tribal khans; empowering Pashtuns in the army and the government; and working to establish the Pashtun culture and Pashto language as the dominant culture and language in Afghanistan. Like Abdurrahman, Daoud also attempted to Pashtunise Afghanistan through forced migrations.

Added to this was Daoud's inclusive approach towards the Pashtun tribes living in India, which was reinforced with a fundamental change that took place in the region: British withdrawal from India in 1947 and the partition of India into two states as India and Pakistan. With the partition, Pashtun tribes living in India, specifically in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), were given the option of joining either India or Pakistan. The Afghan state, on the other hand, protested that they were not given the option of joining Afghanistan or forming an independent state called 'Pashtunistan.' However, with a plebiscite, the NWFP joined Pakistan. That was the point where Daoud and certain factions in Afghanistan formed a hostile attitude towards Pakistan from the very beginning of its establishment.

Daoud's obsession with Pashtunistan eventually reached such a point that it became the official national ideology of Afghanistan, taking the form of "annual days, officially organized demonstrations, symbolic postage stamps, and many tracts and other publications intended to further the cause" (Hyman 2002: 308). Tension climbed to such an extent that Pakistan eventually broke all diplomatic ties with Afghanistan and closed the Durand Line in 1961. It was a major hit to the Afghan border trade, causing Afghanistan to plunge into economic crisis. It was where Zahir Shah finally took the reins and discharged Daoud in 1963. As he reinstated the relations with Pakistan, the border was re-opened in 1965 and the Pashtunistan issue was left to cool down. Still, Daoud has left such a legacy that the Pashtunistan issue, although remaining dormant until today, has diffused into the collective memory to pop up when required.

In the international arena, the power vacuum left by the British in the region was quickly filled by the US as a new power in Asia, which was in a rivalry with the USSR during the Cold War. While coping with the economic crisis, Daoud had turned to the US for aid, only to be rejected. Humiliated, Daoud had broken the traditional distance with the USSR and initiated a full-scale cooperation, whereby the USSR became an assistant for Afghanistan in industrialisation, undertaking big infrastructure projects and introducing 5-year economic plans. As Soviet personnel poured into all levels of the state, army and industry, Soviet ideologies of socialism and communism gradually diffused into the country. In other words, the entrance of Soviet ideologies into Afghanistan resulted not from ideological proximity but from economic pressures.

Meanwhile in domestic politics, Zahir Shah finally took full control in the last ten years of his reign (1963-1973), also known as the period of *Demokrasi-ye Nau* (New Democracy), which was “based on retention of the monarchy, incorporation of traditional tribal institutions, strong parliamentarism, and ‘cooperation of all classes of the nation, especially the educated people and the youth’” (Saikal 2004: 142). The most important reform made by Zahir was the promulgation of the Constitution of 1964, which is known as the most modern constitution of Afghanistan, establishing a bi-cameral parliament, free elections and civil rights. As the previous constitutions, it was also legalised with the approval of the *Loya Jirga*, pointing to the persistent power of this tribal institution. Still, what differed here is the fact that the *Loya Jirga* recognised the existence of a modern parliament alongside itself. The parliament called the *Shura* (Assembly) consisted of the *Wolesi Jirga* (House of the People) elected by voting and the *Meshrano Jirga* (House of the Elders), partly-elected and partly-appointed by the King. On the other hand, the *Loya Jirga* comprised all the members of the *Shura* as well as the leaders of the provincial *jirgas* (Ewans 2002: 166). The *Loya Jirga* was kept at the service of the King “to serve as an instrument for testing popular attitudes and also as an additional means for the King to secure wider political support for his initiatives” (Saikal 2004: 148). These exclusive rights “helped the King to seek modern legitimacy for his traditional leadership” (Saikal 2004: 152). As the leadership remained traditional, so did the people who elected their rulers. In the elections of 1965, people voted on the basis of tribal power, thus sending *khans* and local rulers to the *Shura*, who were:

mainly interested in pressuring the executive to further their own interests and those of their own constituencies...Thus, contrary to the spirit of a liberal constitution, the assembly was dominated by nonliberals and nondemocrats who did not know the workings of the constitution. (M. Kakar 1995: 10)

The Constitution of 1964 also included a key article prohibiting royal family members to stand for elections or serve as ministers, which was aimed particularly at Daoud to prevent him from achieving power once again (Ewans 2002: 166). That was how Daoud and his supporters, who were among the members of the *Wish Zalmayan* movement of the 1940s, grew hostile to Zahir. This group came together around Nur Muhammad Taraki who founded the *Hezb-e Dimokratik-e Khalq-e Afghanistan* or the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in 1965. Despite attracting only a minority in the beginning, the PDPA drew such a great

number of Soviet-influenced army officers that eventually the army and the Party almost merged. Having a strong power base in the army, Daoud employed the PDPA in undertaking a bloodless *coup d'état* in 1973, dethroning Zahir Shah who had been in power in the last 40 years. That was how the ages-old Afghan monarchy as well as the Kingdom of Afghanistan was abolished while the Republic of Afghanistan was established with Daoud Khan as its first President.

Daoud's coup has further meanings in terms of modernisation. Daoud "seized power not as his uncle [Nadir Shah] had, at the head of a tribal army, but as the leader of a group of Soviet-trained military officers" (Rubin 2002: 74). This signalled a radical change in the understanding of gaining political power. "It was for the first time that an Afghan aspirant to power looked not to the tribes or the clergy, which represented traditions, but to a political party and the state army, which represented modernity" (Sungur 2013: 76). Daoud's later attempts at containing tribalism under state authority also confirms this change. He established a Ministry of Tribal Affairs, which recognised the *qawm* as an institution, and appointed *maliks* (leaders) to *qawms* from outside the tribes, who were "more concerned with keeping on the good side of their superiors in Kabul than in forging good relations with the local population" (Barfield 2010: 223). In other words, Daoud attempted to initiate a process of detribalisation in the society. Yet, there was one important tribal institution that he kept intact: the *Loya Jirga*. His Constitution of 1977, which was enacted through the *Loya Jirga*, "provided for a unicameral parliament and a one-party state, with the *Loya Jirga* as the 'supreme manifestation of the power and will of the people'" (Ewans 2002: 181).

Upon achieving power, Daoud immediately set out to distance himself from Soviet dependency for the sake of independence, isolating himself from the entire communist faction. He initiated the persecution of the PDPA, whereby "the Revolution [devoured] its children."²² In 1975, he founded the *Hezb-e Inqilab-e Milli* (National Revolutionary Party) as the basis of his one-party state. Left without the support of the PDPA or members of the old regime, Daoud eventually became a one man for all, assuming "the offices of president, prime minister, foreign minister and minister of defense" (Ewans 2002: 179). In foreign relations, he tried to initiate

²² The famous adage quoted in 1793 by Jacques Mallet du Pan in relation to the French Revolution (1789).

regional cooperation by turning to India, Egypt, Iran and even Pakistan. His invitation to the UN and NATO experts was so provoking for the USSR that he was told to expel them immediately. Daoud, however, was determined to break away from the Soviets, as his famous answer reveals:

‘We will never allow you to dictate to us how to run our country and whom to employ in Afghanistan. How and where we employ foreign experts will remain the exclusive prerogative of the Afghan state. Afghanistan shall remain poor, if necessary, but free in its acts and decisions.’ (M. Kakar 1995: 14)

We now turn to the PDPA, which was set to become the next important political player in the Afghan scene for the next 20 years. Founded in 1965 as *Hezb-e Demokratik-e Khalq-e Afghanistan* (People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan) and split into two in 1967 as *Khalq* (Public) and *Parcham* (Banner), the PDPA is generally labelled as a communist party *prima facie*. Yet, in the context of Afghanistan, it needs to be viewed within the larger modernist faction in opposition to the conservative faction. The PDPA always maintained a link with the former reformers such as the Young Afghans (*Jawanon-e Afghan*) of the 1920s; the Awakened Youth (*Wish Zalmayan*) of the 1940s; and partisans of the New Democracy (*Demokrasi-ye Nau*) movement of the 1960s, while accepting King Amanullah as a hero (Magnus and Naby 1998: 101). It was, rather, “a movement developed by members of state bureaucracy who desired faster, state-directed Western-style modernization” (Rubin 2002: 86). The primary goal here was *faster* modernisation; not adoption of the communist ideology. During violent protests at Kabul University in support of the strikes by industrial workers, there was “nowhere any suggestion that either *Khalq* or *Parcham* took the slightest interest in them or in the working class more generally” (Ewans 2002: 173). What the PDPA members understood from communism came from some basic Persian translations published by the Iranian leftist *Tudeh* Party. For the PDPA, “Marxism as a vehicle of social change was only a theory; more important from a practical standpoint was the role played by the neighboring USSR, which supported the Afghan state and offered to export the Soviet version of modernization” (Rubin 2002: 85). Eventually, the PDPA was made to believe that the Soviet way of non-capitalist development, as opposed to Western capitalist development, offered Afghanistan a *faster* way of modernisation. The PDPA even claimed to have invented “a new brand of socialism, suitable for Third World countries and without any intermediate stages” (Roy 1990: 84). That is

how they came to advocate a communist revolution which, they believed, “would be a short-cut to the long way to development, bypassing certain steps of capitalist modernisation. Taking the USSR as a model, they tried to achieve the stage of Soviet modernity, which had taken centuries to shape, in a few years’ time” (Sungur 2015: 180). Especially the *Khalq* faction under Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin urged for an immediate socialist revolution based on the working class, differing from the *Parcham* under Babrak Karmal who followed a more inclusive ‘National Front’ strategy, incorporating the former reformist movements. These two factions reunited in 1977 in the face of increasing persecutions by Daoud which reached such an extent that the PDPA eventually took a radical step to survive.

That is how the *Enqilab-e-Saur*, or the *Saur* (April) Revolution, took place on April 28, 1978, which ended with the fall of President Daoud and establishment of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan under President Taraki. Imitating Daoud’s *coup d’etat* of 1973 which abolished the Afghan monarchy, the PDPA also achieved political power through a coup which was presented as a communist revolution with promises of land reform. Yet, unlike Daoud who was a member of the royal family, Taraki faced a deep crisis of legitimacy. “Moving away from the traditional form of gaining political legitimacy, which was based on blood lineage to a former monarch, and the religious sanctioning of the *ulama*, was a key challenge for the PDPA” (Baiza 2013: 131-2). President Taraki was the first ruler of Afghanistan, who did not draw his legitimacy from the royal family, but from the leadership of a political party. Yet, the PDPA, which had 3.000-5.000 members according to Western observers and 15.000 members according to Soviet sources (Rubin 2002: 119), had only a narrow base in the Afghan public only 14% of whom was urban and 95% of whom was illiterate (Khan 2018). Modernisation at the top had no counterpart in the wider society, which eventually led to another crisis.

Too fragile to sustain power on its own, the PDPA signed an agreement with the Soviet Union right after the Saur Revolution, which empowered them to ask for direct military help from the USSR in case of need. What was expected took place in 1979, just a year after the Saur Revolution, when the PDPA called the Soviets to deploy their military forces in Afghanistan. In other words, the PDPA government invited the Soviets troops to their country in order to save them from falling. The Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in 1979 was to be the beginning of a long cycle

of wars and conflict in Afghanistan which was to continue for 40 years until today, as of 2019.

4.6. Modernisation under Foreign Intervention: USSR in Afghanistan (1979-1989)

In the 10-year-long Soviet intervention into Afghanistan (1979-1989), the PDPA literally became the puppet of the USSR. “Given their fulsome praise of every action of the Soviet Union and their claim to carry on the progress of the Great October Revolution” (Magnus and Naby 1998: 104), the PDPA viewed the USSR as a model for modernisation before Afghanistan. Yet, this led them to evaluate the context of Afghanistan, their own country, with Soviet goggles and end up with misinterpretations. Lost in imitating the Soviet way of ‘faster’ modernisation, the PDPA adopted the Soviet way of viewing the *tribal* society of Afghanistan as *feudal*. When the Afghan President Amin referred to Afghanistan in 1979, he was using Soviet terminology: “We are struggling to uproot feudalism in order to pass directly from a feudal society to a society where the exploitation of man by his fellow man will be unknown” (Hafizullah Amin quoted in Roy 1990: 84-85). The reality on the ground, however, was different, as the tribal system and the feudal system represent two different relations of power:

Differing from the feudal relationship between the lord and his vassals which depends on *production*, the tribal relationship between the khan and his tribesmen depends on a system of *distribution*, contingent upon plundering neighbours and sharing the booty. Unlike feudal lords, Pashtun khans did not force their tribesmen to work and produce; but raised an army from them at times of need and distributed war booty and gifts among them. Furthermore, the Pashtun tribal system was of the egalitarian type (Rubin, 2002: 10) where the khan was regarded only as a *primus inter pares* or ‘first among the equals.’ Not having the actual ability to command, the khan had to persuade his tribesmen continually through shows of generosity. (Sungur 2015: 180-81)

That is to say, in a tribal society, we see the tribal khan involved in a different form of power relations with his tribesmen, compared to the feudal lord and his vassals. Tribesmen are more powerful and active in the face of their khan. In a tribal society:

...the large majority of adult males are formally equal, and qualified to participate in politics and violence, entitled and obliged to share the risks of feuds and the benefits of blood money. This is quite unlike feudalism, in which a fairly small warrior stratum monopolises politics and violence. (Gellner 1983: 440)

Therefore, depicting the ‘tribal’ society of Afghanistan as ‘feudal’ where peasants and farmers are oppressed by feudal lords, just like in Russia before the Revolution, was a big misinterpretation.

Furthermore, the Soviets even employed the modern concept of ‘class’ in examining the society of Afghanistan, which was still largely rural, tribal and traditional. “Not even the concept of an ‘Afghan nation’ was fully familiar to Afghans; let alone classes” (Sungur 2015: 181). As Rubin (2002: 86) claims, the weakness of class formation in Afghanistan can be understood from the lack of class-based mass organisations such as peasant associations or trade unions. The main reason was that class was understood in terms of tribe or ethnic group in Afghanistan. That is why “when the peasants acted it was virtually never as members of an economic group, but as members of a *qawm*” (Roy 1990: 92). Workers of Kabul were mainly of Tajik and Hazara origins (Rubin 2002: 101), who were united under ethnic-based parties, such as the *Setam-e Milli* (National Oppression) for the Tajik and the *Shula-e Jawed* (Eternal Flame) for the Hazara. What needs emphasis is that both parties protested *Pashtun* domination of non-Pashtun tribes; and not a *bourgeois* domination of the lower classes. On the other hand, members of the *Khalq* branch of the PDPA, were mostly Ghilzai Pashtuns and Pashtun nationalists. In the Afghan political scene, therefore, political parties were formed based on tribal and ethnic affiliation whereby the Hazara and the Tajik were understood as the working class; the newly-urban Ghilzai Pashtuns amounted to the middle class; and the Durrani Pashtuns, labelled as the royal tribe, represented the upper class.

Explaining the *tribal* society of Afghanistan as *feudal* and imposing the modern concept of ‘class’ upon this tribal society, the Soviets as well as their local puppets, the PDPA, were involved in a great misinterpretation of the case of Afghanistan. It provides a perfect example to the failed imposition of a specific model of modernisation upon a specific context which does not have the grounds to absorb that model. Years later, the Soviets would also admit their own mistakes, as shown by a statement by the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in 1988:

‘We must criticize some aspects of our apparatus’ activity in Afghanistan. It did a lot to help strengthen the PDPA and the national power. But often our people, acting with the best intention, tried to export onto Afghan soil approaches to which we were accustomed, pushed the Afghans into occupying us. This did not help the situation, and it bred a dependent mood among the Afghan leaders of

that time in their relations with the Soviet Union...’ (Robinson and Dixon 2013: 131)

Despite these misinterpretations, the Soviet-ruled PDPA period in Afghanistan still made certain contributions to the modernisation process. First and foremost, this period is known for a policy of gender equality in all the spheres of life, remembered as the brightest period concerning the rights of women in Afghanistan. As Baiza (2013: 143) claims, “[t]his period marked the highest level of female participation in education, and in public and social services, of any historical period to date.” In the early 1980s, women constituted 18.6% of all the state employees; while in 1987 they accounted for 43% of the employees at the ministries of education (Haq 1995: 4, quoted in Baiza 2013: 144). Social visibility of women in the public space peaked in this period with parallel increases in female school enrolment rates.

In the field of education, the PDPA carried the state of modern education in Afghanistan to a point hitherto unknown, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. This period is known as the highest school enrolment rates, both for boys and girls, in the history of Afghanistan. “Indeed the enrolment ratio peaked in 1980 – the culmination of decades of efforts and steady increases” (Giustozzi 2010: 11). Furthermore, the PDPA introduced a policy of providing free and equal opportunities for all regardless of their religion, gender and language. Education in mother tongue was a significant feature of the PDPA era, as the government initiated primary education in five major languages: Persian, Pashto, Uzbeki, Turkmani and Baluchi (Baiza 2013: 143). As Lin (1985: 230, quoted in Baiza 2013: 143) claims, “[t]he promotion of ethnic minorities was seen as a key feature of educational development in this period.”

All these positive developments in education, however, were accompanied by ideological indoctrination by the PDPA, as instructed by the USSR. To institutionalise its ideology, the PDPA formed students’ organisations such as the *Peshahangan* (Pioneers) in primary schools and the *Sazman-e Demokratik-e Jawanan-e Afghanistan* (Democratic Organisation of Afghanistan’s Youth) (Baiza 2013: 148). Such junior organisations were expected to facilitate the recruitment of new PDPA members, while encouraging students to take to the streets and hold demonstrations in support of the government. “The primary interest of the PDPA’s politburo [laid] in influencing the education of the young generation in the classroom

for which they needed to train teachers in accordance with the Party's ideology" (Baiza 2013: 146). Especially in rural areas, teachers were generally disliked by the local people due to their anti-religious teachings. "Children started coming home singing socialist dogma songs and telling their parents that religion was no longer important" (Spink 2005:197), which was something intolerable for the rural Afghans deeply rooted in Islam. What is more, the PDPA, which was constantly in need of recruitment for its army fighting the Mujahedeen, "began the conscription of male graduates of upper secondary schools into the army...[and] approved a new curriculum that added a new subject called patriotic military education" (Baiza 2013: 148). Under the PDPA rule, forced school enrolments and conscriptions caused many Afghans flee the country to keep their children away from the communist curriculum as well as the PDPA army. That is why modern education, while progressing in urban areas, seriously regressed in rural areas which were exposed to the *jihadist* curriculum provided by the resistance groups that were being formed under the banner of the Mujahedeen.

While the PDPA employed state-sponsored education to propagate its own ideology and recruit fighters for its army; the Mujahedeen did the same by initiating a kind of 'resistance' education or *jihadist* training to recruit new members. In the context of the Cold War rivalry, the US took its usual place against the USSR to support the *jihadist* education in Afghanistan, which may sound unbelievable today. The USAID (United States Agency for International Development) partnered with the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) to develop a *jihadist* curriculum for students enrolled at the *madrassas* operated by the Mujahedeen in the countryside, which was "a clear violation of human rights and children's rights for a sound and non-violent education" (Baiza 2013: 150). The university even got involved in the writing and printing of the textbooks which are, today, notoriously remembered as the 'UNO books.' Promoting the Islamic concept of *jihad* as a counter-narrative to communism, the UNO books advocated the anti-Soviet hatred and the love of violence to such an extent that "primary school maths books developed exercises around the number of dead and alive Russians...[and children] learnt division by examples of how to equally divide bullets between [Mujahedeen] commanders" (Spink 2005: 199). Today, it is shocking to see that *jihadist* textbooks were developed by an academic institution in the US, the '*jihad* promoter' of the 1980s, which was to initiate a global

‘war against terror’ in the 2000s. It is even more shocking to think that “...none of the NGOs or the UN agencies criticized these textbooks as long as the Soviet Union’s army was present in Afghanistan” (Baiza 2013: 155).

If we turn to the modernisation efforts of the PDPA, we will see that they clashed with two main social forces in Afghanistan: the *khans* and the *mullahs*, i.e. the tribal society and the *aqidawi* society (a society of creed) led by rural clerics. The Saur Revolution had two main promises: land reform and the abolition of what is called the ‘bride price.’ When the PDPA set out to fulfil these two promises, reaction followed suit:

...[T]he party’s land reform programme, under which land was confiscated from landlords and tribal chiefs and distributed to peasants and farmers who had little or no land, and the introduction of changes in traditions, such as the declaration of the equal rights of men and women, and the abolition of the financial transactions that were usually enacted before marriage, incurred the anger of religious clerics and tribal chiefs. These reform programmes encouraged religious leaders and tribal chiefs to use religious and social influence to inflame public sentiment against the government. (Baiza 2013: 159)

Eventually, the PDPA initiated the persecution and mass killings of religious clerics. As tension climbed, the struggle for power eventually transformed into a war between the PDPA and the conservative forces that joined forces with the *Muqawamant* (Resistance) movement under the banner of the Mujahedeen. As the war proceeded, the Soviets soon understood the impossibility of a *fast* modernisation in Afghanistan, i.e. a direct transition to communism bypassing the stages of capitalism, as the Soviet leader Gorbachev told the Afghan President Karmal in 1985:

‘If you want to survive you’ll have to broaden the base of the regime. Forget socialism, make a deal with the truly influential forces, including the Mujahedin commanders. You’ll have to revive Islam, respect traditions, and try to show the people some tangible benefits from the revolution. And get your army into shape, give raises to officers and *mullahs*. Support private trade, you won’t be able to create a different economy anytime soon.’ (Babrak Karmal quoted in Westad 2005: 368)

After all the wars between the PDPA and the Mujahedeen, the USSR finally withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. Of course, the war between these two local forces was actually part of the Cold War between the US and the USSR, to which we now turn.

4.7. Modernisation Interrupted: Mujahedeen and Taliban (1989-2001)

As stated above, starting from the 1960s, Kabul University became a hot spot for politicisation between two groups: the communists and the Islamists. As the communists were a product of the Soviet influence in Afghanistan; Islamism, or political Islam, entered into this country through the professors of the Faculty of Theology who were educated at the Al-Azhar University in Egypt and influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood. Founding the *Jamiat-e Islami* (Islamic Society), these professors “began translating the works of foreign Islamists [such as Sayyid Qutb and Maududi] and introducing political Islam as a modern ideology” (Mendoza 2008: 14). Led by the Tajik professor Rabbani, this Society recruited from among the student union called the *Sazman-e Jawanan-e Musselman* (Muslim Youth Institute) in which young political figures like Hekmetyar and Massoud were members. It shows that both the founders and members sought to gain political power through these modern organisations:

The origins of the members [were] modern in that they often [came] from urban environments and institutions of modern society, such as secular university faculties of science. The goals of the movement [were] modern in that they [spoke] of Islam-as-ideology (not religion), that [would] compete with modern Western ‘isms’ using modern technology and social organization. (Mendoza 2008: 9)

What is meant by “Islam-as-ideology” can be taken as a specific model of development based on Islam which was expected to encounter the Soviet model of development. The final goal of Afghan Islamists was establishing “not a national Muslim state, but an Islamic state” (Roy 1990: 80) based on the Islamic *shariat*. In other words, “social basis of this state was to be not a nation, but the Muslim *ummah*” (Sungur 2015: 186).

With the Saur Revolution of 1978 and the following Soviet invasion, the PDPA initiated a mass persecution of Islamists along with the *mullahs*. It resulted in the escape of these people to Pakistan where they were welcomed by the Pakistani government due to long-held ambitions for avenging Afghanistan on the Pashtunistan Issue. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Pakistani President, supported, sheltered, trained and even paid the Afghan Islamists in Peshawar which was already a Pashtun-majority city in Pakistan. That was how the Afghan Islamists, the traditional

mullahs and the frontier Pashtun tribes, which were in constant struggle with the PDPA, formed an eclectic network of resistance under the banner of the Mujahedeen.

The ‘Afghan *Jihad*’ offered certain opportunities to a number of regional and international powers including the US, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Each had their own interests in the Afghan *Jihad*, due to the political climate in their own contexts. Iran sought to export its Shia brand of the Islamic revolution to the world; while it was confronted by Saudi Arabia propagating its own Wahhabi ideology of Islam. At the global level, the Afghan *Jihad* against the Soviet Union offered a unique opportunity for the US in the context of the Cold War rivalry. To coordinate all the financial and military assistance to be provided for the Mujahedeen, the US employed Pakistan as a foreign proxy, which was more than ready to snatch the opportunity. That was how all these foreign forces became partners in supporting a transnational Islamic resistance movement that was being formed in the Islamic *madrassas* founded in the Durand Line zone between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As the US carried out a PR campaign in presenting the Mujahedeen to the world as ‘freedom fighters’ struggling against the Soviets, Muslims from all over the world were drawn into Afghanistan where they would be indoctrinated with the Wahhabi ideology at the *madrassas*. Not surprisingly, foundations of the two major global terrorist networks of today, i.e. the Al-Qaeda and the DA’ISH (IS) (Islamic State), were laid during the Afghan *Jihad*.

As shown above, the Mujahedeen was an eclectic organisation; not a stable and centralised one. Until 1985, they fought the Soviets as disparate groups when Pakistan forced them to unite for the sake of foreign aid flowing from the US and Saudi Arabia. That is how seven Mujahedeen groups were united under the banner of ‘Peshawar-Seven’ led by Rabbani and Hekmatyar. Meanwhile in the border with Iran, the Shia Mujahedeen were united under the banner ‘Tehran-Eight’ with the support of Iran. Yet, “the Mujahedeen alliance was rather *situational*, unified against an enemy and dispersed when the enemy was gone” (Sungur 2015: 189):

Other than their hostility to the Russians and the Kabul regime, the resistance groups had little in common, and their record was one of persistent factional dispute. From the beginning, they were as apt to fight each other as to cooperate. Neither their shared Muslim faith nor the concept of *jihad* were strong enough to outweigh their personal, tribal and ethnic antipathies. (Ewans 2002: 216)

The situational Mujahedeen alliance started to crack as the ‘Soviet enemy’ finally withdrew in 1989. From 1989 to 1992, the Mujahedeen negotiated and fought among themselves on deciding who should be the ruler of Afghanistan. This discord resulted mainly from the ethnic and sectarian differences among the several Mujahedeen groups, which is impossible to include here. In brief, the main political actors were; Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Massoud of the *Jamiat-e Islami* (Islamic Society), who were both Tajiks; Gulbiddin Hekmatyar of the *Hezb-e Islami* (Islamic Party), who was a Pashtun; Abdul Rashid Dostum of the *Junbish-e Melli* (National Movement), who was an Uzbek; Abdul Ali Mazari of the *Hezb-e Wahdat* (Unity Party), who was a Hazara; and Sebghatullah Mujaddidi of the *Jabhe-ye Melli Nejat-e Afghanistan* (Afghan National Liberation Front), who was a Pashtun. Despite many disagreements, some of these Mujahedeen groups finally reached a kind of consensus, declaring the Peshawar Accord in 1992. The Accord (1992) legitimised the Mujahedeen to take over the rule of the country from Najibullah, who served as the President after the Soviet withdrawal from 1989 to 1992. It was on April 28, 1992 that the Mujahedeen officially took over the government and established the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

The Peshawar Accord (1992) established a transition government led by President Mujaddidi for two months; and then by President Rabbani for six months. As for other offices, the Accord (1992) assigned different Ministries to different Mujahedeen groups, such as the Prime Ministership to the *Hezb-e Islami*; the Ministry of Defence to the *Jamiat-e-Islami*; the Ministry of Interior to the *Ittehad-e Islami* and so on. In other words, the Peshawar Accord (1992) distributed political power, just like war booty, among different Mujahedeen groups, without holding any elections or whatsoever. Since such political power had no stable legitimacy, it kept reproducing endless discords among the Mujahedeen, whereby Afghanistan finally plunged into total civil war.

Under the reign of the Mujahedeen (1992-1996), Afghanistan was divided into Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek controlled territories which were ruled by their respective leaders. In other words, Afghanistan turned back to the 19th century before its establishment as buffer state. The Tajik commander Massoud ruled the north-eastern province of Badakhshan and Panjshir; the Uzbek General Dostum ruled the

north including Faryab and Jowzjan; Ismail Khan controlled the west including Herat and Farah; while Kabul became a battleground among different Mujahedeen groups.

The disintegration seen in the political arena was also reflected in all the spheres of life, including education. There was no unified system of education left, as each Mujahedeen group followed its own education policy. Female education, for instance, was totally at the mercy of the Mujahedeen commanders some of whom allowed it while some others completely banned it. Where all of them merged was the policy of 'Islamising education.' Yet, there was no clear strategy for that:

All that the state knew lay behind Islamization of education was the discontinuity of the previous education policies and programmes because of their 'non-Islamic' contents, writing of new textbooks in which Islam and Islamic ideas would be given prominence, and separation of boys and girls, particularly at secondary and tertiary levels. (Baiza 2013: 172)

Under the pretext of Islamising education, books of modern education were burnt while schools were turned into *madrassas* or totally destroyed especially in cities. Rural areas remained relatively more peaceful, where school enrolment fared better. Yet, what was taught at schools were, still, the *jihad*-promoting UNO textbooks.

Eventually, the Mujahedeen lost all the legitimacy they had in the eyes of the Afghan people who looked forward to a powerful force that could bring back order and peace. It was under such grim conditions that the Taliban, literally meaning the Students, emerged. Being a group of *madrassa* students trained with the *jihadist* curriculum promoted by the US at the Pakistani *madrassas* in the 1980s, the Taliban movement, officially called the *Tahrek-e Islami Taliban-e Afghanistan* (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan's Taliban), was a product of the Afghan *Jihad*. Founded in Kandahar in 1994 by *Mullah Omar*, the Taliban turned out to be the 'saviour' which was, originally, welcomed by the Afghan public due to the exhaustion of war, insecurity and disorder under the Mujahedeen rule. That was why the Taliban were able to take the entire Afghanistan under control by 1996 and establish the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Indoctrinated with the Wahhabi ideology due to the Saudi influences at the *madrassas*, the Taliban sought to establish a purely Islamic state in Afghanistan. Their ideology was a mixture of a very strict interpretation of the Islamic *shariat* of the Sunni sect and the *Pashtunwali*, the Pashtun tribal conduct. Their hard-core

Sunni extremism resulted in their persecution and massacre of the Shia Hazaras. They were intolerant and violent towards non-Muslim people and non-Islamic artefacts such as the giant Buddha statues in Bamiyan which they destroyed in 2001. Reign of the Taliban is known as the darkest period in the history of Afghanistan where the entire economic infrastructure was destructed and basic human needs such as water, food and housing were in short supply.

The Taliban era was a most difficult period especially for Afghan women who were banned from all social life including education, let alone working. The Taliban set up Islamic codes of public behaviour and dressing especially for women and in relation to women; while they asked men to grow untrimmed beards. Monitoring men and women's behaviour in public, the Taliban applied corporal punishment in public to those who disobeyed their codes. Some of their extremist legal codes were killing the convicts in stadiums among the public; amputating hands of the thieves; punishing adultery in the most violent ways like *rajm* (stoning to death); prohibiting the shaving of beards, etc. On the other hand, they were involved in many un-Islamic activities such as cultivating poppy, trafficking drugs, smuggling weapons and sexually exploiting children.

The Taliban rule brought an end to all the progress that had been made in modern education in almost a century since the 1900s. Themselves being the products of the *madrassas*, the Taliban followed the *madrassa* system in education. They turned boys' schools to *madrassas* while closing down all the female schools and reducing female education to only three years at the primary level. They established *madrassas* in each region they took, which served as a source of income thanks to the funding coming from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries (Baiza 2013: 178).

We also need to remember that the *jihadist* UNO textbooks were still at use during the Taliban rule. When we imagine the Afghan youth being educated with a *jihadist* curriculum in a period of around 20 years from the 1980s until 2001, it is not very hard to explain the legacy of violence in this country. As Spink (2005:204) warns, "once an ideology has been instilled in the minds of the youth, it cannot be simply 'switched off' when the war ends." This is the story of how education in Afghanistan became a contributor to violence rather than to peace.

No matter how much Afghan people suffered in this period, the Taliban did not draw much attention from the world until they gave shelter to the Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden who bombed the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es Salaam in 1998. Their rejection of submitting bin Laden to the US even after the Al-Qaeda attacks of the 9/11 caused the US to declare Taliban as a harbourer of global terrorism. That was how the US, along with the UK, invaded Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 and toppled the Taliban regime shortly after, with the cooperation of the Afghan Northern Alliance which was originally formed by Ahmad Shah Massoud and Abdul Rashid Dostum.

4.8. Modernisation under Foreign Intervention: US (NATO) in Afghanistan (2001-)

After the toppling of the Taliban in November 2001, the UN invited the most important stake-holders in the Afghan political scene, who were basically warlords, to the Bonn Conference to discuss the future of Afghanistan. Although such ‘making of warlords into bureaucrats’ was criticised, the post-war conditions in Afghanistan, where the modern state structure had collapsed, obliged the UN to follow a ‘big tent’ strategy in order to incorporate, rather than alienate, the warlords who had the potential of disrupting the state-building process (Mukhopadhyay 2014: 26). At the end of this conference, the Bonn Agreement was signed on December 5, 2001, which laid the foundations for re-building the state of Afghanistan with UN support.

In accordance with the Bonn Agreement; an Emergency *Loya Jirga* was held in June 2002, which elected Hamid Karzai as the President of Afghanistan Transitional Authority; a Constitutional *Loya Jirga* was held in 2004, which approved the Constitution of 2004 and declared Afghanistan an Islamic Republic; the Parliament, or the *Shura-ye Melli*, was inaugurated in 2005 along with the government ministries which amount to 25 today. In other words, the most basic steps required for the operation of a modern political system were complete. Since that time, four presidential elections (2004; 2009; 2014; 2019) have been held every five years. Karzai turned out to be the winner of the 2004 and 2009 elections, while in the 2014 elections Ashraf Ghani became the President, signing a power-sharing agreement with Abdullah Abdullah who was appointed as the Chief Executive. The results of the 2019 elections are not declared, yet. Meanwhile, three parliamentary elections

(2005; 2010; 2018) have been held, the final one with a delay of three years. Yet, all these elections have been held with low voter turnouts, electoral frauds, manipulations and security threats from the Taliban which has recovered in time.

In the context of the Bonn Agreement, the UN Security Council approved the deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan under the coalition of 40 countries to maintain security and train the Afghan military. The ISAF operated in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014 when its combat operations were officially ended by the NATO and the full responsibility of security was transferred to the state of Afghanistan. On the same day, the NATO formed the Operation Resolute Support as a successor to ISAF, to remain in this country in an advisory capacity of counter-terrorism while training the Afghan military.

With the collapse of their regime in 2001, the Taliban had escaped to Pakistan and to the Durand Line zone where they grew strong again and started fighting back the ISAF and the Afghan armed forces, while taking back territory under control. As of 2019, the Taliban controls more territory than ever since the toppling of their regime 18 years ago, as seen in Figures 10 and 11.

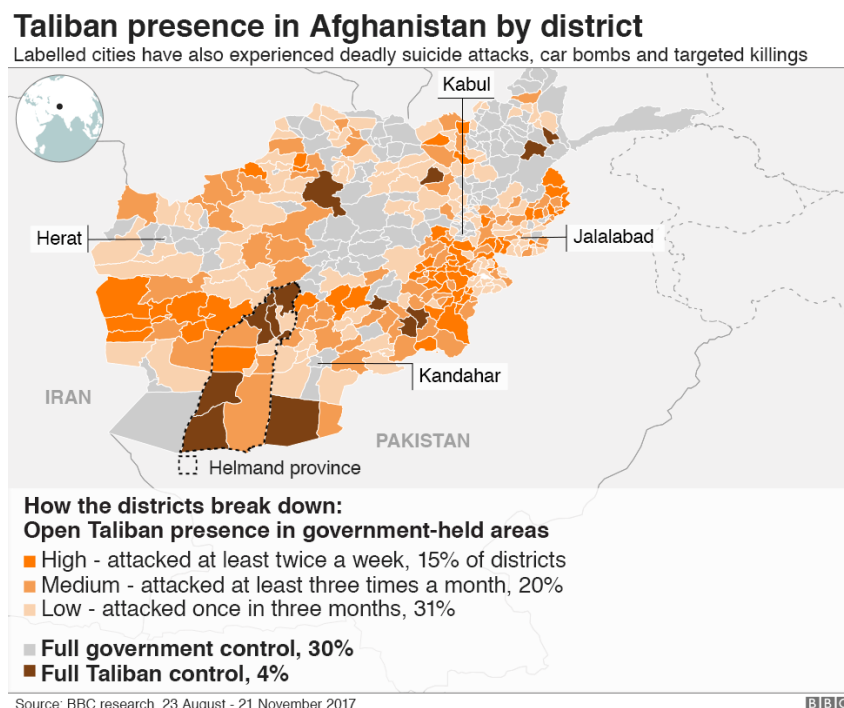


Figure 10. Taliban Presence by District (BBC)²³

²³ Source: [<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45507560>]

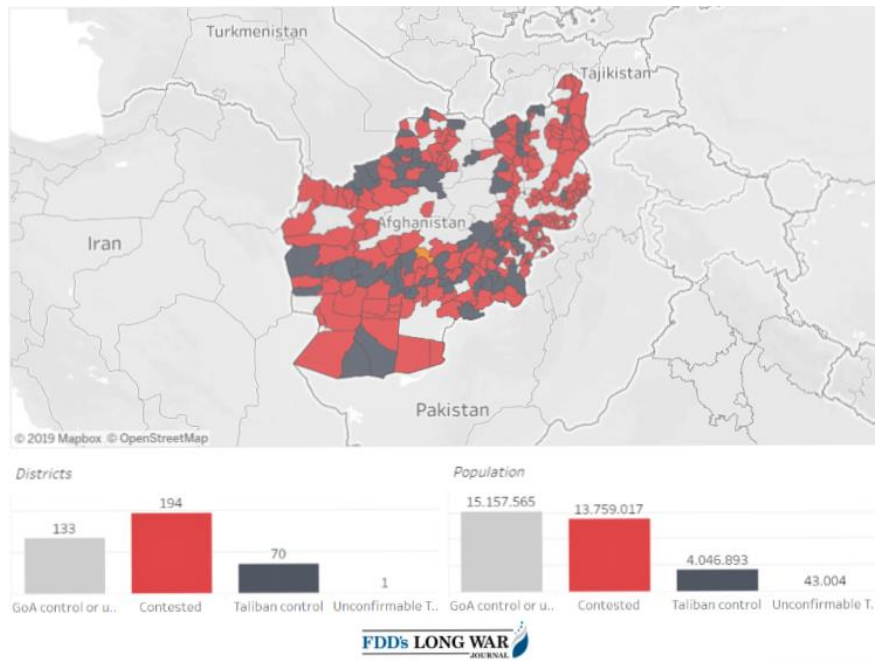


Figure 11. Taliban Presence by District (Long War Journal)²⁴

According to the BBC research dated November 2017, the Afghan state has full control only in 30% of Afghanistan; while the Taliban has full control in 4%. In the remaining 66%, there is an ongoing struggle for power between the state and the Taliban. According to the data provided by the *Long War Journal* as of October 2019, the Afghan state has full control in 133 districts (33% of Afghanistan); while the Taliban controls 70 districts (18% of Afghanistan); and the remaining 194 districts (49% of Afghanistan) are contested. All these data are clear indications of the weakness of the state of Afghanistan in the almost 20-year period since its re-formation. How far this state may build itself and its nation in a country where it does not have full control remains a difficult question. Thus, it will be underlined again and again throughout this thesis that the process of nation-building that is carried out by the state of Afghanistan may have an influence only within the limits of its power across the country.

After the toppling of the Taliban in 2001, modern education started to recover with the early initiatives of the international community deployed in Afghanistan. In 2002, UNICEF initiated a Back to School Campaign which led to a nation-wide movement back to schools by millions of students including the refugees returning from Pakistan and Iran as well as the female students who had been away from schools for

²⁴ Source: [<https://www.longwarjournal.org/mapping-taliban-control-in-afghanistan>]

almost a decade. With this Campaign, school enrolment has increased from only 1 million students, almost all of whom were boys, in 2001 to 9.3 million students 37.9% of which are girls (Ministry of Education 2017) in 2017. Yet, as children started returning to schools, the poor state of modern education emerged as a challenging issue.

First and foremost, the legal framework for re-enabling the operation of the modern education system was established with the ratifications of; the Curriculum Framework in 2003; the Constitution in 2004; and the Education Law in 2008, which constitute the three official primary resources for this thesis. Second, the institutional structure required for the operation of the modern education system was re-enabled through the operation of two ministries: the Ministry of Education responsible for the General Education of 12 years and the Ministry of Higher Education responsible for university education. Third, the physical structure required for the operation of the modern education system, i.e. the schools, came up as an emergency issue, as many of the school buildings were destroyed due to long years of war. Since that time, many school buildings have been repaired; however, holding classes outside or in tents is still a part of everyday life especially in rural Afghanistan. Fourth, the human resources required for the operation of a modern education system, i.e. the teachers, came up as another emergency issue to be dealt with. As the supply of teachers was a major problem, generating qualified teachers out of a teacher training programme was accepted as a priority. And finally, the education materials required for the operation of the modern education system, i.e. the curriculum and textbooks, came up as another issue. With the Back to School campaign, millions of children were running back to schools, however, “little attention was given to what the children were returning to” (Spink 2005: 200). The content of the curriculum, or the textbooks in general, were in a state of a chaos, whereby militant Islamic ideas existed side by side with the communist ideology of the PDPA government (Spink 2005: 199). Consequently, the curriculum reform and textbook development programme started under the leadership of UNESCO in 2002, which was completed in 2010 (Baiza 2013: 202). As of 2019, the Ministry of Education lists some of the key challenges before education as follows:

- Approximately 42% or five million of the estimated 12 million school-aged children and youth do not have access to education;

- Over 5000 schools are without usable buildings, boundary walls, safe drinking water or sanitation facilities;
- Long walking distances to school and lack of safe/proper learning environments are major impediment toward female participation in schooling;
- No female students enrolled in grades 10-12 in 200 of 412 urban and rural districts;
- 245 out of 412 urban and rural districts do not have a single qualified female teacher;
- Some 11 million adults remain illiterate.
- 73% of teachers lack the minimum required qualification of grade 14 graduation. (Official Web Page of the Ministry of Education)

Giustozzi (2010: 3) argues that “the fate of education in Afghanistan can be taken as an indicator of the state of nation-building in the country.” With this claim, he gets closer to the Gellnerian approach to nation-state which emerges only when a fully-operating national education system takes every single inhabitant of a country under the same standard system of state-sponsored education and forms a universe of students and graduates, which, then, equals the size of a nation-state. In Afghanistan, however, we do not see a state that is in full control across the country, due to the increasing presence of the Taliban in various regions where public education facilities are very limited or non-existent. In consequence, what the Afghan state builds up as a modern education system fails to diffuse into the whole country and form a nation-state in the Gellnerian sense. Still, the Afghan state does have a policy of nation-building through education, as it is evident in its policy documents. We need to remember, however, that this policy may work out only as far as the state is able to extend its power.

4.9. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has been designed to play the role of a bridge between the methodological and theoretical chapters and the data analysis chapters. To this end, it has been an effort to read the history of Afghanistan since 1879 as a journey of modernisation. Following a general contextual information on Afghanistan, the chapter has presented the history of its establishment as a buffer state between British India and Russian Empire. In the remaining part, the chapter has undertaken the examination of the history of Afghanistan under five distinct periods.

The first 50-year period between 1879 and 1929 was marked by three important Amirs from the Muhammadzai Dynasty: Abdurrahman (1880-1901), Habibullah

(1901-1919) and Amanullah (1919-1929). As the fluid territory of the Emirate of Afghanistan became a British protected state in 1879, Amir Abdurrahman started to consolidate his power with the help of British subsidies, by taking all the disparate local rulers living in his territory under his sole authority. His reign may be considered as the first systematic effort of state centralisation in the face of tribes, through modern reforms such as compulsory conscription into the regular army as well as taxation of his subjects. Inheriting a pacified state from his father and still equipped with British subsidies, Amir Habibullah went on with modernising reforms especially in the field of education. It was through the establishment of the first modern schools like the Habibiyya College as well as the publication of the first modern journal, the *Siraj al-Akhbar-e Afghaniyah* (The Lamp of the News of Afghanness) by Mahmud Tarzi, the mastermind of modernisation, that the modernisation process gained momentum in Afghanistan. It was under the reign of Amir Amanullah, known as the most reformist king of Afghanistan, that this process peaked. Declaring his independence from the British as soon as he achieved power, Amir Amanullah was the king who brought full independence to Afghanistan in 1919 and who proclaimed the Kingdom of Afghanistan in 1926. Making reforms in many areas such as law, the military, education and family issues, Amanullah enacted the first modern Constitution of Afghanistan, the *Nizamnama* in 1923. He also established many modern schools operated by the French, the German, the British as well as the Turkish. The major problem with his wide reform programme, however, was its economic weakness. Rather than developing a sound economic basis that would grow strong with industrialisation, Amanullah focused on cosmetic reforms such as European dressing, etc. As the Afghan state no longer received the British subsidies since independence in 1919, Amanullah failed in sustaining his power in the face of growing reaction from the tribal, religious and conservative factions in the country. His dethronement in 1929 started another period in the history of Afghanistan.

The next 50-year period between 1929 and 1979 was marked by the Musahiban Dynasty under Nadir Shah (1929-1933) and Zahir Shah (1933-1973) as well as the Presidency of Daoud Khan (1973-1978) followed by the Saur Revolution in 1978. The Musahiban rule constituted a dissociation from Amanullah's revolutionary reformist programme, as the country was taken into a slower pace of modernisation.

Still, the accession of Afghanistan into the United Nations in 1946 brought forth certain obligations like female education. Furthermore, there was more focus on economic development through industrialisation whereby factories like cotton, sugar, textile and cement were established. The Cold War rivalry also provided good opportunities as Afghanistan received foreign aid from various countries. Especially the Soviet Union became the main partner of Afghanistan in industrialisation, undertaking big infrastructure projects and introducing 5-year economic plans. The process was, however, accompanied by the infiltration of the Soviet ideologies of socialism and communism into all levels of the state, the army as well as the institutions of education including the newly-established Kabul University. As the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was established, the former PM Daoud Khan cooperated with the PDPA in realising a coup d'état in 1973, which put an end to the Afghan Monarchy under Zahir Shah and declared Daoud Khan as the first President of the Republic of Afghanistan. Yet, Daoud's purge of the PDPA in the aftermath of the coup caused the latter to turn against him. That was how the PDPA undertook the Saur Revolution in 1978. This period ends with the PDPA's invitation to the Soviet Union to help them sustain power in Afghanistan, which meant the start of the Soviet occupation in 1979.

The 10-year period between 1979 and 1989 was marked by the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan whereby the PDPA acted as the puppet of the USSR. Intent on bringing the Soviet-style 'faster' modernisation into Afghanistan, the PDPA as well as the USSR committed the mistake of viewing the society of Afghanistan in the same way as the Soviet society. They were involved in many misinterpretations like labelling the *tribal* society of Afghanistan as *feudal* and introducing the concept of *class* into this tribal society where classes were viewed in terms of tribes. Still, the Soviet-ruled PDPA period in Afghanistan made certain contributions to the modernisation process, including land reform, education, gender equality, etc. Yet, the enforcement of reforms especially in the countryside brought the PDPA face to face with the tribal, religious and conservative factions which started to organise among themselves under the banner of the Mujahedeen. This group was highly eclectic, feeding upon the modern ideology of Islamism born at the Kabul University and merging with the *mullahs* and religious people persecuted by the PDPA. That is why this period was marked by military as well as ideological conflict between the PDPA,

representing communism, and the Mujahedeen, representing Islamism. As the first was supported by the USSR; the latter was supported by the US. That is how Afghanistan became a battleground of the larger Cold War rivalry between the USSR and the US. The military war came to an end with Soviet withdrawal in 1989; yet, its legacy was to remain for long in Afghanistan.

The next almost 10-year period between 1989 and 2001 was marked by the rule of President Najibullah (1989-1992), the Mujahedeen (1992-1996) and the Taliban (1996-2001). Being an eclectic organisation formed with the specific goal of beating the Soviets, the Mujahedeen failed to establish a stable government. Due to their ethnic and sectarian differences, they negotiated for a long time until 1992 when the Peshawar Accord officially established the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Yet, their way of government quickly made it clear that they would take Afghanistan back to the 19th century before its establishment as a buffer state. They distributed the Ministries, just like war booty, among different Mujahedeen groups, without holding any elections. The country was divided into Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek controlled territories which were ruled by their respective leaders. This kind of tribal government kept reproducing endless discords whereby Afghanistan finally plunged into civil war. Due to all the chaos and disorder, they lost all their legitimacy, as people found remedy in the Taliban which originated from among the *madrassa* students trained in the 1980s. Establishing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the Taliban implemented of a very strict interpretation of the Islamic *sharia* fused with the Wahhabi ideology as well as the *Pashtunwali*, the Pashtun tribal conduct. The reign of the Taliban is known as the darkest period in the history of modern Afghanistan where all the infrastructure and economy was destructed. Even basic human needs such as water, food and housing were in short supply. In brief, the Taliban rule brought an end to all the progress that had been achieved in Afghanistan until that time in terms of modernisation. Yet, it was not the agony of the people of Afghanistan that drew the world's attention; but their harbouring of the Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in the aftermath of 9/11 that the US, along with the UK, invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 and toppled the Taliban regime.

In the final 20-year period from 2001 until today, we see a rebuilding and restructuring process initiated in Afghanistan under the auspices of the UN with the Bonn Agreement signed on December 5, 2001. In that frame, the International

Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established to under the coalition of 40 countries to maintain security and train the Afghan military. The ISAF ended its combat operations in 2014 and transferred the full responsibility of security to the state of Afghanistan. Since then, the NATO remains in this country in an advisory capacity of counter-terrorism and help with the trainings. It is not only in the military field that we see a foreign-assisted restructuring process but in all the other fields. The state structure has been revived with all its ministries and institutions. Political elections have been held, no matter how dubious they were. Meanwhile, however, the Taliban has gathered strength and returned to claim territory. It has been in a constant war with the state of Afghanistan as well as the NATO. Presently, it controls more territory than ever since their toppling 18 years ago.

It is believed that the contextual and historical information provided in this chapter have prepared the grounds for examining the discourse of nation-building in today's Afghanistan. As we reach the end of this chapter, we are ready to initiate our examination of the conceptualisation of nation in Afghanistan as it is revealed in the discourse of education defined within the limits of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT EDUCATION BUILDS IN AFGHANISTAN: SYMBOLS & MEMORY OF NATION

5.1. Introduction

The preceding chapters on methodology, theoretical framework and historical background have helped lay the foundations of this thesis. Now is the time to start the analysis of the data collected from the discourse of education in Afghanistan which is defined, in this thesis, on the basis of three primary resources: official documents, school textbooks and expert interviews. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will be presenting the specific themes that have been derived from the discourse of education, which together make up the content of the idea of nation in Afghanistan. As it is best to start from the most visible and concrete symbols, this chapter begins with examining how the national symbols, or just ‘symbols’ as they are called in the interviews, and the conceptualisation of national history, or ‘common history’ as it is called in the interviews, emerge in the discourse of education. After all, it is the symbols and memory which primarily help concretise all the abstract ideas surrounding the concept of nation.

National symbols are, generally, concrete items that carry certain specific meanings; such as a nationally meaningful piece of cloth, i.e. the national flag; a nationally meaningful song, i.e. the national anthem; and nationally meaningful people, i.e. national heroes. Some countries may have several different national symbols; while others may have only a few. Still, there are some very basic national symbols which are common to almost all countries in the world, as required by the globally-imposed model of nation-state. This model comes with a national flag and a national anthem, at least, which are required of all the countries in order to be distinguished and representable worldwide. In other words, it is through these national symbols that countries are distinguished as members of the United Nations. As the nation-state model originated in Europe, so did its symbols, according to Hobsbawm (1983: 266):

Most European states, as well as the American republics...had capitals, flags, national anthems, military uniforms and similar paraphernalia, based largely on the model of the British, whose national anthem (datable c. 1740) is probably the first, and of the French, whose tricolour flag was very generally imitated.

Indeed, national anthems of different countries follow a similar pattern in terms of lyrics and music, as they give similar feelings of glory, pride and patriotism. Generally, they are played by an orchestra of Western musical instruments and sung by a serious chorus, as is the case with the national anthem of Afghanistan. As for national flags, a great majority of countries use tricolour flags of either horizontal or vertical lines. The national flag of Afghanistan is also a tricolour with the national emblem sealed on it.

About the function of national symbols, Firth (quoted in Hobsbawm 1983: 11) refers to an official Indian government commentary as follows:

The National Flag, the National Anthem and the National Emblem are the three symbols through which an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty, and as such they command instantaneous respect and loyalty. In themselves they reflect the entire background, thought and culture of a nation.

In other words, national symbols are the signs through which an independent country establishes; (1) its sovereignty as a recognised state in the world; (2) its specific identity and culture; and (3) its historical background. A national flag and a national emblem may include figures and colours that represent the most precious values of a country; while a national anthem may tell the history of a country in music. That is why they command instant respect from nationals as well as foreigners. It is a matter of mutual respect in the international arena, as well, since everybody is expected to respect the national flag and national anthem of all the countries.

Turning back to Afghanistan, we see three major national symbols emerging from the discourse of education: (1) national flag (including the national insignia); (2) national anthem; and (3) national heroes. The order given here reflects the strength of a symbol whereby the national flag emerges as the strongest national symbol, which is followed by the national anthem although it appears as a more controversial symbol. These two appear as the two major national symbols in the primary resources, which are legalised through the Constitution; presented in the textbooks and discussed in the interviews. National heroes, on the other hand, are only presented in the textbooks of Patriotism which have been at use in schools only in the

last couple of years. In other words, it is a newer theme among the national symbols. What needs to be underlined here in relation to the national symbols of Afghanistan is that they are the symbols of an Islamic republic. Inevitably, they are heavily equipped with Islamic elements which will be all explained in further details in the following chapters.

Besides national symbols, we also see national memory as an important element in the conceptualisation of nation. History-writing is an important part of the nation-building process in which the state is the main actor. The state develops a coherent discourse of history which includes and excludes certain historical facts, while *inventing* certain others. In other words, the state constructs a national history in line with its foundational ideology as well as national interests. As discussed in Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework, both Gellner and Hobsbawm claim that a nation always has an *ancient* history because it has to present itself as an ancient nation with an established background:

We should not be misled by a curious, but understandable, paradox: modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so ‘natural’ as to require no definition other than self-assertion. (Hobsbawm 1983: 14)

In other words, it is in the nature of being a nation to have an ancient history. History-making for the sake of nation-building requires mixing certain historical facts with certain invented components:

Whatever the historic or other continuities embedded in the modern concept of ‘France’ and ‘the French’ – and which nobody would seek to deny – these very concepts themselves must include a constructed or ‘invented’ component. (Hobsbawm 1983: 76)

That is how the memory of a nation is constructed. Of course, it is not within the scope of this thesis to show which of the historical data presented in the textbooks used in Afghanistan are facts and which are inventions. Instead, we will be limited to examining how the textbooks of History, in their entirety, construct the memory of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ (*millat-e Afghanistan*). In this examination, a number of important sub-themes will be derived from the discourse of the History textbooks, which will be revealing the major historical features of the nation of Afghanistan.

5.2. National Flag (*Bayraq-e Milli*)

National flag of Afghanistan is a charged vertical tricolour triband flag, meaning that it is made up of three vertical stripes of three different colours and ‘charged’ with a figure that is the national insignia (see Figure 12). In other words, the national flag of Afghanistan includes the national insignia of Afghanistan at the same time. Both of these symbols are legally based in the Constitution of 2004 which includes a specific article giving a detailed description of both:

Article Nineteen: The flag of Afghanistan shall be made up of three equal parts, with black, red and green colors juxtaposed from left to right vertically. The width of every color shall be half of its length, and at the center of which the national insignia shall be located. The national insignia of Afghanistan shall be comprised of an emblem and a pulpit in white color—at the two corners of which are two flags, inscribed in the top middle the holy phrase “There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his Prophet, and Allah is Great.” This shall be inscribed and superseded on rays of a rising sun, and in its lower part, the year 1919 in the solar [*hijri*] calendar, and the word “Afghanistan” encircled on two sides by sheaves of wheat shall be inscribed. The law shall regulate the use of the flag and insignia.



Figure 12. National Flag and National Insignia of Afghanistan

It is not only the Constitution that describes the national flag in such details. All textbooks start with a specific page, right after the hard cover, displaying the national flag together with the national anthem (see Figure 12). That page comes by default in all the textbooks, showing the importance of both as the very first national symbols that students encounter as they open their textbooks.

As we look closer into the content of the textbooks, we see a specific chapter in 4-SS (Grade 4 – Social Studies) titled “Our Homeland” which has an immediate subsection titled “National Flag.” That is to say, national flag is presented as the primary feature of the homeland of Afghanistan. What needs to be underlined here is that

national flag is presented as an attribute of the homeland, *watan*, and not the state. In none of the chapters on the state of Afghanistan presented in the textbooks of Civic Education do we encounter the national flag. Examination of other themes in the next two chapters, such as 7.5. *Watan* (Homeland), also reveals that there is a general pattern of presenting the national flag not as a part of the official institution of the state; but as a part of the homeland. It is one of the earliest points implying an absence of the state in relation to the symbols, concepts and elements of nation, as to be shown in Chapter 8 Discussion.

As the section on the National Flag in 4-SS follows up, we see a detailed description of the flag, including the meaning of its three colours which are black, red and green:

These colours have *specific meanings* in the history of the country. Black represents the black and *dark colonialism* of the interveners into our homeland. Red represents the *blood of the martyrs* on the way to freedom and independence. Green on the national flag of Afghanistan represents *prosperity* while it is a noteworthy colour in Afghanistan and the whole *world of Islam*, which is greatly valued by people. (4-SS: 43) (italics mine)

We see in the colours of the national flag of Afghanistan: (1) a history of colonialism and intervention; (2) sacrifices made by martyrs on the way to independence; (3) prosperity and Islam. It also shows a movement on the line of history from the past to the future; advancing from darkness to blood and then to prosperity with Islam.

As for the national insignia, 4-SS (43-44) repeats the description provided by the Constitution and then adds: “The pulpit [*minbar*] and the altar [*mihrab*] are indicators of being Muslim and the sheaves of wheat represent being an agricultural country.” In other words, these figures depict a Muslim country which is, at the same time, an agricultural country. Although not included in this description, the rising sun at the top of the gate is a reference to the older name of the lands of today’s Afghanistan, which is “Khorasan” meaning the rising sun. And the year 1919, which is written on the flag as “1298” according to the Solar Hijri (SH) Calendar, is the year when Afghanistan achieved full independence from the British.

All the descriptions above present both national symbols as heavily equipped with Islamic elements. In terms of colours, we see the colour green on the national flag as the symbol of Islam. In terms of the figures on the national insignia, we first see a gate which has the architectural style of an Asian building. The two flags placed in both sides of the gate imply that this is the gate of the homeland of Afghanistan (see

7.5. *Watan*). Inside this gate, we see a pulpit and an altar, which looks like the interior of a mosque. Such depiction shows the centrality of Islam inside the homeland of Afghanistan. This idea is also supported through the Arabic inscriptions seen at the top of the gate: the Arabic expression *Allahu Akbar* (God is the greatest) topped by the Islamic *shahada*, or testimony, which states: “There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is His Prophet.” Such inscription as well as depiction gives the impression that this is the national flag and national insignia of a Muslim country.

Following the physical description of the national flag, 4-SS explains why the national flag is important in a sub-section titled “Importance of the National Flag:”

(1) National flag is a symbol of *honour and unity*. (2) National flag represents the *history* of the country. (3) National flag is a symbol of *freedom and independence* of the country. Therefore, national flag of the country is *respected* and we must guard it just *like our ancestors* who protected it *as the apple of their eye*. (4-SS: 44) (italics mine)

As we see, national flag is described through the metaphor of the “apple of the eye” which is one of the most delicate and vital parts of the human body. Another impression given here is that there is a tradition of respecting and protecting the national flag since the era of the ancestors, which is something that should be maintained by today’s youth. The reason is that national flag represents the honour, unity, history, freedom and independence of Afghanistan. If we examine this statement further, we will see the national flag as something carried in hands during the wars of liberation. That is why it represents freedom and independence, which has initiated the history of an independent Afghanistan. Furthermore, national flag has acted as a symbol under which people of Afghanistan unified and fought their enemies; thus, it is a symbol of national unity, too. And finally, having all these meanings, national flag is a symbol of the honour of Afghanistan, which is explained by one of my respondents as follows:

EXPERT-2: There have been cricket matches and taekwondo when an Afghan won a medal. It was two Olympics before this one, I think. When you see the *flag of Afghanistan raised, you feel proud and you associate yourself with the flag and say to yourself, this man is my representative...* When I feel a sense of belonging to the flag, that is *national identity*, because the *flag belongs to this country*. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-2 gives a detailed description of the “sense of belonging to the flag” which ‘proves’ the existence of national identity in a person. When does that sense

come to life? In specific situations where the national flag makes that person proud. The feeling of pride, then, increases the level of association with the national flag, which, in return, increases the level of association with one's country. Furthermore, national flag makes its carrier a "representative" of the members of the country. In this way, it functions as a symbol tying the people of a country to one another. In this quotation, EXPERT-2 explains how he experienced this process personally. Contrary to the general claim (which will be revealed in other themes) that the idea of nation finds more buyers among Pashtuns, EXPERT-2 is not a Pashtun but a Hazara. This is an important indicator of the strength of national flag as a relatively more commonly accepted national symbol in Afghanistan. We may see this idea confirmed in two of my other respondents who are also non-Pashtuns:

EXPERT-5: We have the tricolour flag. Each *mazhab* [religion/sect] and each *milliyat* [*qawm*] *accepts it*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-8: Look at the national flag; *nobody objects* to our flag because its colours *belong to everybody*. (italics mine)

Both of these respondents underline the general acceptance of the national flag in Afghanistan. The only difference between them is that EXPERT-5, who is a female Qizilbash, describes this acceptance on a group basis – *mazhab* and *qawm* – while EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, describes this acceptance on an individual basis by "everybody." At the end of the day, national flag (as well as the national insignia on it) emerges as one of the rare symbols that are commonly accepted by the people of Afghanistan, as its signs and colours are believed to represent everybody or every *qawm*. One final respondent also confirms it specifically in the field of education:

EXPERT-4: ...national anthem and national flag which are the *symbols* that *students should respect*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-4, who is a male Hazara, once again, underlines the importance of these two national symbols as things to be respected by students. That is why all textbooks have a specific page at the very beginning displaying both of the national symbols.

5.3. National Anthem (*Milli Sorud*)

The current national anthem of Afghanistan, which is titled as *Milli Sorud* (National Anthem) in Pashto language, has been at use since 2006. This new national anthem is legally based on the Constitution of 2004 which includes a specific article on it:

Article Twenty: The national anthem of Afghanistan shall be in Pashto with the mention of “God is Great” as well as the names of the tribes [*aqwam*] of Afghanistan.

This article defines the three main features of the national anthem: (1) its language, which is to be Pashto, one of the two official languages of Afghanistan along with Dari; (2) inclusion of the Islamic expression *Allahu Akbar*; and (3) inclusion of the names of the *aqwam* of Afghanistan. Although this article does not state clearly which *aqwam* are to be mentioned, the national anthem includes the names of the fourteen *aqwam* that are recognised in Article Four of the same Constitution (see 7.3. *Qawm*). Based on the detailed description of the Constitution, the new national anthem of Afghanistan was written by Abdul Bari Jahani and composed by the German-Afghan composer Babrak Wassa. Figure 13 below displays the very first page of all textbooks presenting the national flag and the national anthem, on the right of which may be seen the English translation of the anthem.



سرود ملی

دا عزت د هر افغان دی	دا وطن افغانستان دی
هر بچی یې قهرمان دی	کور د سولې کور د تورې
د بلوڅو د ازبکو	دا وطن د ټولو کور دی
د ترکمنو د تاجکو	د پښتون او هزاره وو
پامیریان، نورستانیان	ورسره عرب، گوجر دي
هم ایماق، هم پشه پان	براهوي دي، قزلباش دي
لکه لمر پر شنه آسمان	دا هیواد به تل ځلیري
لکه زره وي جاویدان	په سینه کې د آسیا به
وايو الله اکبر وايو الله اکبر	نوم د حق مودی رهبر

NATIONAL ANTHEM

*This homeland is Afghanistan.
It is the honour of every Afghan.
The land of peace, the land of the sword,
Each of its sons are heroes.
This homeland is the home of all:
The Baluch and the Uzbek and
The Pashtun and the Hazara and
The Turkmen and the Tajik and
With them are the Arab and the Gojar,
The Pamiris, the Nuristanis,
The Brahui and the Qizilbash,
Also the Aimaq, also the Pashais.
This country will shine for ever,
Like the sun in the blue sky.
In the chest of Asia,
It will remain as its heart forever.
Our leader is al-Haqq (God).
We say “Allah is the greatest,”
We say “Allah is the greatest,”
We say “Allah is the greatest.”*

Figure 13. First Page of All Textbooks

What needs emphasis here is that we do not see a specific chapter or a section or even a paragraph in the textbooks on the national anthem, differing from the national flag. In other words, the discourse of education defined within the limits of this thesis does not present an explanation about the content of the national anthem to the students. Yet, the text of the national anthem reveals significant conceptualisations that provide important data for our examination. Therefore, an explanation about its content will be presented below, based on my own interpretations of it.

National anthem of Afghanistan includes two main descriptions of: (1) the *watan*, or the homeland and (2) the *aqwam* living in this homeland. It begins with a clear statement, “this homeland is Afghanistan,” which gives the impression that it will be a description of the homeland. Its primary description of Afghanistan is as a “land of peace” and a “land of the sword” at the same time, pointing to the possibility of both peace and war depending on the conditions. Second, the national anthem, further below, describes Afghanistan as a land that will shine forever “like the sun in the blue sky,” which is a reference to the older name of Afghanistan which is ‘Khorasan’ meaning ‘the land where the sun rises.’ And third, the national anthem describes Afghanistan as the ‘heart of Asia,’ where the lyrics say: “In the chest of Asia, it will remain as its heart forever” (see 7.5. *Watan*). In sum, we see that the homeland of Afghanistan is described as: peace, sword, the sun and the heart (of Asia).

This description of the homeland is accompanied by the inhabitants of the homeland. In the very first couplet, the anthem names both the homeland and its inhabitants: “This homeland is *Afghanistan*. It is the honour of every *Afghan*.” It means that every Afghan is expected to protect their homeland as they protect their own honour. Then comes a gendered discourse with the line stating that the “sons” of this land are all heroes. Although the Pashto (and Persian) word *bacha* means ‘child’ in general; the daily usage of this word in Afghanistan *primarily* suggests the meaning of a boy or a son in particular. Therefore, what is meant here is that the “sons of this land” are all heroes. In this metaphor, the land of Afghanistan is personified as a mother who breeds sons that are heroes, signalling a patriarchal society based on heroism. This discourse is also supported with the depiction of the homeland not only as a mother (see 7.5. *Watan*); but also as a ‘hero-breeding’ mother (see 5.4. National Heroes).

Going deeper into the text, we see that the national anthem describes the inhabitants of Afghanistan first on an individual level, i.e. as Afghans, and then describes them

on a group level with the verse: “This homeland is the home of *all...*” The meaning of this verse is that Afghanistan is the home of all the Baluch, the Uzbek, the Pashtun, etc. This list, which takes up one-third of the body of the national anthem, is the list of the fourteen *aqwam* living in Afghanistan which are officially recognised in the Constitution of 2004. Before any of these ethnonyms, though, we see the ethnonym ‘Afghan’ at the very beginning of the national anthem as an umbrella ethnonym that stands for all the inhabitants of Afghanistan. Although the list of *aqwam* implies that “every Afghan” belongs to one of these fourteen *aqwam*, the inhabitants of Afghanistan are, first of all, Afghans, before their *aqwam*. Another point is that we see the ethnonym Pashtun as one of the *aqwam* in the list; while we see the ethnonym Afghan at the top of all the *aqwam*, which is an effort to differentiate between the two and override the claims that they are synonymous.

After all this group differentiation comes a verse that includes the “we” and “our” pronouns: “Our leader is *al-Haqq*²⁵ (God). We say ‘Allah is the greatest.’” Here, Allah emerges as the leader of Afghans who confirm it by repeating the Islamic expression *Allahu Akbar* for three times at the end of the national anthem, as dictated by the Constitution. At the end of the day, Islam emerges as a common point of unification for all the *aqwam* of Afghanistan. On the whole, the national anthem depicts a people who are divided into fourteen parts by *qawmi* boundaries; and who are united: (1) in their honour which is the homeland of Afghanistan, and (2) in their religion which is Islam. Here, we see patriotism and religious fellowship suggested as unifying factors against the fragmenting power of *qawmi* diversity. National anthem seems like a brief summary of the sociology of contemporary Afghanistan.

National anthem is something that people are exposed to or made to chant in various occasions on various days. In the field of education, it is chanted as part of the flag raising ceremonies at schools, which Giorgetti (2016) calls the “rituals of education.” This “ritual” of chanting the national anthem in regular intervals, on certain days, in a disciplined manner and a physically-ordered way works to impose the underlying ideology of the state through the national anthem on students. Thanks to the feelings

²⁵ The word *al-haqq* in Arabic language, which means “truth,” is also one of the names of Allah (God) expressed in the Holy Quran as *al-Haqq*, or the Ultimate Truth.

of the Durkheimian “collective effervescence²⁶” that are supposed to accompany the chanting of a national anthem, its institutionalisation becomes easier. That is exactly what we see in the childhood memories of one of my respondents:

EXPERT-2: When I was a child going to school in a village in Afghanistan in the years 1978-79 before the Soviet invasion, we had a ceremony every morning and we chanted the national anthem, although we did not have a flag. From that time onwards, *I felt that I am an Afghan*. At that time, teachers had different *qawms*, but we did not differentiate between them, not because we were children but because they were *all considered Afghans*. At that time, *the state was building the nation through education*. (italics mine)

This quotation reveals the power of a national anthem in instilling a national identity into a young student. EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, clearly states that he felt he is an Afghan when he was a child. He not only refers to the power of the national anthem in giving him that feeling; but also links it to the larger context where all the teachers were “considered Afghans” no matter what their *qawmi* identity might have been. The fact that such a ceremony took place every morning at a village school may indicate that the state of Afghanistan had a wide outreach right before the Soviet invasion, which contributed to its ‘power’ of nation-building through education.

Turning to today’s Afghanistan, it is out of the scope of this thesis to detect whether all the school children chant the national anthem regularly at school. Still, for those who are chanting it, we know that they will be spelling the names of the fourteen *aqwam* and eventually learning them by heart. Even while they don’t know all of these names, the regular chanting of the national anthem at school will teach them these names in an imposing way, as it is a ritual in which everybody is supposed to behave respectfully. Obviously, they will also hear about these names outside school, at home from their families, in the streets from people or on the TV, social media, etc. Whatever they hear outside school will add to the chanting of the national anthem at school and contribute to the *institutionalisation* of the names of the *aqwam*

²⁶ “Collective effervescence refers to moments in societal life when the group of individuals that makes up a society comes together in order to perform a religious ritual. During these moments, the group comes together and communicates in the same thought and participates in the same action, which serves to unify a group of individuals. When individuals come into close contact with one another and when they are assembled in such a fashion, a certain ‘electricity’ is created and released, leading participants to a high degree of collective emotional excitement or delirium. This impersonal, extra-individual force, which is a core element of religion, transports the individuals into a new, ideal realm, lifts them up outside of themselves, and makes them feel as if they are in contact with an extraordinary energy.” Source: *Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)* in IEP (Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy), available at [<https://www.iep.utm.edu/durkheim/>], retrieved on April 30, 2020.

in young minds. When asked about whether this is something good for children, one of my respondents replies:

EXPERT-6: In terms of nation-building, it is not something good, because it will *not allow students to gain an Afghan identity*. But we still have problems. As I have told you, the *society is full of direct and indirect signs of qawm*.

The conclusion of EXPERT-6, who is a female Hazara, is that the chanting of the *aqwam* will prevent the institution of an Afghan identity in students. Then, she quickly adds: “But we still have problems.” What she means to say is that national anthem is not the only problem here. The main problem is the “direct and indirect signs of *qawm*” that are encountered in the society. In that case, national anthem may only be a contribution to those *qawmi* signs which will be explained in further detail in 7.3. *Qawm*. In brief, then, the current national anthem of Afghanistan, instead of inspiring the feelings of unity as a nation, has the potential of reproducing the current *qawmi* divisions every time it is chanted by young students regularly at schools.

My interviews also reveal another issue that needs attention. It appears that the national anthem, differing from the national flag, is a controversial symbol in Afghanistan, which is not readily accepted by everybody; especially by non-Pashtuns. The fact that the language of the national anthem is Pashto poses a problem for non-Pashtuns who find it difficult to embrace it as a national symbol, even while Pashto is recognised as one of the ‘national languages’ of Afghanistan. Chanting the national anthem in Pashto only strengthens the general claims about a Pashtun hegemony at large in Afghanistan:

EXPERT-11: Everything is based on the Pashtuns. *National anthem is in Pashto*. When *they* refer to national traditions of Afghanistan, *they* refer to Pashtun traditions. (italics mine)

EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, shows the national anthem as an example of Pashtun hegemony in institutionalising the national traditions of Afghanistan. For him, national anthem is only one among other examples, as *everything* is already “based on the Pashtuns.” This statement, which involves a dichotomy of “they vs. us,” shows a tendency to describe the national anthem as a Pashtun symbol, revealing a reluctance to recognise it as a common national symbol.

Another non-Pashtun respondent refers to the practical difficulty of singing the national anthem for non-Pashtuns who do not speak the Pashto language:

EXPERT-6: For someone like me who was born and raised abroad, it is difficult because I don't know Pashto. But for others who were born and raised here, they know Pashto. I believe that the national anthem should be sung *half in Dari and half in Pashto*. (italics mine)

As a female Hazara who was born and raised in Iran, EXPERT-6 refers to the difficulty of singing the national anthem. From her statement, we understand that people who were born and raised in Afghanistan will have, at least, a primitive knowledge of the Pashto language. Furthermore, as students will be chanting the national anthem at schools, they will get used to it in time, even if they cannot speak in Pashto. Still, even in such cases, EXPERT-6 personally believes that the national anthem should be chanted half in Dari and half in Pashto and she was not the only one to make such a suggestion:

EXPERT-8: ...nation-building is difficult, because there is *no social justice*. For example, the *national anthem should be written in other languages*, too. Look at the national flag; nobody objects to our flag because its colours belong to (or represent) everybody. But the national anthem... So, nation-building is not successful. All the *qawms* should be *given an opportunity*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, compares the national flag with the national anthem and concludes that the national flag is more readily accepted as a common symbol in Afghanistan, while the national anthem is not. That is what she means to say by the pause at the end of her sentence: "But the national anthem..." Furthermore, she examines the issue of national anthem within the framework of the concept of 'social justice.' In her opinion, there is no social justice because the national anthem is not written in other languages. Here, what she means by social justice is, actually, a kind of *qawmi* justice or *qawmi* equality. In her understanding, social justice may be fulfilled only when all the *qawms* are given an opportunity; that is, when the national anthem is written in other languages used by other *aqwam* in Afghanistan; not only in Pashto. EXPERT-8 stops here; however, if we continue in the same line of thinking, we will reach a point of multiple national anthems whereby each *qawm* would sing the national anthem in their own languages. What would be the point of a *national* anthem then?

In sum, the opinions of three non-Pashtuns, i.e. a Qizilbash, a Hazara and a Tajik, indicate a resentment among the non-Pashtuns towards the specification of the language of the national anthem as the Pashto language. It shows that even if the national anthem includes the names of all the *aqwam* of Afghanistan and mentions

the ethnonym ‘Pashtuns’ only as one of the fourteen *aqwam*, people may, still, view the national anthem as a ‘Pashtun anthem.’ And it only undermines the power of a national anthem as a common symbol between diverse people.

5.4. National Heroes (*Qahramanan-e Milli*)

Following the symbolisation of the nation of Afghanistan in a banner and a song, now is the time to see its personification in heroes. Like the preceding themes, this theme on national heroes has also been derived from the primary resources. However, it must be reminded that this theme emerges only in the textbooks. Neither in the Constitution nor in the interviews do we see any reference to national heroes. As for the textbooks, we clearly see this theme only in the textbooks of Patriotism among all the other textbooks of History, Social Studies and Civic Education. The fact that Patriotism textbooks have been at use only in the last couple of years for the newly-introduced course called Patriotism (*Watandoosti*) clearly indicates an effort for building a new discourse of education through this new course. These textbooks build up a discourse on national heroes through the following two resources:

- Chapter 9 titled “National Heroes” in 7-PA (Grade 7 – Patriotism)
- 20 autonomous chapters in 7-PA, 8-PA and 9-PA on important personalities

The first resource is an introductory chapter on the concept of national heroes; while the second includes twenty autonomous chapters of two to three pages, where a specific personality, who may or may not be defined as a national hero, is introduced. Whether they are clearly defined as national heroes or not, all these personalities will be covered here, as they still help construct the discourse on national heroes.

The introductory chapter on “National Heroes” in 7-PA answers the question “Who is a hero and what is heroism?” as follows:

Each nation has heroes whom they take pride in and whose name and memory they cherish. Heroes are, generally, people who struggle under difficult and bad conditions, throwing themselves into the middle of strong waves, their ships wrecked and hit by storms, and lead their nation into the coast of victory. (7-PA: 27) (italics mine)

In this quotation, we see the metaphor of a sea storm which is employed to describe a state of crisis. In this metaphor, a nation is described as a ship hit by storm, which is then led by heroes to the coast of victory. Here, we see an idea of heroes ‘serving

their nation' especially in crises. In return, the nation, takes pride in its heroes, cherishing their name and memory.

7-PA (27-28) presents three different ways of serving a nation, by describing three types of heroes: (1) heroes who save their nation from captivity and help them achieve freedom and independence; (2) heroes who save their nation from the darkness of ignorance and backwardness, holding the light of science and knowledge; and (3) heroes who save their nation from poverty and economic dependence by working hard. We see all these three types of heroes in the twenty autonomous chapters on important personalities that are scattered through the three textbooks in a random way. Table 10 classifies all the personalities under specific groups, showing them in an organised way. This table reveals seven specific groups of personalities three of which are clearly defined as national heroes: (1) the *ghazis*; (2) the *shohada*; and (3) the founding fathers. These three groups are described as the first type of heroes, i.e. heroes of independence. The remaining four groups are described generally as “personalities” though it is implied that they constitute either the second type, i.e. heroes of science, or the third type, i.e. heroes of hard work.

Table 10. Classification of Personalities in Textbooks of Patriotism

Classification of the Autonomous Chapters on Personalities in Textbooks of Patriotism		
	Group of Personalities	Name of Personalities
1	Founding Fathers	Mirwais Khan <i>Nika</i> (1673-1715)
		Ahmad Shah <i>Baba</i> (1722-1772)
2	Historical Leaders of Science*	Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (971-1030)
		Amir Ali Shir Navai (1441-1501)
3	The <i>Ghazis</i>	<i>Ghazi</i> Mir Masjidi Khan (?-1841)
		<i>Ghazi</i> Muhammad Jan Khan Wardak (?-1879)
		<i>Ghazi</i> Mir Bacha Khan Kuhdamani (1825-?)
4	Founder of Independence	<i>Ghazi</i> Amanullah Khan (1892-1960)
5	The <i>Shohada</i>	<i>Shahid</i> Muhammad Hashim Maiwandwal (1919-1973)
		<i>Shahid</i> Muhammad Musa Shafiq (1929-1978)
		<i>Shahid</i> Professor Gholam Muhammad Niyazi (1932-1978)
6	Loyal Servants of the Homeland	Allama Sayyid Jamaladdin Afghani (1839-1897)
		Fayz Muhammad Katib Hazara (1862-1931)
		Salahuddin Saljuqi (?-1970)
		Professor Khalilullah Khalili (1907-1987)
		Abdul Rahman Pajwak (1917-1995)
		Doctor Abdul Hakim Tabibi (1925-2008)
		Doctor Muhammad Yusuf (1917-1998)
7	Women of Courage	Zarghuna <i>Ana</i> (18 th century)
		Kariz Ayno (18 th century)
		Malalai of Maiwand** (19 th century)

* There are no autonomous chapters on Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi and Amir Ali Shir Navai who are presented together under a single chapter in Chapter 22 titled “Some of the Scientist Leaders” in 8-PA (54-56).

** Although there is no autonomous chapter on Malalai of Maiwand, she is explicitly presented as a national hero in Chapter 4 titled “National Values” in 9-PA (13).

1. Founding Fathers

In the first group, we see two main figures categorised under the founding fathers of Afghanistan: (1) the grandfather as Mirwais Khan *Nika*, and (2) the father as Ahmad Shah *Baba*. The final words in these figures’ names denote their titles, *nika* meaning ‘grandfather’ and *baba* meaning ‘father’ both in Pashto and Dari. It should not be misunderstood, however, that Ahmad Shah was the son of Mirwais Khan. In fact, the *Nika* and the *Baba* were not related in blood; but belonged to different Pashtun tribes. Mirwais Khan was of the Hotaki clan of the Ghilzai Pashtuns; while Ahmad Shah Baba was of the Abdali, or Durrani, Pashtuns. That is why in historical resources they are known respectively as Mirwais Khan Hotaki and Ahmad Shah Durrani or Ahmad Shah Abdali. Yet, the textbooks of Patriotism consistently use their titles of *Nika* and *Baba* much more than their tribal names. It is, probably, due to a conscious effort of establishing them respectively as the grandfather and father of Afghanistan, rather than underlining their differing tribal identities. Considering the fact that the Ghilzai and the Abdali are historically known as two rivalling Pashtun tribes, the effort of establishing a Ghilzai Pashtun as the grandfather and an Abdali Pashtun as the father may also be a way of reconciling this ages-old tribal rivalry. Not using their tribal names also hides their Pashtun identity, which implies an effort to facilitate, in the long-run, their acceptance by all the students, Pashtun and non-Pashtun alike, as the grandfather and the father of *all* the people of Afghanistan.

Apart from the textbooks of Patriotism, those of History also present Mirwais Khan *Nika* and Ahmad Shah *Baba* within the narrative of history, as explained in 5.5. Common History. Yet, we see both personalities described more in detail in the textbooks of Patriotism which include two autonomous chapters on them. To start with Mirwais Khan, the grandfather, Chapter 6 titled “Mirwais *Nika*, A National Leader” in 9-PA gives biographical information about him:

Mirwais Khan was born in 1084 LH²⁷ / 1673 Miladi. His father, Shalem Khan (Shah Alem Khan), was regarded as one of the well-known elders of the Hotaki tribe [*qawm*]. His mother (Nazo Ana) was the daughter of Sultan Malakhai Tokhi. (9-PA: 17)

This statement reveals the birth date, the parents and the tribe of Mirwais Khan. It also establishes his family as respected people, his father being a tribal leader and his mother being the daughter of a ruler. The text, then, tells the life story of Mirwais Khan who was, originally, a merchant dealing with trade from Khorasan to India. The appointment of Gurgin Khan as a Safavid governor in Qandahar changes Mirwais Khan's life. While Gurgin Khan rules Qandahar like a tyrant, people look upon Mirwais Khan for help, who eventually puts aside trade for the sake of saving his people. He first goes to Isfahan, the Safavid capital, accumulates power in the Safavid court. Then, as 8-HI (41) adds, he goes to Mecca for pilgrimage, receiving the *fatwa* of the religious *ulama* about an uprising against Gurgin Khan. Here, we see a sanctification of the uprising by the supreme Islamic authority in Mecca. On his way back, Mirwais Khan goes back to Qandahar, organises his people for rebellion, and finally defeats Gurgin Khan. Then he becomes the leader of his people by the decision of the *jirga* of 1709 (9-PA: 18).

As his life story reveals, Mirwais Khan is the first to *lead* people to rebel against the Safavid rule in Qandahar. Within the larger discourse of history which is presented in 5.5. Common History, we see the lands of Afghanistan being ruled by three regional powers – the Shaybanids, the Safavids and the Baburids – for two and a half centuries, until what is described in the textbooks as the “Qandahar Uprising” in the 18th century. It is in this uprising that Mirwais Khan Hotaki emerges as a leader. That is why both 9-PA and 8-HI (Grade 8 – History) describe him as a “leader” or “national leader”:

People of Qandahar, through their *leader* Haji Mirwais Khan Hotak who was a brave, cautious and patriotic man, took the first steps for freedom. (8-HI: 41) (italics mine)

Mirwais Khan is one of the *national leaders* and *heroes* of our country. He had a big role in saving the homeland from the claws of the enemy. (9-PA: 17) (italics mine)

²⁷ LH is the Lunar Hijri Calendar which is also known as the Islamic Calendar. It is different from the Solar Hijri (SH) Calendar which is at use today in Afghanistan as well as Iran.

These two quotations portray Mirwais Khan as a leader leading people into obtaining their own freedom for the first time and, thus, saving the homeland of Afghanistan from the “claws of the enemy,” i.e. foreign rule under the Safavids. Such vital services eventually pave the way for the grant of the title ‘grandfather’ on him:

In appreciation of his services, Afghans remember Mirwais Khan with the title “*Nika*.” (9-PA: 19)

Moving from the ‘grandfather’ to the ‘father,’ we see Ahmad Shah Baba. To understand the centrality of Ahmad Shah in the history of Afghanistan, it is enough to consider the periodization of the History textbooks (see 5.5. Common History). A periodization based on ‘before Ahmad Shah Baba’ and ‘after Ahmad Shah Baba’ confirms how he is treated as a threshold in the history of Afghanistan. It is because he is defined as the founder of Afghanistan in both History and Patriotism textbooks:

As *the founder of contemporary Afghanistan*, Ahmad Shah Baba succeeded in building up this piece of land and achieving unity among tribes [*aqwam*]. Therefore, he has a special place. (9-HI: 15) (italics mine)

Ahmad Shah Baba is regarded as *the founder of today’s Afghanistan*. He formed the administrative, military, economic and civil structures in Afghanistan and appointed ministers. (9-PA: 34) (italics mine)

These two quotations focus on Ahmad Shah’s different features as a founder. 9-HI refers to him as a ‘builder of land’ and as an ‘achiever of unity among tribes’ while 9-PA refers to him as a ‘builder of structures in Afghanistan.’ As discussed in 5.5. Common History, by the time of Ahmad Shah Abdali, different parts of Afghanistan had, for a long while, been under the rule of three regional powers – the Shaybanids, the Safavids and the Baburids. In other words, there was nothing like a unified land that we know as Afghanistan today. That is why Ahmad Shah Abdali is presented, first and foremost, as a builder of the *prototypical homeland* of Afghanistan. His second most important attribute as a founder is his success in uniting the tribes, which is always a big issue in tribal societies that are endlessly fragmented by cycles of structural opposition²⁸. And his third attribute as a founder is his success in bringing a structure to his reign on this piece of land, by building up the administrative, military, economic and civil structures. With all these attributes, Ahmad Shah emerges as the founder of the Afghanistan that we know today. As for

²⁸ See *Tribesmen* by Marshall D. Sahlins (1968).

his life story, Chapter 11 titled “Ahmad Shah Baba, A Religious King” in 9-PA gives biographical information on him:

Ahmad Shah Abdali, the son of Zaman Khan who was the governor of Herat, belonged to the Sadozai Abdalis. He was born in 1135 LH²⁹ (1722 Miladi). His mother’s name was Zarghuna Ana. (9-PA: 33)

This statement reveals the birth date, the parents and the tribe of Ahmad Shah Abdali. As was the case with Mirwais Khan, we also see Ahmad Shah as the son of a high-calibre family, whose father is the governor of Herat. Besides giving his tribal background, 9-PA (34) also states that he was a Muslim of the Hanafi sect, giving the exact sectarian information about him, as well. Then, 9-PA (34-35) reveals a detailed description of his characteristics, stating that he was a religious man; a poet who had written a divan of poems in Pashto language; a patriot in love with his homeland and people; a forgiving ruler towards rebellions; an advocate of peace and reconciliation; a ruler observing Islamic brotherhood in the region and conducting peaceful relations with the Amirs of Delhi, Bukhara, Khorasan, Baluchistan and the Sindh. All these features are presented as a basis for the grant of the title ‘father’ on Ahmad Shah:

That is how these admirable characteristics gave him the title *baba*. (9-HI: 15)

Ahmad Shah Baba is the founder of contemporary Afghanistan; therefore, he has a place in the hearts of the people of Afghanistan, who have honoured him with the title *baba*. (9-PA: 34)

Although his life span was short, he did great services for Afghanistan during his reign. That is why people have given him the title *baba*. (9-PA: 33)

As a ruler, he acted with justice and mercy, guarding people like his own children. For this reason, Afghans call him “*baba*.” (9-PA: 34)

All these quotations reveal different reasons behind the grant of the title ‘father’ on Ahmad Shah, from his “admirable characteristics” to the “great services” he did for his country in his short life (of 51 years). And finally, the fourth quotation reveals a paternalistic view of ruler who guards his people like his own children. That is where Ahmad Shah Abdali literally becomes a ‘father’ and Afghan people his ‘children.’

The fact that the founder of Afghanistan is accepted as Ahmad Shah Baba points to a foundation in the 18th century; not in the modern period. As seen above, the textbooks underline that Ahmad Shah Baba is the founder of contemporary (*asri*)

²⁹ LH is the Lunar Hijri Calendar which is also known as the Islamic Calendar.

Afghanistan. Although the word *asri* here includes both the meanings of ‘contemporary’ and ‘modern,’ we know from history that the reign of Ahmad Shah Baba (1747-1772) does not belong to the *modern* period in the sense of historical periodization. The Durrani state founded by him was not a modern state; but a dynasty that ruled a loose tribal confederation (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan). That is why the word ‘contemporary’ is a better choice here to underline that Ahmad Shah Baba gave birth to the land that is known as Afghanistan today. In sum, we see here not a founder that establishes a modern nation-state; but a *baba*, a fatherly figure of patrimonial authority, who establishes a dynasty ruling a tribal confederation. In this picture, Ahmad Shah Baba emerges as the *father* of the Durrani dynasty; not the *founder* of the modern nation-state of Afghanistan. Though there is another ruler, i.e. Amir Amanullah Khan, whom we encounter in the modern period in the 1920s, we do not see him depicted as a founder; but as a *ghazi* and the founder of independence, as to be presented below.

Before having the final word on the founding fathers, it needs to be reminded that the Constitution of 2004 also includes a name that is described as the “father of the nation” in Chapter 12 titled “Transitional Provisions.” This name, however, is neither Mirwais Khan Nika nor Ahmad Shah Baba, but Zahir Shah:

Article One Hundred Fifty-Eight: The title of the Father of the Nation [*baba-ye millat*] and privileges bestowed upon His Majesty Mohammad Zahir Shah, the former King of Afghanistan, by the Emergency *Loya Jirga* of one thousand three hundred and eighty one (HS), (2002), with due respect to provisions of this Constitution, shall be preserved during his lifetime.

Zahir Shah was the last king of Afghanistan until 1973, before the cycle of coup d’états, civil wars, and foreign interventions started (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan). In other words, Zahir Shah represents the peaceful years of Afghanistan between 1933 and 1973. This article establishes him as the “father of the nation” in order to form a living link between the older Afghanistan and the new Afghanistan being formed in the post-2001 period. What needs emphasis is that even if Zahir Shah was followed by presidents after a change of regime from kingdom to republic, this Constitution still honours a monarchical past despite being the constitution of an Islamic *republic*. It gives the feeling that Zahir Shah, as the longest-reigning king of this country for 40 years, gives his approval, as a ‘father,’ to the establishment of the new state of Afghanistan. It should, however, be underlined

that this Constitution Article is a “transitional” provision which limits the title of “Father of the Nation” to the lifetime of Zahir Shah. With the death of Zahir Shah in 2007, this title has legally expired.

2. Historical Leaders of Science

The second group includes the two ‘historical leaders of science,’ Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi and Amir Ali Shir Navai, who are presented together under a single chapter in Chapter 22 titled “Some of the Scientist Leaders” in 8-PA (54-56) starting as follows:

In this lesson, we will read about the two *famous leaders of the history of Afghanistan*, whose love for science and services will always be remembered. (8-PA: 54) (italics mine)

This quotation presents Ghaznavi and Navai as famous historical leaders who had a love for and interest in science. 8-PA also gives biographical information about both. Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (971-1030) is presented as one of the famous rulers of the Ghaznavid state, who was interested in science and letters, living in Ghazni which was a cultural and scientific centre at the time. Amir Ali Shir Navai (1441-1501) is presented as a skilful *vizier*, prime minister, of the Timurid state, who worked for the spread of science, establishing *madrassas* in Herat which was a centre of science and letters at the time.

It needs to be emphasised that both Ghaznavi and Navai are described as “leaders” (*zamamdar*); but not as “national leaders” (*zaim-e milli*) in the way that Mirwais Khan *Nika* or Ahmad Shah *Baba* is described. Ghaznavi and Navai appear more like ‘historical leaders’ that we encounter in the medieval history of the region before the rise of what we know as Afghanistan in the 18th century. That is why they are presented not in a national; but in a more universal framework as leaders working for the humanity or the Islamic world, who “did great services for the human civilisation” (8-PA: 55). Still, they are also among the “personalities of our country”:

Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi is one of the honours of the *Islamic world* and of *our hero-breeding country*. His valuable services for science and *civilisation* will never be forgotten. (8-PA: 55) (italics mine)

Ali Shir Navai is one of the famous *leaders* and *viziers* [ministers] as well as one of the science and literature friendly *personalities of our country*. (8-PA: 55)

In other words, both Ghaznavi and Navai are regarded among the important personalities of Afghanistan. However, their identity as ‘scientists’ is much more on the foreground than their identity as ‘leaders.’ We understand why below:

If the *leaders of a country show interest in science and literature*; receive the appreciation of scholars and scientists for their acts; pave the way for education and scientific research, it may certainly be said that the *darkness of ignorance will disappear and the country will progress*. (8-PA: 56) (italics mine)

This quotation gives a message about the leaders of a country, whose love for science and literature paves the way for progress. Ghaznavi and Navai are presented as exemplary leaders who played a big role in nurturing Ghazni and Herat, respectively, as the two centres of science and literature in their own period. In that respect, Ghaznavi and Navai may be considered as the second type of heroes, i.e. heroes of science and knowledge, among the three types of heroes described in 7-PA (27-28).

3. The Ghazis

The third group consists of four *ghazis* (including *Ghazi Amanullah Khan* as the “founder of independence”) who fought wars against non-Muslims and defeated them, as the word *ghazi*³⁰ suggests. All the *ghazis* named here – *Ghazi Mir Masjidi Khan*, *Ghazi Muhammad Jan Khan Wardak*, *Ghazi Mir Bacha Khan Kuhdamani* and *Ghazi Amanullah Khan* – fought wars against the British, a non-Muslim power, and triumphed. The first fought in the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842); the second and the third fought in the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1879); and the fourth, *Ghazi Amanullah*, fought in the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919). Among the four *ghazis*, *Ghazi Amanullah Khan* comes forward as the “founder of independence.”

4. Founder of Independence

In the textbooks, we see Amanullah Khan in two dimensions: (1) as a *ghazi*, and (2) as the person who obtained the independence of Afghanistan. The main data on him comes from an autonomous chapter in 9-PA (41-43) titled “*Ghazi Amanullah Khan’s Statement on Freedom*” which identifies him with independence:

³⁰ The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives the meaning of the word *ghazi* as follows: “A Muslim warrior, especially one victorious in battle against the opponents of Islam – often used as a title of honor.” Source: [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ghazi>].

Regarding the independence of the homeland, *the name that has most been interwoven with the independence of Afghanistan* is Ghazi Amanullah Khan. There is no freedom-seeker and patriot who will not remember the name of Ghazi Amanullah Khan when speaking about the independence of Afghanistan. (9-PA: 41) (italics mine)

This discourse is strengthened even more through Amanullah Khan's own statements about freedom and independence. 9-PA displays one of those statements in which he addresses his soldiers, state officials and the residents of Kabul:

"My dear nation! I will not take off this military uniform unless I clothe the mother homeland with the dress of freedom. I will not put this sword into its case until I make the foreign oppressors sit down in their place. Dear nation and sacrificing soldiers! To save your homeland, use your final strength, come along and sacrifice your heads full of ardour for the sake of freedom!" (9-PA: 42) (italics mine)

This is a patriotic speech in which Amanullah Khan rallies his soldiers in military uniform, as a soldier himself, against the "foreign oppressors" of Afghanistan, i.e. the British. Here, we see him vowing to achieve independence. 9-PA also gives the exact quotation where Amanullah declares independence in the court of Kabul in the presence of the British Ambassador to Afghanistan on April 13, 1919:

"I have declared myself and my country entirely independent internally and externally. From now on, our country will be on the same rank as other free and independent states and powers of the world. And nobody will be given a hair's breadth of right to interfere with the internal and external affairs of Afghanistan, and if anybody ever does, I will cut their hands with this sword" (9-PA: 42). (italics mine)

Following this statement, 9-PA (42) remarks, Amanullah turns to the side of the British Ambassador and says: "Have you understood what I have said!" and the British Ambassador replies with respect: "Yes, I have." That is how Amanullah Khan comes forward as "the founder of independence" in Afghanistan:

Amanullah Khan was a famous *ghazi, the founder of independence* and a *patriotic leader*. In the modern history of the country, *after Ahmad Shah Baba*, there are few people among the kings, princes and *amirs who can compete with Amanullah Khan* in patriotism, philanthropism, love for independence, pride in the homeland and resistance to foreigners and foreign domination in the internal affairs of the homeland. (9-PA: 41) (italics mine)

As we see in this statement, Amanullah Khan's patriotism is specifically underlined, which may surpass everybody else's except for Ahmad Shah. Here, we see Amanullah Khan as the second most important figure of independence and patriotism

after Ahmad Shah in the history of Afghanistan. In this way, a tacit link is formed between Ahmad Shah, “the founder of contemporary Afghanistan,” and Amanullah Khan, “the founder of independence.” That is why the latter is also commemorated as a hero today:

He [Amanullah Khan] *loved his homeland* very much. He did not want his free nation to live *under the yoke of the foreigners*...It is the responsibility of all of us to keep alive his unforgettable memories and services for the homeland. (9-PA: 41) (italics mine)

This quotation displays a patriotic Amanullah Khan who did his best to free his country from the “yoke of” foreign rule. This is basically how he is conceptualised as a national hero. What we see missing here is Amanullah Khan’s attribute as the most reformist and modernist ruler in the history of Afghanistan. In the discourse of education defined within the limits of this thesis, Amanullah Khan as a national hero is not conceptualised as a moderniser; but as a *ghazi*, an Islamic warrior fighting in the name of Islam, and as the founder of independence. Such an effort may result from a concern for not drawing the reaction of the religious and conservative factions as well as the Taliban.

5. The *Shohada*

In the fifth group, we see the *shohada*, or the martyrs of Afghanistan. Although the English word martyr³¹ is generally used as an equivalent of the Arabic word *shahid*, the original word will be preferred here, as the English word may not exactly correspond to the way the word *shahid* is used in Afghanistan. Here is a definition of *shahid* as presented in Chapter 11 titled “Remembering the *Shohada*” in 8-PA:

Shahid is a person who has sacrificed their life for the sake of achieving the consent of Allah, *Jalla Jalaluhu*³², on the way to establish the religion of Islam and guard its rulings and values. (8-PA: 27)

As seen in this statement, the concept of *shahid* belongs particularly to the Islamic context, since a *shahid* sacrifices their life specifically for the sake of Allah and the

³¹ The Merriam-Webster Dictionary gives three main meanings for the English word ‘martyr’: (1) a person who voluntarily suffers death as the penalty of witnessing to and refusing to renounce a religion; (2) a person who sacrifices something of great value and especially life itself for the sake of principle; and (3) victim, especially a great or constant sufferer. Source: [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/martyr>].

³² *Jalla Jalaluhu* is an Arabic expression that accompanies the name Allah, meaning “May His glory be glorified.”

religion of Islam. Further in the text, 8-PA expands the framework of martyrdom as a service for humanity:

All the values and rulings of the religion of Islam are, undoubtedly, for the good and salvation of humanity, as *salvation of people is latent in the religion of Islam*. Therefore, it may be said that a *shahid* has sacrificed their own life for the sake of *achieving lofty human goals* and objectives as well as serving the society and people. A *shahid* is somebody who, *like a candle*, burns themselves so that the society and the world lightens up. (8-PA: 27) (italics mine)

According to this quotation, the religion of Islam serves the good of humanity. With this idea, a link is formed between the *shahid* as an individual and the society at large. A *shahid* dies for serving the society and its high goals; hence the candle metaphor. In that regard, a *shahid* is a specific form of national hero in an Islamic framework. 8-PA then contextualises this concept particularly in Afghanistan:

Dear Afghanistan is a land of the shohada and our nation is a shahid-breeding nation. The nation of Afghanistan has *always given sacrifices* for the sake of protecting its religion, honour, soil, independence and freedom, while offering the red burial robe to thousands of the *shohada* for achieving these holy goals. Each time our country was exposed to the occupation or attack of foreigners and its religion, honour, independence and freedom fell into danger, the *courageous nation of Afghanistan* hastened to the trench of the *jihad* and resistance while sacrificing all its being to this end (8-PA: 27-28) (italics mine)

This quotation describes both the homeland and the nation of Afghanistan centred on the concept of the *shohada*. It describes a nation for whom “religion, honour, soil, independence and freedom” are of the utmost values. Whenever these values come under the threat of foreigners, this nation immediately declares a *jihad* against the aggressors, being ready to sacrifice “all its being” for the sake of its “holy” goals. That is why the nation of Afghanistan has given thousands of *shohada* and will always be ready to do that, as the expression “*shahid*-breeding nation” foreshadows.

Following these introductory remarks, 8-PA (28) exemplifies the instances of martyrdom in the history of Afghanistan where we see two main cases: (1) the Anglo-Afghan Wars in the 19th century, and (2) the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 20th century. We see that the main focus in relation to the *shohada* is on the latter. Among the *shohada*, however, we not only see the Afghan Mujahedeen, who are clearly described as “national heroes” (7-PA: 28-29); but also the people killed by the communist regime due to their resistance to the ideas of communism flowing from the Soviet Union into Afghanistan. As explained in 5.5. Common History, the

aftermath of the Saur Revolution of 1978 is presented as a period when the communist regime in Afghanistan, with the support of the Soviet Union, undertook a mass persecution of people who were against the communist ideology. That is why we see three such people in this fifth group: *Shahid* Muhammad Hashim Maiwandwal, *Shahid* Muhammad Musa Shafiq and *Shahid* Professor Gholam Muhammad Niyazi. The first two served as the Prime Minister under Muhammad Zahir Shah while the third was a professor at the Kabul University. What brings these two educated bureaucrats and a professor together is that they were martyred after the coup d'états of the 1970s; the first after the 1973 coup by Daoud Khan and the latter two after the Saur Revolution of 1978. The textbooks (7-PA: 46; 7-PA: 32; 7-PA: 63) present all the three figures imprisoned and then “cruelly martyred” by the government forces.

Last but certainly not the least, it needs to be reminded that the Constitution also includes an expression about the *shohada* in its Preamble:

We the people of Afghanistan...Appreciating the sacrifices, historical struggles, *jihad* and just resistance of all the peoples of Afghanistan, *admiring the supreme position of the shohada* of the country's freedom...Have, herein, approved this constitution... (italics mine)

In the Preamble, we see the expression “we the people of Afghanistan” which is followed by five features that define these people. One of those features is presented as appreciating the *jihad* and the *shohada* of the country. This Preamble certainly supports the general discourse on the *shohada* in the discourse of education.

6. Loyal Servants of the Homeland

The sixth group is based on Chapter 26 titled “Remembering the Loyal Servants of Dear Homeland” in 8-PA as well as some of the autonomous chapters on important personalities across the textbooks of Patriotism. The introductory chapter reveals the conceptualisation of those personalities defined as loyal servants:

A country is like a big house in which everybody takes part for repairing and places a brick for its construction. At the end, the strength, building and beauty of that house is the product of the tireless efforts of people who, by taking a part in this process, come to be known as the *architects of that big house which is the homeland*. (8-PA: 63) (italics mine)

This quotation describes the homeland of Afghanistan as a big house that is being constructed by “architects” toiling together to build it (see 7.5. *Watan*.) These

“architects” work for the sake of their country; not for their own interests, and that is why they are viewed as ‘loyal’ to their homeland:

Whatever we see today in our country as signs of progress and development is the result of the sincere toils of the *loyal off-springs of this land*, each of whom, in their own historical period, has done services for the progress of our dear country to the extent that they could. (8-PA: 63) (italics mine)

This quotation describes servants of the homeland as “loyal off-springs of this land,” employing the metaphor of a mother and her loyal children working for her (see 7.5. *Watan*.) Associated with all the “signs of progress and development” seen in Afghanistan, these loyal servants, as we understand, constitute the second and third type of heroes who save their nation from ignorance and poverty through science and hard work in various different fields such as “religion, politics, economics, industry, urbanisation and culture” (8-PA: 64).

In exemplifying the servants of the homeland, 8-PA lists several names which we do not see in the autonomous chapters. Therefore, those names will not be included here, except for the very first one: *Allama* Mahmud Tarzi (1865-1933) who is presented as an important figure of journalism initiating the journal *Siraj Al-Akhbar* in the 1910s as well as activating the ministry of foreign affairs (8-PA: 64). Although limited information is given about Tarzi, his inclusion here is important, as he is known as the ‘mastermind of modernisation’ in Afghanistan (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan).

Now is time to list the names that appear under the fifth group of “Loyal Servants of the Homeland” whom we properly encounter in the autonomous chapters: (1) *Allama* Sayyid Jamaladdin Afghani (“a scholar of the East”); (2) Fayz Muhammad Katib Hazara (a historian of the court); (3) Salahuddin Saljuqi (a writer and a poet); (4) Professor Khalilullah Khalili (a professor and a poet); (5) Abdul Rahman Pajwak (a bureaucrat and a journalist); (6) Doctor Abdul Hakim Tabibi (a bureaucrat and a writer); and (7) Doctor Muhammad Yusuf (a PM and a professor). What brings all these people together under this group is that they all served the state of Afghanistan in different positions. What needs emphasis is that they come forward as the products of a modern education which they received either in Afghanistan or abroad. That is why we see here modern professions, for the first time, such as professors,

bureaucrats, journalists and so on, which invites a further analysis to be made at the end of this theme on national heroes.

7. Women of Courage

In the seventh group, we see the names of three women: *Zarghuna Ana*, Kariz Ayno and Malalai of Maiwand, all of whom appear in autonomous chapters except for Malalai who is, nevertheless, explicitly described as a “national hero” in Chapter 4 titled “National Values” in 9-PA. What is common about these three women is that; (1) they are all described through their courage (2) within male-dominated stories.

Chapter 10 of 8-PA titled “Qandahar Walls and the Role of *Zarghuna Ana*” is about the establishment of the city of Qandahar as the capital of Afghanistan during the reign of Ahmad Shah. Here, we see *Zarghuna Ana* (*ana* means grandmother in Pashto) who is Ahmad Shah’s mother. The story is that Ahmad Shah plans to erect seven walls to surround the new city of Qandahar and convenes a *jirga*, i.e. assembly (see 6.4.1. *Loya Jirga*). *Zarghuna Ana*, who is known as “an eloquent speaker and a scholar” (8-PA: 25), also joins the *jirga* and makes the following statement:

‘The homeland, the city and their people are protected by the efforts and ardours of men; not by high walls. If men are diligent, they can take care of their own homeland even while they live in tents. But if diligence does not exist, walls will not prevent enemies from entering the city. Leave the protection of the city to men.’ (8-PA: 25-26)

Upon hearing this statement, Ahmad Shah Baba and members of the *jirga* reconsider their decision and decide to erect only a single wall of security in Qandahar.

This story shows the image of a strong woman who intervenes into an all-male *jirga* and manipulates the decision through her powerful rhetoric. As a woman and as the mother of the ‘founder’ of this country, *Zarghuna Ana* teaches men how to protect their homeland, i.e. through hard-work and diligence. Given that all the members of the *jirga* as well as her own son, Ahmad Shah, take her advice, she emerges as a strong mother figure; as the mother of the *baba* (father) of Afghanistan, or the ‘grandmother of Afghanistan.’ It is also something that overlaps with the mother metaphor used to describe the homeland of Afghanistan, as presented in 7.5. *Watan*.

The second bold woman we see in this group is Kariz Ayno whom we encounter in Chapter 16 of 8-PA titled “Kariz Ayno.” This chapter tells the story of a “courageous

and honourable woman” (8-PA: 40) who lived in Qandahar during the reign of Ahmad Shah. The text glorifies this woman to such an extent that it says:

In the deeds of this diligent woman were hidden the *Islamic and Afghani features and values*. (8-PA: 40) (italics mine)

This quotation presents Ayno as the personification of the “Islamic and Afghani features and values.” Thus, we expect to see this woman acting, in a certain situation, in the exact way that is expected from a Muslim Afghan.

The story here is that there is a canal (*kariz*) running close to the city of Qandahar, that is called “Kariz Ayno.” One day, Ahmad Shah goes to India for an expedition with his soldiers among whom is Ayno’s husband. On their return from conquest, they stop near Qandahar to pass the night so that they can enter the city in daylight in a glorious manner. But Ayno’s husband secretly leaves his post and goes home before the others. As he knocks at the door, Ayno, without opening the door, asks him why he returned alone without Ahmad Shah and the rest of the army. As the husband insists her to open the door, Ayno gives the following didactic answer:

“What do you have that is *superior to others* that you have left your rank behind and came home secretly in this way? Wouldn’t they also wish to return their homes? If other Afghan sisters and mothers learn about this tomorrow, what would they tell me? That would be a big rebuke. I will not open the door. Turn back. You can come home when all the soldiers, with Ahmad Shah Baba, return their homes.” (8-PA: 41) (italics mine)

As the husband turns back, he is caught near his tent and brought to Ahmad Shah Baba. Upon listening to the whole story, Ahmad Shah Baba praises the diligence of the woman, forgives her husband and grants the canal called “Kariz Ayno” to her. That is how she comes to be called Kariz Ayno herself.

As for the “Islamic and Afghani features and values” that are hidden in the personality of Ayno, we clearly see a woman who is honest, righteous, loyal, egalitarian, outspoken and persistent. These are the personality traits of Muslim Afghans, then. For further details on the features of Afghans, see 7.4. *Afghaniyat*.

The third bold woman we see in this group is Malalai of Maiwand whose story is told in relation to the national flag of Afghanistan in Chapter 4 titled “National Values” in 9-PA (9-PA: 12-13). Malalai, a young Afghan girl, takes part in the Battle of Maiwand in 1880 (Second Anglo-Afghan War) alongside *Ghazi* Muhammad

Ayub Khan, carrying water to the Afghan troops. At a critical moment when she sees that the flag-bearer of Afghan troops falls on the ground, she enters into the battlefield and picks up the Afghan flag, chanting the following patriotic poem:

Young love! If you do not fall in the battle of Maiwand,
By God, someone is saving you as a symbol of shame! (9-PA: 12)

This poem, which we encounter more than once in the textbooks, shows how an Afghan woman rallies soldiers with a call to honour and martyrdom. It is written that the chanting of this poem encourages the soldiers so much that it changes the course of events in the war, leading to Afghan victory. Malalai actually represents all the Afghan women engaged in this war besides men, as the following quotation reveals:

It is remarkable that, *Afghan women, alongside men*, also took an active part in the *jihad* and struggle against the British. Just during the second British attack on Afghanistan, 850 women took part in the wars in Kabul and the Mount Asmayi, 83 of whom were martyred [*shohada*]. The deeds of *Ghazi* Addi in the war of Kabul and those of Malalai in the Battle of Maiwand are counted among the unforgettable memories. (7-PA: 29) (italics mine)

This quotation presents Afghan women joining men in becoming the military heroes of Afghanistan. As these women become *ghazis* or *shohada* in the war, they join their male counterparts as national heroes one of whom is Malalai:

The name of Malalai has been registered in the history of the country among the ranks of the *heroes of Afghanistan*. The following generations preserved the name of Malalai with pride. Schools, journals and hospitals have been *named after Malalai of Maiwand*. (9-PA: 13) (italics mine)

The message given through these three women is that courage and boldness are the traits that are praised in the women of Afghanistan. Through these stories, female students are told to be courageous women and not to shy away from speaking their own mind in male-dominated areas. In all these stories, we see women who 'teach' men what to do in critical moments, as Zarghuna Ana teaches the rulers, including his son Ahmad Shah Baba, how to protect a city and a country; Kariz Ayno teaches her husband to be faithful to his commander; and Malalai encourages and rallies the Afghan troops in war. This is a very significant discourse on women in such a patriarchal society like Afghanistan, even if the general discourse on women still remains weak. Though we see women joining men in becoming *ghazis* and *shohada* in the wars, we do not see a single woman in the other groups of personalities, especially among the Loyal Servants of the Homeland which fails to include even a

single woman that belongs to the modern period. Needless to say, women emerge as the weakest group among the national heroes and personalities of Afghanistan.

Having discussed all the seven groups of personalities, we may now make a brief overall analysis. The key point under this theme is that among the personalities, we see an Islamic sub-group of heroes who are: (1) the *ghazis* (fighters warring against the British in the 19th century), and (2) the *shohada* (those who were killed by the communist government in the 1970s) who also include the Mujahedeen. It is not only through the autonomous chapters on personalities but also through the introductory chapter titled “Remembering the *Shohada*” in 8-PA that the *shohada* as well as the concept of martyrdom emerges as a vital part of the understanding of heroism in Afghanistan. 8-PA brings together the concepts of ‘heroes’ and the ‘*shohada*’ more than once, underlining their power in constructing the idea of a nation:

Alive nations never forget their shohada and heroes. Remembering and honouring the shohada and their services as well as sacrifices is a sign of the gratitude and liveliness of the nation of Afghanistan. Therefore, we keep alive the memory of our shohada so that our country remains alive... We are an alive and united nation; because we haven't forgotten our shohada. (8-PA: 29) (italics mine)

This quotation presents remembering the *shohada* as a sign of being an “alive nation.” Memory of the *shohada* is a vital part of the idea of a nation in Afghanistan. Interestingly, the life of a nation depends on the *living memory of the dead*. Yet, it is not merely the dead; but those who become dead for the sake of Allah and Islam, i.e. the *shohada*. This idea reveals an Islamic understanding of heroism in Afghanistan.

In all the groups of personalities, we see people with differing reference points in serving their homeland. The reference point of the *ghazis* and the *shohada* is rooted in the fight for Islam; that of the founding fathers as well as the founder of independence is rooted in freedom and independence; that of the women of courage is rooted in their boldness in male-dominated areas; that of the historical leaders of science is rooted in science; and that of the loyal servants of the homeland is rooted in serving their country with their modern professions. In such a picture, the latter two groups appear as different from the rest, as their reference points are rooted in science and modern professions. The historical leaders of science are presented in order to show that the rulers of a country must be involved in science and literature so that the country progresses. Still, we see them as rulers; not common people. On

the other hand, we see the loyal servants of the homeland as common people, or rather as the elite, who cultivate themselves through modern education and emerge as specialists in modern professions. That is why they are the only personalities in this picture whose reference point is their own good deeds that they realise through modern professions. Therefore, they come closest to the understanding of ‘modern’ heroes. Still, the introductory chapter titled “Loyal Servants of Dear Homeland” in 8-PA gives us a different reason for remembering them:

A good and patriotic Afghan never forgets the works of the *loyal servants of their country*; because, the religion of Islam orders Muslims to thank those who do goodness to them. (8-PA: 66) (italics mine)

Remembering these *servants of the homeland* and appreciation of their valuable works is a sign of loyalty and gratitude as well as a *religious and national duty* for the present and future generations of this country. (8-PA: 64) (italics mine)

In these two quotations, the motivation behind remembering the loyal servants is presented as Islam. These people have served their homeland, thus, the present and future inhabitants of that homeland should remember them as a sign of gratitude, because it is an order of Islam. It is both a religious and a national *duty* to remember those loyal servants. In sum, the loyal servants are also presented within an Islamic framework, even when their reference point seems to be different from the rest.

A final point is that these seven groups of personalities, whether they are of the first, second or third type of national heroes, are presented to students as role models:

As the patriotic children of the *grateful Muslim nation of Afghanistan*, we never forget the services of the *national personalities and our ancestors* while we take their good deeds as examples for our own lives and pray for them. (7-PA: 32) (italics mine)

In other words, these personalities are shown as exemplary people of the nation of Afghanistan. That is why this theme on national heroes, even while it is encountered only in the textbooks and not in the official documents or the interviews, constitutes an important component in the idea of nation in Afghanistan.

5.5. Common History (*Tarikh-e Moshtarak*)

As explained in 5.1. Introduction, national history is an important element in establishing the collective memory of nation-states. In the case of Afghanistan, however, we see a preference to describe it as ‘common history’ rather than ‘national

history,’ which is what the primary resources consistently reveal. Among the textbooks, 9-PA includes a chapter on “National Values” which presents one of the national values as “common history” (9-PA-12). Similarly in the interviews, we do not see the word ‘national history’ but ‘common history’ instead. The discussions to be made under this theme will be revealing the possible reasons behind this choice.

In examining this theme on common history, the textbooks of History (7-HI, 8-HI, 9-HI) constitute our major primary resource. It needs to be underlined that the analysis here depends solely on the textbooks of History, excluding those of other courses, so that the discourse of history is better distinguished. Table 11 below shows the content of the textbooks of History in particular.

Table 11. Contents of the Textbooks of History (7-HI, 8-HI, 9-HI)

Contents of the Textbooks Analysed: Intermediate Level			
Publication Year: 1396 (2017)			
Chapter	Class 7 History (7-HI)	Class 8 History (8- HI)	Class 9 History (9- HI)
1	Fundamental Principles of History	Afghanistan and Islam	Political, Social and Economic Factors of Afghanistan before Ahmad Shah Baba’s Rise to Power
2	Early Civilisations of Afghanistan	Autonomous Islamic Governments of Afghanistan	Historical Events in Afghanistan during the Years 1747-1879
3	Civilisations of the Ancient World	Relations between Afghanistan and Its Neighbours before Qandahar Uprising	Historical Events in Afghanistan during the Years 1880-1973
4	History of Islam	Qandahar Uprising	Modern History of Afghanistan’s Neighbours
5		History of Neighbouring Countries in Middle Ages and Modern Times	
6		History of Europe	
7		History of America	

**Chapters coloured in grey are the ones providing the main data for this research.*

Content of these three textbooks of History shows that four major histories are presented to students in the 9-year compulsory education period:

1. History of Afghanistan (chapters coloured in grey)
2. History of Islam
3. History of the neighbours of Afghanistan
4. World history

For the purposes of this thesis, our main focus will be limited to the first item under which we see three main periods: (1) history of ancient Afghanistan; (2) history of Afghanistan after the arrival of Islam; and (3) history of Afghanistan after Ahmad Shah Baba, including the modern history of Afghanistan. The very last chapter, i.e. Chapter 3 of 9-HI titled “Historical Events in Afghanistan in 1880-1973,” ends with the year 1973 which marks the end of the Afghan Monarchy with the *coup d’etat* of 1973 and the establishment of the Republic of Afghanistan. In other words, History textbooks used in the compulsory period do not present the history of Afghanistan after 1973. Only in the textbooks of Patriotism do we see patches of information about the post-1973 history specifically on the Mujahedeen struggle against the Soviet Union in 1979-1989.

In the historical discourse constructed by the textbooks of History, we observe the emergence of nine sub-themes, only the final one of which is derived from the textbooks of Patriotism:

1. Afghanistan has a 5000-year history.
2. The arrival of Islam brought forth a new identity to the people of Afghanistan.
3. Afghanistan remained occupied by the Shaybanids, the Safavids and the Baburids for two and a half centuries.
4. Afghans of Qandahar uprose to achieve liberation in the 18th century.
5. Afghanistan was founded by Ahmad Shah Baba.
6. Afghanistan lacked central government after Ahmad Shah Baba.
7. The British made a great effort to colonise Afghanistan.
8. The British attacked Afghanistan two times; yet, Afghans defeated British colonialism.
9. People of Afghanistan expelled the Soviet occupiers out of the country.

1. Afghanistan has a 5000-year history.

As seen in Table 11, 7-HI has a chapter on the “Ancient Civilisations in Afghanistan” presenting the Aryan civilisation, the Greco-Bactrian states and the Kushan state. This chapter (7-HI: 13) talks about the “5000-year history of Afghanistan” presenting the historical site called “Mundigak” located near today’s Qandahar, where the first civilisation was founded in 3000 B.C. In the immediate section on the “Aryans,” it is written that “Aryans established the foundations of the first Aryan civilisation in Balkh” (7-HI: 15). According to this information, then, the first civilisations of Afghanistan were established first in Qandahar, then in Balkh.

2. The arrival of Islam brought forth a new identity to the people of Afghanistan.

In 8-HI, there is a specific chapter called “Afghanistan and Islam” where we see the arrival of the religion of Islam into the lands of Afghanistan, which was called “Khorasan” at the time, during the reigns of Caliph Omar and Caliph Osman in the 7th century. 8-HI presents a negative social picture in Afghanistan before the arrival of Islam, each part of which was ruled by separate powers:

...[I]n our country there was no *qawmi*³³ government that administered various cities and regions each part of which was administered by separate rulers. North of the country was ruled by Turks while the south was ruled by Ratbil Shahs³⁴. And in the west, the Sassanid governors kept people under their own rule. (8-HI: 3)

As the territorial Afghanistan that we know of today had not yet emerged in the 7th century, Khorasan was in this condition, which was actually not dissimilar to the neighbouring regions. This picture shows that the lands of today’s Afghanistan stood like an intersection of the edges of three main polities: Turks, the Kabul Shahs and the Sassanids. At this point, we see the arrival of Islam into Khorasan:

With the arrival of Islam, our country entered *a new level of its history. Islam gave us a new identity* and after that, our country started to be called an *Islamic country*. This identity brought *oneness and unity* in our country, because all the *aqwam* and tribes [*aqwam wa qabayel*] adopted a *single faith and religion*. (8-HI: 11) (italics mine)

³³ Here, the word *qawmi* may have the meaning of national (see 7.3. *Qawm*).

³⁴ Or the Kabul Shahs.

This is a fundamental quotation presenting the consequences of the arrival of Islam into Afghanistan, stating that: (1) Afghanistan entered into a new level of its history; (2) Islam gave a new identity to the people of Afghanistan; (3) The new Islamic identity brought forth unity to the *aqwam* of Afghanistan as they acquired a single religion; and (4) Afghanistan started to be called an Islamic country. In other words, the spread of Islam into this region opened a new page in the history of Afghanistan; that is why it is shown as a turning point in the historical periodization of the textbooks of History. The basic reason is that Islam equipped the inhabitants of this land with a new identity, i.e. the Islamic identity. As the *aqwam* living in these lands acquired a single religion, they unified around it. This idea is also in line with the current conceptualisation of national unity based on Islam, as discussed in 6.2. National Unity. Finally, the fact that Afghanistan is an Islamic republic today is linked with as far as the arrival of Islam into these lands in the 7th century, which is a significant point in history-making.

3. Afghanistan remained occupied by the Shaybanids, the Safavids and the Baburids for two and a half centuries.

Moving from ancient to medieval history in the timeline, we step into the medieval history of Afghanistan after the arrival of Islam. Especially in the 16th and 18th centuries, we see the emergence of three strong governments in the territory and surrounding area of today's Afghanistan: (1) the Shaybanid Dynasty in the north, in Transoxiana; (2) the Safavid Dynasty in the west, in today's Iran; (3) and the Baburid Dynasty in the east and south, in India. These three neighbouring powers, who rivalled one another, are presented as invading or occupying or taking under control certain parts of Afghanistan (8-HI: 31, 33, 37). In other words, the lands of today's Afghanistan were divided among these powers. Hence the question asked to students: "Do you know that our country was divided between the neighbouring states just before the Qandahar uprising?" (8-HI: 41)

Interestingly, we do not see the same approach towards the ancient civilisations that lived in Afghanistan. In their case, we do not see the word 'occupation' or 'invasion.' In fact, we know from history that the Greco-Bactrian states were founded upon the empire of Alexander the Great who was a Greek invader hailing from Macedonia. Yet, 7-HI (27, 28) shows an inclusive approach to these states, stating that the Greek

mixed with Afghans and formed a new civilisation called the Greco-Bactrian civilisation. For the Kushans, which was also a Greco-Bactrian state, it is written that they “laid the foundations of the new empire totally on an Afghan background” (7-HI: 29). At the same time, it is claimed that Bagram, the summer capital of the Kushans, was founded by Alexander the Great (7-HI: 33). In sum, 7-HI treats the Greco-Bactrians not as a foreign civilisation; but as a part and parcel of the ancient civilisations of Afghanistan.

As we come to the 18th century, however, we see that the approach differs:

“The Syahbanid, Safavid and Baburid states possessed the northern, western and south-eastern regions of our country. Geographical division of regions for two and a half centuries *prevented our country to have unity and integrity*. During this period, our country became a *battleground between these powers and their cultural values have left an impact on our cultural sphere.*” (9-HI: 3) (italics mine)

This quotation portrays an Afghanistan which remained divided among three powers for “two and a half centuries,” which probably denotes the period from the 16th to the 18th century. It gives the impression that there was a perfectly united Afghanistan under a single state before the 16th century. Yet, none of the textbooks make such a claim. 8-HI presents the Ghaznavids, the Seljuqids, the Ghurids, the Kharezm Shahis, the Kartids and the Timurids who all reigned in different parts of Afghanistan before the 16th century. Who come forward as *the* occupiers of Afghanistan are the Syahbanids in Uzbekistan, the Safavids in Iran and the Baburids in India. The main reason is that these three powers represent the three big civilisations surrounding Afghanistan: the Turkic in the north; the Iranian in the west and the Indian in the south and east (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan). These civilisations have produced nation-states in the modern era as Uzbekistan, Iran and India which represent the *others* of the nation-state of Afghanistan. Yet, in terms of culture, they are not fully *others* either, as Afghanistan, standing at the crossroads of these three civilisations, has inherited the cultural elements of all of them. That is how the quotation above ends, meaning that the people of Afghanistan took over the values of Uzbeks, Iranians and Indians, which is why the country is a rich mixture of different cultures today. A final point is that, presenting a territory that was ‘occupied’ by neighbouring powers becomes more

meaningful in the timeline just before the people of that territory ‘revolt’ against these powers to form an autonomous polity of their own, as to be explained below.

4. Afghans of Qandahar uprose to achieve liberation in the 18th century.

When the lands of today’s Afghanistan were under the rule of the neighbouring Shaybanids, the Safavids and the Baburids, local Afghan people were subject to certain impositions, according to the discourse of the textbooks. The major issue between them was that the *lashkars*, or tribal armies of the locals were made to take part in the regular armies of these three powers (9-HI: 3). In this way, expenditure of the *lashkars* that joined the three neighbouring states were imposed on the Afghan people (9-HI: 5). According to 9-HI, it was what prepared the ground for revolts: “Opposition by the people of Afghanistan increased from hate to disgust. In consequence, feelings of freedom and independence increased” (9-HI: 3). In this picture, we see the people of Afghanistan rejecting to join the regular armies of the Shaybanid, the Safavid and the Baburid states, which may also be considered as a part of the usual clash between the tribe and the state. In other words, the reason behind these revolts was to keep the autonomy of the Afghan tribes from those states.

In the chapter on “Qandahar Uprising,” 8-HI localises these revolts:

Our dear country was divided between the Gurkanians [Baburids] of India, Safavids of Iran and Uzbeks of Transoxiana [Shaybanids] *just before the Qandahar uprising*. Besides, in some regions of the country, local rulers and governors had established their own governments. This situation had taken people into misery, who wanted to initiate movements and uprisings for their liberation. *Especially the people of Qandahar*, whose city was under the Safavid rule at that time, was *more prone to uprising and secession* (8-HI: 41). (italics mine)

Here, we see a special emphasis on the city of Qandahar which is presented as the centre of uprising. Considering the fact that Qandahar has always been a Pashtun stronghold throughout Afghan history, such a discourse, undoubtedly, presents Pashtun people as “more prone to uprising” against domination. Although the ethnonym Pashtun is not once used in the textbooks of History, we know that what is meant by the “Afghans of Qandahar” (8-HI: 38) is, basically, the Pashtuns. By placing Qandahar at the centre of uprisings against ‘foreign’ rule, the historical discourse presents Pashtuns as the initiators of the history of an independent Afghanistan.

This idea also links to the general discourse on the importance of Qandahar. 9-HI (8) underlines that Qandahar, which was called ‘the door to India,’ was a trade centre. That was why the Baburids and the Safavids were fighting over the rule of Qandahar (8-HI: 38). This situation resulted in reactionary movements led by the locals of Qandahar in different time-periods, such as the Rushanian movement led by Bayezid Ansari who struggled against the “tyranny of the Mughal [Baburid] rule” (9-HI: 4). It was followed by another movement led by Khushal Khan Khattak, the famous warrior poet, who “influenced the awakening of our people” (9-HI: 4). And finally, we see the emergence of Mirwais Khan Hotaki also in Qandahar:

Although the independence seeking struggles on the eastern borders of the country faced pauses and stagnations, in the 18th century, once again, Mirwais Khan Nika set out to achieve his objective of eliminating the occupiers with an uprising, which is known in the history of our country as Qandahar Uprising. In 1709 Miladi, Mirwais Khan Nika prompted the uprising of the people of Qandahar against Gurgin [Safavid governor] tyranny and Safavid domination. As a result of this uprising, he established the independent Hotaki state. (9-HI: 4) (italics mine)

Here, we see a story of independence led by Mirwais Khan Nika (see 5.4. National Heroes). We should, however, be careful in viewing this movement as something like a ‘national’ liberation movement. How far the Safavid rulers were seen as ‘foreign rulers’ in Qandahar and how far the people of Qandahar were thirsty for obtaining their own freedom and establishing their own state remains a question here. Still, what matters for our purposes is that we see the emergence of an independent Afghan polity for the first time in history. Although the Hotaki state did not last long, it foreshadowed the foundation of another independent Afghan state: the Durrani.

What is important about the Qandahar Uprising is that we see it just before the emergence of Ahmad Shah Baba, the “founder of Afghanistan.” In this way, in the timeline of the history of Afghanistan, a link is formed between the Hotaki dynasty and the Abdali, or Durrani, dynasty. Although the textbooks do not use the ethnonym ‘Pashtun,’ we know from history that the Hotaki dynasty was founded by the Ghilzai Pashtuns while the Durrani dynasty was founded by the Abdali (Durrani) Pashtuns. These two were ancient rivals, which is partly mentioned in 8-HI:

The government of Shah Mahmud Hotaki³⁵ in Qandahar was contemporary with the coming to power of the Afghan Abdalis in Herat. Abdalis had also formed

³⁵ Successor to Mirwais Khan Hotaki.

an autonomous government in Herat which reigned till Farah. Although *a war took place in 1720 between these two states* in Farah, the main purpose of Shah Mahmud was capturing Iran. (8-HI: 44)

Despite the Ghilzai-Durrani rivalry, the Hotaki dynasty is presented as a predecessor to the Durrani dynasty in the historical discourse. 9-HI (4) clearly states that the Hotaki state, “from a political viewpoint, influenced the political power of Ahmad Shah Abdali.” What is suggested here is that the Hotaki dynasty paved the way for the establishment of the Durrani dynasty. That is why Mirwais Khan is called the *Nika*, the grandfather, while Ahmad Shah is called the *Baba*, the father (see 5.4. National Heroes).

5. *Afghanistan was founded by Ahmad Shah Baba.*

Considering all the History textbooks, we see that 7-HI is on the ancient history of Afghanistan; 8-HI is on the mediaeval history of Afghanistan after the arrival of Islam; and, finally, 9-HI is on the foundation of Afghanistan and its modern history. There are three main chapters in 9-HI on Afghanistan: (1) the period just before Ahmad Shah Baba when the lands of Afghanistan were ruled by the Shaybanids, Safavids and the Mughals; (2) the period that starts with the autonomous rule of Ahmad Shah Baba in 1747 and goes on until 1879 when the Treaty of Gandamak was signed; and (3) modern history of Afghanistan between 1880 and 1973. In such periodisation, Ahmad Shah Baba is presented as a threshold in the history of Afghanistan, who put an end to the reign of neighbouring powers and established his own state. That is why he is clearly presented as the founder as well as the father (*baba*) of Afghanistan (see 5.4. National Heroes).

6. *Afghan rulers fought one another and failed to achieve unity and central government.*

Ahmad Shah Baba is presented as a paternalistic leader who succeeded in uniting the tribes living in Afghanistan; and, thus, establishing his own state. It is what gives him a special place in the history of Afghanistan (9-HI: 15). His successors, however, faced the problem of sustaining unity and establishing central authority across their lands (9-HI: 14, 15, 19, 33, 34, 36, 41).

This sub-theme on the lack of a central government is accompanied by another sub-theme on the rivalry between the *shahzadas*, or heirs to the throne. Especially in

Chapter 2 titled “Historical Events in Afghanistan in 1747-1879” in 9-HI (19, 25, 27, 35, 37), we see so many names fighting with, imprisoning or killing each other to achieve power. No in-depth information is provided other than names and dates. These stories of fratricide, vengeance, blood feud, etc. culminate in a strong theme of what is called the *tarburwali* (cousin rivalry) in Pashto, which is something akin to the anthropological concept of structural opposition in tribal societies. What is more, 9-HI (21) presents the British “resorting to the policy of ‘divide-and-rule’ [and benefiting] from the rivalry between commanders” (9-HI: 21). According to 9-HI (36), all this rivalry provided a perfect opportunity for the British to follow their colonial policies.

7. The British made a great effort to colonise Afghanistan.

In the modern history of Afghanistan that is presented in 9-HI, we see the emergence of two foreign powers on the borders of Afghanistan: the British and Russian Empires. Among the two, we clearly see the British as a coloniser and Russians as a foreign power offering shelter to the defeated Afghan Amirs. 9-HI (30, 36, 40, 43) reveals a pattern of Afghan Amirs, who are defeated in their fights with other contenders to the throne, turning to Russians for refuge by withdrawing to Bukhara (9-HI: 30, 36, 40, 43). This pattern, however, fades away after 1880 with the coming into power of Amir Abdurrahman (r. 1880-1901) who established his sole authority across Afghanistan, which was something inherited by his followers.

9-HI (30, 37, 41) presents, in more than one instance, the British urge for placing a British permanent resident in Afghanistan, specifically in Kabul, Qandahar and Herat in the 1830s. According to 9-HI (41), the motivation behind was to control the moves of Russia as well as to oblige the Amir to accept their domination. It was a dual motivation for keeping Russia at bay and paving the way for colonising Afghanistan.

9-HI presents the trilateral Lahore Treaty signed in 1838 secretly among the British India, Afghan Shah Shoja and Ranjit Singh, leader of the Sikhs. With this Treaty, the British are said to have taken the lands under the Sindh River, including Kashmir, Peshawar and Khyber, from Afghanistan and given it to the Sikhs. With this Treaty, the British also made Shah Shoja accept that he would pursue no foreign relations other than that with the British. In that regard, the Lahore Treaty seems like foreshadowing the Treaty of Gandamak to be signed in 1879.

The four-year period between 1839 and 1842 following the Lahore Treaty, which is known in the literature as the First Anglo-Afghan War, is presented in 9-HI almost like a British colony in Afghanistan. 9-HI (31) explains that a British colonial administration was formed under Shah Shoja, with William Macnaghten as his PM and Alexander Burnes as his interior minister. This colonial order came to an end with the British defeat in their first war with Afghans, as “[t]he painful experience of four-year domination made the British understand that they cannot stay in Afghanistan” (9-HI: 33).

The British would take their chance for a second time in 1878-1879, which is known in the literature as the Second Anglo-Afghan War. 9-HI (43) states that the British conquered Afghanistan in 1878 when they made Amir Yaqub Khan sign the “shameful Treaty of Gandamak” in 1879. Stating that this Treaty enabled the British to place permanent residents in Afghanistan, 9-HI makes a long explanation about the treaty:

Treaty of Gandamak was signed under such conditions that there was a *violent chaos all across the country* and even Amir Muhammad Yaqub Khan *lived under others’ protection*. He was *not recognised* as King all across the country. Therefore, the Treaty of Gandamak *did not have legal significance*. Because of that, Khyber, Kurram, Pishin and Sialkot separated from Afghanistan and became a part of the British India. *Political independence of Afghanistan was also exposed to danger*. (9-HI: 44) (italics mine)

This quotation reveals a disapproving attitude towards the Treaty of Gandamak. As the Amir of the time was not fully recognised across the country, it is claimed, the legal validity of this Treaty is in question. Furthermore, this quotation refers only to the loss of territory in consequence of this Treaty. The statement that the “political independence of Afghanistan was also exposed to danger” is a very implicit reference to the fact that Afghanistan became a British protected state with this Treaty. In other words, we see *selective amnesia* operating in the case of the 40-year period (1879-1919) when Afghanistan was a British protected state, which is a huge gap in the teaching of history. If this Treaty was not really recognised and Afghanistan remained fully independent throughout this period, then what is the meaning of including a chapter in 9-HI (51-52) on “How the People of Afghanistan Obtained their Independence from the British”?

8. *The British attacked Afghanistan two times, but Afghans defeated British colonialism.*

The textbooks of History describe what is known in the literature as Anglo-Afghan Wars as “British attacks on Afghanistan” (9-HI: 27, 29, 41, 43). It implies a conscious effort by the Afghan state to present these wars as British colonial initiatives. Indeed, it was the British who advanced into the lands of Afghans; not the vice versa. Especially regarding the first two wars, we see two major commonalities in describing them in the textbooks. First, both of these wars are presented as resulting from the British excuse of seeing Russian presence in Afghanistan (9-HI: 28), which perfectly reveals the position of Afghanistan swaying between the Russian and British Empires. Second, both of these wars are presented as resulting from the British imposition of certain treaties, i.e. Lahore Treaty in 1838 and Treaty of Gandamak in 1879, on Afghan Amirs in order to make Afghanistan into a colony, which caused reaction by the people of Afghanistan.

9-HI (31) describes the first British attack on Afghanistan as a “national uprising” with a number of factors behind: oppression of invaders, people’s dissatisfaction with them, imposition of the expenditures of the big army, minor income of the country, imposition of taxation and people’s hate of Shah Shoja. It should be underlined, however, that only the first two factors are directly related to the British while the rest is more related to the colonial administration of Shah Shoja. Factors like the formation of army and imposition of taxation reveal the clash between tribes and the centralising state. In other words, the usual tribe-state discord was also involved in the “national uprising” against the British.

9-HI (31) also states that regional revolts of the Ghilzai, Kohestan and other places were consolidated with the participation of the “national leaders” who were probably tribal khans of the time, and culminated in “national movements.” As *jihad* was declared, people took part in this “national *jihad*” (9-HI: 32). Consequently, “November 2, 1841 was, for Afghans, the big day of uprising and, for the big British Empire, the day of the defeat of colonialism in the east.” With this statement, Afghans are shown as defeating British colonialism through a “national *jihad*”:

The British view of occupying and dominating Afghanistan immediately came to an end...With this defeat, the *British prestige in entire Asia, even in the world, was damaged* while the British cabinet was changed. From that time

onwards, the *British changed their policy about Afghanistan* and left our country on its own for a long time. It was a *big honour granted to Afghans*. (9-HI: 32)

This statement as well as others (9-HI: 32, 33) present Afghans as the people who gave a lesson to British colonialism in Asia and the world. Obviously, it is shown as a source of pride for Afghans. In relation to that, we witness, in this part, an unusually more prevalent use of the adjective “national” with the words: “national uprising,” “national leaders,” “national movements” and “national *jihad*.” The obvious goal behind is to give the impression of a *national war of liberation* against British colonialism in Afghanistan.

As for the second British attack on Afghanistan, 9-HI (42) presents it as resulting from the British excuse of Russia’s increasing proximity to Afghanistan after capturing Khiva and Marv. Especially after the Russian dispatch of an ambassador to Kabul, “the British Indian state, became sure that an attack was the only way for protecting their own interests” (9-HI: 43). Starting their attack on the borders of Afghanistan, the British imposed on the Afghan Amir the “shameful Treaty of Gandamak” in 1879 (9-HI: 43). It was after this treaty that the people of Afghanistan arose again under the leadership of “*mujahedeen* leaders” in various regions. Notice that this war is also presented as a *jihad*. The war that devastated the British forces was the Battle of Maiwand in 1880, where we encounter the Malalai legend (see 5.4. National Heroes). “In this way, once again, the intrigue of the colonialists for capturing Afghanistan failed” (9-HI: 44).

As for the final war, we see information on it in the section on “How People of Afghanistan Obtained their Independence from the British” (9-HI: 51-52). We see this war breaking out immediately after the enthronement of Amir Amanullah in 1919: “All Afghanistan was surrounded with cries for freedom” (9-HI: 51). In other words, we do not see this war as a “British attack on Afghanistan;” but as an Afghan initiative; a *jihad* on the way to independence. “As a result of violent wars and pressure of the people who attacked the British in full flood, the British inevitably approved the restoration of the independence of Afghanistan” (9-HI: 52). With the Treaty of Rawalpindi signed in 1919, full independence of the country was officially recognised by the British (9-HI: 52). That is how the story of British colonialism in Afghanistan came to an end.

9. *Afghan Mujahedeen expelled the Soviet occupiers out of the country.*

As stated above, this is the only sub-theme that is derived not from the textbooks of History; but Patriotism. Specifically, Chapter 21 titled “*Jihad* of the People of Afghanistan against the Invasion of Soviet Union” in 7-PA provides the main data for this sub-theme, although we see patches of information on the Soviet invasion in all the textbooks of Patriotism. Here is a quotation that presents the background to the invasion:

After the bloody coup d'état³⁶ of 7 Saur 1357 SH, the *religion and holy beliefs of our Muslim people got into danger*. The communist government, in order to *spread atheism* and “Marxism,” started *killing people*, especially the scholars of religion [*ulama*], scientists and leaders of opinion in the country. It *prepared the ground* for the attack of the army of the Soviet Socialist Union on Afghanistan. The *Muslim nation of Afghanistan* declared a *jihad* against the oppression and the atheism of the communists as well as the attack of the Soviet Red Army which sought to occupy our homeland. (8-PA: 28) (italics mine)

This is one of the rare paragraphs on the Saur Revolution of 1978, after which a “communist government” was established in Afghanistan. What is emphasised here is the atheist and Marxist nature of this government which persecutes and kills the religious factions. Though the text fails to explain how this situation ‘prepares the ground’ for the Soviet attack, it is implied that the presence of a communist government in Afghanistan paves the way for the Soviet presence in this country. At the end, we see the “Muslim nation of Afghanistan” declaring a *jihad* both against the communist government and the Soviet Union. Here is the rest of the story:

...[W]hen the aggressor state of the Soviet Union attacked and occupied our dear country Afghanistan on Jadi 6, 1358 SH [December 27, 1979], *our Muslim and warrior people*, for the sake of *defending the sacred religion and the independence* and freedom of the homeland, set to wage a *jihad*. In this *jihad*, *all the brave men and women* of this Islamic country participated in a unified and integrated manner. (7-PA: 66) (italics mine)

Here, we see the “Muslim and warrior people” of Afghanistan waging *jihad* against the Soviet Union for defending Islam as well as the independence of their homeland. What needs emphasis is that we see both men *and* women taking part in *jihad*. Besides, the text stresses that Afghans and their enemies were on unequal terms:

³⁶ The Saur Revolution of 1978 in Afghanistan. See Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan.

In this attack, the state of the Soviet republics was equipped with thousands of tanks, cannons, warplanes and tens of thousands of armed and trained soldiers; yet, the *Mujahedeen of Afghanistan did not possess much* except for ordinary guns and scarce facilities. (7-PA: 66) (italics mine)

Here, we see the fighters specifically named as the Mujahedeen which means those waging *jihad* in Arabic language. Despite being poorly equipped (ignoring the military and financial aid provided by the US), the Mujahedeen still got victorious:

Muslim people of Afghanistan, with empty hands but with great hearts full of faith and trust in God, uprose against the army of the Soviet Union, the Red Army, known as one of the strongest armies of the world. After ten years of armed *jihad*, they *humiliated the Soviets and expelled them out of their homeland*. In that period, *Afghan Mujahedeen wrote one of the most glorious epics of human history* in the battle of truth [*haqq*]³⁷ against superstition [*batel*]. (7-PA: 29) (italics mine)

This quotation reveals the main idea of this sub-theme whereby we see the Afghan Mujahedeen expelling the Soviet occupiers out of Afghanistan, which is presented as “one of the most glorious epics of human history.” Fighting in the name of Islam, the Mujahedeen also help the Truth (God) defeat the Superstition, which further strengthens the Islamic dimension of this war.

With this final sub-theme, we reach the end of our examination of the sub-themes emerging from all the textbooks of History. On the whole, this examination reveals that the discourse of History textbooks has a heavily military content which presents the historical actors living in the lands of Afghanistan involved in continuous wars and fights against their enemies. In this discourse, we see the inhabitants of Afghanistan largely in a defensive position, defending their freedom and expelling the foreign attackers and occupiers out of their lands. In the medieval history from the 16th to the 18th centuries, we see the lands of today’s Afghanistan occupied by three regional powers, i.e. the Shaybanids, the Safavids and the Baburids, for two and a half centuries; then in the 18th century we see the people of Qandahar, i.e. Pashtuns, rising up against their Safavid rulers; then in the 19th century we see the people of Afghanistan defeating the British Empire in three wars and finally grabbing their independence in 1919; and in the late 20th century we see the Afghan

³⁷ The Arabic words *haqq* and *batel* constitute an important dichotomy in Islamic faith, which we see in constant struggle. *Haqq* means both ‘truth’ and ‘God’ while *batel* means everything outside the *haqq*, including the superstitions.

Mujahedeen defeating and expelling the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. This discourse on defending the homeland and defeating the enemies is presented also in the textbooks of Patriotism:

Our country, throughout its history, has been *attacked by the superpowers of the world*; however, the attackers, each time, faced with the reaction of the *freedom-seeking people* of this country. The English, in whose lands *the sun never sets*, attacked our country for three times. But each time, they faced *tremendous and shameful defeats*. Defeat of the former Union of the Soviet [Socialist] Republics by our people was among the *shameful defeats*, at the end of which the *world was saved from the monster of Soviet communism* while the resistance and struggles of the people of this land became *an example for other nations living under the yoke of foreigners*. (8-PA: 30) (italics mine)

This quotation seems like a summary of the discourse of the textbooks of History. It presents an Afghanistan that is placed, each time, against the great powers of the world including the British Empire and the Soviet Union. In both cases, we see Afghanistan changing the course of the world history by defeating British colonialism and “the monster of Soviet communism.” This historical discourse is also in line with the depiction of the homeland of Afghanistan as a “graveyard of conquerors,” as discussed in 7.5. *Watan*. At the end, people of Afghanistan emerge as “an example for other nations” living under foreign rule. Therefore:

Glory to the *proud and enemy-breaker nation of Afghanistan!* (9-PA: 40) (italics mine)

The reason behind so much emphasis on Afghans being enemy-breakers might be a tacit statement that the current occupiers of Afghanistan will also be defeated and leave one day. The implied reference may be to the NATO forces which have been in this country within the last twenty years. It may be an implied effort to appease the people, including the Taliban, who are against the presence of foreign forces in today’s Afghanistan.

A final point to be made under this theme on Common History is on the teaching of history which comes up as a theme in the interviews. The general criticism made in this regard is that the textbooks of History reflect the history of Pashtuns only. Especially non-Pashtun respondents criticise the teaching of history in Afghanistan:

EXPERT-1: Our textbooks promote *categorisation of citizens*. Only the deeds and kings of a *certain group* is given, there is *only one group ruling Afghanistan*, and the poor think, then who are we?...History books show all the *kings coming from one tribe*. There are two messages going to the students:

Only one group will always be ruling; so you will always have to obey. And the second is that the rest does not have the capacity. (italics mine)

EXPERT-1, who is a male Tajik, criticises the textbooks for ‘categorising’ the citizens of Afghanistan by presenting the history of only a “certain group,” i.e. the ruling group in Afghanistan by which is meant Pashtuns. By identifying the non-Pashtuns with “the poor,” EXPERT-1 carries this controversy to a dichotomy between the ‘rich’ Pashtuns and the ‘poor’ non-Pashtuns. In this dichotomy, we see two main groups: (1) the ‘rich’ Pashtuns who “will always be ruling;” and (2) the ‘poor’ non-Pashtuns who “will always have to obey” and who do not “have the capacity” to rule. EXPERT-1 criticises such “categorisation of citizens,” as it gives wrong messages to the students. In other words, EXPERT-1 is for a more inclusive understanding in the teaching of history. Probably aware of such criticisms, EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, underlines including everybody in the curriculum:

EXPERT-10: In the teaching of history, *all the ancestors* of the people living here *must be* included without any differences, because they were *all fighting for Afghanistan. All tribes* living in Afghanistan have *victories and honours*. Everybody has the *honour of building empires*. The Khwarazm Shahs, the Seljuk, etc. were the empires established by the Turks; they were the *Turktabar* [of Turkish descent]. The Lodi dynasty and Sur dynasty in India were established by Pashtuns. The Samanids and the Sassanids were established by the Persians or the Tajik. (italics mine)

What EXPERT-10 states here seems like an answer to the criticisms of EXPERT-1. EXPERT-10 says that the textbooks of History *must be* including all the empires built by different *aqwam*. The word “must be” here may indicate something lacking. In other words, this is what a textbook of History must include in theory in his opinion; yet, in reality it fails to function that way. Even while those empires listed by EXPERT-10 are, indeed, presented in the textbooks of History, it does not change the fact that Pashtuns emerge as the main actors of history in this discourse, as an entity called Afghanistan comes into being. Of course, it is not possible for students to detect Pashtuns specifically in this discourse; it is the adults who make such criticisms. The textbooks of History do not use the ethnonym Pashtun for even once and use the ethnonym Afghan instead, in order to give the impression of a ‘common history.’ Yet, they are even more criticised for presenting what is, in fact, Pashtun history as the general history of Afghanistan.

Our major goal here in this theme is to reveal how the textbooks of History construct the ‘memory’ of the nation of Afghanistan. Thus, it is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the writing of history in Afghanistan and offer solutions for its inherent problems. Suffice it to say that these criticisms about history-writing in Afghanistan are, of course, part of the larger social issues that are encountered in other themes such as 7.4. *Afghaniyat*. The issue presented here may not be fully understood outside the general mind-set and perceptions about the society, the nation and the *qawm* in Afghanistan. In a society where the idea of nation is conceptualised as something made up of numerous *aqwam* (see 7.3. *Qawm*), it is only natural that each one of these *aqwam* ask for their own histories to be written as part of the ‘common history.’ That is exactly the point where history is conceptualised as a ‘common’ history of all the *aqwam*; failing to be a ‘national’ history addressing all the individuals, i.e. citizens. There is one critical question: How can a history textbook include the histories of all the *aqwam* when those *aqwam* historically appear as the enemies of one another? That would be a chaotic textbook of ‘*qawmi* histories’ which would just present each *qawm* fighting one another. At this point, we understand that it is not the content of the textbooks; but rather, the understanding of ‘common history’ that complicates the writing of a ‘national history’ in Afghanistan. Once again, the main issue here is with the conceptualisation of nation which will be revealed more clearly at the end of the entire analysis.

5.6. Conclusion

This first chapter on data analysis constitutes the first step in examining the idea of nation as it emerges out of the discourse of education defined within the limits of this thesis. In this first step, this chapter has examined the symbols of the nation including the national flag, national anthem and national heroes as well as the memory of the nation which comes up as common history.

A detailed analysis of the primary resources brings the national flag to the fore as the strongest national symbol in Afghanistan. Two major reasons may be counted behind it. First, the national flag is associated with the homeland rather than the state, as it is easier for the people of Afghanistan to identify with the homeland (see Chapter 8 Discussion). Second, the national flag, with all the Islamic figures and inscriptions on

it, physically appears as the flag of a Muslim country. That is how it is perceived to be representing all the people of Afghanistan which is said to be 99% Muslim.

As for the second national symbol, we see the national anthem which displays the sociology of Afghanistan perfectly, describing the homeland; listing the fourteen *aqwam*; and emphasising on the Islamic faith. Yet, we do not see a single description or explanation about the content of the national anthem in any of the textbooks. Such omit of information most probably results from the controversial nature of the national anthem resulting from its lyrics in Pashto, which is something confirmed by the interviews. Due to criticisms especially by non-Pashtuns, we see the national anthem much less embraced as a national symbol compared to the national flag.

As the third and final symbol of nation, we see the national heroes which appear as a new symbol encountered only in the textbooks of Patriotism. Based on the discourse of these textbooks, seven groups of national heroes emerge: (1) founding fathers, (2) historical leaders of science, (3) the *ghazis*, (4) the founder of independence, (5) the *shohada*, (6) loyal servants of the homeland, and (7) women of courage. Who comes forward being clearly defined as “national heroes” are the *ghazis* and the *shohada*, which reveals a predominantly Islamic understanding of heroism in Afghanistan.

And finally at the end, we have a look into the memory of the nation of Afghanistan as it is revealed in the nine major sub-themes derived from the textbooks of History. This examination reveals a discourse of history that has a heavily military content, presenting the historical actors of Afghanistan involved in continuous wars and fights against their enemies. These actors are presented largely in a defensive position, defending their freedom and expelling foreign attackers and occupiers out of their lands, be it the the Shaybanids, the Safavids and the Baburids in the 16th-18th centuries or the British Empire in the 19th century or the Soviet Union in the late 20th century. Such victories over world powers portrays an Afghanistan that is able to change the course of the world history. And this historical discourse helps construct the memory of a warrior, freedom-loving, anti-colonialist and enemy-killer nation.

As we complete our examination of the concrete national symbols and national memory of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as they emerge in the discourse of education, we may now pass on to analyse the more abstract conceptualisations about nation in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

WHAT EDUCATION BUILDS IN AFGHANISTAN: CONCEPTS OF NATION

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has shown us the concrete symbols and memory of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as they are presented in the discourse of education. It is now time to move from the concrete to the abstract and examine the concepts related to the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan*. Our principal goal here is to present the major themes that come forward as coherent concepts of nation in the discourse of education.

In the discourse of education defined within the limits of this thesis, we see the emergence of the following major concepts: (1) national unity, together with commonalities of people; (2); citizenship; (3) national will; and (4) national interests. It needs to be underlined that these are the concepts derived from the primary resources of this thesis; that is, derived specifically from the context of Afghanistan and may differ from the concepts that describe other countries. In the context of Afghanistan, most of these concepts also have Islamic content, just as the case with symbols. It needs to be reminded beforehand that they should not be viewed as purely secular concepts; but as highly interwoven with an Islamic framework.

6.2. National Unity (*Wahdat-e Milli*)

National unity, or *wahdat-e milli*, is a concept that is frequently used in the political scene of Afghanistan. It is very common to hear it in discussion programmes on TV or in the social media. Even the name of the government in the term 2014-2019 was the *Hokumat-e Wahdat-e Milli* or National Unity Government (NUG) which was formed with a power-sharing agreement between Ashraf Ghani as the President and

Abdullah Abdullah as the Chief Executive Officer. The NUG, in a way, represented the government of a *united front* against the Taliban.

For our purposes, we will be examining the emergence of the idea of national unity as a theme in the discourse of education. As the first and foremost primary resource, the Constitution of 2004 reveals a reference to this concept right at the beginning in its Preamble which explains the purpose and philosophy of the Constitution:

Preamble:...We the people of Afghanistan...in order to *strengthen national unity*, safeguard independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country...Have, herein, approved this constitution... (italics mine)

Here, we see that this Constitution has been approved by the “people of Afghanistan” for the sake of achieving a strong national unity among other things. It means that the Constitution itself is as a tool for strengthening national unity. Furthermore, the Education Law also presents national unity as one of its objectives:

Article Two: The main objectives of this law are as follows:

...

2- Strengthen Islamic spirit, patriotism, *national unity*, preservation of independence, and defense of territorial integrity, protection of interest, national pride, and loyalty to the republic system of Afghanistan. (MoE 2008) (italics mine)

This article is where the sixteen objectives of the Education Law are listed. The very first objective is on the right to education of all the citizens of Afghanistan, which is immediately followed by the second objective that mentions strengthening national unity. In other words, it is among the goals of the Education Law as well as the Constitution to reinforce national unity. In achieving this goal, the Constitution, in another article, directly commissions the state:

Article Six: The state shall be obligated to create a prosperous and progressive society based on social justice, preservation of human dignity, protection of human rights, realization of democracy, *attainment of national unity* as well as equality between all peoples and tribes [*aqwam wa qabail*] and balance development of all areas of the country. (italics mine)

Here, we see a designation of duty for the state to create a prosperous society based on a number of factors including the attainment of national unity. We come across the same idea in the interviews, as well:

EXPERT-2: ...the policy of the government in education must be to unite the country based on common values.

EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, says that the government must have a policy of education for uniting the country based on “common values” or “commonalities” which is a term much used by my respondents (see 6.2.1. Commonalities of People).

Following these references to national unity in the official documents, now is the time to examine how this concept appears in the textbooks. We see several specific chapters in the textbooks of Patriotism and Social Studies that discuss this concept:

- Chapter 4 titled “National Unity” in 8-PA
- The section on “National Unity” in Chapter 1 titled “The State” in 6-SS
- Chapter 18 titled “Islamic Brotherhood, Basis of National Unity” in 7-PA
- Chapter 23 titled “Unity and Solidarity, A Vital Necessity” in 9-PA
- Chapter 12 titled “Unity and Solidarity of Afghans in Defending the Homeland” in 7-PA

Here, we organise all the data coming from these chapters, moving from the more general to the more specific. In this flow, we first encounter definitions; more, specifically, what *unity* itself means, before *national* unity. We see unity presented as “a principle of social life” (9-PA: 67) which is necessary for the formation of a society and state. 9-PA explains why people in the world unite among themselves:

Peoples of the countries in the world have *unified* among themselves for the sake of *achieving their supreme goals* and formed the state. For achieving peace and happiness, they work for the sake of their homeland; protect their freedom; establish strong economic and political foundations; and take their country to high levels of development and progress. (9-PA: 67) (italics mine)

Here, we see the emergence of the state which comes to life when people unify among themselves with the purpose of achieving their goals. Then, we see how these “unified” people act for achieving peace and happiness. Following this statement, the text claims that it is not possible to do all these things by oneself all alone:

It is the *responsibility of nations and aqwam*...Therefore, unity and solidarity means the *association and solidarity of individuals and aqwam and groups* for the sake of achieving specified supreme goals. (9-PA: 68) (italics mine)

What needs emphasis here is that we see people uniting to form a state on different social levels. Individuals may unify one by one while *aqwam* may unify in the form of groups. From this quotation, we do not understand whether this is an individual-

based state like a modern citizen-state; or a *qawm*-based state like a loose tribal confederation. This is a vital point that should be kept in mind during the analysis.

After this general conceptualisation of unity comes the concept of *national* unity:

“National unity” is made up of two words: “national” and “unity.” “Unity” means the *coming together of scattered parts* while the word “national,” which is rooted in the word “nation,” means the *affiliation and relationship of people with the state and the country* in which they live and *possess its nationality* [*tabaiyat*]. (8-PA: 8) (italics mine)

Here, the word “national” implies a relationship between people and their state as well as country. In this case, national unity means the unity of all the people’s affiliation to the state and to a country. The rest of this chapter unfolds this conceptualisation better:

Being a social and political expression, *national unity* means that the citizens [*atba*] of a country, who consist of various *aqwam*, races, languages and regions, *live under a single flag and unite together* on the basis of common religious, historical, cultural and social relations as well as common economic interests. (8-PA: 8) (italics mine)

This quotation reveals important information about the conceptualisation of nation in Afghanistan. In brief, it states that national unity exists where the citizens of a country live in a united manner based on certain common relations and interests. These citizens may belong to different *aqwam*, races, languages or regions; yet, they may still live together under a single flag. Although the word “citizens” implies a legal relationship with an official polity, i.e. the state, we do not see these citizens living under *a single state*; but under *a single flag*. Though the national flag may also be regarded as a representation of the state, 5.2. National Flag shows that it represents the homeland more than the state in the case of Afghanistan. Besides, the idea of citizens living under a single flag, once again, highlights the national flag as the strongest national symbol in Afghanistan. As for the common bases of national unity that the rest of the quotation reveals, they will be examined below in 6.2.1. Commonalities of People.

Following these definitions of unity and national unity, we may now turn to look at the elements of national unity displayed as follows:

Each time we look at the history of world countries, we find out that the most important factors and *elements of national unity* consist of: relations of race and

language, *qawm and tribe* [*qawm wa qabeelah*], religion and faith, culture and history, economic interests and living together. (7-PA: 55) (italics mine)

This quotation examines the elements of national unity that are seen in the history of world countries. In what follows comes up a fundamental criticism:

Of course the role and impact of these elements on the national unity of the world nations varies; some nations have based their national unity *upon the relations of race, qawm and tribe*; entered into *contests of superiority*; and launched *wars of race* [ethnic wars]. Some nations *colonised other aqwam and nations on the basis of domination and economic interests*; set to *plunder their capital*. On the other hand, there are nations which, by employing the elements of national unity, have strengthened the grounds of welfare, progress, peace and security both for themselves and others. (7-PA: 55) (italics mine)

This quotation gives the example of those nations which base their national unity specifically on racial, tribal and *qawmi* relations. These nations are criticised for growing chauvinist feelings of racial superiority towards other nations and launching wars based on race. Then, the text gives the example of coloniser nations which plunder the capital of other nations that they dominate. And finally, we see a better example of other nations that employ the elements of national unity for good reasons. This quotation actually prepares the grounds for presenting the major element of national unity in Afghanistan, which is something different from the ones presented until now, i.e. Islam. But for now, in order not to diverge from our path, we may turn to see how unity and national unity emerge in the case of Afghanistan specifically:

People of this country, having various *aqwam* and tribes [*aqwam wa qabayel*]; different cultures and languages; and diverse customs and traditions, *have always unified against the world of opposers and occupiers*, striking the toughest blow on the *enemies of the homeland*. (8-PA: 37-38) (italics mine)

Right after this quotation, 8-PA (38) presents three such examples of foreign enemies: (1) Alexander the Great; (2) the British Empire; and (3) the Soviet Union. It is explained how these three enemies were crushed by Afghans who united against them. What is important about this quotation is that it reveals a fundamental *condition of unity* in Afghanistan: the existence of a *common enemy*. As stated here, people of Afghanistan are made up of diverse *aqwam* which come together in the face of enemies and defeat them. Such a picture of diverse *aqwam*, and not diverse *individuals*, unifying against a common enemy, evokes a tribal pattern where the only possibility for unification among tribes is the rise of threat that is viewed as a

common enemy (Sahlins: 1968; Gellner: 1983). The same discourse is seen in the following quotation, as well:

Sometimes Afghans may have difficulty and controversy among themselves, which is a requirement of common life; yet, they unite in the face of enemy...Each time external occupiers attempt to assault this country, Afghans put aside all their internal controversies and give a sharp answer to the enemy. (9-PA: 12) (italics mine)

This quotation explains the controversies among Afghans as a requisite of living together; as something normal. What matters is that Afghans know how to cast aside their controversies and unite when faced with an enemy. This specific understanding of national unity is pervasive across all the textbooks, whereby it is consistently presented primarily as a requirement for **defeating the enemy**. History textbooks abound with such examples, one of which is given below:

In the second British attack on the sanctum [hareem] of our country, Ghazi Muhammad Jan Khan Wardak, with the consolidation of national unity, inflicted heavy defeats on the British forces...Wardak did not think of his own interests or those of his family. He only thought about the freedom of the homeland and the peace of all the people of Afghanistan. He knew that the honour and chastity; dignity and freedom of the united country; solidarity and consonance of all the Afghans were to be protected. Therefore, he emphasised on the necessity of the national unity of his people. (8-PA: 34) (italics mine)

In this quotation, there is a story told about a national hero, Ghazi Muhammad Jan Khan Wardak, who fights against the British in their second attack on Afghanistan (1878-1879). Wardak defeats the British “with the consolidation of national unity,” by which is probably meant the unification of all the tribes against a common enemy, i.e. the British. The text shows how Wardak values freedom of the homeland and its people more than “his own interests or those of his family” and probably also those of his tribe, acting with the goal of protecting the homeland. The message given here is that national unity comes before personal, familial and also tribal interests.

In line with this message, we see other national heroes in other chapters, who are presented as taking heed of national unity in order to establish their power against foreigners. On top of these national heroes comes Mirwais Khan Nika, the ‘grandfather’ of Afghanistan (see 5.4. National Heroes), who has a quote on unity:

“Each time you fail to unite; you cannot keep away the foreigners’ yoke from your shoulders.” (9-PA: 19)

This is a rare direct quotation from the mouth of a historical personality. Here, the ‘grandfather’ of Afghanistan warns his ‘children,’ the Afghans, that they should be united to be free from foreign rule. In such an understanding, we see an association formed between national unity and **independence from foreigners**.

Another textbook, 6-SS, in its section titled “National Unity” presents a story that perfectly links to the father metaphor. Titled as “Advice of an Experienced Father” (6-SS: 12), this story is about a wise father who teaches his children how a group of sticks cannot be broken; while it is possible to break the same sticks one by one. The message is that it is necessary to stick together and unite so as not to be broken by others. The analogy here is that when there is unity among the people of a country, it will not be harmed by foreign enemies. This story supports the idea that the concept of national unity is evoked primarily as a tool of defence against enemies. In other words, there is, primarily, an external understanding of national unity in Afghanistan.

Only secondarily do we see an internal understanding of unity whereby it is presented as a requirement for progress and stability:

Unity and alliance are the *signs of the strength and glory of nations*. Nations seeking to be powerful and proud have *no other way* than unity and alliance. (8-PA: 8) (italics mine)

Here, unity is presented as a sign of power for nations. That is to say, the more united a nation is, the more powerful it will be. In fact, unity is suggested as the *only* way for nations seeking to be powerful and glorious. One of my respondents, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, reveals a very similar understanding of this association between unity and **progress**:

EXPERT-7: Unless we become unified, we will not progress.

As we look back at the history of Afghanistan, however, we do not see a bright picture according to the primary resources. As presented in 5.5. Common History, History textbooks reveal a theme titled “Afghan rulers fought one another and failed to achieve unity and central government.” This theme reveals the legacy of a tribal polity that struggles to centralise political power in the face of continuous internal strife. Under this theme, we see many examples of rivalry between the heirs to the Afghan throne who perpetually fight among themselves, undermining the process of centralisation.

We encounter a kind of warning against this situation in the future projections for Afghanistan. 6-SS includes a section which gives a very brief historical summary of the recent years in Afghanistan. Immediately after the account of history, the text takes us to today's Afghanistan where we see the emergence of the concept of national unity:

It is important that Afghans *strengthen national unity with alliance and confederation*; compensate for the destruction of war through science and knowledge; and turn Afghanistan into a prosperous and developed country. (6-SS: 17) (italics mine)

This quotation presents three major targets for Afghans today: (1) strengthening national unity; (2) improving science and knowledge; and (3) making Afghanistan a prosperous country. This seems like a roadmap for the future of Afghanistan, where the attainment of national unity emerges as the first and foremost objective.

As the data above suggests, national unity is something called upon for three major motivations: (1) defeating a common enemy; (2) being independent from foreign rule; and (3) making progress. Among these motivations, the first two suggest an external conceptualisation of national unity while the final one suggests an internal conceptualisation. Following these motivations behind national unity, we may now turn to see the major objectives of national unity as listed in 8-PA:

- 1- Respect for and protection of the *unity of the country* and the *sacred religious beliefs* of its people.
- 2- *Freedom, justice and equality* among all the people before law *without any kind of discrimination or privilege*.
- 3- *Harmony between the nation and the government* in political, economic and social affairs for the sake of economic and social welfare of the individuals and the society.
- 4- Having the army, the police and *national institutions which are related to the entire nation* and not to a specific group, *qawm*, race or language. (8-PA: 8-9) (italics mine)

As we see, the primary objective of national unity is protecting the unity of the country as well as the religious beliefs of its inhabitants. In other words, national unity is needed to protect religion in the first place (see 6.2.1. Commonalities of People). In the second article, we see the objective of establishing, first, freedom, which is a fundamental value in Afghanistan; and, second, justice and equality among all the people before law, which is expected to remove all kinds of discrimination or privilege, by which is, probably, meant the *qawmi* discriminations

or *qawmi* privileges. The final two articles in this list come forward as vital points. In the third article, we see the mention of a polity, i.e. “the government,” in relation to the concept of national unity. Yet, it is not the “state” but the “government” that is being referred to. Thus, the third objective of establishing a “harmony between the nation and the government” may sound a bit problematic, considering the fact that not all the citizens of a country have to be in harmony with their actual “government,” as it may not reflect their political choices. What is meant here is closer to the idea of a harmony between the nation and the state as an *institution*; yet, the usual word choice of “government” over the “state” which we encounter many times in the discourse of education leads to misconceptualisations and misinterpretations (see Chapter 8 Discussion). It is in the fourth article that we see the concept of national *institutions* which are supposed to be related to the entire nation and not to a particular group. The fact that their independence is underlined shows a tendency to view them as *institutions*; and not the branches or tools of a “government.” In line with this idea, 8-PA literally invites Afghans to declare a *jihad* against all sorts of factionalisms:

For strengthening *national unity*, it is the duty of each patriotic Afghan to *wage a jihad* against all kinds of tribal, racial, linguistic or partisan prejudices; because, *our strength lies in our unity*. (8-PA: 8) (italics mine)

This is a fundamental statement that perfectly reveals the social scene in Afghanistan. “Patriotic” Afghans are invited to wage an Islamic war, i.e. *jihad*, against tribalism, racialism, linguistic factionalism or partisanship. In other words, waging a *jihad* against separation is presented as a way of “strengthening national unity.” Here, Islam is summoned as the primary point of commonality to act as a force of unity, as it is viewed as *the* foundation of national unity in Afghanistan (see 6.2.1. Commonalities of People).

While inviting Afghans to fight against factionalism and tribalism, 8-PA also gives a direct quotation from the Article Four of the Constitution that lists the names of the fourteen *aqwam* living in Afghanistan. The same list is revealed in the section titled “National Unity” in 6-SS, as well:

In Afghanistan many *aqwam* live. *Aqwam* of Afghanistan are: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Pashayi, Nuristani, Aymaq, Arab, Pamiri, Kirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujur, Brahui and Hindu...The state is obliged to provide services to all the *aqwam*. All the *aqwam* respect the rights of one another *so*

that national unity becomes stronger. National flag, national anthem, national police, national army and education of all are the signs of the unity of all the aqwam of Afghanistan. (6-SS: 12) (italics mine)

This is a crucial quotation that shows the understanding of nation and national unity in Afghanistan. We may paraphrase it shortly as follows: Many *aqwam* live in Afghanistan; the state must provide services to all the *aqwam*; all the *aqwam* must respect the rights of one another; and there are certain signs denoting the unity of all the *aqwam* in Afghanistan. What we see here is that the main actors in the formation of national unity are the *aqwam*. It is in line with the quotation seen further above which gives the responsibility of establishing unity to the *aqwam*. In other words, the *aqwam* come together for the sake of forming a society as well as a state. In such a conceptualisation, national unity is defined not on the basis of individual citizens; but on groups called the *aqwam*. That is why national unity depends on the groups' respect for the rights of other groups; and not the citizens' respect for the rights of other citizens. Here, rights are also defined on the basis of groups; not individuals. Furthermore, we see a relationship between the state and groups, whereby the state has obligations towards the *aqwam*; not towards the citizens. The reason is that the state is formed by the coming together of the *aqwam*; not citizens. In consequence, we see a state-*aqwam* relationship here, instead of a state-citizen relationship. In sum, what is understood from national unity is the unity of the *aqwam* of Afghanistan; not the unity of individual citizens of Afghanistan. That is why national symbols like the flag and national institutions like the police are the “signs of the unity of all the *aqwam* of Afghanistan.” It is for this reason that the sections titled “National Unity” in the textbooks *do* include a listing of the names of the fourteen *aqwam*, underlining their official existence as well as recognition.

6.2.1. Commonalities of People (*Moshtarakha-ye Mardom*)

In order to fully comprehend the conceptualisation of national unity in Afghanistan, we need to understand what is suggested as its basis. As seen above, national unity is presented as something founded upon certain “commonalities” among the people of Afghanistan both in the words of my respondents and as the title of Chapter 5 in 9-PA suggests: “Commonalities of the Nation of Afghanistan.” This chapter will be our departing point to examine the concept of “commonalities” which frequently comes up in relation to the concept of national unity:

People living in different corners of the world have *commonalities around which they come together*. It is these *common characteristics through which they reinforce their national unity*. Values and elements such as: religion; sect; history; culture; language; race; economic interests; living together; and other values and motivations are known as the *foundational elements of nations and states*. (9-PA: 14) (italics mine)

According to this quotation, people unite around certain commonalities such as religion, culture, history, etc., which are described as the “foundational elements of nations and states.” In other words, the bases of national unity are, at the same time, the foundation stones of nations and states, which implies the idea of a nation-state.

Following this general view, here is how the concept of commonalities is explained specifically in relation to Afghanistan:

People of Afghanistan have *a lot of commonalities* which has brought together the inhabitants of this land in different periods. The *most important commonalities* of our people are the holy religion of Islam, land, history, culture, language, living together and common interests. (7-PA: 56) (italics mine)

The opening statement of this quotation claims that people of Afghanistan have “a lot of commonalities,” which may not easily offer itself as a point of consensus in this country where there is much talk on *differences* rather than *commonalities*. Even the “most important commonalities” such as “land, history, culture, language, living together and common interests” may work towards establishing differences, as well. These commonalities may, at the same time, be the commonalities within a *qawm*, since each *qawm* is believed to have a specific village or province, history, culture, language and interests of its own. In other words, what is presented as commonalities may work towards uniting as well as dividing. Although the religion of Islam is offered as a point of commonality among the *aqwam*, it may also become a point of separation considering the sectarian division between the Sunni sect and the Shia sect in Afghanistan (see 7.2. Islam.) Still, there is an effort to present Islam as the most important commonality:

Since the time when the sun of Islam sprayed its lights into this land and the people of this country converted into the religion of Islam, *religious beliefs have come to form the most important and most substantial commonalities* of the people of this land. (9-PA: 15) (italics mine)

This quotation historicises the rise of Islam as “the most important and most substantial” commonality in Afghanistan, which is in line with the historical

discourse presented in 5.5. Common History. The only other commonality that we see before the arrival of Islam is the presentation of the lands of Afghanistan as “the original home of the ancient Aryans” (9-PA: 14), which is not much emphasised.

In solidifying the discourse on Islam as the major commonality, the textbooks also make references to the Islamic resources including the Holy Quran and the *hadith* of Prophet Muhammad. Both 8-PA (69) and 9-PA (68) consistently cite the same Quranic verse that states: “And hold fast all together to the rope of God and never be divided” (Surah Al-Imran 3: 103). Through this verse, the textbooks explain how God forbids separation and discord among the members of the *ummah*. Besides, both 7-PA (56) and 8-PA (69) cite the same *hadith* of the Prophet stating that Muslims are like a single body and each time a part suffers, all the other parts feel the same pain.

In the discourse of education, then, Islam emerges as *the most common commonality* among the people of Afghanistan. Chapter 4 titled “National Unity” in 8-PA openly declares **Islam as the foundation of national unity** in Afghanistan:

The religion of Islam forms the *foundations of brotherhood; or national unity of the people of Afghanistan. The chains of faith and belief link our nation* in such a way that our compatriots work together in a united way for the independence, peace and progress of the dear country. (8-PA: 8) (italics mine)

This quotation basically presents national unity as a kind of “brotherhood.” This idea becomes more evident in Chapter 18 titled “Islamic Brotherhood, Basis of National Unity” in 7-PA, which displays a discourse on Islamic brotherhood:

The most important commonalities of our people are the *holy religion of Islam, land, history, culture, language, living together and common interests*. Of course, each of these elements have roles in national unity; yet, *Islamic brotherhood constitutes the foundation of the national unity of the people of Afghanistan*. (7-PA: 56) (italics mine)

This quotation distinguishes Islamic brotherhood as *the foundation of national unity*, among other commonalities. According to the rest of the text, it is because Islamic brotherhood; (1) makes all the inhabitants of the country brothers with one another; (2) establishes brotherhood, equality, affection and sincerity among them; (3) unravels feelings of sympathy among them; (4) unites them against enemy in cases of danger and foreign attacks; and (5) establishes peace, reconciliation, security and solidarity while extinguishing enmity among them (7-PA: 56). In other words, Islamic brotherhood is presented as the only commonality that has the potent of

establishing a sense of brotherhood, equality, sympathy, peace and unison against the enemy among all the inhabitants of Afghanistan. The final conclusion is as follows:

Therefore, *Islamic brotherhood is stronger and more stable* than the other bonds and links...None of the other elements or slogans can bring together the Muslim people of this land as much as conviction and Islamic brotherhood. (7-PA: 56)

In other words, Islam appears as the only bond that has the ability to establish national unity. No other commonality will have enough power to bring together “the Muslim people of this land.” Similar ideas are also encountered in the interviews:

EXPERT-2: Between the many ethnic groups living in Afghanistan, we do not see many common points. So, Islam acts as a common point between them.

EXPERT-3: We are Muslims, we have commonalities.

Both of these respondents, the first of whom is a male Hazara while the second is a male Pashtun, join the same discourse in presenting Islam the primary commonality among the people of Afghanistan. What EXPERT-3 means to say is that they are Muslims, *therefore*, they have commonalities. In other words, having the same Muslim faith automatically brings forth certain commonalities both in faith and practice. EXPERT-2 supports that view by presenting Islam as a common point between the “many ethnic groups living in Afghanistan” which do not have many common points. It gives the impression that if it were not for Islam, these ethnic groups, or the *aqwam*, would have failed to grow a sense of unity. 8-PA also confirms this view:

...Islamic brotherhood melts away the discords and differences in qawm, race, language, colour, tribe [qabeelah], social leaning and attitude, while erasing discrimination among them. The reason is that the only criterion of excellence among people is piety [taqwa] which is the door to all the virtues and goodness. (8-PA: 68) (italics mine)

This quotation underlines the power of Islamic brotherhood in neutralising all types of discords and differences among people while preventing discrimination. The main reason is that Islam views humans not through their characteristics like *qawm* or language; but through their level of piety and nothing else. That is why it is presented as a point of unification for the *aqwam* both in the textbooks and the interviews.

As for the commonalities other than Islam, we see the following in the interviews:

EXPERT-7: From grade one onwards, students learn about the issue of *national unity* and national culture, which is based on the Afghan culture, the Islamic culture and being a human of morality and progress. The main issue here is *to get people closer to one another*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-3: We have a book called Patriotism (*Watandoosti*) in grades 7-9. This book teaches the *historical, cultural and civic commonalities* like Islam and *Afghaniyat*, or Afghanness. (italics mine)

In these two quotations, EXPERT-7, a male Uzbek, defines three bases of national unity as: (1) Afghan culture; (2) Islamic culture; and (3) humanity while EXPERT-3, a male Pashtun, refers to two commonalities as Islam and Afghanness. Especially the list given by EXPERT-7 seems very similar to one of the major objectives of education defined in the Curriculum Framework (2003: 13) for generating a three-layered identity for Afghan students: (1) moderate Muslims; (2) true Afghans; and (3) civilised human beings. It is important that we see a reflection of this objective in the conceptualisation of national unity, or the vice versa. It is these three bases of national unity that are supposed to “get people closer to one another” and establish national unity.

Having examined Islam, now is the time to look at the two other points of commonality: Afghanness and humanity. About **humanity**, the interviews offer some material, such as the following quotation:

EXPERT-1: *We are human beings*. We should focus on commonalities and respect the differences. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-1, who is a male Tajik, establishes his own understanding of commonalities through humanity. In his reasoning, people have commonalities just because they are human beings. Even while there are differences, one needs to focus on the commonalities that result from being humans and respect the differences that result from *qawmi* or religious identities.

Upon being asked about the main objective of education defined in the Curriculum Framework (MoE 2003) for producing “moderate Muslims, true Afghans and civilised human beings,” another respondent places more emphasis on humanity:

EXPERT-9: Yes, we have that goal of generating good humans, good Muslims and true Afghans. *Above all, we are all human*. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-9, a male Qizilbash, gives his own order as “good humans, good Muslims and true Afghans,” moving from the more general to the more specific, placing humanity above all. Another respondent reveals a similar view:

EXPERT-8: We first see *everybody as human*; only after that comes Islam. For example, in the textbooks, we first talk about a person in terms of being human and then we also include a *hadith* to explain the issue in question. First comes sociology; then comes religion. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, explains the structural content of the textbooks which presents issues first from a more general perspective within the framework of humanity; and then from an Islamic perspective. What she means by “first comes sociology” is the primacy of the human framework in the textbooks, before the religious framework. Although it is not within the limits of this thesis to test whether that is a valid statement, suffice it to say that it is not necessarily the case across all the textbooks examined in this thesis, which are heavily loaded with Islamic reference points and frameworks. The obvious reason is that Islam is consistently presented as the major commonality among the people of Afghanistan. Therefore, the idea of humanity as commonality may, at times, get into a complicated relationship with the idea of Islam as commonality. One of the respondents find the remedy in enlarging the idea of ‘Islam as commonality’ into a kind of ‘religion as commonality’:

EXPERT-10: Islam is an element of unity. Of course, we have no preference for any religions; we are *all from Adam and Eve*. What matters is piety [*taqwa*] and service to humanity. (italics mine)

The reason why EXPERT-10, a male Pashtun, right after declaring Islam as an element of unity, corrects himself by adding that “we have no preference for any religions,” may be the fact that he remembers the very few Hindus and Jews living in Afghanistan. For in the event of presenting Islam as a commonality, there is the possibility of excluding the non-Muslim inhabitants of Afghanistan from the idea of national unity. That is why EXPERT-10 quickly reminds the common ancestral roots of humanity as Adam and Eve. Still, what he presents as an element of national unity is not humanity; but religion in general. For him, what matters is “piety and service to humanity” within a religious framework. This quotation also reveals a general pattern among my respondents who, right after asserting that Islam comes first in

Afghanistan, quickly add that, of course, everybody is human at first. In other words, the concept of humanity appears as something remembered in relation to Islam.

Finally, we have the idea of **Afghanness** as commonality which is discussed in more detail in 7.4. *Afghaniyat*. Here, we will remain limited to its invocation specifically in relation to the concept of national unity, which is seen in some of the interviews:

EXPERT-7: *National unity is built on social justice, equality – that we prepare the grounds and opportunities for all the citizens – and merit. Even if I am an Uzbek, I am an Afghan. All of us are Afghans. We may call them Uzbek-Afghan or Hazara-Afghan. In other words, the word “Hazara” should not disappear. (italics mine)*

Here, we see a conceptualisation of national unity based on justice, equality and merit. Interestingly, right after that, EXPERT-7 immediately declares his own identities: Uzbek by *qawm* and Afghan by nationality. Departing from his own personal example, he then makes a generalisation: “All of us are Afghans.” What he is doing here is, actually, laying the Afghan identity as a *common* ground for equality, justice and merit for all the inhabitants of Afghanistan. In his reasoning, then, national unity is possible only if all the people of Afghanistan are treated in the same way with justice, equality and merit *based on their common identity as Afghans*. That is why EXPERT-7, even while offering the possibility of hybrid identities like Uzbek-Afghan, recognises the Afghan identity as a necessity. Here, we see the Afghan identity coming up as a tool for standardisation and equality among everybody. That is to say, if people view themselves and others through their specific *qawmi* identities, there will be no justice, equality or merit. Another respondent, EXPERT-8 who is a female Tajik, touches upon the same issue, underlining the possible consequences of using *qawmi* identities:

EXPERT-8: We do not want students to *describe themselves as Turk or Tajik*; to separate themselves; to differentiate between themselves and others; to feel separated or to *focus on differences*. (italics mine)

All the words used in this quotation for describing the unwanted student attitudes, i.e. separating; differentiating; feeling separated; and focusing on differences, reflect a call to unity among the students. In that regard, this statement perfectly reveals a policy of nation-building by the state of Afghanistan. EXPERT-8 says that the state, which she represents through the “we” pronoun, is against any feelings of separation or difference among the students, something that may result from the students’

description of themselves through their *qawmi* identities. In this reasoning, then, we see an association between the *qawmi* identities and the feelings of differentiation.

We have now examined all the three major points of commonality among the people of Afghanistan, which emerge out of the primary resources of this thesis. Islam, without doubt, offers itself as *the most common commonality* in Afghanistan, while humanity and Afghanness follow it. Of course, the talk on commonalities is not something written on stone; but an issue that is constantly being discussed and debated. EXPERT-11 makes a very significant statement and points to the dynamic nature of the process of finding the commonalities among people:

EXPERT-11: Anyway we are a country and we should be a nation. *We need to work on becoming a nation.* Finding those common elements is the most difficult process now. *Only if we can find them, then we will be a nation.* (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, makes his own conclusion that as there is a country, then, there should be a nation. He stresses on the need to work on becoming a nation. From this statement, we understand that it is a process that includes the difficult task of finding the common elements in that nation. The conclusion of EXPERT-11 is that there will finally be a nation only if those commonalities can be found.

6.3. Citizenship (*Tabaiyat / Shahrwandi*)

Citizenship is a broad concept examined in a huge literature in different aspects, such as citizenship as a legal status; citizenship as duties; citizenship as rights, etc. For our purposes, we will remain limited to its meaning as a specific form of membership based on a legal relationship between individuals who are called “citizens” and a modern state of which they are members. In the context of Afghanistan, this concept is supposed to mean ‘membership of citizens in the state of Afghanistan.’

In the discourse of education, the textbooks, which generally provide the richest data in all themes, come up as the weakest resource in this theme, revealing only an implicit discourse on citizenship. On the other hand, we see a strong discourse on it in the Constitution which has a whole chapter on the rights and duties of citizens. Interviews also offer substantial material on the conceptualisation of citizenship.

Before starting, a vital note needs to be made in relation to the word choice in Dari language in describing citizenship. In Dari, there are two different words that correspond to the English word “citizen”: *taba* (or *atba* in plural) and *shahrwand*. *Taba* is originally an Arabic word which comes from the root verb *taabe*³⁸ meaning “to follow; to be subject to; to be subordinate,” etc. Therefore, *taba*³⁹ in Dari means “subject, citizen, national.” Departing from that, the concept of *tabaiyat*, which denotes the state of being *taba*, means being a subject to; or being a citizen of; or being a national of. In other words, the concept of *tabaiyat* implies being the subject or national or citizen of a state. It denotes a condition of being bound to a state; and that is how it assumes the meaning of “citizenship.” Still, *tabaiyat* connotes a condition of *subjection* that may evoke certain duties on the part of the *taba*. Therefore, *tabaiyat* seems like a closer match for the English word “nationality” rather than “citizenship.”

The second word that is used to denote “citizen” in Dari is *shahrwand* which seems like a more exact translation, *shahr* meaning “city” and *shahrwand* meaning “citizen.” Departing from that, *shahrwandi* is a closer match for the term “citizenship” with all the connotations of the modern conceptualisation of citizenship around rights and duties of citizens. Yet, the word *shahrwandi* is a much newer word in the context of Afghanistan where the word *tabaiyat* is much more pervasively used to describe citizenship. That is what the primary resources of this thesis consistently reveal.

To better understand the use of words in Dari, it is a good idea to start with the interviews some of which include the question “What is the Dari word for ‘citizen?’” Although my respondents immediately confirm the use of two different words in Dari, their examination of the issue differs. Here is one of them:

EXPERT-3: We use an Arabic word, *taba*, as well as a Persian word *shahrwand*. In the Identity Card [*Tazkere-ye Tabaiyat*] we say “*taba-ye Afghan*.” Meanings of these words are the same.

³⁸ Source: Word Hippo. Available at [<https://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/the-meaning-of/arabic-word-bb70bb192ab5d229a78829d1f6eafbbeeaa6eb13.html>], retrived on January 25, 2020.

³⁹ Source: Dictionary-Farsi.com. Available at [<http://www.dictionay-farsi.com/>], retrived on January 25, 2020.

EXPERT-3, who is a male Pashtun, differentiates between the Arabic word and the Persian word for citizen; however, he does not differentiate between their meanings. For him, both words correspond to the same thing. The word citizen immediately reminds him of the Identity Card, i.e. the *Tazkere-ye Tabaiyat*, which may be literally translated as the ‘certificate of nationality.’ Even the name of the identity card in Afghanistan includes the word *tabaiyat*, which is a vital point. It is not simply an *identity* card; but an official certificate that establishes one’s *tabaiyat*; that is, one’s relation to a state. EXPERT-3 also underlines that the holders of this card are described as *taba-ye Afghan* and stops there, not going into details of the long controversy over what should be written in the identity cards. Another respondent touches upon the same issue:

EXPERT-4: In the Constitution, we have *taba*, but the Dari-speaking people use *shahrwand*. Everybody has the Afghan identity card; we should write on it the same expression that is written in the Constitution.

EXPERT-4, who is a male Hazara, bases his understanding on the Constitution which uses the word *taba* for citizen. Then, he adds that the Dari-speaking people of Afghanistan, probably in contrast to Pashto-speakers, prefer to use the word *shahrwand*. It displays a division in the society of Afghanistan with regards to the choice of words. We know that Dari and Pashto are the two official languages spoken in Afghanistan, which inevitably gives rise to two different communities of Dari-speakers and Pashto-speakers. EXPERT-4’s reference to the word *shahrwand* as the preferred word of the Dari-speaking community implies that the other word *taba*, which is an Arabic and *not* a Pashto word, is preferred by the Pashto-speaking community. The way EXPERT-4 explains the issue is such that this dualism results not from a consciousness about the difference in meaning of these two words; but from a kind of ‘competition’ between the two linguistic communities of Afghanistan. His final conclusion is that the word used in the Constitution is binding and, thus, the same expression should be written in the identity card, as well. Here, he is no longer talking about the word only *taba*; but the expression “*taba-ye Afghan*” that is written in the Constitution (see 7.4. *Afghaniyat*).

The most expansive answer to the question “What is the Dari word for ‘citizen?’” is provided by the following respondent:

EXPERT-11: *Taba* is more common. It's originally Arabic. Its literal meaning is that *you need to follow the state*. It is *tabaiyat* – subjecthood, nationality. But *shahrwand*, citizen, is a new word that is invented recently. Its connotation is that you are *an active part of the society*. In Afghanistan, some intellectuals started using the word *sharwand*. But people say that this is *an Iranian word; not an Afghan word*, so they reject using it. (italics mine)

EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, finally examines the two words based on their literal meanings. Under his examination, the word *taba* appears as ‘following the state’ while the word *shahrwand* appears as ‘taking an active part in the society.’ He presents the first as having a passive connotation and the latter as having an active connotation. He distinguishes *shahrwand* as the word that is preferred by intellectuals, in a way, empowering this word. By saying that this word is “invented recently,” he probably refers to its entrance into Afghanistan, since we know that the Persian word *shahrwand* has already been at use in Iran. That is the reason why it is perceived as an “Iranian word; not an Afghan word” by some people who may be Pashto-speakers. The irony here is that *taba* is not a Pashto word; but an Arabic word. Still, the fact that *shahrwand* sounds like a word borrowed from the Iranian context gives a threatening feeling to some who believe that the use of an “Iranian” word does not fit into the Afghan context.

Following this etymological analysis, we may now pass on to examine the Constitution on citizenship. The famous Article Four, which is examined under different themes across the thesis (see 7.3. *Qawm* and 7.4. *Afghaniyat*), is the most important article describing citizenship in Afghanistan:

Article Four: ...The nation of Afghanistan is composed of all individuals [*afrad*] who possess the citizenship [*tabaiyat*] of Afghanistan...The word Afghan shall apply to every citizen [*fardi*: individual] of Afghanistan. No individual of the nation of Afghanistan shall be deprived of citizenship [*tabaiyat*]...

Here, we clearly see the use of the word *tabaiyat* to denote citizenship. Although we do not see the word *taba* here, other articles consistently use the words *taba* or *atba* to describe citizens, just like the one below. This article defines the nation of Afghanistan as “all individuals who possess the citizenship of Afghanistan,” adding that not a single individual will be deprived of it. According to this article, then, it is citizenship that constructs the nation of Afghanistan. More importantly, this article

also names the citizens, or rather “individuals” (*fardi*), of Afghanistan as “Afghan.” For a further discussion on the ethnonym Afghan, please refer to 7.4. *Afghaniyat*.

The Constitution includes a specific chapter on citizens, i.e. Chapter Two titled “Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens” (*Hoqoq-e Asasi wa Wajayeb-e Atba*). Both the title of this chapter and its content define the inhabitants of Afghanistan as *atba* which is translated into English as “citizens.” Here is the first article of it:

Article Twenty-Two: Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens [*atba*] of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. *The citizens [atba] of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law.*
(italics mine)

While Article Four defines who a citizen is in Afghanistan; this article conceptualises what exactly citizenship means in Afghanistan. This article, first and foremost, bans all kinds of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan; and then, recognises equal rights and duties for all the citizens, man and woman. In other words, it establishes the condition of citizenship as having “equal rights and duties” before law. The rest of this Chapter, which is the largest chapter of the Constitution with 38 articles, goes on to describe in detail those rights and duties. It means that at least 23.4% of the Constitution, which has 162 articles, is on the rights and duties of the citizens of Afghanistan. Some of these rights (*hoqoq*) are: liberty; freedom of speech; education; work; travel and settlement; election and being elected; forming associations and political parties; gathering and holding unarmed demonstrations; accessing information in state departments, etc. As for the duties (*wajayeb*) of citizens, some of them are: active participation in war, disaster or other times of crisis; compulsory military service; observance of law and respect for public order and security; payment of taxes and duties to the state, etc. In fact, all of these articles denote modern duties of citizenship towards the state; however, interestingly, the Constitution uses not the word *wazeefa* (*wazayef*) in explaining these duties; but the word *wajeeba*⁴⁰ (or *wajayeb* in plural) which has an Islamic connotation. There

⁴⁰ Both *wajeeba* and *wazeefa* are originally Arabic words which mean ‘duty’ or ‘obligation.’ What is interesting is that the first has a religious connotation while the latter does not. The word *wajeeba* has the same root with another Arabic word, *wajib*, which means “a religious duty; something that Muslims are obliged to do” (Source: *Wiktionary*, available at [<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/wajib>], retrieved on January 29, 2020.) In the Islamic jurisprudence, according to the Sunni Hanafi sect, the most obligatory acts are described with the word *fard* while a little less obligatory acts are expressed with the word *wajib*. (The other Muslim sects take the two equally obligatory.)

might be a conscious motivation behind this choice of words to establish a *religious* feeling of responsibility and duty towards the state; not a secular one. It might work towards the sanctification of the state in the eyes of its citizens so that they feel the responsibility of fulfilling their duties towards the state as an Islamic *wajeeba*. Still, considering all of these articles on the rights and duties of citizens, it may be argued that the Constitution works to officially establish the conceptualisation of citizenship in Afghanistan on the basis of rights and duties, just in the way that the word *shahrwandi* suggests, while using the word *tabaiyat* for citizenship.

Now we may turn to see how the textbooks conceptualise citizenship. As stated above, the textbooks remain very weak in revealing a coherent discourse on citizenship. Among the four course sets, the textbooks of Civic Education, obviously, offer the largest material on citizenship, which are followed by the textbooks of Social Studies and Patriotism, while History textbooks remain totally silent on the issue. Textbooks of Civic Education, Social Studies and Patriotism do give some information on the state and its institutions; however, they fail in clearly linking the discourse on the state to a discourse on ‘membership in the state,’ which is what citizenship means. One of the rare contents on membership that we encounter across these textbooks is the following:

Each one of us, as we are the members of the small society of our own family, so are we also the *members of our village, region, city and country* as well. Each one of us have *duties and responsibilities* in these societies which we must fulfil in a good way so that our country takes its share from progress and development. (5-SS: 6) (italics mine)

Here, we see two things in relation to each other: (1) being a member of the society, and, thus, (2) having some duties and responsibilities towards that society. It is implied that membership in a society involves duties towards that society. What we see as units of membership are *geographical* circles of community which go from the smaller to the larger: village, region, city and country. What is meant by being the ‘member of a country,’ is, in fact, citizenship; yet, we do not see any expression here about being the ‘member of a state,’ which denotes a *political* circle rather than a geographical one. In this conceptualisation of membership, we do not see any political circles like the state, the nation or, even, the *qawm* which is recognised as a unit of membership in the Constitution. Students are only told that they are the *members of a country*; not that they are the *members of a state*; the *citizens of a*

country. In sum, this quotation reveals a concept of citizenship based on the homeland; not the state.

As for the use of words across the textbooks, we see that textbooks, differing from the Constitution, make use of the word *shahrwand* instead of *taba* for citizen. On the other hand, the definition of *citizenship* is given not as *shahrwandi*; but as *tabaiyat*:

Citizenship [*Tabaiyat*]: To be *a subject of, to obey*, in political terminology to be a citizen [*shahrwand*] of a country and *as a member of that country, to follow the laws* of that country. (6-SS: 70) (italics mine)

This definition establishes the concept of *tabaiyat* on being a *shahrwand*, interweaving the two concepts. Furthermore, it confirms once again the conceptualisation of citizenship as *membership in a country*, stating that *tabaiyat* means being the citizen of a country; and not a state, even if it is implied with the reference to laws. Besides, it denotes a passive understanding of citizenship as *tabaiyat* whereby individuals become members of a country only by following and obeying its laws. There is no reference to the rights of citizens in this definition. In the content of the textbooks, however, there are many references to the rights of citizens. There are whole chapters on Democracy and Mass Media which portray modern citizens participating in the government of the country. In other words, there is an implicit discourse on citizenship as *shahrwandi*, which is not defined or clearly explained *per se*.

The conceptualisation of citizenship as membership in a country or homeland is also encountered in the textbooks of Patriotism. Interestingly, these textbooks, while including specific chapters on many significant concepts such as national unity, national interests, national heroes, etc., fail to provide a single chapter on citizenship or the state, except for Chapter 29 titled “People’s Obligations towards the Government” in 8-PA, which is examined below. While we do see references to the state, or rather the ‘government,’ scattered across the textbooks of Patriotism; we do not see a specified effort for describing these concepts. They remain limited to offering indirect information that may only be vaguely linked to the concept of citizenship based on the homeland.

Chapter 30 titled “Rights of the Homeland” in 9-PA unfolds this idea, displaying the homeland as a claimant to certain rights over her inhabitants, as the title of the chapter suggests. In this conceptualisation, we don’t see citizens equipped with rights

and duties towards the state; but inhabitants who are *exposed* to the rights of the homeland on them:

Homeland is like a mother. Just like a mother brings up her child in her arms, giving milk, water and food, so is homeland a place of welfare and security for her inhabitants. *Therefore, homeland has some rights over her inhabitants...Therefore, we should recognise these rights and fulfil this religious and national duty* (9-PA: 89) (italics mine)

This quotation presents a symbolic relationship between a mother homeland, or *motherland*, and her inhabitants. In this parental relationship, we see the motherland imposing her rights on her inhabitants who are supposed to recognise and take them as their religious and national duty. Some of these rights are presented as follows: (1) (the right to) protection of independence and national sovereignty; (2) the right to construction and reconstruction; (3) the right to progress and development; (4) (the right to) protection of the environment. These are the four rights that the homeland has over her inhabitants. 7-PA further discusses it in a sub-section titled “Mutual Rights and Obligations between Us and the Homeland” in Chapter 26:

We are born into the lap of this homeland; we benefit from its water, soil and air; and we grow up in her arms. These are the *rights that we enjoy* in our homeland. *Therefore, we have responsibilities towards the homeland, too*, which we should not neglect. We should love our homeland; we should remain faithful to her values; we should obey the laws that rule there; we should make an effort together for her prosperity, progress and development; and if, God forbid, her independence, freedom, prestige and honour come under attack of enemy, we should not hesitate to do all kinds of sacrifice for defending her. (7-PA: 82) (italics mine)

According to this quotation, as we are born into the lap of a motherland, we benefit from her natural resources and these are the rights that we enjoy as the inhabitants of this land. Such conceptualisation of rights, obviously, differs from the modern rights that the citizens of a state enjoy. What we see here is, basically, a discourse on patriotism; not citizenship. This is the general picture that the textbooks of Patriotism paint, frequently excluding the state from the picture. Still, there is some rarely-encountered content such as Chapter 29 titled “People’s Obligations towards the Government” in 8-PA which presents the ‘government’ (not the ‘state’) and people in a mutual relationship and then lists the duties of people towards the ‘government’ as follows: (1) obeying the law; (2) preserving and guarding the state; (3) cooperating with organs of the state; (4) helping the government protect the economy

(paying taxes); (5) sparing money; and (6) doing your duty honestly. Each of these duties are duties of modern citizenship; yet, 8-PA does not link them clearly to the discourse of citizenship.

Having examined the Constitution and the textbooks in relation to citizenship, we may now turn to see what the interviews have to say on it. A great majority of my respondents have been asked the same question, albeit in slightly different ways, which goes: “Who is a citizen in Afghanistan? How do you call a citizen, *shahrwand* or *taba*? How do you teach it to students?” An analysis of the answers reveals vital data about the conceptualisation of citizenship in Afghanistan. EXPERT-1 gives a good starting point, explaining how citizenship is viewed by different segments:

EXPERT-1: Citizens are all the people who are living in this country and holding the ID card, the *tazkera*. They might not be living here; they might be living abroad, but they are citizens. There are *a number of different perceptions of citizen in different segments of Afghanistan, like the government and civil society*. According to the *government view*, the state should serve the people. But there is a *political party* which claims that people should just obey the state; for them, citizen is a *taba*. The *religious segments* claim that people should obey the government and the religious leader. They give the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who was also a ruler. So they say we must be the followers [*taba*] of the religious ruler. *Civil society* claims that it is not only the government to have the mandate on everything; people should have the right to choose; more rights should be given to citizens. NGOs ask the government to give more choices to citizens about the issue of sending or not sending their children to religious schools. (italics mine)

First of all, EXPERT-1, who is a male Tajik, defines citizen as anybody living in or out of Afghanistan and holding the identity card. Then, he explains how a citizen is perceived by the different segments of the government; political parties; the religious segment; and the civil society. According to the government view, i.e. the official view, citizenship means that the state is there to serve people; that is, the state is the servant of the people. On the other hand, the perception of citizenship as people obeying the state; i.e. as *taba*, has buyers among some political parties as well as the religious segments that base their views on the Prophet as a religious ruler to be obeyed. Yet again, the segments of civil society are against such a mandate of the government on everything, urging for more rights to be given to citizens. In the picture that EXPERT-1 presents, then, the civil society demands citizenship to be viewed as citizens’ rights, closer to the concept of *shahrwandi*. An example that

EXPERT-1 gives in this regard is about the NGOs that demand freedom from the government in their choice of schools.

EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, comes very close to the view of the government segment that EXPERT-1 mentions, by presenting the responsibilities of the state towards people:

EXPERT-7: We would like all our citizens, each Afghan boy and girl, to be educated and to *have equal rights as citizens*. The state must make use of them as well as protecting them. The *state has the responsibility* of applying law on all the citizens. The state must prepare *equal opportunities* for all so that everybody develops depending on their own ability. (italics mine)

The entire statement of EXPERT-7 is about the responsibilities of the state. What he means by “we” in the very first sentence is the state which he represents at the Ministry of Education. Here is his description of the responsibilities of the state: (1) educating citizens of both genders; (2) giving citizens equal rights; (3) making use of citizens; (4) protecting citizens; (5) applying law on citizens; and (6) preparing equal opportunities for citizens so that they may develop. In this discourse, we see an almost chronological flow that starts with the generation of citizens through education; goes through the application of law on them; and ends with the preparation of equal opportunities for citizens so that the state may make better use of them. Here, we see a bilateral relationship between the state and citizens, which is presented as a win-win situation.

EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun also working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, refers to the importance of the state, or rather the “government” in his own words, when asked about the content of the Civic Education courses:

EXPERT-10: We have the course of Civic Education for integrating them [students]. First comes *history-teaching and then government[-teaching]*. There have been governments and civilisations in this country for 5.000 years. This is an old country. In the early years of history, there was the Golden Age of Islam when there were big empires. Then comes Genghis Khan’s interruption. And then comes the Great Game in this region and we teach to students that during the Great Game, you were *able to keep your independence; although not stability; but independence*. So they learn that *government is important* and so are the *rights and duties of citizens*. They learn *how to participate by civil participation; not war*. We show them that *they are included in the traditional, regional and national institutions*. (italics mine)

What EXPERT-10 means is that there are basically two ways for integrating students: the teaching of history and the teaching of the government, or rather the state, by which is meant the course of Civic Education. He explains the two in relation to each other, using the historical account to demonstrate a deficiency. He first establishes Afghanistan as an old country which has generated governments and civilisations for five thousand years, while idealising the period of great Islamic empires as the “Golden Age of Islam.” Then he jumps from Genghis Khan to the Great Game. His point is that Afghanistan was able to keep its *independence* during the Great Game; but not its *stability*. (He ignores the 40-year period when the British held the control of the foreign affairs of Afghanistan.) He associates the problem of stability with the importance of government, or rather the state, which leads one to think that the problem was with the state. (In fact, the prototypical state of Afghanistan with a regular government was established as a buffer state during the Great Game in the 19th century.) He also adds the importance of the rights and duties of citizens and civil participation which he contrasts with participation by war. Here, he might be referring to the ages-old tribe and state conflict in which tribes are typically in war against the state. He might also be referring to the current clash between the Taliban and the state. For he stresses on civil participation *within* the state; not warring *against* the state.

Following from what EXPERT-10 describes as the ‘teaching of the government,’ we may turn to see what kind of an ideal citizen the state of Afghanistan aims to foster:

EXPERT-8: Each Afghan individual should *know about the Constitution*; they should be responsible towards themselves, the society and the homeland; they should be strong; they should be *able to identify all the qawms*, they should not discriminate; they should know about the relations between Afghanistan and all of its neighbours; they should feel responsibility towards their own culture and homeland as well as towards humanity. In sum, we want them to have the *feeling of love towards Afghanistan, people, law and religion. This is our way of building up an ideal citizen.* (italics mine)

Use of the verb “should” here is an indicator of the speaking persona of the state of Afghanistan which has the power to describe the ideal citizen. In the words of EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, the ideal citizen is supposed to feel love towards Afghanistan (the homeland), its people (co-citizens or compatriots), its law (the Constitution) and its religion (Islam). According to EXPERT-8, this love may only be nurtured in students if they know about the Constitution; the *aqwam* of

Afghanistan; and the relations between Afghanistan and her neighbours. Furthermore, she emphasises on the feeling of responsibility twice, both at the beginning and end of the quotation. It shows that responsibility is an important feature of the citizens. She first mentions responsibility towards themselves, the society and the homeland; and then mentions responsibility towards their own culture, the homeland and humanity. There is a clear emphasis on responsibility towards homeland here, as it is repeated twice. Furthermore, “their own culture” is, highly possibly, a reference to the *qawm* community of each student. If that is the case, it means that students are responsible towards their own *qawm*, as well. The fact that EXPERT-8 mentions the necessity of identifying the *aqwam* of Afghanistan supports this point. She presents identifying the *qawms* as a *civic skill*, given that it is something recognised in the Constitution and chanted in the national anthem. As the mention of this ‘skill’ is immediately followed by a warning against discrimination, it implies a possible association between the *aqwam* and the act of discrimination.

The description of citizens in relation to both obligations *and* rights finally finds a place in the words of the following respondent:

EXPERT-3: Anyone living in Afghanistan, having the identity card, abiding by the Constitution, national values and Islamic values is an Afghan citizen. They have *rights and obligations towards laws and the society*. The Constitution explains all these. *Everybody has the right* to elect and be elected. Looking at equality, *no Afghan is better than other*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-3, who is a male Pashtun, adds other dimensions to being a citizen in Afghanistan: living in Afghanistan; having the Identity Card; abiding by the Constitution, national values and Islamic values. Here, we see the citizen as somebody conforming with law and certain values. Still, this citizen has *rights* as well as obligations, which are all explained in the Constitution, according to EXPERT-3. As he refers the right to election, he mentions the concept of equality. At this point, he refers to a statement⁴¹ by Ashraf Ghani, the President of Afghanistan, which originally goes: “No Afghan is superior or inferior to another Afghan.” By quoting this statement, EXPERT-3 underlines the importance of equality in the conceptualisation of citizenship.

⁴¹ “Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai: *Hich Afghani az hich Afghani dighar bartar ya kamtar nist*” in *Payam-Aftab*, 1 Mizan 1393.

Here is another respondent who bases the concept of citizenship on the Constitution:

EXPERT-4: The framework for a good citizen is given in the Constitution as well as the textbooks. Independence, freedom, right to education, right to work, right to health, right to family, right to a house. It is also *learning about rights and responsibilities; following the rule of law; participating actively in society; participating in the elections; protecting the environment and protecting the national interest* which is built on territorial integrity, freedom and independence. *On top of everything is Islam.* Everything in Afghanistan should be within the framework of Islam; and nothing should be against Islamic laws. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-4, who is a male Hazara, gives a kind of a summary of the Chapter Two of the Constitution titled “Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens.” What he presents here is a description of *shahrwand* actually; not *taba*. And on the top of such a conceptualisation of citizenship, he places Islam as something that gives a framework to everything else. He is not alone in describing Islam as a foundational part of citizenship. Here is what EXPERT-2 says:

EXPERT-2: A citizen in Afghanistan means to be a *Muslim and to be an Afghan*, although there is controversy around the word Afghan, because there are different ethnic groups. Anyway *in the Constitution, a citizen is called an Afghan citizen* who is *expected to be a good citizen, responsible* towards the country, the community and to the world. *An Afghan citizen is also a good Muslim* who knows the basics of Islam and the religious rituals. S/he also has a national identity, but it is a controversial issue. (italics mine)

EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, defines citizen on two dimensions: religion (being a Muslim) and national identity (being an Afghan). Though admitting the controversy around the ethnonym ‘Afghan,’ he emphasises on the power of the Constitution to stop the controversy by establishing the fact that a citizen is called an ‘Afghan citizen’ in Afghanistan. In his conceptualisation, however, we see an understanding of only responsibility, or *obligations*, on the part of the citizens; and not *rights*. Afghan citizens are “expected to be” good citizens as well as good Muslims. In such an understanding, knowing the basics of Islam and practicing the basic Islamic rituals are also seen within the framework of ‘good citizenship.’ At the end, he also refers to national identity as part of citizenship while admitting its controversial nature (see 7.4. *Afghaniyat*).

Besides this conceptualisation of citizenship that is highly interwoven with Islam, we see another one which is highly interwoven with the institution of the *qawm*:

EXPERT-9: Students learn about themselves, their family, village, state and country. It is important that they know about themselves and learn from which country they come. We also explain our traditions to them. They learn how to draw the map of Afghanistan. We ask them from which city they come and they learn which other cities neighbour their own city. *The only way to teach how to be a citizen is, first, that they should understand their own identity, their surname, their location and ancestors. It is like knowing about the seven generations of our family.* We have some big and important families in Afghanistan such as ... and ... [*Smiling, he tells me his own surname.*] From that point onwards, they identify themselves with their family. (italics mine)

At the beginning of this quotation, EXPERT-9, who is a male Pashtun, explains the importance of knowing about one's country and society in becoming citizens. Then, he makes a fundamental statement claiming that "the only way to teach how to be a citizen" is that students understand "their own identity, their surname, their location and ancestors." We understand that teaching citizenship may only take place by building up the identity of the student. Yet, what EXPERT-9 specifically means here is the *qawmi* identity, for the surname of a student; where he comes from; and his ancestors are the indicators of their *qawmi* identity. That is why EXPERT-9 refers to the tradition of counting the seven generations of your family. It means that all students are expected to identify primarily with their own *qawmi* families rather than the nation of Afghanistan. In such a conceptualisation citizenship seems to be based on *aqwam*. It means that being a citizen of Afghanistan may best be understood through knowing your *qawmi* identity. With this said, we have reached the end of our analysis of the concept of citizenship as it is revealed in the discourse of education.

6.4. National Will (*Irade-ye Milli*)

Another concept that emerges from the discourse of education in relation to the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan* is national will or *irade-ye milli*. Before starting, it needs to be reminded that it is not a strong concept in the primary resources among which interviews offer no material. What is stronger is not the concept itself; but the institutions that are defined as the representations of it.

In the Constitution, the first place where we encounter the concept of will is in the Preamble which is a long statement. Here is the part on the concept of will:

We the people of Afghanistan:

- Believing firmly in Almighty God, relying on His *divine will* and adhering to the Holy religion of Islam;...

And in order to:

... • Establish an order based on the *peoples' will* and democracy;...
Have, herein, approved this constitution... (italics mine)

Here, we see the co-existence of two kinds of wills: the “divine will” and “peoples’ will.” The Preamble presents the people of Afghanistan as believers in God and “His divine will.” And then, we see one of the motivations for approving this Constitution as establishing an order based on the “people’s will” which may be paraphrased as the ‘national will.’ That is to say, the ‘people of Afghanistan believing in the divine will of God’ approve this Constitution to ‘establish an order based on people’s will.’

Further on, the Constitution defines two major institutions that represent national will: the *Shura-ye Milli*, or the National Assembly, and the *Loya Jirga*, or the Grand Council. In the Constitution, there are two specific chapters on both of these institutions. Chapter Five titled the “National Assembly” has 29 articles; while the subsequent Chapter Six titled “*Loya Jirga*” has 6 articles. It needs emphasis that the Constitution keeps the original name of the *Loya Jirga* in Pashto, not translating it into English, the reasons for which will be revealed below. Here are the two articles taken from both chapters, which define these two institutions as the representation of the national will in Afghanistan:

[Chapter Five] Article Eighty-One: The National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, as the highest legislative organ, shall *manifest the will of its people as well as represent the entire nation*. (italics mine)

[Chapter Six] Article One Hundred Ten: The *Loya Jirga* is the *highest manifestation of the will of the people of Afghanistan*. (italics mine)

The first article presents the National Assembly (*Shura-ye Milli*) as the “highest legislative organ” in Afghanistan that manifests people’s will and represent the entire nation. Here, we see that the major attribute of the National Assembly is that it is an organ of legislation; that is, law-making. On the other hand, the second article describes the *Loya Jirga* as the “highest manifestation of the will of the people of Afghanistan.” In this picture, we see the *Shura* as the highest legislative organ and the *Loya Jirga* as the highest manifestation of national will. We need to underline at this point that the *Loya Jirga*, though an institution convened irregularly, includes all the members of the *Shura*; that is why it is the *highest* organ of national will. While the total members of the *Shura* may be two hundred and fifty at most; the capacity of the *Loya Jirga* may range from several hundred to several thousand including people coming from all over Afghanistan.

Based on the Constitution, these two organs of representation will be examined in detail under two sub-sections. This examination will be based on the related Constitution articles as well as the textbooks of Social Studies, Civic Education and Patriotism which provide the related material specifically in the following parts:

- Section titled “Parliament of Afghanistan” in Chapter 1 titled “The State” in 6-SS
- Section titled “Let’s Get to Know Our Political Order and State Better” in Chapter 1 titled “The State” in 9-CE
- Chapter 20 titled “Role of the *Jirgas* in Conflict Resolution” in 9-PA
- Chapter 25 titled “Importance and Status of the *Shura*” in 8-PA

6.4.1. *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council)

In order to comprehend the institution of *Loya Jirga*, we first need to grasp the meaning of the term *jirga* which is fundamental in understanding the indigenous traditions of government in Afghanistan. Etymologically, *jirga* is a Pashto word that has Mongolian origins⁴², meaning “circular or semicircular formation of hunters or warriors” to squeeze the animals or the enemy into the middle. Throughout time, this word has acquired a political meaning to denote a kind of gathering where men sit in a circle to discuss, negotiate or reach a consensus or a decision especially in self-ruled communities like tribes or clans. Here is a brief description of the *jirga* in one of the textbooks:

Jirga is a big assembly or gathering of the white-bearded, the elders, the *ulama* and people of high standing, which is convened for resolving internal, tribal [*qawmi*], regional, national and international problems, and which gives verdicts on important issues. *Jirga* is empowered and qualified to give verdicts. (9-PA: 59)

In other words, *jirga* is an assembly of opinion leaders in a community, which has the power and qualification to give verdicts, acting like a court. Basically, *jirga* is an institution for decision-making and conflict resolution, which may be convened at different levels of society, such as the clan, tribe, village, district, province or the national level. In other words, there may be small or big *jirgas* depending on the

⁴² Source: The Free Dictionary, available at [<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/jirga>], retrieved on February 22, 2020.

situation at hand. The biggest of all the *jirgas* is called the *Loya Jirga*, meaning the Grand Council in Pashto, convened at the national level in today's Afghanistan.

Reasons behind the survival of the *Loya Jirga* into today is rooted in the history of Afghanistan (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan), whereby it was co-opted as a state institution starting with the reign of Amir Abdurrahman at the end of the 19th century. Abdurrahman reinstated the *Loya Jirga* as a national council whose members he himself appointed from among tribal and religious leaders. "The *Loya Jirga* thus co-opted a tribal tradition into a state institution" (Rubin 2002: 51). In this way, original function of the *Loya Jirga*, i.e. reaching a consensus, was transformed and limited to approving and legitimizing the policies of the Amir. This transformation became more evident during the reign of Amir Amanullah who, as the first Constitution-maker of Afghanistan, ratified the Constitution of 1923 as well as the earliest modern laws through the *Loya Jirga* (Barfield 2010: 196). The subsequent Constitutions of Afghanistan, including those of 1930 promulgated by Nadir Shah; 1964 by Zahir Shah; 1977 by President Daoud Khan; and 1987 by President Najibullah were all ratified through the *Loya Jirga* (S. Smith 2019). The latter two also included a specific chapter on the *Loya Jirga*. Here is how 9-PA presents the *Loya Jirga* in this historical flow:

In our society, taking into consideration the importance and historical position of such kinds of *jirgas* and *Shuras*, in the twentieth century, *Loya Jirgas* have been formed on the basis of law and recognised as the organs for representing the will of the nation of Afghanistan, to such an extent that the Constitution of 1343 SH [1964 M] included a specific chapter on them. (9-PA: 59) (italics mine)

This quotation first points to the importance of *jirgas* in the history of Afghanistan and then focuses on the twentieth century when the *Loya Jirga* was formalised through law and recognised as the organ for representing the national will. This quotation presents the *Loya Jirga* as a modern institution even while it is based on the tradition of the *jirga*.

The reason why the Constitution of 1964 is underlined here is that the modalities of convening a *Loya Jirga* were, for the first time, codified in this Constitution (S. Smith 2019: 3). 9-PA does not take the story further into contemporary history, but we know that the Constitution of 2004, which is at use today, also recognises the *Loya Jirga* with a specific chapter on it. Here is the first article that describes it:

Article One Hundred Ten: The *Loya Jirga* is the highest manifestation of the will of the people of Afghanistan. The *Loya Jirga* consists of:

1. Members of the National Assembly;
2. Presidents of the provincial as well as district assemblies.

Ministers, Chief Justice and members of the Supreme Court as well as the attorney general shall participate in the *Loya Jirga* sessions without voting rights.

As this article shows, the *Loya Jirga* is literally a “grand” council that includes both the national and the local representatives across the country as well as key state officials. That is why it is a much larger body than the National Assembly. Yet, the *Loya Jirgas* that have been convened until today have hardly been in accordance with this Constitution article, as Afghanistan has never held an election for district councils yet.⁴³

Another article describes the situations which require the *Loya Jirga* to be convened:

Article One Hundred Eleven: The *Loya Jirga* shall convene in the following situations:

1. To decide on issues related to independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity as well as supreme national interests;
2. Amend provisions of this Constitution;
3. Impeach the President in accordance with the provisions of Article Sixty Nine of the Constitution.

As this article reveals, the *Loya Jirga* mostly acts like an emergency council that convenes for countrywide matters of utmost interest. The three situations listed in this article actually reveal the power of the *Loya Jirga* in three vital areas: (1) the homeland (protecting its independence, integrity and interests); (2) law (amending the Constitution); and (3) head of the state (impeaching the President). It means that the *Loya Jirga* has the power over these three basic features, i.e. the land, the law and the ruler. Based on these powers, the *Loya Jirga* emerges as a vital body for decision-making, which is underlined in the textbooks, as well:

⁴³ Adili, Ali Yawar (2018). “Afghanistan Election Conundrum (14): District council and Ghazni parliamentary elections quietly dropped” in Afghanistan Analysts Network, September 26, 2018, available at [<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/afghanistan-election-conundrum-14district-council-and-ghazni-parliamentary-elections-quietly-dropped/>], retrieved on February 25, 2020.

Afghans resolve their conflicts and controversies through the *jirgas*. In a similar way, they set up the *Loya Jirga* for *important and historical issues* and for *sealing the destiny of the homeland*, and they give common verdicts. *Each verdict that is given by the jirga for resolving a conflict is accepted by everybody and nobody has the right to disobey it.* (9-PA: 58) (italics mine)

This quotation, first and foremost, positions the *Loya Jirga* in the ‘Afghan tradition’ of conflict-resolution through *jirgas*. Here, we see, once again, its power of decision-making, as all its verdicts are to be accepted by all and there is no room for disobedience. It shows the power of the *Loya Jirga* as the utmost body that is empowered to decide on the destiny of Afghanistan. 9-PA goes on to talk about the role played by the *Loya Jirga* in the history of Afghanistan:

As one of the very important and effective ways and *national understandings* between Afghans, the *Loya Jirga is deeply rooted in our people and society*. For decades, *Loya Jirgas have ended big conflicts and tensions, taking the country out of big crises*. These *jirgas* deserve to be appreciated and their *verdicts deserve our acceptance with heart and soul.* (9-PA: 59) (italics mine)

This quotation, once again, points to the deep roots of the *Loya Jirga* in the traditions of Afghanistan. That is how it may act as a way of “national understanding,” which is a rare expression seen across the textbooks. The discourse here implies that just because the *Loya Jirga* is an ‘Afghan tradition,’ it has been able to take the country out of crisis throughout history. That is why it deserves to be appreciated by all who are invited to accept its verdicts “with heart and soul.” For the verdicts of the *Loya Jirga* act not only as a way out of crisis; but also as a way into progress:

In the modern history of Afghanistan, *Loya Jirgas* across the country have given important verdicts, on the basis of which the *nation of Afghanistan stepped into the highway of progress.* (9-PA: 59) (italics mine)

In this quotation, the “important verdicts” given by the *Loya Jirga* are presented as a facilitator on the road to progress in the modern history of Afghanistan. Here, we see the *Loya Jirga* empowered as an institution that is expected to play a part in the progress of Afghanistan. The reason behind is the ‘Afghanness’ of this institution:

Convening the *Loya Jirgas* is an indicator of the national identity of Afghanistan. (9-PA: 59)

This quotation obviously establishes the *Loya Jirga* as a part of national identity in Afghanistan. That is probably the reason why the English translation of the

Constitution of Afghanistan keeps the original word *Loya Jirga* while translating the word *Shura-ye Milli* into English as National Assembly.

The entire discourse in the textbooks shows that it is not only the *Loya Jirga* but also the institution of the *jirga* that is part of the ‘national traditions’ or ‘national values’ of Afghanistan. In both Chapter 4 titled “National Values” in 9-PA and Chapter 10 titled “National and Historical Glories” in 9-PA, *jirga* is clearly presented as one of the national values and national glories of Afghanistan, respectively. This discourse does not differentiate between the institutions of the *jirga* and the *Loya Jirga* which has been made into a state institution in the last century. Here are various quotations from the textbooks of Social Studies, Civic Education and Patriotism:

One of the *important and good traditions of the people of Afghanistan* is the formation of *jirgas* and *Loya Jirgas* since ancient times until today for the resolution of major problems in the country. (6-SS: 22) (italics mine)

Our dear country Afghanistan has a rich history, national traditions and persistent values. One of these *national values and traditions* is the *jirga*. (9-PA: 58) (italics mine)

Afghans resolve their conflicts and controversies through the *jirgas*. (9-PA: 58) (italics mine)

Loya Jirga is an assembly that is *held only in Afghanistan* and it is the highest level of the will of the nation. (9-CE: 12) (italics mine)

These three quotations from different textbooks reveal a similar understanding about the institution of the *jirga* as well as the *Loya Jirga*. All of them present the *jirga* as an indigenous form of assembly rooted in the local traditions of the people of Afghanistan. 9-PA goes further on and historicises the institution of the *jirga*:

Jirga is one of our *national values* which is rooted in the *history of the ancient Aryans*. (9-PA: 58) (italics mine)

Here, we see a national value of Afghanistan, the *jirga*, being linked to the ancient Aryans. Although the word *jirga* itself is originally a Mongolian word, which implies a much more recent history than the Aryan period going back to the period Before Common Era (BCE), this quotation may be regarded as an effort to establish an ancient history, the examples of which are shown in 5.5. Common History.

Besides the legitimisation of the *jirga* as an ‘Afghan tradition,’ we observe in the discourse of education its legitimisation in Islamic terms, as well:

Fortunately, this principle [the *jirga*] is *considered valuable in the holy religion of Islam*, as well, which is known through the concept of the *Shura*. (9-PA: 58)

The word “fortunately” at the beginning of this quotation gives the impression of a feeling of contentment that the Afghan tradition of *jirga* does not clash with the religion of Islam; and on the contrary, it is in line with the Islamic concept of the *Shura* which means council or consultation in Arabic. There is a whole other chapter explaining this Islamic concept in 8-PA, that is Chapter 25 titled “Importance and Status of the *Shura*” which gives a definition of the *Shura* as follows:

Shura is a permanent principle in the religion of Islam, which means consulting the advice and views of others in certain issues and deeds. (8-PA: 61) (italics mine)

This quotation establishes the *Shura* as a “permanent principle” in Islam. In consolidating the importance of this institution, both 8-PA (61) and 9-PA (58-59) make use of direct quotations from the Quran (*Surah Al-Imran*: 159 and *Surah Ash-Shura*: 38) in Arabic, which are followed by explanations in Dari. The first explanation goes: “Consult with Muslims in your affairs” (9-PA: 58), while the second one goes: “Affairs of Muslims are handled in consultation” (9-PA: 59). These Quranic verses form an association between the Islamic institution of the *Shura* and the ‘Afghan tradition’ of the *jirga*. In other words, here, we see an Afghan tradition being legitimised through Islam. 8-PA further explains the necessity of the *Shura* at different levels of the society, which may be taken as valid for the *jirga* as well:

The principle of *Shura* starts in the family and expands gradually into the public judgements that are related to the *nation and the government*. Family members should resolve the family issues by consulting with one another. In dealing with the affairs and difficulties of the village or the neighbourhood, it is necessary to benefit from the way of consultation with the people of the village or the neighbourhood. In the same way, in taking important decisions related to the district or the province, people’s views should be taken. *The only possible way of taking the right and beneficial decisions in important and fateful national issues is through the Shura and taking the nation’s vote [or opinion]. (8-PA: 61) (italics mine)*

This quotation establishes the importance of the *Shura* in every social circle: family, village, neighbourhood, district, province, the nation and the government. However, we do not see any clear reference to the *Shura* that exists at the national level, i.e. the *Shura-ye Milli*, or the National Assembly. The only implied reference is hidden in the expression “taking the nation’s vote” (which may also mean “taking the nation’s

opinion”) that is seen at the very end of the quotation. Considering the fact that the Dari name of the National Assembly of Afghanistan is called the *Shura-ye Milli*, we may conclude that the Islamic legitimisation of the *jirga* through the *Shura* works both for the *Loya Jirga* and the *Shura-ye Milli*.

6.4.2. *Shura-ye Milli* (National Assembly)

The data on the *Shura-ye Milli* comes from the Constitution Chapter Five titled “National Assembly” as well as the textbooks of Social Studies and Civic Education which have two specific chapters on it. It needs to be reminded that the textbooks of Patriotism include not a chapter on the National Assembly but a chapter on the *jirga*. The only content they provide is in Chapter 25 titled “Importance and Status of the *Shura*” in 8-PA, as seen above, which gives information on the concept of the *shura* rather than the *Shura-ye Milli* as an institution.

As presented above, the Constitution has a specific article on the *Shura-ye Milli* which describes the it in three dimensions: (1) as the highest legislative organ in Afghanistan; (2) as a manifestation of the will of the people of Afghanistan; and (3) as a representation of the entire nation. What needs emphasis at this point is that although the *Shura* is presented as the highest legislative organ; it is not the *Shura* but the *Loya Jirga* that is qualified to amend the Constitution. In other words, the *Shura* is a legislative organ for all the laws except the Constitution. Here is how textbooks explain the *Shura*:

Parliament is one of the pillars of the state, which is called Shura-ye Milli [National Assembly] in our country. The first time that the Parliament was established in our country was in 1311⁴⁴ SH [1932 M] during the reign of Muhammad Nadir Shah. This institution is an indicator of the participation of people in law-making and political decision-making. Members of the Parliament of Afghanistan enter the Shura-ye Milli through elections and through appointment by the President. These representatives in the Shura-ye Milli enact laws in accordance with the needs of the people. (6-SS: 30) (italics mine)

Establishing the institution of the parliament as one of the pillars of a state, this quotation gives a brief historical information about the very first establishment of the *Shura* in Afghanistan. Then it clearly describes the *Shura* as an indicator of people’s

⁴⁴ Although the text defines the establishment date of the *Shura-ye Milli* as 1932, web site of the *Wolesi Jirga* gives the same date as 1931.

participation in the processes of legislation and decision-making. That is how it becomes an organ representing the will of the people. Then the quotation explains how the MPs enter into the *Shura*. And the final sentence, once again, points to the most basic duty of the *Shura*: legislation. 9-CE underlines this duty further:

The *legislative or law-making power of our country* is called the “*Shura-ye Milli*” [National Assembly]. *Laws of our country* are ratified in the *Shura-ye Milli*. *Shura-ye Milli*, or the *Parliament of our country*, is formed of two assemblies: *Wolesi Jirga* and *Mashrano Jirga*. (9-CE: 10) (italics mine)

As a textbook of Civic Education, 9-CE presents the *Shura* as a part of the Three Organs of the State, under the part on the Legislative Organ. What needs to be underlined here is that this quotation never mentions the state, although the content is provided under the three organs of the *state*. It talks about the “law-making power of our country,” “laws of our country” and “the Parliament of our country.” It is even more interesting to think that this is a textbook of Civic Education and its chapter is specifically titled “Our State.” This is not the only time we see an omit of the mention of the state or its replacement with the term ‘country’ or ‘homeland.’

At the end of the quotation above, we see that 9-CE names the two houses of the *Shura-ye Milli*, on which the Constitution has an article, as well:

Article Eighty-Two: The National Assembly consists of two houses: House of People and House of Elders. No individual shall be a member of both houses at the same time.

The National Assembly of Afghanistan is a bi-cameral parliament which consists of two houses. The lower house is called the *Wolesi Jirga* (People’s *Jirga*) in Pashto or the *Majles-e Namayendagan* (Assembly of Representatives) in Dari, which is translated into English in the Constitution as the “House of People.” As for the upper house, it is called the *Mashrano Jirga* (Elders’ *Jirga*) which is translated into English in the Constitution as the “House of Elders.” What needs emphasis here is that the names of the two houses of the *Shura* also include the term *jirga*, which implies the legacy of this traditional institution within the modern form of parliament.

Following this introductory information on the *Shura*, we may now turn to see how its two houses are depicted, where the *Wolesi Jirga* takes the lead. Here is the Constitution article describing the formation of the *Wolesi Jirga*:

Article Eighty-Three: Members of the House of People shall be elected by the people through *free, general, secret and direct balloting*...The number of the members of the House of People shall be proportionate to the population of each constituency, not exceeding the maximum of *two hundred fifty individuals*...The elections law shall adopt measures to attain, through the electorate system, *general and fair representation for all the people of the country*, and proportionate to the population of every province, on average, *at least two females* shall be the elected members of the House of People *from each province*.

This article first describes the kind of balloting held for electing the members of the *Wolesi Jirga* and then defines the maximum number of the members of this house as two hundred and fifty. Then it empowers the election law to ensure a “fair representation for all the people of the country.” The very final statement reveals a legalised effort to include women in the *Wolesi Jirga*, by clearly giving a specific number of female members that are supposed to be there. There are many other Constitution articles defining the duties of the *Wolesi Jirga* in detail; however, they will be excluded for the sake of brevity. Besides, the major textbook content on the *Wolesi Jirga* is based specifically on the Constitution article above:

This assembly [*Wolesi Jirga*] is composed of the representatives that are *elected by people across Afghanistan*. Representatives of this assembly are *elected each five years through free, general, secret and direct elections*...The *essential duty* of the representatives at the *Wolesi Jirga* is *legislation*. For more efficiency, the representatives form expert groups which are called *commissions*. Each representative is a member of one of those commissions. Each *law proposal* is first studied and amended in the related commission and then submitted for the final discussion. (9-CE: 10-11)

In addition to the basic details given in the Constitution article, this quotation explains, in brief, how the process of legislation takes place through commissions.

As for the *Mashrano Jirga*, here is the Constitution article on it:

Article Eighty-Four: Members of the House of Elders shall be elected and appointed as follows:

1. From amongst each provincial council members, one individual shall be elected by the respective council for a four year term;
2. From amongst district councils of each province, one individual, elected by the respective councils, for a three year term;
3. The remaining one third of the members shall be appointed by the President, for a five year term, from amongst experts and experienced personalities, including two members from amongst the impaired and handicapped, as well as two from nomads.

The President shall appoint fifty percent of these individuals from amongst women...

This article explains in detail the formation of the *Mashrano Jirga*. As it is stated, two thirds of this assembly are elected while one thirds are appointed by the President. Such appointment by the President also ensures the inclusion of under-represented groups in the *Mashrano Jirga* in particular and in the *Shura* in general. These groups are defined here as: (1) women; (2) the handicapped; and (3) the nomads (*kuchi*).

Based on this article, 6-SS explains the formation of the *Mashrano Jirga* as follows:

Two thirds of the members of the *Mashrano Jirga* are elected through elections while one third of them are assigned by appointment, in a way that one third of the representatives of this assembly are elected among the members of the provincial councils; another one third is elected among the members of the district councils; and the final one third is selected by the President from among the wise and influential people. Representatives in the *Mashrano Jirga* work for five years, as well. (6-SS: 32)

The rest of the text states that the *Mashrano Jirga* has the same duties like the *Wolesi Jirga* with the major difference that law drafts are first submitted to the *Wolesi Jirga* and then to the *Mashrano Jirga*. The same point is underlined in 9-CE, as well:

Mashrano Jirga also has expert commissions. Generally, laws are first approved by the *Wolesi Jirga* and then by the *Mashrano Jirga* and enter into force after the signature of the President. (9-CE: 11)

The Constitution provides many other articles describing the duties of both houses; however, they will not be included here for the sake of brevity. This is, basically, what the textbooks present on the *Shura-ye Milli* and the concept of national will. As seen above, the textbooks form only a weak association between the national will and the *Shura*, just stating that the *Shura* is a manifestation of the will of the people. Yet, the concept of ‘will’ or ‘national will’ is neither defined nor explained in detail.

This theme on the concept of national will has shown us that there are two institutions harbouring the national will in Afghanistan: the *Shura-ye Milli*, and the *Loya Jirga*. Yet, there is a significant difference between them. The National Assembly is a regular and institutionalised organ for political representation. On the other hand, the *Loya Jirga*, which is based on the ancient tradition of *jirga* in Afghanistan, has, originally, been a platform for resolving a specific issue; not a regular organ for political representation. Still, the modern history of Afghanistan

reveals an effort to institutionalise the *Loya Jirga* through the Constitution. The paradox here is that the *Loya Jirga* is, originally, not a regular organ for political representation; but a platform for resolving conflicts that may arise under different conditions and for reaching a consensus or giving a verdict. In other words, it is originally an organ of negotiation and settlement, which is something different from a modern parliament. Yet, the Constitution of 2004 defines the *Loya Jirga* as the “highest manifestation of the will of the people of Afghanistan.” This is the main reason behind the dualism in the conceptualisation of national will in Afghanistan through two institutions: the National Assembly and the *Loya Jirga*. What we see here is the survival of an ancient tradition, the *Loya Jirga*, and its articulation into the modern state system to exist side by side a modern parliament, the *Shura*. It is not a mere survival however; it is much more than that. It is the *Loya Jirga* which is presented in the textbooks as an ‘indicator of national identity’; not the *Shura*. It is the *Loya Jirga* that comes up in issues related to ‘national interests’ or ‘national values’; not the *Shura*. Besides, we see the *Loya Jirga* as a numerically more inclusive institution than the *Shura*, which empowers it more in terms of representing the national will.

Another vital point is that recognition of the *Loya Jirga* in the Constitution makes it possible for the institution of the *jirga* to survive in Afghanistan. As the *Loya Jirga* is convened at the national level, so are local *jirgas* at smaller levels like villages with the purpose of resolving local issues such as the disagreements on water, fields and animals as well as abduction of girls. In these *jirgas*, issues are discussed, negotiated and settled locally without being conveyed to the central state in Kabul. Considering the fact that the state of Afghanistan fails to exert full authority across the entire country, the *jirgas* actually fulfil a significant function. Yet, they may also be perceived as a symbol of self-rule away from state control especially in places remote from state authority such as the Durand Line zone. In return, it may undermine the concept of a *unified* national will that is represented in a single parliamentary institution; while making room for disparate ‘local wills’ represented in the local *jirgas*.

6.5. National Interests (*Manafe-e Milli*)

The final concept that emerges in the discourse of education is the concept of national interests, or *manafe-e milli*. Above all, it needs to be underlined that the primary resources including the Constitution, the textbooks and the interviews do not provide coherent data on the concept of national interests. In neither of these resources do we see a clear definition of what this concept means. Only in the textbooks of Patriotism do we see two specific chapters on national interests. Considering the fact that these textbooks have been at use only in the last three years, the topic of national interests seems like a new concept introduced to the discourse of textbooks. And it is in very general terms that it is explained, as to be shown below.

To start with the Constitution, we see the mention of national interests only indirectly in relation to the foreign policy of Afghanistan:

Article Eight: The *state shall regulate the foreign policy* of the country on the basis of preserving the independence, *national interests* and territorial integrity as well as non-interference, good neighborliness, mutual respect and equality of rights. (italics mine)

This article asserts that the state of Afghanistan shall regulate foreign policy based on national interests among other things. In other words, national interests will be one of the factors to determine the position of Afghanistan in the international arena. As the term implies the interests of a nation against those of other nations, it inevitably appears in relation to foreign policy. We see a similar statement in one of the textbooks, as well:

States, representing their nations, work towards the progress, improvement and *protection of their national interests* and make an effort to *realise their national interests inside and outside the country*. (7-PA: 23) (italics mine)

This quotation presents an idea of “states representing their nations,” or nation-states, implementing their national interests both domestically and in the form of foreign policy. In other words, 7-PA presents the two dimensions of the concept of national interests which are internal and external. Content of the two specific chapters on national interests in the textbooks of Patriotism also confirms this view, as these two chapters discuss national interests in two different ways. Chapter 7 titled “Preference for National Interests over Personal Interests” in 9-PA presents national interests as synonymous with the concept of public interests and antonymous with the concept of

personal interests. Here, we look at the concept of national interests from an internal dimension. On the other hand, Chapter 8 titled “National Interests” in 7-PA discusses national interests as the interests of the nation of Afghanistan in relation to foreigners. There, the concept of national interests is examined from an external viewpoint. More specifically, 7-PA (24-25) lists seven national interests all of which are to be *protected against the foreigners*: (1) religion and spirituality; (2) territorial integrity; (3) security; (4) economic welfare; (5) being powerful; (6) status and prestige; and (7) independence. 7-PA examines each of these items one by one, which offer important data for our purposes.

To start with, **religion and spirituality** is presented as the primary national interest:

As the religious and spiritual values constitute the foundation of the other aspects of the life of the religious people, especially the Muslims, protection of these values are regarded as the *most fundamental national interest* among the other duties and requisites. (7-PA: 24) (italics mine)

Here, we do not see the mention of a specific religion, i.e. Islam, but a general expression like “religion and spirituality.” In this picture, we see “religious people,” among whom are “especially” Muslims, who accept religion as the basis of their life. That is the reason why religion appears as the “most fundamental national interest” in Afghanistan. Some further reasons are given as follows:

The secret of *our success and power as a Muslim nation* lies, in the first place, in the protection of our religious and spiritual beliefs and values; because, *religion and spirituality have been the support that our fathers and ancestors took refuge in* during hard times and overcame the difficulties and protected their own existence as an *alive and stable nation among other nations*. (7-PA: 24) (italics mine)

Here, the nation of Afghanistan is clearly described as a “Muslim nation” whose power and success is defined through religion. The quotation refers to the past experience of the ancestors who took refuge in religion and spirituality under difficulty. Here, the major reference point is the various wars of *jihad* in history that the people of Afghanistan waged against foreign invaders including the British and the Soviets. In other words, the reason why religion emerges as the major weapon of Afghans against their enemies is an idea rooted in the history. It is through the protection of religion that the ancestors could also protect their own existence as an “alive and stable nation.” Here, we see an association formed between protecting religion and existing as a nation.

Following religion, the second national interest is presented as **territorial integrity**:

Territorial integrity means having an *integrated country with specified borders*. Protection of the *integrity of the country in which a nation lives* and protection of the specified borders of that country is accepted as one of the important aspects of the national interests of that nation. (7-PA: 24) (italics mine)

This quotation presents the idea of an “integrated country with specified borders” whereby both its integrity and borders are to be protected. On the other hand, we know that the discourse of education reveals a problematic understanding of those “specified borders,” presenting the Durand Line as an “imposed border” that is not recognised by the people of Afghanistan (see 7.5. *Watan*). The problem with borders is exactly the reason why territorial integrity appears as the second national interest to be protected.

The third national interest to be protected is presented as **security** which is explained through two types: “visible security” and “mental security”:

Visible security means the *immunity of a country* from internal or external wars, rebellions, armed conflicts and instability; while *mental security* means that the citizens [*atba*] of a country have *peace of mind* instead of anxiety about war, oppression, suppression or famine. (7-PA: 24) (italics mine)

This quotation explains security not only as a physical state of being; but also as a mental state of mind. It is a well-known fact that long exposures to physical insecurity bring forth feelings of insecurity in people who eventually lose their peace of mind. The case of Afghanistan, which has been struggling with wars and conflict in the last forty years, offers itself as an obvious example where many people suffer from mental illnesses and disorders. That is why 7-PA presents the idea of security in two dimensions both of which need to be pursued as items of national interest:

It is the *duty of governments to ensure visible and mental security* in political, economic, international and other various fields so that the citizens [*atba*] of the country may live in security and peace and *make plans for the future*. (7-PA: 24) (italics mine)

This quotation gives the responsibility of ensuring visible and mental security to “governments” so that their citizens may live in peace and make plans for the future. It actually gives a perfect glimpse of the everyday reality in Afghanistan where people go out of their homes every morning, not knowing whether they will make it back safe and sound. Under such conditions, making future plans sounds like a

dream. That is why ensuring the physical and mental security appears as a national interest to be pursued.

Where security is established, the following goal to be pursued is **economic welfare** which is presented as the fourth national interest:

One of the ways of achieving economic welfare is the extraction of mines and natural resources at home and the attraction of investments from abroad. Our country – thank God – is rich in natural resources and human skills. *It is upon the state, with the sincere cooperation of the nation, to make use of this God-given wealth in the best way; to pull people out of poverty and disaster; and be the guide to a prosperous and self-sufficient life.* (7-PA: 25) (italics mine)

This quotation demonstrates Afghanistan as a country rich in natural and human resources, which shows a potential for receiving foreign investments. In other words, it claims that the grounds necessary for economic welfare are present in Afghanistan. It only depends on the state, with the cooperation of the nation (the ‘nation-state’), to realise the potential. Yet, the reality on the ground shows Afghanistan as an insecure and instable country, which undermines foreign investments and economic welfare.

The fifth and sixth national interests are presented in relation to the state. Here is how the text explains **being powerful** as the fifth national interest:

Power of the states originate from natural blessings and acquired successes. Natural blessings include: location of the country in a good and convenient region in terms of the geographical political (geopolitical) position or possession of natural resources like oil, gas, etc. On the other hand, acquired successes include scientific and technological progress, military and armed power, population intensity, an effective presence in influential international circles and assemblies, and other things. (7-PA: 25) (italics mine)

This quotation explains in detail how states acquire power in two ways: their given context and their acquired successes. Though it is not openly explained, the underlying idea here is that the power of the state has to be protected as a national interest. This idea unfolds better in the sixth national interest which is presented as **status and prestige**:

One of the most important aspects of national interest is having a position and dignity or prestige in international arenas. *As much as a state is respected and revered in the international order* and its official documents (such as passport and academic documents) have esteem, in that measure does it have dignity and prestige. (7-PA: 25) (italics mine)

The final and seventh national interest is presented as **independence** which is explained through two concepts, i.e. “independent nation” and “independent state”:

An independent nation is one which is fully independent in its choice of life style; type of government; and political order, and on which nobody may impose an order. An independent state is one which has freedom and independent will in its elections and decisions and in which no foreign power may interfere with its decision-making. Being independent is, in fact, the product and consequence of the other aspects of national interest that has been explained above. (7-PA: 25-26) (italics mine)

This quotation explains an independent nation as one that has the *freedom to choose* its way of life, type of government and political order. An independent nation, then, generates its own state which may only be independent if it has *freedom from foreign interference* in electing and decision-making. Such freedom may be achieved only if the other national interests, i.e. religion, territorial integrity, security, economic welfare, power and prestige, are pursued. In sum, protection of all the national interests is offered as a way of achieving full independence and freedom from foreign interference.

The mention of freedom from foreign interference is, obviously, a vital point considering Afghanistan which has been occupied by the NATO forces since 2001. Thus, the presence of foreigners emerges more clearly as a point in the interviews:

EXPERT-10: National interests are important. *Afghanistan is a tool of fifty countries. We do not accept the presence of many countries, even Arabs although they are Muslims. I always tell Americans: “Let us defend our country ourselves. We are good defeaters; we have defeated communism.” But...* (italics mine)

This statement by EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, is very revealing of the reality on the ground in Afghanistan. Right after admitting that national interests are important, EXPERT-10 makes a striking statement: “Afghanistan is a tool of fifty countries.” It leads to the question of whether we can really talk about national interests in Afghanistan where we see so many foreign countries stationed in the last twenty years. Under such conditions, who decides on the *national* interests in Afghanistan? Where there is foreign presence as well as interference, are the interests of Afghanistan really *national* interests indigenous to the state of Afghanistan or the interests of those foreign states? It is because of these questions that EXPERT-10 clearly states that

Afghanistan is a *tool* in the hands of fifty countries. And he adds that they, i.e. the state of Afghanistan, do not accept the “presence of many countries,” which gives the impression that they *do* accept the presence of *some* of those countries. The only clear information we have at that point is that they reject to see “even Arabs” in Afghanistan, despite the very fact that they are Muslims. In other words, even religion as a point of commonality between Afghans and Arabs fails to operate as a facilitating factor to keep them in Afghanistan. After this statement, EXPERT-10 passes on to the presence of Americans in Afghanistan and discloses what he says to Americans: “Let us defend our country ourselves.” This statement reveals the fact that it is others, probably Americans, that are *defending* Afghanistan against the enemy, which is, the Taliban. Here, the state of Afghanistan declares its will to defend Afghanistan based on the idea that Afghans are “good defeaters,” because they have defeated communism. In other words, the will to have back the responsibility of defending Afghanistan is legitimised through a historical experience, i.e. the Mujahedeen victory over the Soviet Union after ten years of war (1979-1989). Following this statement, EXPERT-10 confines himself to the word “but...” and does not complete his sentence. He probably means to say that his words are ignored by the Americans. Then, he continues as follows:

EXPERT-10: We don't have any agenda. We just want to keep Afghanistan as it is. We have some problems now with Pakistan. We want to solve them in peace. Afghanistan doesn't claim to be the centre of the Islamic Caliphate [*Khilafat*]. We just want to have peace. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-10 discloses some of the major goals or national interests of the state. Essentially, he makes four important points that may be interpreted as follows:

1. “We don't have any agenda. We just want to keep Afghanistan as it is.”

Here, there is a reference to some other countries which may have certain agendas. The fact that EXPERT-10 passes on to talk about Pakistan right after this statement strengthens the possibility that there is a reference to the neighbours of Afghanistan, especially to Pakistan and Iran, which are said to have specific agendas concerning Afghanistan, as this is common talk in Afghanistan. The statement “we just want to keep Afghanistan as it is” may denote a ruling out of any irredentist claims about the territory of Afghanistan, such as the discontent with the Durand Line. This statement,

then, may come to mean that Afghanistan has no agenda of enlarging its territory or interfering with the affairs of its neighbours for its own interests.

2. “We have some problems now with Pakistan. We want to solve them in peace.”

This statement reveals an acknowledgement of the problematic relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which result from the problematic Durand Line in-between and the support provided by Pakistan to the Taliban. Still, it also reveals a peaceful attitude towards the solution of those problems.

3. “Afghanistan doesn’t claim to be the centre of Islamic Caliphate, or *Khilafat*⁴⁵.”

There is a reference here to some other countries that desire to be the leader of the Islamic world, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. While Iran, especially since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, has the urge to be viewed as the leader of the Shia Muslim world; it is confronted by Saudi Arabia which claims to represent the Sunni Muslim world. Although the regime in Afghanistan is also an Islamic republic, the Afghan state has no aims of being the centre of the Islamic world under the framework of a *khilafat*.

4. “We just want to have peace.”

This is a clear statement that reveals the priority in today’s Afghanistan. The obvious reason is that nothing else works without peace and security.

It needs to be underlined here that such a clear articulation of national interests is made by one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education who appears as EXPERT-10 among my respondents. On the other hand, another respondent, EXPERT-1, who is a senior official working at the same Ministry, refers to the general lack of information about national interests in Afghanistan:

EXPERT-1: *We don’t know what is our national benefit*. Many countries know it; for example, Pakistan knows it. There, the military doesn’t fight with the public. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-1, who is a male Tajik, compares Afghanistan with her neighbour Pakistan in terms of their national interests. His conclusion is that

⁴⁵ “The definition of caliphate is ‘government under a caliph.’ A caliph is a spiritual leader of Islam who claims succession from Muhammad. The word stems from the Arabic *khalifa* meaning ‘successor.’” Source: Dictionary. com, available at [<https://www.dictionary.com/e/caliphate/>], retrieved on February 22, 2020.

Afghanistan, as a country, does not know about her national interests while Pakistan knows about it. He gives the example of the Pakistani military abstaining from fighting the Pakistani public for the sake of their common national interests. On the other hand, Afghanistan offers a complicated picture where the sake of national interests gets lost in the continuous fight between the Afghan military and the Taliban, whereby each claims to be defending the national interests of Afghanistan.

Furthermore, EXPERT-1 asserts an important claim: “We don’t know what is our national benefit” or national interest. Not knowing the national interests may result both from internal and external factors. As discussed above, Afghanistan’s occupation by foreign powers means an interference into the internal conceptualisation of national interests. As for internal factors, such illiteracy about national interests may be related to the possible clash between what is presented as national interests to people and what people have as *qawmi* interests. In a society where *qawm* is an important institution and a recognised unit of belonging, people, inevitably, have an understanding of *qawmi* interests which may precede national interests. Furthermore, many of the *aqwam* have their ethnic counterparts in the neighbouring countries, which complicates the understanding of national interests even more. Such conditions aggravate the possibility of reaching a consensus on what the national interests of Afghanistan are. As the idea of *qawm* is a vital part of the idea of nation in Afghanistan (see 7.3. *Qawm*), it is difficult to imagine national interests that are separate from *qawmi* interests. Even the interest of the state may be perceived by some as a Pashtun interest, because the state does not exist fully as an *institution*; but as a *government* in Afghanistan (see Chapter 8 Discussion).

In sum, national interest implies a national consensus on what is defined as national interest. In a country that has been occupied for so long by foreigners, what kind of a consensus can there be? Where the state does not have full sovereignty, how can people be made to believe in the interests defined by that state? These questions show that the conceptualisation of national interest is a difficult task in Afghanistan.

6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined several important concepts of nation that come forward in the discourse of education defined within the limits of this thesis. As stated at the very beginning, it is believed that these concepts form a significant part

of the understanding of nation in Afghanistan. At the end of this examination, it has become apparent how the meaning and content of each of these concepts contribute to the construction of an idea of nation.

The first concept examined is national unity which is analysed together with another related concept that is the commonalities among people. The reason is that the basis of national unity emerges as certain common values among the people of Afghanistan, which is described generally as ‘commonalities’ in the primary resources. The most important data gathered from this theme is that national unity is explained as the coming together of the *aqwam* living in Afghanistan. This is a group-based understanding of national unity; rather than an individual-based understanding. And the primary motivation behind the unity of the *aqwam* is shown as external, i.e. unity against defeating a common enemy and achieving independence. It is for this reason that the *aqwam* are called to unite and wage a *jihad* against all tribal, racial, linguistic or partisan prejudices. Here, waging a *jihad* against the separation of *aqwam* is presented as a way of “strengthening national unity.” In other words, Islam is summoned as a point of commonality to act as a force of unity among the *aqwam*. The sub-theme on the commonalities of the people also confirm the idea that Islam acts as the *most common commonality* among the people of Afghanistan. In sum, Islam is presented as the basis of national unity in Afghanistan. Yet, we also need to underline the strategic usage of Islam as commonality, considering the presentation of another Muslim country like Pakistan as an enemy. Even while Islam is summoned as a point of commonality among the *aqwam* of Afghanistan, it only functions in the face of a common enemy, be it the British in the 19th century or the Russians in the 20th century.

The second vital concept we have dealt with is citizenship. The most basic data we gather from the primary resources is that there is a tension between the two terms used in Dari to denote ‘citizen’ in Afghanistan: *taba* and *shahrwand*. While the first has the implications of obeying or subjecthood; the latter is the equivalent of the word citizen. What this discourse has revealed is that the word that is used to denote ‘citizenship’ in Afghanistan is *tabaiyat*. Although the Constitution, while using the word *tabaiyat*, constructs an understanding of citizenship as ‘membership in a state’ with citizens’ rights and duties, the textbooks construct an understanding of citizenship as ‘membership in a country’ and not ‘membership in a state.’

Another concept that has been examined is national will which is explained through its two representative institutions: the *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council) and the *Shura-ye Milli* (National Assembly). While the first is an irregular council convened nationwide in cases of emergency; the latter is the regular form of parliament based on elections. Yet, it is not the *Shura* but the *Loya Jirga* that is described as a national value and a symbol of national identity. It is the vitality of the ancient *jirga* tradition in Afghanistan that makes it possible for smaller *jirgas* to be convened locally in villages or provinces that are away from state control. A possible consequence involved here is a weakening of the idea of a unified national will that is represented in a single parliamentary institution; while making room for ‘local wills’ represented in those local *jirgas*.

The final concept that we have examined is national interests. What this examination has shown is that the concept of national interests implies the existence of a sovereign state to define those national interests. On the other hand, Afghanistan is a country that has been occupied by international forces in the last nineteen years. Therefore, who defines the national interests of Afghanistan remains a big question. That is why the primary resources including the Constitution, the textbooks and the interviews do not provide coherent data on the concept of national interests. Especially the textbooks provide only some general stuff on the idea of national interests, showing the protection of religion and spirituality as the most important national interest in Afghanistan, followed by territorial integrity and economic welfare among other things.

As we complete our examination of both national symbols and national concepts as they emerge in the discourse of education, now it is time to have a look at the basic elements of the idea of a nation in Afghanistan, to which we turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT EDUCATION BUILDS IN AFGHANISTAN: ELEMENTS OF NATION

7.1. Introduction

Following the previous chapters examining how the symbols, memory and concepts of nation that are presented in the discourse of education, we finally arrive at the core of the story: elements of the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’ This chapter will be an examination of the primary data in order to reveal which themes emerge from the discourse of education to form the major elements in the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan*. In other words, the themes to be analysed here will together construct the idea of nation.

Examination of the discourse of education so far has revealed that the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan* is made up of four major elements: (1) Islam, (2) *qawm*, (3) *Afghaniyat* (Afghanness), and (4) *watan* (homeland). Here, we will be examining each element one by one, together with the data coming from the previous two chapters. At the end of this analysis, we will have reached the complete picture of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as it is presented in the discourse of education.

7.2. Islam

Afghanistan is an Islamic republic as well as a Muslim majority country. Islam generally plays a vital role in the daily lives of people who consult to Islamic rulings and provisions while acting or taking decisions. That is why the Afghan society is frequently described as an *aqidawi* society, i.e. a society of creed. Being *aqidawi* means more than just being an Islamic society; it rather means acting on the impulse

of beliefs and convictions. That is why the local *mullahs* who issue *fatwas*⁴⁶ on daily issues actually play a vital role in the daily lives of the people of this country. Its implications for this thesis is that both the regime of the state and the nature of the society interweave a discourse of education in which Islam emerges as the primary element in the idea of nation. After all, it is the Islamic state of Afghanistan that constructs this discourse which, inevitably, has an Islamic nature.

In examining Islam, the Constitution will be our starting point, as it lays the foundations of the state on Islam in the very first three articles:

Article One: Afghanistan shall be an *Islamic Republic*, independent, unitary and indivisible state. (italics mine)

Article Two: The sacred religion of *Islam is the religion of the* [state of the] *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*. Followers of other faiths shall be free within the bounds of law in the exercise and performance of their religious rituals. (italics mine)

Article Three: *No law shall contravene* the tenets and provisions of the holy religion of Islam in Afghanistan. (italics mine)

These three articles; (1) define the regime of the state of Afghanistan as an Islamic republic; (2) define Islam as the religion of the state of Afghanistan (while granting freedom to other religions); and (3) places Islamic beliefs and provisions above any other law. Basically, these articles clearly describe an Islamic framework for the state of Afghanistan and prioritise Islamic “tenets and provisions” while not using the word *sharia*⁴⁷ or “Islamic law.” The reason behind this word choice results from an effort to distinguish the present Constitution of 2004 from the rulings and regime of the Taliban. The message here is that Afghanistan may be an Islamic republic, but it will be different from the Taliban regime marked by its fundamentalist interpretation

⁴⁶ “*Fatwa*, in Islam, is a formal ruling or interpretation on a point of Islamic law given by a qualified legal scholar (known as a *mufti*). *Fatwas* are usually issued in response to questions from individuals or Islamic courts. Though considered authoritative, *fatwas* are generally not treated as binding judgments; a requester who finds a *fatwa* unconvincing is permitted to seek another opinion.” Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, available at [<https://www.britannica.com/topic/fatwa>], retrieved on May 18, 2020.

⁴⁷ “*Shari’a* means literally ‘path to be followed’ and implies divine guidance. It is generally defined as Divine Law consisting of two parts: God’s own words, i.e. the corpus of revealed law as contained in the Koran, and the *Sunna*, i.e. the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, consisting of his statements and deeds. In this sense the *Shari’a*, referring to primary sources of law, is eternal and immutable” (Mahmoudi 2004: 867).

of the Islamic *sharia* that recognised no other faith. Article Two recognising the freedom of the followers of other faiths underlines this message further.

The strength of the first three articles are further increased through another article in Chapter Ten of the Constitution, titled “Amendments,” where the possibility to amend the Constitution is regulated, with an exception of the Islamic framework:

Article One Hundred Forty-Nine: The principles of adherence to the tenets of the Holy religion of Islam as well as Islamic Republicanism *shall not be amended...* (italics mine)

In other words, this article constitutes a ban on any amendments to be made on the first three articles of the Constitution. It is in this way that the Constitution solidly establishes the Islamic character of the state of Afghanistan.

We see a reflection of the Constitution in the textbooks in defining the religion of the people of Afghanistan, including the “followers of other faiths”:

Religion of the people of Afghanistan is Islam...At the same time, a limited number of Sikhs and Hindus inhabit our country. (4-SS: 55)

As for the Islamic regime of the state, textbooks of Social Studies and Civic Education, which both have chapters titled “The State,” touch upon it. In presenting the types of state as autocracy and democracy, they include another type called the “Islamic state:”

In the holy religion of Islam, the *way of government stands on Islamic principles*. In Islam, *absolute sovereignty belongs to God and man is the caliph of God* on earth...In this great and valuable religion, the ruler is elected on the basis of merit, piety and knowledge *so that he applies the divine laws on divine servants*. (9-CE: 5) (italics mine)

What we see in the Islamic state is absolute sovereignty of God, which is followed by people’s sovereignty in electing the ruler. This quotation presents the ruler as someone applying the “divine laws,” i.e. the Islamic *sharia*, on “divine servants,” i.e. the citizens. Then we see this Islamic state contextualised as Afghanistan:

Our dear country Afghanistan is an *Islamic state* and its Constitution is openly *built on the enlightening religion of Islam*, which is expressed in the *second and third articles* of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. (9-CE: 5) (italics mine)

This quotation makes a specific reference to the second and third articles that prioritise Islam over all the other laws. It is underlined in the interviews, too:

EXPERT-4: *On top of everything is Islam. Everything in Afghanistan should be within the framework of Islam; and nothing should be against Islamic laws.* (italics mine)

In this quotation, Islam is clearly described as having an utmost position on top of “everything.” The word that EXPERT-4, a male Hazara, uses is simply “everything” which needs no further specifications. In line with the Constitution articles, then, “everything” in Afghanistan is expected to be entering into the framework of Islam and “nothing” going against the Islamic “beliefs and provisions.” Another respondent displays a similar attitude in relation to education when asked “What kind of an individual does the state of Afghanistan wish to foster through education?”:

EXPERT-7: It is based on the Constitution, the Education Law and other laws. *None of these laws, regulations and procedures may contradict the Islamic and national values, national unity, national interests and the principles that I have listed above. Islamic and national values are the most important of all.* (italics mine)

EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, bases his answer upon *law*. But he quickly adds that none of these laws are above Islamic or national values. Although he mentions Islamic and national values together, he utters the Islamic values prior to national values twice in this quotation. Still, he refers to the official documents in describing the type of people that the state wishes to foster. Based on this idea, we may turn to see the content of the Education Law and the Curriculum Framework to see the place of Islam in both. Here is an article of the Education Law where Islam is prioritised at the beginning:

Article Two: The main objectives of this law are as follows:

...

2- *Strengthen Islamic spirit, patriotism, national unity, preservation of independence, and defense of territorial integrity, protection of interest, national pride, and loyalty to the republic system of Afghanistan.* (MoE 2008) (italics mine)

In this article, we see strengthening the “Islamic spirit” as the first objective of education in Afghanistan. The fact that we see Islam as a primary objective in the Education Law means that Islamic teachings and ideas will be diffusing into the curriculum, as an examination of the textbooks and interviews confirm. As for the Curriculum Framework, first principle of the new curriculum is presented as:

The new curriculum fosters the development of students’ personalities as human beings, *good Muslims* and true Afghans... (MoE 2003: 13) (italics mine)

In other words, the new curriculum will be fostering: (1) human beings; (2) good Muslims; and (3) true Afghans. In this order, we see three levels of identity: (1) the universal human identity; (2) the religious identity; and (3) the national identity. We see the religious identity preceding the national identity, which is something confirmed in other themes. The expression “good Muslims” is explained as follows:

Children and youngsters in Afghanistan will be educated in compliance with *moderate Islamic values and spiritual believes, as opposed to extremist and fundamentalist attitudes*. (MoE 2003: 17) (italics mine)

We need to remember the Curriculum Framework was written in 2003, only two years after the Taliban was toppled. Considering the legacy of the Taliban in education (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan), the new Curriculum Framework, just like the Constitution, had to make a distinction between the fundamentalist Islam of the Taliban and the “moderate” Islam that is offered as an alternative. Therefore, this is a crucial statement dividing a vital line between an extremist interpretation and a moderate interpretation of Islam. Even while one of the objectives of education is, still, generating “good Muslims,” the Framework distinguishes it from the objective of the Taliban in generating fundamentalist Muslims with the help of a *jihadist* curriculum.

Departing from these foundational documents, we may now turn to see what the experts say about the place of Islam in the courses as well as the textbooks:

EXPERT-1: Presently in the General Education, 60% is positive sciences and 40% is *Islamic education*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-9: We see the topic of religion *in all the courses* besides courses like *Hadith*⁴⁸ or *Tajwid*⁴⁹. It is important *to convince students about Islam*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-11: Most of the Civic Education in Afghanistan is *within Islamic education* actually. How to behave, etc. are issues that may be *seen under Islamic subjects*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-3: Patriotism was developed as a separate subject, yet Islamic Studies *also highlights the civic values* like helping others. (italics mine)

As these four respondents reveal, Islam is interwoven into almost all the courses in Afghanistan. EXPERT-3 and EXPERT-11 both refer to the example of Civic

⁴⁸ *Hadith* is the words, acts or approvals of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic belief.

⁴⁹ *Tajwid* is the correct recitation of the Holy Quran.

Education which is, actually, presented within Islamic education; while EXPERT-1 clearly gives the ratio of Islamic education as 40% which is almost half. That is to say, *almost half the compulsory education* in Afghanistan is Islamic education. The major reason behind is explained by another respondent as follows:

EXPERT-8: As our people are *people of creed* [*mardom-e aqidawi*], we see the elements of *Islam always entering into the texts*. The reason is that the elders (parents), teachers and children should be *accepting these texts at first sight*. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, employs the common description of the *mardom-e aqidawi* to define the society of Afghanistan. It is due to this social structure that Islam enters into the texts so that those people of creed do *accept* the texts. Here, we see a *tension* between modern education and Islamic education, whereby the *aqidawi* society of Afghanistan is reserved towards modern education and expects to see more of Islam in education even while it is modern education.

Having examined the official documents and interviews on the place of Islam in the textbooks, we may now turn to see the content of the textbooks themselves to see how they construct Islam as a primary element in the idea of nation. As the experts claim, Islam is so much interwoven into the entire discourse of the textbooks that it is difficult to extract and show it as a separate part. Many concepts are explained through the framework of Islam, as already presented in the other themes. Below are the major chapters in the textbooks which provide data specifically on Islam:

- Textbooks of History:
 - Chapter 1 titled “Afghanistan and Islam” in 8-HI
- Textbooks of Patriotism:
 - Chapter 18 titled “Islamic Brotherhood, Basis of National Unity” in 7-PA
 - Chapter 22 titled “Religion of Islam, Basis of Muslim Unity” in 7-PA
 - Chapter 27 titled “Islamic Brotherhood” in 8-PA
 - Chapter 8 titled “Nation of Afghanistan as an Inseparable Part of the Islamic *Ummah*” in 9-PA

As presented in 5.5. Common History, we see a sub-theme in the discourse of history: “The arrival of Islam brought forth a new identity to the people of Afghanistan.” This sub-theme shows that as the *aqwam* of Afghanistan acquired a

single religion, they found in it something around which they could come together, putting aside their *qawmi* identities. As they were able to unite, so were they to establish states. In other words, only after Islam united the people of Afghanistan was it possible to establish states:

The greatest states of this land were founded *under the shade of Islam* and most of the conquests and glories of our nation in scientific, political, military and cultural fields were granted to this land *during the Islamic periods*. In the face of internal disorders and foreign attacks, *religious feelings and patriotic motivations* have always been the agent behind the *awakening of our nation* as well as the *support to the trench of the jihad* and the *unity of the people of Afghanistan*. (9-PA: 15) (italics mine)

In other words, it was under the *protective* “shade of Islam” that great states were formed; glories were achieved; internal disorders were overcome; and foreign attacks were defeated. Here, Islam is presented as an agent that has taken the people of Afghanistan forward by uniting them. And it was all made possible through the Islamic concept of war that is *jihad*. 7-PA gives the definition of *jihad* as follows:

Dictionary meaning of the word *jihad* is *effort and struggle*. As an idiom, it comes to mean each struggle that is taken *to protect the religion of Islam and its values*. In its abstract sense, what is meant by the word *jihad* in the Islamic *sharia* is that each time the religion and sanctity of the lands of Muslims come under the attack of enemies, they should not hesitate in undertaking all kinds of efforts or sacrifices in *defending their religion and land*. On the way *to defend the religion, the sanctum of the homeland and the national honour*, *jihad* takes place in the form of *armed liberation wars*. (7-PA: 65)

This quotation explains the concept of *jihad* as protecting the religion of Islam as well as the homeland where Muslims live. It means that if the homeland comes under attack, it must be defended in the name of Islam by waging a *jihad*. Here, the homeland becomes a sacred place, a “sanctum” that needs to be defended, being the *dar-ul-salam*, i.e. land of peace or land of Islam. That is how the Islamic concept of *jihad* assumes a central role in unifying the *aqwam* around the common goal of protecting the land of Islam.

Unity around Islam also lies at the core of the idea of national unity, as presented in 6.2. National Unity and 6.2.1. Commonalities of People. These discussions show that Islam emerges as the *most common commonality* among the people of Afghanistan:

Islamic brotherhood constitutes the *foundation of the national unity* of the people of Afghanistan. (7-PA: 56) (italics mine)

As examined in 6.2. National Unity, the emphasis on Islamic brotherhood results from the fact that it is presented as ‘stronger’ and ‘more stable’ than all the other bonds. No other commonality has enough power to unite the *aqwam* of Afghanistan:

The Muslim nation of Afghanistan is formed of numerous aqwam that live in unity, following the rulings and values of the holy and human-making religion of Islam, under the shadow of the flag of the tawhid⁵⁰ [oneness of God] and the blessed expression⁵¹ “la ilaha illallah Muhammad-un rasulullah” [“there is no god but God; Muhammad is the messenger of God”]. (7-PA: 70) (italics mine)

This quotation shows Islam as the only way to unite the “Muslim nation of Afghanistan” which is “formed of numerous *aqwam*.” In other words, Islam fills an important gap between the *aqwam* which lack points of commonality. Where Islam unites all the *aqwam* is piety; not *qawmi* background or language, as explained in 6.2.1. Commonalities of People. Thus, people are invited to reject fragmentations:

Comprehending their Islamic duty [wajeeba], the sincere offsprings of this land struggle against all types of prejudice and contradiction, not allowing dispersion and disagreement to find their way among the united nation of Afghanistan and cause weakness and division of our Muslim compatriots. (7-PA: 70)

Here, we see an Islamic duty defined for the people of Afghanistan, which is to struggle against prejudice and discord so that national unity is sustained. More importantly, this duty is explained through the Islamic concept of the *wajeeba*⁵² which is an order of God according to the Muslim faith. In other words, this discourse associates national unity with people’s adoption of it as an Islamic duty.

Departing from the conceptualisation of Islam as the major commonality among people, the discourse of education also presents Islam as the primary element of national identity in Afghanistan, as examined in 7.4. *Afghaniyat*. In fact, it is observed in the discourse of education that national identity is intricately interwoven

⁵⁰ The concept of *tawhid* (meaning oneness in Arabic) is central to Islamic faith, which indicates belief in the oneness of God (Allah).

⁵¹ This expression is called the *shahada* (meaning testimony in Arabic) in Islamic faith, by which one declares belief in the oneness (*tawhid*) of God and the acceptance of Prophet Muhammad as God’s messenger.

⁵² The word *wajeeba*, which means ‘duty’ or ‘obligation,’ has the same root with another Arabic word, *wajib*, which means “a religious duty; something that Muslims are obliged to do.” In the Islamic jurisprudence, according to the Sunni Hanafi sect, the most obligatory acts are described with the word *fard* while a little less obligatory acts are expressed with the word *wajib*. (The other Muslim sects take the two equally obligatory.) Source: *Wiktionary*, available at [<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/wajib>], retrieved on January 29, 2020.

with the Islamic identity. It is explained that the Islamic teachings and values are so much fused with the beliefs, morals, culture and history of the people of Afghanistan that Islam has inevitably become an obvious part of national identity. In relation to that, the primary data also shows the prevalence of the belief that Islamic and national values are highly interwoven, which is something confirmed in the interviews. To the question of what kind of an individual the state of Afghanistan wishes to foster through education, the respondent below gives the following answer which includes an explanation on the intricacy between Islamic and national values:

EXPERT-7: Our goal is to have a *literate, moral, advanced, clean and noble nation*. They *should not be alcoholic*, because it is a sin; not *halal*⁵³ [permissible]. They should be careful in their relations with women and *refrain from adultery*. If they drink alcohol, there is a law and punishment for that. Or if a woman does not *wear a headscarf* or is involved in adultery, not only by law but also by people will she be seen negatively. These are *our national values*. *Progress does not mean having bad habits*. Alcohol has economic harms, as well. In Russia, people die from alcoholism. In fact, our culture is *more advanced than the Western culture*. Our attitude towards adultery reflect *both our religious and national values*. *If these values are not transmitted to children, there will be anarchism*. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, describes what kind of a nation ‘they’ (the state of Afghanistan) aim to generate: “a literate, moral, advanced, clean and noble nation.” In other words, the nation of Afghanistan is expected to have: (1) literacy which may be achieved through education; (2) morality which may be achieved through Islam; (3) progress which may be achieved through economic development among other things; (4) cleanliness which may also be achieved through Islam; and (5) nobility which may be achieved through the respect of other nations. After listing these traits, EXPERT-7 shows how such traits may be achieved: (1) abstention from alcoholism; (2) abstention from adultery; and (3) veiling. Following this explanation, he says: “These are our national values.” In fact, all of these acts display Islamic values. But he explains that they reflect the expectations of the society, too, specifically on veiling and abstention from adultery. That is why he calls all of these actions “our Islamic and national values,” not differentiating between the two. Then he jumps into the issue of progress, which reveals a criticism of those who identify

⁵³ *Halal* is an Arabic word meaning permissible or lawful, which is used to denote an object or act that is permissible to use or do in Islamic belief. It is the opposite of *haram* which means forbidden.

the “Islamic and national values” with backwardness. That is why he asserts that progress does not mean having bad habits. In that respect, he regards the culture of Afghanistan in advance of the Western culture. What he says at the very is also critical. He believes that if the “Islamic and national values” are not transmitted to new generations, “there will be anarchism” in Afghanistan. In other words, it is these values that sustain the traditions, the society and the status quo.

Given the role of Islam in the conceptualisation of national identity, national unity and national values, it takes its place in the conceptualisation of citizenship as well:

EXPERT-2: A citizen in Afghanistan means to be a *Muslim and to be an Afghan...An Afghan citizen is also a good Muslim* who knows the basics of Islam and the religious rituals. (italics mine)

Just like the conceptualisation of national identity, the conceptualisation of citizenship is also founded upon two pillars: being Muslim and being Afghan. And Islam always precedes Afghanness. Upon being asked the most important feature of the members of the country, EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, gives the answer below:

EXPERT-10: The *most important feature is Islam*, because *Afghanistan is 99.5% Muslim*. Although Hindus and Sikhs also live in Afghanistan, they are a minority.

While describing Islam as the most important characteristic of the people of Afghanistan, EXPERT-10 once again shows it as a major commonality. On the other hand, another respondent, EXPERT-6 who is a female Hazara, brings forth a serious criticism to the conceptualisation of Islam as commonality, upon being asked: “Do you agree with the claim that Islam unites the *aqwam* in Afghanistan?”:

EXPERT-6: No, I don’t agree. *Islam is not a unifier* unfortunately; the *most important problem* in Afghanistan is related to *religion*. As I have told you, *we live in the 17th century*. The Taliban belonged to one sect and they *killed peoples from the other sect*. The Taliban was both a political and a religious problem; it still is. They are made to believe that they will go to Heaven if they kill people of other sects or religions. Most of the suicide bombings take place in Barchi, which is a Hazara quarter in Kabul. *Radicals of Sunnis believe that it is good to kill Shias*. Fundamentalists want *Sunnis and Shias to be enemies*. This is something very bad. (italics mine)

EXPERT-6, who is a Shia Hazara woman, touches a sore spot in the issue of Islam in Afghanistan. While all the primary data, including the textbooks and the interviews,

present Islam as a commonality unifying the people of Afghanistan, EXPERT-6 explains how it may become a point of division and violence among the Muslims themselves. More specifically, she describes religion as the “most important problem” in Afghanistan, let alone being a point of unification. While almost the entire population of Afghanistan adheres to Islam by 99.8%, there is a sectarian division between the Sunnis (85-90%) and Shias (10-15%). Although EXPERT-6 does not clearly express it here, the Taliban belong to the Sunni sect and they have been killing people of the Shia sect, since their fundamental interpretation of Islam regards Shia Muslims as non-believers. It is still the case in today’s Afghanistan where the Taliban specifically targets the Hazara quarters. EXPERT-6 describes this situation as living in the 17th century, intending to say that this kind of violence does not belong to the current century.

With this quotation, we get an insight into the reality on the ground which is different from what is shown in the textbooks. On the other hand, we need to remember that the textbooks construct a discourse on Islam as commonality exactly because of such fundamentalist ideas. After all, the goal of education is defined in the Curriculum Framework (2003: 13) as fostering “moderate Muslims” in contrast to the fundamentalist ideas of the Taliban and similar groups in the country.

Until this point, we have examined the position and role of Islam in the conceptualisation of nation in Afghanistan. Chapter 8 titled “Nation of Afghanistan as an Inseparable Part of the Islamic *Ummah*” in 9-PA inverts the picture and shows the position and role of the nation of Afghanistan within the greater Islamic *ummah*:

Nation of Afghanistan is an *inseparable component of the Islamic ummah* while the land of Afghanistan is a historical and *valuable territory of the world of Islam*. The biggest glories of this country were granted to the nation of Afghanistan *under the shadow of Islam and in the name of Islam*. Since the time of its introduction to the religion of Islam, this country, as the *shining centre of Islam*, carried the lights of invitation, *jihad*, wisdom and freedom to all the corners of the world. The famous offsprings of this land have been recognised among the Islamic *ummah* as the *flag carriers* of science, wisdom, invitation, politics and freedom. (9-PA: 24) (italics mine)

This quotation presents the nation of Afghanistan as a vital component of the Islamic *ummah*, or the worldwide community of Muslim people. It is not simply a part of it; but a glorious part of it making conquests, waging *jihad*, inviting non-believers and engaging in science and wisdom *in the name of Islam*. As seen in the other

quotations, Afghanistan is consistently presented as making conquests only after the arrival of Islam, i.e. through *jihad*. Here, it is not only the military victories that are underlined; but also other glories achieved in science and wisdom by the “famous offsprings of this land” some of whom are listed (9-PA: 24) as follows: Imam-e Azam Abu Hanifa (699-767); Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (971-1030); Ahmad Shah Abdali (1722-1772) and Sayed Jamaladdin Al-Afghani (1838-1897). The text also underlines that the relationship between Afghanistan and the *ummah* is mutual:

Likewise, the Islamic *ummah* across the world of Islam love the land of *Afghanistan*, respecting and appreciating the *faithful and courageous people of this country*. (9-PA: 24) (italics mine)

This quotation shows the positive perception of Afghanistan and its people among the *ummah*. The biggest evidence for that is shown in the participation of Muslims from all over the world in the *jihad* of the nation of Afghanistan against the assault of the Soviet Union in 1979-1989 (9-PA: 25). Indeed, the Afghan Mujahedeen was a transnational movement formed with the participation of innumerable Muslims coming to Afghanistan to join the *jihad* against the Soviets (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan). Though 9-PA explains it as an indicator for the *love of the Islamic ummah for Afghanistan*; we know that, in reality, it resulted from a proxy war between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Besides this military ‘cooperation’ seen in history, the text also gives an organisational example:

In the Islamic *ummah*, *Afghanistan has a special status*, being a member of the *Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)* since its establishment. This organisation is a symbol of the *unity and cooperation of Islamic countries*. (8-PA: 68) (italics mine)

This quotation underlines the importance of the unity of the Islamic *ummah* through official organisations like the OIC. The text presents such cooperation with the Islamic *ummah* as something beneficial for Afghanistan:

...[T]he nation of Afghanistan, by protecting its relations and solidarity with the great Islamic *ummah*, may *protect its own pride, strength and honour*...It is in the hands of the people of Afghanistan as well as the actors of the political system of this country to fulfil their responsibility and make an effort for establishing *solidarity of the nation of Afghanistan with the great Islamic ummah*; and for *making good use of the abilities of the Islamic ummah and the world of Islam for the sake of peace, security, reconstruction, welfare and progress of Afghanistan*. (9-PA: 25) (italics mine)

This quotation makes a call to the people and administrators of Afghanistan to sustain the solidarity with the Islamic *ummah* and benefit from the abilities of the Muslim world. Here, we see a designation of the *ummah* as a solution for the problems of Afghanistan. The implication may be that Muslims should be asked to help Afghanistan; not non-Muslims. Even while there have been some “enemies” in the past who “tried to weaken the relations of Afghanistan with the great Islamic *ummah* and separate the two” (9-PA: 25), by which is probably meant the Soviet Union, it should not be permitted. That is why love for the *ummah* is underlined:

A requirement of patriotism for a Muslim individual is to regard one’s self as a part of the great Islamic ummah which constitutes more than one and half billion of the world population. Each patriotic Afghan loves their ummah besides their own nation and makes an effort for the benefit and progress of all the Muslims. (8-PA: 68) (italics mine)

This quotation reveals a specific understanding of patriotism in Afghanistan which means not only love for one’s own homeland and own nation; but also for the greater *ummah*. What is recommended here for a patriotic Afghan is feeling as a part of the Islamic *ummah* as well as the Afghan nation. It includes working for the “benefit and progress of all the Muslims;” and not just the Muslims of Afghanistan.

So we arrive at the end of our analysis of Islam as the primary element of the idea of nation in Afghanistan as revealed in the discourse of education. Here, we face a conceptualisation of nation that is intricately interwoven with Islam and Islamic concepts such as the *ummah*, the *jihad*, Islamic brotherhood, etc. Especially the conceptualisation of some important national concepts such as national unity, national identity and citizenship consistently involve Islam as a primary element, as examined in Chapter 6 Concepts of Nation. Not only do we see Islam as part of national concepts but also as part of national symbols like the national flag, national anthem and national heroes, as examined in Chapter 5 Symbols and Memory of Nation. Just by looking at the national flag, one may see the Islamic symbols on it including the pulpit and the altar as well as the *shahada* (testimony) and the word of *tawhid* (oneness of God) inscribed in Arabic on it. Similarly, the lyrics of the national anthem declares Allah as the leader of the people of Afghanistan, which is followed by the repetition of the expression *Allahu Akbar* (God is the greatest). As for the national heroes who represent the personified national symbols, we see specifically two groups of people that both belong to the Islamic context: the *ghazis*

(Muslim veterans) and the *shohada* (Muslim martyrs). Such conceptualisations of national symbols are in line with that of national concepts which all include elements of Islam. When all the data is triangulated, it is confirmed that Islam emerges as the primary element of the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan*.

7.3. *Qawm*

Following Islam, we are faced with a critical concept that emerges secondarily in the idea of nation: *qawm*. In the context of Afghanistan, *qawm* is a much-loaded concept that assumes different meanings under different conditions. Being such a ‘jelly’ word that is hard to pinpoint, *qawm* is, at the same time, a critical term in understanding the society of Afghanistan. Thus, an examination of this term will display the social structure in Afghanistan, which constitutes a vital step in understanding this country.

For such a loaded concept like *qawm*, etymology is undoubtedly the best place to start. English translation of the Dari (Persian) word *qawm* in singular and *aqwam* in plural is given as “family, folk, nation, nationality, people, race” in one of the online dictionaries⁵⁴ and as “people, nation, tribe, sect, group (of followers), family, kin, kith” in another online dictionary⁵⁵. As seen in these definitions, this word corresponds to many *unusually different* terms in English like “tribe” and “nation” at the same time, which are generally placed in opposition to each other in the academic literature. Although the word *qawm* may denote nation under certain circumstances, we need to underline that the exact equivalent of the word “nation” is *millat* in Dari. As for the word “tribe,” another word is used as its exact equivalent in Dari, i.e. *qabeelah*. On the other hand, the word *qawm* may also denote a group larger or smaller than a tribe; so, it is very much related to the word *qabeelah*. Thus, *qawm* is also a highly possible equivalent of the word “tribe.” What we do not see in this list is the word “ethnic group.” Interestingly, however, as we switch from Dari-to-English to English-to-Dari and search for the Dari equivalent of the English word “ethnic group,” we see that it is given as *qawm* in the online

⁵⁴ Source: *Vajehyab*, available at: [<https://www.vajehyab.com/?q=%D9%82%D9%88%D9%85&t=like&s=32>], retrieved on April 2, 2020.

⁵⁵ Source: *Dictionary-Farsi.com*, available at: [<http://www.dictionary-farsi.com/>], retrieved on April 2, 2020.

dictionaries⁵⁶. It means that if we are to say “ethnic group” in Dari, we may use the word *qawm*, even while the two words may not be exact equivalents.

Departing from the fact that the term *qawm* is such an intractable word with many diverse meanings, it is a good idea to have a look at how some of my respondents translate this word into English upon being asked. On the whole, four equivalents come up as major suggestions: “tribe,” “ethnic group,” “ethnicity” and “nationality.” It needs to be underlined with emphasis that switching between these words is common among my respondents. For example, upon being asked how he would translate the word “*qawm*,” EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun, says:

EXPERT-10: *Qawm* means an *ethnic group* like Pashtun, Uzbek, Turk, Tajik. (italics mine)

This is the answer he gives *consciously* upon being asked. An examination of the entire text of the interview with EXPERT-10, however, reveals that he consistently uses the word “tribe” for *qawm* both before and after this question:

EXPERT-10: ...there are many *tribes* and sub-tribes in Afghanistan. For example, X is a *qawm* and within it, there are different layers of *qawm*. It has several *khels*. (italics mine)

Here, he explains the nature of a tribe, or *qawm*, which contains several sub-tribes, or *khels* which is a Pashto word for “clan” or “sub-tribe.” Thus, the word that EXPERT-10 unconsciously uses for *qawm* is actually “tribe.”

On the other hand, EXPERT-11, upon being asked how he would translate the word *qawm* into English, gives the answer below:

EXPERT-11: *Ethnicity. Tribe is different for me. Pashtuns have different tribes and they have conflicts among each other. In the past, each of them wanted to be the ruling tribe. Their kind of living are tribal. Many of them are kuchis; nomads. They are not urban. Many other people in Afghanistan, they don't have tribes. Qizilbash or Hazara don't have tribes...By the way, tribe is qabeelah.* (italics mine)

EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, gives the answer “ethnicity;” yet, the fact that he immediately says “tribe is different for me” means that he also considers the word “tribe,” but then abandons it. While explaining the word “tribe” through Pashtuns specifically, he refers to: (1) tribal segmentation, (2) tribal conflicts, (3) tribal way of

⁵⁶ Source: *Glosbe*, available at: [<https://en.glosbe.com/fa/en/%D9%82%D9%88%D9%85>], retrieved on April 2, 2020.

living, (4) nomadism and (5) rural life. He contrasts all these tribal features with his own *qawm*, i.e. Qizilbash, as well as the Hazara who “don’t have tribes” in his opinion. That is how he distinguishes between certain *aqwam* as tribal and certain other *aqwam* as non-tribal. At the end, he prefers the word “ethnicity” to “tribe.”

And finally, another respondent suggests a totally different word for *qawm* upon being asked how he would translate it into English:

EXPERT-7: *Qawm* means *nationality* [*milliyat*]. And nation is the Afghan nation. *Nationality is smaller than nation*. We are a nation. (italics mine)

EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek, suggests the word “nationality” which is a legacy of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. In the Soviet conceptualisation⁵⁷, this word does not give the sense of citizenship like “Afghan nationality”; but that of “ethnic group” like “Hazara nationality.” The fact that this conceptualisation still has buyers in Afghanistan shows how deep the Soviet legacy penetrated at the time. On the other hand, there are other respondents who reject it:

EXPERT-10: I don’t believe in *milliyat* (nationality). The objective of the *millat* [nation] should be to increase the love for the *millat*. Russians created the *milliyat* to divide us, telling us: “You are not a *millat*; you are made up of *milliyats*.” So, *millat* must be there to mean “love to *millat*.” Now, *milliyat* should mean *millatdoosti* [love for nation].

EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun, explains how the word “nationality” entered into the context of Afghanistan by way of Russians. He reads it as a bad intention for dividing the nation of Afghanistan. That is why he suggests a change in the meaning of nationality as “love for nation” instead of *qawm*. It is important to note that both EXPERT-7, an Uzbek, and EXPERT-10, a Pashtun, are the two top level officials of

⁵⁷ Soviets had a different understanding of nationality and nationhood, unlike the Western understanding. Built on the Soviet ‘ethnos’ theory, this understanding treated nationality not as the single state identity in a country; but as ethnic identity. “The standard Russian term to describe such ‘ethnic’ identity, *natsional’nost*, is often translated into English as ‘nationality’ but this is not held to imply anything about an individual’s relationship to the state (which is an aspect of citizenship - *grazhdanstvo*)” (Banks 1996: 23). In the Ukrainian SSR, for instance, one’s bond of citizenship was not to the Ukrainian SSR but to the USSR; while her nationality might be Kazakh, Russian or Ukrainian. Brubaker (1994: 50) distinguishes the Soviet style nation-building as: “*the thoroughgoing state-sponsored codification and institutionalization of nationhood and nationality exclusively on a substate rather than a state-wide level.*” That is to say, nationality in the Soviet context consisted of all the ethnic identities living in a state, which were not entitled to have their own state. Therefore, in Uzbekistan, for instance, various nationalities, or stateless ethnic identities, resided, including Tajiks, Russians, etc. Uzbeks were the only ethnic identity with a state, that is why they were called the “titular nationality” in Uzbekistan. It was through the titular nationality that the act of nation-building was implemented by the Russian SFSR, such as strengthening the Uzbek elite, teaching the Uzbek language, reviving the Uzbek culture, etc.

the Ministry of Education; yet, they have two different conceptualisations of such a vital term like the *qawm*. While the first suggests “nationality;” the latter suggests “ethnic group” but, in practice, uses “tribe.” This variation at the top is highly representative of the variation in general with respect to the use of the term *qawm*.

As stated at the beginning of this theme, *qawm* is a fundamental institution in the society of Afghanistan. It is the one major social institution that needs to be understood correctly in order to comprehend the social structure of this country. Yet, the textbooks examined in this study, even while presenting the *aqwam* as components of the nation, fail to provide a clear explanation about this institution. All the data we gather on the society of Afghanistan comes from the interviews:

EXPERT-2: We should underline that 75% of Afghanistan consists of *rural areas*; it is a mountainous country. There is *little communication and little relation between the groups*. Sometimes *ethnicity becomes even stronger than Islam*...In rural areas, people *belong to their family and tribe*. They know other people by their names like: “He is the son of X, he speaks Persian or Pashto and he is a Muslim.” (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-2 makes an analysis of the social structure of Afghanistan based on the demographic figures which conform with those declared by National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA).⁵⁸ A country like Afghanistan where three quarters of the population live in the countryside is, obviously, a rural country. Geographical features like mountains further intensify the rurality, as mountains disrupt communication between neighbourhoods. In consequence, there is “little communication and little relation” between “the groups” by which is meant the *aqwam* living apart from one another. Under such conditions, the *aqwam* become more and more isolated whereby their *qawmi* identity get ahead of their religious identity based on Islam, let alone the Afghan national identity. The reason is that rural people recognise one another primarily through their *qawmi* identities, as their primary belonging is to “their family and tribe.” Considering the fact that the majority of Afghanistan is rural, we arrive at the conclusion that the institution of *qawm* and *qawmi* identity are strong in the majority of the society, which increases

⁵⁸ According to the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) of Afghanistan [<https://nsia.gov.af/home>], 22.6 million (71.5%) of the total population of Afghanistan live in rural areas, with nomads constituting 1.5 million (4.8%), while only 7.5 million (23.7%) live in urban areas.

the possibility of *qawmi* discrimination. At this point, EXPERT-2 points to a difference between the rural and the urban, claiming that things are changing today:

EXPERT-2: Now the mass media and social media increased communication between the ethnic groups and decreased controversial issues. Thanks to the government and the media, *national values are increasing and national identity started to act as unifier*. For example, what I see at the Ministry is that older people are more separated from each other in terms of ethnicity. Young people *work together and mix more*...In Kabul, I haven't seen anyone insulting any groups. Of course, *urbanisation helps it*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, mentions three main factors behind the social change that is taking place: (1) media consumption (including social media); (2) role of the state in nation-building; and (3) urbanisation. First, he underlines the role played by the mass media in increasing the level of communication between the *aqwam*. That is to say, the mass media tools have been able to bypass the geographical barriers between the *aqwam* living apart from one another. Second, he adds to it the role played by the “government” (not the “state” again) as the main actor of nation-building in strengthening national values as well as national identity. At this point, he gives the example of the Ministry of Education where younger people are more open to co-working and ‘mixing’ more with the members of other *aqwam*. And third, he mentions urbanisation as a factor behind the mutual acceptance of each *qawm*. Here, we see a dichotomy between the city and the countryside in terms of *qawmi* disrespect and discrimination. For EXPERT-2, the reason why people in Kabul do not insult other “groups,” or *aqwam*, is that they are *urbanised*. It means that they do not recognise one another primarily through their *qawmi* identities like those living in rural areas. EXPERT-11, on the other hand, claims that the situation in Kabul and the countryside is, actually, similar:

EXPERT-11: Just recently, we had a small fighting in Kabul University *around ethnicity [qawm]* between Pashtuns and Hazaras. *Fights in provinces are between ethnicities [aqwam]*. We always think it is between the Taliban supported by Pakistan and the public, but that's not the case. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, gives the example of Kabul University which has been one of the most modernised institutions in Afghanistan since its foundation in 1940s. Even there, we see *qawm*-based violence between the students of different *aqwam*, which implies that at least some of the students are fractionised based on their *aqwam*. Then, EXPERT-11 jumps to the example of

provinces, which include both cities and villages, where we also see *qawmi* conflicts. EXPERT-11 clarifies a misunderstanding at this point, claiming that the main conflict in provinces is *qawm*-based conflict; and not the conflict with the Taliban.

As we see in the quotations above, both of the respondents give Kabul as an example. Leaving aside the fact that they themselves live in Kabul, we need to emphasise that Kabul, the capital city, is *the city par excellence* in Afghanistan, being the most urbanised city compared to all the other cities including Herat, Mazar-e Sharif or Qandahar. Therefore, whenever a comparison is made between the city and the village, Kabul emerges as the primary example. Yet, we should be careful in viewing Kabul like a modern capital city, as one of my respondents shows:

EXPERT-6: For example, you may think that Hazaras, Tajiks and Pashtuns live together in Kabul as it is the capital city. In fact, *each district of Kabul belongs to one group of people. They can't live together in unity.* For example, the quarter of Barchi belongs to Hazara people while that of Khayrkhana belongs to the Tajik. We know that in *modern life*, all the groups should mix with each other and *groups should not be important.* But in Kabul it's important. For example, I am a Hazara and I can live easily in Barchi, but I can't live in Khayrkhana. People living there might think *I am a foreigner.* (italics mine)

From the very beginning of the quotation, EXPERT-6, who is a female Hazara, warns us not to be misled into thinking that Kabul is a city where different *aqwam* live together in a mixed manner. On the contrary, she shows the inner story of Kabul city which is divided into specific quarters based on *qawmi* identity. Being a Hazara herself, she says that her Hazara identity entitles her to live only in a specific quarter and not in others. This division is so strict that if she attempted to live in another quarter, she would be treated like a “foreigner,” as she says. In her opinion, this is unlike a “modern life” where group identities are not that important. From her reasoning, we infer that Kabul does not fit into the definition of a modern capital city. Thus, it is not only in the rural areas that the institution of *qawm* remain significant; but also in the capital city, which is the most urbanised in the country.

A very important trait of the *qawm* is, undoubtedly, language. Almost every *qawm* is distinguished from their counterparts by their language or dialect. Among the textbooks, 4-SS has a specific section on the languages spoken in Afghanistan:

In Afghanistan, *nearly thirty languages* exist which are spoken by *people in different locations*, including Pashto and Dari which are the *official state languages*, as well as Uzbeki, Turkmeni, Pashai, Balochi, Nuristani and Pamiri

which are recognised as the third *official language* in the areas where the majority of people are speakers of one of these languages. (4-SS: 55)

In other words, almost thirty different languages are spoken by the people of Afghanistan living in “different locations,” i.e. in the rural and mountainous areas set apart from one another. Among these numerous languages, we see two recognised as “official state languages” while a third language is recognised as an “official language,” as well. In other words, it is only in Pashto and Dari that the state communicates to people while the third language seems like a locally officialised language. This information is based on the Constitution article on languages:

Article Sixteen: From amongst Pashto, Dari, Uzbeki, Turkmani, Baluchi, Pachaie, Nuristani, Pamiri and *other current languages* in the country, *Pashto and Dari shall be the official languages of the state*. In areas where the *majority* of the people speak in any one of Uzbeki, Turkmani, Pachaie, Nuristani, Baluchi or Pamiri languages, any of the aforementioned language, in addition to Pashto and Dari, shall be the *third official language*, the usage of which shall be regulated by law. The state shall design and apply effective programs *to foster and develop all languages* of Afghanistan. *Usage of all current languages* in the country shall be *free in press* publications and mass media. Academic and national administrative terminology and usage in the country shall be preserved. (italics mine)

At the very beginning of this article, we see eight languages listed, which is followed by an open-ended statement of “and other current languages in the country,” as it is the case with the ending statement of Article Four as “and other tribes.” Such statements imply a flexible attitude that avoids limiting the number of the languages spoken or the number of *aqwam* living in the country. What needs emphasis in this article is the freedom granted to publish or broadcast in all these “current languages.” In other words, the Constitution gives the *aqwam* the right to communicate in their own languages. Consequently, Afghanistan emerges as one of those countries where people can speak in multiple languages, one of which indicates their specific *qawm*.

Living in a society where *qawm* remains an important trait entails an automatic skill in people for recognising one’s *qawm*. Upon being asked how people in Afghanistan can recognise a person’s *qawm*, some of my respondents give the following answers:

EXPERT-1: ...they can understand *from where you come*; or your *names and surname*. Many people use the *name of their tribe as their surname*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-11: The first question when you meet someone for the first time is: *Where are you from?* But this question is asked *to understand your qawm* actually. (italics mine)

EXPERT-6: We're different from each other in *body, face and dress*. My *way of speaking* is also distinct. Our *religion* is different. It's *something clear*. (italics mine)

Based on the data we get from these three experts, we may accept the following traits as major signs revealing one's *qawm*, from the most visible to the less visible: (1) bodily and facial features; (2) dressing; (3) way of speaking; (4) names and surname; (5) hometown; and (6) religion or sect. The order given here, however, does not denote an order of importance. Not all of these traits may work as signs of *qawmi* identity in each case. As we see, different experts with different *qawmi* identities talk about different signs. Both EXPERT-1, who is a male Tajik, and EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, point to the significance of hometown as a sign revealing one's *qawmi* identity. As it is the least visible sign, it emerges as the first question to be asked at the first moment of meeting someone new. EXPERT-1 adds the role of one's names and surname as indicators of *qawmi* identity, which may also be learnt by asking. On the other hand, EXPERT-6, who is a female Hazara, emphasises more on certain physical characteristics like facial features and the way of speaking which may reveal themselves without being asked. That is why she states that "it's something clear." Furthermore, she also adds religion as a sign of difference due to the fact that Hazaras are generally Shia Muslims. Yet, we need to underline that religious sect may only become apparent under specific conditions; otherwise, it is difficult to be identified. As for dressing, it may also be a sign of *qawmi* identity in some cases if the person in question is wearing something peculiar to a *qawm* or a province. Especially the caps or turbans that men wear may be peculiar to a specific *qawm*. Still, for those who are not wearing traditional clothes, dressing may not work as a sign indicating *qawmi* identity. Finally, the way of speaking, dialect or accent, may be a stronger clue for *qawm* or hometown, as we know that Afghanistan is a country with different language communities. Pashtuns easily become apparent by speaking in Pashto. As for Dari-speakers, the way a Hazara speaks in Dari may reveal their *qawmi* identity, as they speak in the Hazaragi dialect; or the way an Uzbek speaks in Dari may reveal their Turkic identity.

Such *qawmi* signs play an important role in the way students get conscious about their own *qawm*, starting with the family, extending into the school and the society:

EXPERT-6: The family directly doesn't say that they are, for example, Tajiks. Students *understand* that they are Tajiks in *their routine life*. May be at primary school, they are not aware of their identity, but after that, they certainly understand. But it is *not only in the family*. *Every part of the society* has a lot of *signs* saying that they are Tajiks. These signs say it *unconsciously*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-6, who is a female Hazara, explains how the *qawmi* signs act upon young people who unconsciously develop an understanding about their *qawmi* identity. It happens as a process of *understanding* through the omni-present *qawmi* signs that are visible in "every part of the society" including the family and the school. In other words, the visibility of *qawmi* signs is something that reproduces the *qawmi* identity. We also need to remember that in Afghanistan, it is legal to have a *qawmi* identity; so, there is no problem in either showing off your own *qawm* or asking about other's *qawm*. What legalises these *qawmi* identities is, obviously, the Constitution which recognises fourteen *aqwam* and "other *aqwam*" living in Afghanistan:

Article Four: ...The nation of Afghanistan is composed of *all individuals* who possess the citizenship of Afghanistan. The nation of Afghanistan shall be *comprised of* Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkman, Baluch, Pachaie, Nuristani, Aymaq, Arab, Qirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujur, Brahwui and other *tribes* [*aqwam*]. The word Afghan shall apply to every *citizen* of Afghanistan... (italics mine)

This quotation is a part of the famous Article Four of the Constitution describing the "nation of Afghanistan" which is defined in two ways: (1) The nation of Afghanistan is composed of individual citizens. (2) The nation of Afghanistan is composed of fourteen *aqwam*, which is translated here as "tribes." The first description gives us the modern conceptualisation of a nation that is supposed to be made up of the individual citizens of a state; while the second shows us the Afghan understanding of nation made up of fourteen *aqwam*. These two descriptions mean that the individuals of Afghanistan become members of the nation in two ways: (1) directly as citizens, and (2) indirectly as the members of their own *qawm*. As the *aqwam* are members of the nation, so too will be all the members of the *aqwam*. It is also in this way that their *qawmi* membership is recognised together with their national membership. In sum, the Constitution recognises three units: (1) "Afghan citizen" as the individual unit; (2) *aqwam* as the *qawmi* unit; and (3) the "nation of Afghanistan" as the largest

social unit. It should also be underlined that here, we do not see an expression like the “Afghan nation;” instead, we see the “nation of Afghanistan,” which probably results from the controversy around the ethnonym Afghan (see 7.4. *Afghaniyat*). And finally, although the Constitution establishes fourteen *aqwam* as the officially recognised *aqwam* of Afghanistan, the open-ended statement at the end (“and other *aqwam*”) implies that there are more than just fourteen *aqwam* living in this country. One of my respondents explains it as follows:

EXPERT-10: Our Constitution recognises fourteen *qawms* but it is *not limited*. After naming them, it says: “and other *qawms*.” In fact, there are *forty-five tribes in Afghanistan*, but we didn’t write them all, because some citizens don’t like the idea, because they think *we will be separated*. *Independent tribes* can have their identity, no problem. (italics mine)

EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, states that there are forty-five *aqwam* living in Afghanistan, which is more than three times the official figure recognised in the Constitution. If the names of all those *aqwam* were written in the Constitution, it would, surely, be a never-ending list. Plus, EXPERT-10 points to the higher possibility of separation and disintegration in that case. He ends his statement by referring to the “independent tribes,” which are the “frontier tribes” that consist mostly of Pashtuns living in the Durand Line zone close to Pakistan. As the tribes living in both sides of the Durand Line, i.e. in Afghanistan and Pakistan, have been exempt from state authority throughout history (see Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan), EXPERT-10 claims that they may keep their own identity, which does not constitute a problem for him. In other words, the inclusion of their names in the Constitution of the Afghan state would not have much meaning, as they already do not recognise the state which, in return, does not interfere with their affairs. The fact that one of the top officials of the Ministry of Education has such a view about independent tribes shows how deep the tribal structure has penetrated into the state of Afghanistan.

Though the number of *aqwam* living in Afghanistan is claimed to be higher than the official figure recognised in the Constitution, there is a general trend in the interviews to mention the first four *aqwam* in this list, i.e. Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, while talking about the *aqwam* of Afghanistan. See the following examples:

EXPERT-7: The *four big qawms* are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Turks and Hazaras. (italics mine)

EXPERT-6: Afghanistan is a mix of many parts of people: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek.

EXPERT-10: *Qawm* means an ethnic group like Pashtun, Uzbek, Turk, Tajik.

Here, it is only EXPERT-6, a female Hazara, who conforms to the exact order listed in the Constitution. EXPERT-7, a male Uzbek, and EXPERT-10, a male Pashtun, both use the ethnonym “Turk” instead of “Uzbek,” probably in an effort to include the other Turkic *aqwam* like the Turkmen, although the ethnonym “Turk” is not used in the Constitution. As EXPERT-7 clearly states, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Turks and Hazaras constitute the four big *qawms* of Afghanistan. The reason behind this choice results probably from the fact that these four *aqwam* are the most populous ones.

Article Four is the only article of the Constitution that defines and names the *aqwam* of Afghanistan. The textbooks also follow the Constitution in this regard, either directly quoting from this article (8-PA: 10) or making statements very similar to it:

In Afghanistan *many aqwam live. Aqwam of Afghanistan* are: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Pashayi, Nuristani, Aymaq, Arab, Pamiri, Kirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujar, Brahui and Hindu. (6-SS: 12) (italics mine)

In terms of *qawm*, Afghanistan is the common house of *numerous aqwam*. In this country, Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Nuristani, Pashayi, Arab, Pamiri, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Brahui, Ghojar, *and other aqwam* live like brothers side by side. (9-PA: 11) (italics mine)

These two quotations list the same fourteen *aqwam* seen in Article Four with certain variations. While 6-SS adds the Pamiri and the Hindu to the list; 9-PA replaces the Aymaq with the Kazakh. Such variation confirms the reason why an expression like “and other *aqwam*” is added to Article Four. It should also be noted that neither of the two quotations explicitly write that “fourteen *aqwam*” live in Afghanistan; instead, they write that “many *aqwam*” or “numerous *aqwam*” live in this country, which gives a flexibility to the list of *aqwam*. The picture of society that emerges out of this data is one that has a high level of *qawmi* diversity, as seen in the textbooks:

Social composition of Afghanistan is very appealing. It includes so much *variety and colourfulness* that is rare in other nations. This variety is like the *flowers in a garden*. This garden catches the eye as much as there is variety among its flowers. (9-PA: 11) (italics mine)

This is a rare quotation that briefly, and superficially, explains the social structure of Afghanistan. Diversity of the Afghan society is shown in a positive light, presented as something “rare” compared to other “nations.” Such a conceptualisation

distinguishes the Afghan nation among other nations of the world, working towards nation-building. It is even strengthened more through a garden metaphor:

People of this land, with their various *aqwam* [*aqwam wa qabayel*] and different customs and traditions that resemble the *colourful flowers in a garden, form a single nation*. All of them love their homeland and make sacrifices for its defence, prosperity and vitality. (9-PA: 15) (italics mine)

This quotation explains how the nation of Afghanistan resembles a garden that is full of colourful flowers, i.e. the *aqwam*. In this metaphor, the “single nation” is resembled to a single garden while the *aqwam* are resembled to the various flowers. What is common among these flowers, i.e. *aqwam*, is that they are patriots ready to sacrifice for the garden, i.e. the nation. That the same garden metaphor also comes up in the interviews reveals a consistency in the discourse of education:

EXPERT-7: *Aqwam in a nation is like a garden*. This is the *big garden of Afghanistan*. The Tajik are like a flower; the Pashtun are like another flower. We build up a *nation out of the collection of nationalities*. All the Afghans are *equal* and they make up a *beautiful garden* together. (italics mine)

Just like the above quotation from the textbook, EXPERT-7 also resembles the nation of Afghanistan to a “beautiful garden” made up of the Tajik flower, the Pashtun flower and other flowers. Being a male Uzbek himself, EXPERT-7 equalises these *aqwam* on the basis of being “Afghans.” We should also be reminded that he uses the word “nationality” to denote the word *qawm*. Thus, what he means to say is that the Afghan nation is built out of the collection of the *aqwam*. We may examine his statement together with similar statements encountered in other interviews:

EXPERT-7: We build up a nation out of the *collection of nationalities*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-5: A nation is the *sum of qawms*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-10: For me, a nation can be defined as *groups of people* living in one geography, in one state and under one law. (italics mine)

Even while these three experts employ different words like “*qawms*,” “nationalities” and “groups of people,” what they mean at the end is *aqwam*. Considering the fact that EXPERT-5 is a Qizilbash, EXPERT-7 is an Uzbek and EXPERT-10 is a Pashtun, we see a consensus on the conceptualisation nation as made up of *aqwam*, which is confirmed in the Constitution and the textbooks. As *qawm* is an important part of everyday life in Afghanistan, it has more meaning for people than the concept

of a nation. Therefore, introduction of the concept of nation does not overrule the concept of *qawm*. On the contrary, the idea of nation becomes *meaningful and intelligible* only through the idea of the *qawm*. That is why most of the national concepts are understood in terms of *qawm*, as examined in Chapter 6 Concepts of Nation. Below is the example of national unity presented as the unity of *aqwam*:

The state is obliged to *provide services* to all the *aqwam*. All the *aqwam respect the rights of one another* so that national unity becomes stronger. National flag, national anthem, national police, national army and education of all are the *signs of the unity of all the aqwam of Afghanistan*. (6-SS: 12) (italics mine)

Here, we see the state entering into a relationship with the *aqwam* instead of individual citizens. In that line, national symbols like the national flag, national anthem and national army as well as (national) education are presented as signalling the “unity of all the *aqwam* of Afghanistan.” As the nation of Afghanistan is made up of the *aqwam*, national unity means unity of the *aqwam*. If the nation of Afghanistan were conceptualised as the sum of individual citizens, then, national unity would mean the unity of the citizens of Afghanistan. For a more detailed explanation about this quotation, please refer to 6.2. National Unity.

Considering that Islam is the primary element of nation, it inevitably enters into a relationship with the concept of *qawm*, as well. The *qawmi* diversity that is seen in the society of Afghanistan is legitimised through Islam:

In this country...*aqwam* live like brothers side by side. Based on the *Quranic verse*, they see the *variety of aqwam* and languages as a means of *knowing one another*; not as a cause of privilege and superiority over one another. (9-PA: 11) (italics mine)

In this quotation, 9-PA cites a verse from the Holy Quran (Surah Al-Hujurat 49: 13) that states: “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.” Based on this Quranic verse, 9-PA claims that the main goal of each *qawm* is getting to know or familiarising with the other *aqwam*; rather than having a patronising attitude towards them which may cause inequality. A similar idea is seen in the Constitution, too, which has a specific article mentioning an idea of ‘*qawmi* equality’:

Article Six: The state shall be obligated to create a prosperous and progressive society based on *social justice*...as well as *equality between all peoples and tribes* [*aqwam wa qabayel*] and *balance development of all areas* of the country. (italics mine)

This article describes the obligation of the state to form a prosperous society based on social justice, equality and balance. These are generally the three concepts that are offered as ‘cures’ to discrimination in the discourse of education. But what is meant by discrimination is not so much discrimination between individuals; but discrimination between groups, or *aqwam*. We understand it from the conceptualisation of these three cures. First, the concept of equality, as seen in this quotation, is based on *aqwam wa qabayel*, which are, both, groups; not individuals. Second, the concept of social justice is very much related to treating all the *aqwam* justly, as confirmed in the interviews:

EXPERT-8: *All the qawms should be given an opportunity*. Not all the *qawms see themselves* in the curriculum. But what matters is *social justice*. (italics mine)

This statement clearly shows how the concept of social justice is used in the sense of the fair treatment of all the *aqwam*. In the discourse of education, social justice appears as something not based on individuals; but on the *aqwam*. It is not that the individual citizens of Afghanistan, one by one, must be treated with justice; but that their *qawm* must be treated with justice as a group. When a *qawm* is given a privilege, it is given for all the members of that *qawm*. In the same way, when the member of a *qawm* is badly treated, that *qawm* as a group is assumed to be treated badly. Similarly, for EXPERT-8, social justice emerges only when all the *aqwam* are given an opportunity (see 5.3. National Anthem where EXPERT-8 explains social justice as having the national anthem written in other languages). And finally, by balance is meant having a balanced approach to all the *aqwam* and the development of their own areas or provinces:

EXPERT-4: The Constitution says that *we should have equality and balance*. In the textbooks, there is information on tribes. There are *majority tribes* and *minority tribes*. The new curriculum has a *more balanced approach* to all *qawms* and provinces. Their kings, books, scholars, geographic situations are also given. In principle, we have to have it. But how far our current textbooks have it is a *question*.

It needs to be underlined here that EXPERT-4, who is a male Hazara, just upon mentioning equality and balance, jumps to the issue of tribes. What is understood

from his statement is that although there are “majority tribes” and “minority tribes,” the new curriculum has a “more balanced approach” to all the *aqwam*, at least in principle. The final question he asks is a fundamental one, which takes us to the core of the story. What is meant by all these three concepts of social justice, equality and a balanced approach are all offered as solutions to the perceived *qawmi* divisions in the country. It is due to this perception that the new curriculum is expected to have a more balanced approach towards all the *aqwam*. That is why “including everybody in the curriculum” emerges as a common discourse among my respondents:

EXPERT-8: We try to *include the elements of each group, qawm and religion in the texts*. Serving people is what matters. (italics mine)

EXPERT-3: For national unity, we give *examples from everyone* so that people *feel they are in the curriculum*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-10: What matters most is to *include everybody in the curriculum*; treat them as equals and *make them feel that they are members*. (italics mine)

In these quotations, all of these experts underline the importance of; (1) including everybody in the curriculum; (2) showing examples from everybody in the textbooks; (3) treating everybody as equals; and (4) making them feel that they are members (of the nation of Afghanistan). What is meant by ‘everybody’ in all these quotations is, actually, ‘every *qawm*,’ as it is already apparent in the first quotation by EXPERT-8. Upon being asked how the *aqwam* are presented in the textbooks, the following respondents state:

EXPERT-8: We write *their names* as well as show *their clothes* so that they may *see themselves included*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-3: *Some of their values are taught*. The Turkmen in the north, for example, produce good carpets and it is written in the books. (italics mine)

EXPERT-10: In the teaching of history, *all the ancestors* of the people living here must be included without any differences, because they were all fighting for Afghanistan. All tribes living in Afghanistan have *victories and honours*. Everybody has the honour of *building empires*. (italics mine)

From these three quotations, it is understood that the textbooks are supposed to ‘include all the *aqwam*’ by; (1) writing their names; (2) showing their peculiar clothing in the pictures; (3) showing some of the values peculiar to specific *aqwam*; and (4) presenting the ancestors, victories and empires of all the *aqwam* in the teaching of history. It needs to be underlined, however, that some of these points are criticised by some other respondents, claiming that not all the *aqwam* are included in

the textbooks (see 5.6. Common History for a discussion of the perceived dominance of Pashtuns in the textbooks of History). Some put the blame on the existence of a single curriculum, proposing multiple curricula so that all the *aqwam* are included:

EXPERT-11: *Local areas* should be given more *opportunity to have their own curriculum*. They should *see themselves in the school curriculum*. (italics mine)

What EXPERT-11 means by “local areas” is, actually, the diverse *aqwam* who “should” have their own curriculum probably in their own mother tongue. Our goal here is not to go into the details of the debate between a single curriculum and multiple curricula; but to show, once again, how vital the institution of the *qawm* in Afghanistan is perceived. In the case of a single curriculum, including all the *aqwam* emerges as a key issue, the reason for which is explained by EXPERT-8:

EXPERT-8: These books are *seen by all the aqwam*. All of them should be *adopting my objectives*; all should *accept one another* so that discrimination disappears. (italics mine)

EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, believes that the inclusion of every *aqwam* in the textbooks will help all the *aqwam* accept one another and overcome discrimination. In other words, such inclusion is expected to give a feeling of equality as well as integration. Furthermore, it is only by making them *feel like members* that the *aqwam* may be made to “adopt” the objectives presented in the textbooks, which is a vital statement. If the *aqwam* do not accept the textbooks, then, there is no point of pursuing certain education policies including nation-building.

The examination carried out so far has revealed that *qawm* is the second most important element in the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan*. Although we do not see much information on it in the textbooks, the interviews display it as a strong element in the conceptualisation of nation. In sum, the idea of nation is presented in the discourse of education as the sum of the *aqwam* living in Afghanistan.

7.4. *Afghaniyat* (Afghanness)

As the third major element in the idea of nation, we see *Afghaniyat* or Afghanness which emerges as the identity of the nation of Afghanistan. What may be called the “Afghan national identity” in the general academic literature corresponds to the local concept of *Afghaniyat*, or “being an Afghan,” as it is revealed in the primary resources. Under this theme, we will be examining the content of Afghanness

together with the concept of national identity as it is revealed in the discourse of education. With regards to the primary resources, it needs to be emphasised that not all the textbooks are articulate on this theme, with the sole exception of the textbooks of Patriotism which clearly define the concepts of *Afghanityat* and national identity specifically in the following chapters:

- Chapter 6 titled “National Identity” in 8-PA
- Chapter 14 titled “Features of Afghans” in 7-PA
- Chapter 10 titled “National and Historical Glories” in 9-PA

Moving from the more general to the more specific, we will first be examining how the concept of national identity is presented in these chapters as well as the interviews, and then move on to analyse the specific content of Afghan national identity, or *Afghanityat*. Here is a general definition of the concept of national identity as given in the textbooks:

Identity of a nation means *self-recognition* or knowing one’s self and the *conscious answer* given by each individual of that nation to the questions of *who they were in the past and who they are today*. In other words, national identity of a nation is expressive of their religious, cultural, historical, civilizational, social, geographical and political position in the past and present. (8-PA: 14) (italics mine)

This quotation establishes the meaning of national identity as a “conscious answer” given by the members of that nation to the question of who they are and who they were. As we are talking about identity, it is, inevitably, something that may be found out through the ‘who’ questions asked to oneself. As the members of a nation ask and answer these questions, they reach “self-recognition” through which they establish their national identity. According to this explanation, then, national identity is not something that is defined externally. On the contrary, it is something *constructed* internally through the *self-description* of the members of a nation, who are believed to have the agency to do that. In other words, Afghanness cannot be something that is described by external forces for Afghans; it is something described by Afghans themselves. We can see a similar description in the interviews, too:

EXPERT-9: National identity is taught in the courses of History and Social Studies through the following questions: *Who are we? Who are the people that preceded us? What are the things that we take pride in?* Geography might also be helpful in defining *our borders* now and before. These are the *things related to one’s identity*. (italics mine)

Just like the textual definition above, EXPERT-9 also employs the ‘who’ questions in presenting the term national identity. Accordingly, national identity contains four main elements: (1) our identity, (2) our ancestors, (3) our glories, and (4) our borders. In the first element we see identity and character; in the second we see history and memory; in the third we see values and culture; and in the fourth we see the homeland. Another quotation from 8-PA further uncovers these elements:

If we like to know about the national identity of Afghanistan and specify *its status as a nation among other nations of the world*, it is necessary, before anything else, to know about the religion, culture, history, civilisation, geographical position, social and political situation of that nation in the past and today; in other words, to have *a true awareness about its past and present*. (8-PA: 14) (italics mine)

The opening statement of this quotation emphasises that national identity helps us position the country in question as a nation among the other nations in the world. After all, who that nation is, i.e. its identity, distinguishes it from its counterparts in the world. In order to understand the identity of a nation, one needs to look at many of its features including religion in the first place, as is the case of Afghanistan:

...[T]he distinct *religion of Islam*, with its human-making beliefs, rulings and high values, constitutes the *first and most important element* of the national identity of the nation of Afghanistan...After Islam, the *second element* of the national identity of Afghanistan is *Afghaniyat*. (8-PA: 15) (italics mine)

In other words, national identity in Afghanistan has two elements: (1) Islam and (2) Afghanness. Here, we actually see two different identities: (1) the religious identity, and (2) the national identity. Yet, we are presented with a conceptualisation in which the religious identity is offered as a part and parcel of the national identity. The following respondent also speaks from the same discourse:

EXPERT-11: Students should learn to be able to live in an *Islamic way*, practicing the basic *rituals of Islam*. This is the *first element of national identity* in Afghanistan. (italics mine)

EXPERT-11 joins the discourse of the textbook in describing Islam as the first element of national identity, which shows a general coherence in the discourse of education (see 7.2. Islam). On the other hand, there is another respondent who describes *Afghaniyat*, by itself, as *the* national identity. To the question “What is national identity in Afghanistan?” EXPERT-7 gives the answer below:

EXPERT-7: *Howiyat* [identity] is an Arabic word which shows *what kind of a nation we are*. It is what we call *Afghaniyat* (Afghanness). (italics mine)

EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, clearly defines national identity as *Afghaniyat* which shows “what kind of a nation we are;” and not only “who we are.” In other words, *Afghaniyat*, or the Afghan national identity, reveals what kind of people Afghans are.

At this point, we may have a look at Chapter 14 titled “Features of Afghans” in 7-PA where we see the main features of Afghans listed as follows:

Religiosity: People of Afghanistan are Muslim and they take pride in following the holy religion of Islam. They respect the *ulama*, prayer and religious people while they hate disbelievers.

Endeavour: Being *toilers*, Afghans tolerate difficulties and obligations. They undertake difficult deeds with patience. This characteristic gives them the ability to keep their *manly stance* and not to surrender under oppression.

Compassion and mercy: In the face of tyrants, Afghans hold firm and stand up *like a mountain*. They regard it a shame to oppress and assault weak people while they accept compassion for and cooperation with the oppressed as something to be proud of.

Trusteeship and loyalty: Afghans regard trusteeship as a good characteristic. For them, adhering to one’s promise means the perfection of *manliness*. They regard breach of trust and break of promises as bad and indecent deeds.

Self-sacrifice: Giving up one’s own personal interest for the interests of others and sacrificing for their sake is called self-sacrifice. Thanks to this characteristic, unity and oneness among the human societies is fulfilled and the society is driven towards good fortune. Self-sacrifice is an important and decent characteristic in the Afghan culture. (7-PA: 43) (italics mine)

To make the long story short, Afghanness means being religious; endeavouring; compassionate and merciful; trustworthy and loyal; and self-sacrificing. Besides this list, two more textual descriptions and an interview quotation also describe Afghans:

People of Afghanistan are theist, *religious*, *freedom-loving*, independence-seeking and strongly patriotic people. (7-PA: 49) (italics mine)

National identity consists of *religious* values and a collection of good characteristics such as *manliness*, *hospitality*, honour, modesty, *love of freedom* and peace, generosity and forgiveness, and other numerous features of us. (9-PA: 31) (italics mine)

EXPERT-3: Afghans are *freedom-lovers*; *hospitable*; good at protecting their land, neighbours and citizens; courageous; knowledgeable; creative; *hard-working*; and respectful towards each other. (italics mine)

Departing from the most mentioned characteristics (which are italicised) in these four lists, we may say that the following four are the most common features of Afghans: (1) religious, (2) freedom-loving, (3) endeavouring, and (4) manly. The first feature is not surprising, which has become evident by now. The second one also comes up a lot, considering all the references to the efforts Afghans made to keep their independence throughout history. The third feature refers to the hard-working and enduring nature of Afghans throughout all these years of wars, conflict and violence. In relation to that comes the fourth feature which emphasises the strength of Afghans through masculinity. It is underlined further through an anecdote written in 9-PA:

A British officer writes: “If you ask an Afghan *who he is*, he will answer you promptly as ‘I am an Afghan!’ with such a voice that sounds *like he is the landlord and you are his servant.*” This speech is a *sign of our national identity*, which is apparent *even for foreigners.* (9-PA: 31) (italics mine)

This story shows Afghans through the eyes of a foreigner who is considered an enemy: a British officer. The message given here is that, the dominating and patronising characteristic of Afghans is “apparent even for foreigners,” which ‘confirms’ that it is true.

Following the analysis of the features of Afghans, which forms an important part of the idea of Afghanness, we may now pass on to examine the Afghan national identity in official documents. In fact, the Constitution makes no reference to the concept of ‘national identity’ while it clearly recognises the ethnonym ‘Afghan’:

Article Four: ...The nation of Afghanistan is composed of all individuals who possess the citizenship of Afghanistan. The nation of Afghanistan shall be comprised of Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkman, Baluch, Pachaie, Nuristani, Aymaq, Arab, Qirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujur, Brahwui and other tribes. *The word Afghan shall apply to every citizen of Afghanistan.* (italics mine)

As we know by now, Article Four is one of the most important articles of the Constitution, displaying many features of the society of Afghanistan. Here, we see the names of all the fourteen *aqwam* of Afghanistan written; however, the final statement clearly establishes that a single name will be used to denote all the citizens of Afghanistan: Afghan. The fact that this statement is written at the very end following all the other *qawmi* ethnonyms has a purpose: to establish that none of the *qawmi* ethnonyms have the same official power as the ethnonym Afghan, which is presented as an umbrella name for all the people of Afghanistan, who may still

belong to different *aqwam*. To establish the usage of the ethnonym Afghan better, the Constitution also makes consistent use of it throughout the text:

Article Thirty-Nine: Every Afghan shall have the right to travel and settle in any part of the country, except in areas forbidden by law...

Article Forty-Eight: Work is the right of every Afghan...

Besides the Constitution, the Education Law also states that the objective of the law is to educate children as ‘Afghans,’ among other things:

Article Two: The main objectives of this law are as follows:

...

3- Educate children, youth and adolescents as pious, *Afghans* and useful and sound members of the Society. (MoE 2008) (italics mine)

This article is probably grounded in the Curriculum Framework, an earlier document dated 2003. Here, the first principle of the new curriculum is presented as follows:

The new curriculum fosters the development of students’ personalities as human beings, good Muslims and *true Afghans*... (MoE 2003: 13) (italics mine)

In other words, the state of Afghanistan aims fostering *true Afghans* through the new curriculum, which takes us to the concept of *Afghaniyat* or Afghanness. The Curriculum Framework also expresses the term “Afghan identity” clearly when presenting one of the expected outcomes of the new curriculum as follows:

The *Afghan identity* will be fostered and promoted. (MoE 2003: 17) (italics mine)

This statement establishes that the students in Afghanistan will be equipped with the Afghan national identity through education, as it is officially declared in such a foundational document like the Curriculum Framework.

In some of my interviews, my respondents have been asked about this specific goal of the Curriculum Framework and whether it is adopted and implemented. Here is what EXPERT-2 says on it:

EXPERT-2: In the *Loya Jirga*, it was accepted that *people living in Afghanistan are called Afghan*. However, there is *no specific policy of teaching the word Afghan*. Nevertheless, there is *a policy of teaching common values*. The word Afghan is *recognised in the Constitution*. (italics mine)

As explained in 6.4.1. *Loya Jirga*, in Afghanistan the Constitution is ratified by the *Loya Jirga*; not the National Assembly (*Shura-ye Milli*). Given that the Constitution

of 2004 was ratified by the constitutional *Loya Jirga* of 2003, use of the ethnonym Afghan was also accepted there. Yet, in the field of education EXPERT-2 sees no specific policy for teaching this ethnonym. Rather than teaching the Afghan identity, the general tendency is to teach the “common values” which remains a vague term.

The in-depth examination of textbooks confirms what EXPERT-2 says about the policy of teaching the Afghan identity. First of all, the textbooks in general do not offer a strong discourse on the *Afghaniyat* or Afghan identity. More specifically, we do not see anything defined as national identity or *Afghaniyat* in the textbooks of Social Studies or Civic Education or History. Even the ethnonym Afghan is not much encountered in the textbooks. Table 12 shows how infrequently this word is used in all the textbooks of Social Studies and Civic Education.

Table 12. Frequency of the Ethnonym ‘Afghan’ in Textbooks

Frequency of the Ethnonym ‘Afghan’ by Textbook							
Words (in English)	Words (in Dari)	4-SS	5-SS	6-SS	7-CE	8-CE	9-CE
Afghans	<i>Afghanha</i>			4			1
Afghan (for people) (all)	<i>Afghan</i>			2			2
Afghan individual	<i>Fard-e Afghan</i>						(1)
Afghan citizen	<i>Tab-e Afghan</i>						(1)
Afghan men and women	<i>Mardan wa zanan-e Afghan</i>			(1)			
Afghan political groups	<i>Goruha-ye siyasee-ye Afghan</i>			(1)			
Afghan (for things) (all)	<i>Afghani</i>		6				
Afghan culture	<i>Farhang-e Afghani</i>		(1)				
Afghan fruits	<i>Meywaha-ye Afghani</i>		(1)				
Afghan carpets	<i>Ghalinha-ye Afghani</i>		(4)				

This table shows that in all the six textbooks, the word “Afghans” is used for 5 times; the word “Afghan” (for people) is used for 4 times; and the word “Afghani” (for things) is used for 6 times. There is another controversy around the word “Afghani,” for some people claim that the word “Afghani” may not be used as an ethnonym because it actually denotes the currency in Afghanistan. However, we still see it being used in the textbooks. These two sets of textbooks, i.e. those of Social Studies and Civic Education, are presented here only to give a general idea about the use of the ethnonym Afghan in the textbooks. It needs to be underlined that this ethnonym is more at use in the textbooks of History and Patriotism. Especially the recently introduced textbooks of Patriotism comes to the fore not only for its use of the

ethnonym Afghan; but also for its specific chapters on national identity and *Afghaniyat*. Such variation shows that there is a rising tendency for teaching national identity and *Afghaniyat*, as it is confirmed by my respondents. Yet, it is not enough to stop the controversy, as a respondent summarises it:

EXPERT-1: Everybody has their own interpretation of “Afghan.”

We know from Article Four of the Constitution that the ethnonym Afghan applies to all the citizens of Afghanistan. Yet, we see a variation in the textbooks on its employment. And here, EXPERT-1 also mentions a general variation in interpreting the ethnonym Afghan. As the interviews clearly reveal, employment of the ethnonym Afghan is a highly controversial issue in Afghanistan. One of my respondents explains it as follows:

EXPERT-2: ...[T]here is *controversy around the word Afghan*, because *there are different ethnic groups*. Anyway in the Constitution, a citizen is called an Afghan citizen...S/he also has a national identity, but it is a *controversial issue*. In the ID card, nationality is written as Afghan, however some think that *Afghan means Pashtun*. There is *ethnic diversity* in the country; *people are divided* and there are *controversies*. (italics mine)

In other words, use of the ethnonym Afghan is a controversial issue even while it is recognised in the Constitution and written as such in the Identity Cards. EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, explains this controversy through ethnic diversity, or *qawmi* diversity, in Afghanistan. In his opinion, as people are ethnically divided in Afghanistan, they react towards the efforts of establishing a “common identity,” i.e. national identity. The reason is that the name of that common identity, i.e. Afghan, is believed to be the name of an already existing *qawm* which is the Pashtun. That is why “some think that Afghan means Pashtun.” This idea constitutes a major deadlock in the understanding of nation and national identity in Afghanistan. It is based on the claim that the ethnonyms Afghan and Pashtun are one and the same thing. Although the Constitution presents the ethnonym Pashtun only as the name of one of the fourteen recognised *aqwam* and establishes the ethnonym Afghan as the common name of all the citizens of Afghanistan, it is something well-known that these two ethnonyms were used interchangeably in the past. That is why non-Pashtuns, in general, reject to be labelled with the ethnonym Afghan, preferring to be labelled with the name of their own *qawm*. Some prefer, at least, being called “Afghanistani.” See the following examples:

EXPERT-8: In the past, the *qawm* of everybody was written on the identity cards. But now, there is the nation-building policy. However, *not everybody accepts the word “Afghan.”* So, the word *“Afghanistani” may be written.* (italics mine)

EXPERT-2: Afghan nationality or *Afghanistani nationality* is important.

Both of these respondents are non-Pashtuns, EXPERT-8 being a female Tajik and EXPERT-2 being a male Hazara, and both suggest the word “Afghanistani” to be used as an ethnonym to denote the citizens of Afghanistan. Such an ethnonym would be based not on a *qawm* but on the homeland, even while containing the word Afghan within. What EXPERT-8 means by the “nation-building policy” is that as the ethnonym Afghan is presented as a national identity, it is offered as a unit to be included in the ID cards. She does not totally reject it, but she offers the alternative ethnonym of “Afghanistani.”

On other hand, another respondent, EXPERT-11 who is a male Qizilbash, displays a sterner position. Upon being asked what it means to be an Afghan, he says:

EXPERT-11: *It doesn’t mean anything for us.* We have a different ethnicity. Pashtun people have a *stronger sense of national identity.* Everything is *based on the Pashtuns.* National anthem is in Pashto. When they refer to national traditions of Afghanistan, they refer to Pashtun traditions. Our national identity is defined *based on the Pashtun culture.* So, Pashtun people have a *stronger sense of national identity* than *minorities* like me. We immigrated to Iran and lived there for twenty years. *My sense of national identity is lost.* (italics mine)

There are a number of important points to be underlined in this quotation. First of all, this is the answer given to the question: “What does being an Afghan mean to you?” EXPERT-11 could have taken the question personally and answered in the first person singular; however, he gives an answer in the first person plural, i.e. “we.” He seems to be speaking on behalf of; (1) all the Qizilbash as a *qawm*, or (2) all the minorities “like him,” or (3) all the non-Pashtuns. We see that he frames the story within an ‘us vs. them’ dichotomy. He states that while the Afghan national identity “doesn’t mean anything for us;” Pashtuns have a “stronger sense” of it. In such a framework, the Pashtun vs. non-Pashtun dichotomy seems more probable.

Second, he claims that the Afghan national identity is based on the Pashtun *qawm*. For everything related to the national identity, including the national anthem, national culture and national traditions, is based on Pashtun traditions. Inevitably, Pashtun people have a stronger sense of national identity compared to non-Pashtuns

including minorities like the Qizilbash. However, he reveals another personal story here. It is not only because he belongs to a “minority” group; but also because he immigrated to and lived in another country for such a long time that his “sense of national identity is lost.” Another Hazara respondent who has a similar experience makes the following comment:

EXPERT-2: ... [Living abroad] has led to an *identity crisis*, as well. Like questions of who am I? For example, for me, am I Iranian or am I Afghan? *I am in the air...* When we live abroad, *our consciousness about our identity rises.* (italics mine)

Here, we see only a glimpse of the identity crisis that many Afghan returnees from abroad go through. Of course, it is only natural that living in another country for a long time complicates the feelings about homeland, giving a sense of being “in the air,” perhaps belonging to nowhere. This part of the story concerns the returnees. But we know that national identity is an issue also for those who remained in Afghanistan, due to the perceived division between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns.

Given the graveness of the controversy around the ethnonym Afghan, one of my respondents extensively discusses how to overcome it:

EXPERT-10: We will go with the Constitution which says “Everyone in Afghanistan is called Afghan.” *If people don't accept this*, we may convene a *Loya Jirga* and decide there. (italics mine)

What EXPERT-10 means here is that in case people reject the ethnonym Afghan, the Constitution will have to be amended through a *Loya Jirga*. With this statement, EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, shows that there is a possibility of changing the name of the national identity, at least in theory. He presents some alternative ethnonyms too:

EXPERT-10: But what will be our common name? Khorasani? No. Turkish? No. Before, the word “Afghan” didn't only mean Pashtun; it had a *bigger meaning*. Not many people *care about* these words. They say: “We are not Afghan, we are Tajik.” However, behind the scenes, *everybody in the administration* accept that they are Afghans. Because *there is the Constitution.* (italics mine)

The reason why EXPERT-10 mentions the name “Khorasani” is that some people in Afghanistan endorse the name ‘Khorasan’ instead of ‘Afghanistan,’ as it was the name given to the region encompassing parts of today’s Afghanistan and the east of Iran in the past. The opponents of this idea claim that it would show Afghanistan as

an extension of Iran, as the bordering region in eastern Iran is still called Khorasan today. That is why EXPERT-10 rejects the idea with an immediate “no.” Then, he suggests the ethnonym “Turkish,” pointing to the fact that Afghanistan shelters Uzbeks, Turkmen and other Turkic populations who prefer being labelled with the single ethnonym “Turk.” Yet, he also rejects this idea with another “no.” He then turns back to the ethnonym Afghan, advocating that this word had a “bigger meaning” in the past. Even if this statement contradicts with the general conviction that the ethnonyms Afghan and Pashtun were used interchangeably in the past, EXPERT-10 seems to be claiming that we need to consider the ethnonym Afghan in a larger sense which also covers non-Pashtuns. At the end of his statement, he claims that even though people use their *qawmi* ethnonyms in defining themselves, those in the administration accept themselves as Afghans, because it is written so in the Constitution. In other words, his flexibility, at the beginning, in changing the ethnonym by amending the Constitution ends with the binding power of the Constitution, as he settles for the ethnonym Afghan again after his own analysis of the possible alternatives. In other words, he abandons the idea of changing the ethnonym Afghan because he fails to find any feasible alternative ethnonyms. And he legitimises his own conclusion by referring to the leaders of various *aqwam*:

EXPERT-10: Rabbani was a Tajik himself, but he put the word “Afghan” in the Constitution. Because he said he would be in trouble, as he had Tajik friends who wanted to write Tajik...During the internal war in 1992, General Dostum said “I am Afghan”; Ahmad Shah Massoud said “I am Afghan,” he was fighting to be the leader of Afghanistan and not Panjshir; Hekmatyar also said “I am Afghan.”

In this quotation, EXPERT-10 refers to the past in showing how the leaders of the major *aqwam* of Afghanistan defined themselves as ‘Afghans’ during the civil war. The names he mentions are the Mujahedeen leaders who fought the Soviets in 1979-1989, including General Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek commander; Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Tajik commander; and Gulbiddin Hekmatyar, the Pashtun commander. (For further information, please refer to Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan.) These three Mujahedeen leaders all represented their respective *qawms*. Rabbani was also a Tajik leader who became the President of Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal and who accepted the ethnonym Afghan to be included in the Constitution, according to EXPERT-10. The thing is that these leaders were all fighting for the sake of Afghanistan *only when* there was a common enemy, i.e. the

Soviets. However, as soon as the enemy was gone, they plunged into civil war lasting from 1992 to 1996. Even at the time of a unified resistance against the Soviets, what united the Mujahedeen was not the Afghan national identity; but political Islam. The Mujahedeen fight against the Soviets was framed around the concept of *jihad* against the ‘infidel’ (*kafir*) who occupied the homeland, *watan*. Therefore, the major goal of the Mujahedeen was to unite as the Muslim *ummah* against the ‘infidel’ Soviets and expel them out of the homeland. There were even foreign Muslims, like Arabs, who had travelled to Afghanistan to join this fight. Under such circumstances, it would be unrealistic to claim that all these different groups united around the Afghan identity. That the Afghan identity came to the foreground during the civil war following the Soviet withdrawal (1992-1996) seems like an even more unlikely possibility; for in this period each Mujahedeen commander ruled their respective area where their own *qawmi* kin lived. Kabul itself was divided into major territories like the Pashtun zone, the Tajik zone, etc. Therefore, the statements of EXPERT-10 about the Mujahedeen leaders defining themselves as Afghan during the civil war seems unrealistic, as confirmed by another respondent:

EXPERT-11: During the past decades of war, ethnic identity became stronger than national identity. *Civil war was around ethnicity rather than nationality. We lost our national identity.* After the fall of Taliban, there are some programs, but it’s not successful. (italics mine)

This quotation reveals that EXPERT-10 and EXPERT-11 have clashing views on the issue of civil war. Here, EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, makes a vital claim that it was after the civil war that the national identity was lost in Afghanistan. The reason is that the civil war was “around ethnicity” or *qawm*, and thus, it consolidated the *qawmi* identities while weakening the Afghan national identity. In other words, he explains the current ‘absence’ of national identity in Afghanistan through the civil war among the Mujahedeen groups. Then, he underlines that the efforts made in the post-Taliban era have not been successful either in re-constructing a national identity. One of the reasons he gives is the presence of foreign countries:

EXPERT-11: ...Afghanistan is like a world power game. If left to ourselves, we *can decide on our national identity*, but there are *lots of countries* involved. (italics mine)

Together with this statement, we see that EXPERT-11 gives the external reasons behind the ‘absence’ of national identity in Afghanistan as: (1) legacy of the civil

war (1992-1996); and (2) the present occupation of Afghanistan by foreign countries (2001-). He claims that it is due to the presence of foreign countries that the people of Afghanistan fail to ‘decide’ on their national identity.

Besides these external reasons, there are also some vital internal reasons behind the weakness of national identity in Afghanistan, the primary of which is the perpetuation of the *qawmi* identities. At this point, we need to examine how *Afghaniyat* enters into a relationship with the concept of *qawm*. As discussed in 7.3. *Qawm*, the Afghan nation is viewed as the sum of the *aqwam* living in Afghanistan. The same is valid for the understanding of national identity, as the following respondent shows:

EXPERT-3: In Afghanistan, there are people from different ethnic groups. *All ethnic groups together make Afghans* and the national identity. (italics mine)

In other words, Afghan national identity means the sum of all the *qawmi* identities in Afghanistan. What EXPERT-3, who is a male Pashtun, states here is perfectly in line with what the Constitution; the national anthem; and the textbooks say. The reason behind such a formulation may be an effort to dissociate the ethnonym Afghan from the ethnonym Pashtun and establish it as a distinct ethnonym. Similarly, another respondent places the Afghan national identity at the top of all the *qawmi* identities:

EXPERT-5: ... [E]verybody *must* accept themselves *first* as Afghans. *Then comes the qawm*. At the top is the *national identity which is common*, but at the *lower level is the qawms*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-5, who is a female Qizilbash, claims that the primary identification of everybody “must” be with the Afghan national identity. The usage of “must” here denotes that it is what is desired; but what does not exist. Another respondent, EXPERT-6 who is a female Hazara, perfectly shows the reality on the ground upon being asked: “Do you, as a Hazara, accept the Afghan identity?”:

EXPERT-6: I do accept it. But *on condition that the society also accepts it*. Everywhere I go, the *first issue with me is my qawm identity*; my Afghan identity comes later. What can I do myself if they do not accept it? I personally pay attention to it, but it does not work all the time in workplaces or in relations with others. (italics mine)

This is a fundamental statement revealing the persistence of the *qawmi* identity in daily life. EXPERT-6 claims that even when she is ready to accept the Afghan identity, she is recognised primarily through her *qawmi* identity, i.e. as a Hazara, and

only secondarily as an Afghan. She mentions the difficulty of sustaining an Afghan identity for herself when the society recognises her through her Hazara identity. Given that national identity is viewed as the sum of *qawmi* identities, it is only natural that the primary identification of the people of Afghanistan remains with the primary circle, i.e. the *qawm*, and only secondarily with the secondary circle, i.e. the nation. It is an understanding legalised through the Constitution which officially recognises the *qawmi* level of identity. That is why anytime a reference is made to the Afghan national identity, it will always be accompanied with the *qawmi* identity. Here is what a respondent says on it:

EXPERT-7: Even if I am an Uzbek, I am an Afghan. All of us are Afghans. We may call them Uzbek-Afghan or Hazara-Afghan. In other words, *the word "Hazara" should not disappear.* (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, offers hybrid identities, as both the national and the *qawmi* identities are recognised officially. What needs to be underlined here is that EXPERT-7 offers not the combination of "Afghan-Uzbeks" but that of "Uzbek-Afghans." The first combination describes the Afghan feature of Uzbeks as a totality; while the second combination describes the Uzbek feature of Afghans as a totality. The first combination implies an emphasis on the commonality of Uzbeks in general whether they live in Uzbekistan or Afghanistan. It reveals a *qawmi* outlook. On the other hand, the second combination implies a commonality of all Afghans; be they the Uzbek-Afghans or the Hazara-Afghans. Even while there may be people who prefer to use the first combination in order to emphasise their *qawmi* identity; EXPERT-7, as one of the top officials of the Ministry, uses the second combination which emphasises on the Afghan national identity. His main motivation here is just to stress that the *qawmi* identity "should not disappear" with the introduction of the national identity. The idea here is that Afghan national identity should be accompanied by the *qawmi* identity, which is also mentioned by another respondent:

EXPERT-10: *As an Afghan, you have your own belongings to qawms and your own personal identity. They are not contradicting each other.* (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, summarises the core of the issue. Being an Afghan means that you have a *qawmi* identity as well as a personal identity. Thus, it is in the nature of

Afghanness to include *qawmi* identities, which is not a contradiction according to EXPERT-10. On the other hand, EXPERT-11 explains it as a “dilemma”:

EXPERT-11: We have this *dilemma* of developing a national identity and keeping the sub-cultures at the same time. (italics mine)

Contrary to what EXPERT-10 claims, EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, sees the togetherness of national identity and *qawmi* identities, which he describes as “sub-cultures” here, as a “dilemma.” This statement actually explains one of the other internal difficulties of establishing a national identity in Afghanistan. Yet, we need to underline that this “dilemma” is not peculiar to Afghanistan, since it is something encountered almost in every country. It is only natural that a new identity that is presented as a national identity enters into conflict with all the other identities. The only difference in Afghanistan is that the main difficulty arises not from *ethnic* diversity; but from *qawmi* diversity and the official recognition of *qawmi* identities (see Chapter 8 Discussion).

Another internal reason behind the difficulty of establishing a national identity in Afghanistan is its perceived clash with the Islamic identity. One of my respondents thoroughly questions the meaning of national identity in the face of Islam:

EXPERT-4: Is national identity so important? *I wouldn't have so much focus on it personally.* If I focus on the Afghan national identity, then we would fight with Pakistan and Iran. It is *against the ummat-e waheda* (single *ummah*)...Is national identity more important than religious identity, the *ummah*? In Islam, we should first help our parents, then the *aqwam*⁵⁹ (relatives), then our neighbours. This is the Islamic point of view. We are not allowed to do bad things to other people. National identity usually has some *negative parts*, too. Generally, in other countries, they use it for the negative things. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-4, who is a male Hazara, reveals his criticism of the idea of national identity as well as his negative attitude towards it. He explains the nature of national identity as divisive and separationist. In other words, having a national identity means otherising the neighbouring identities. That is why having an Afghan national identity would involve fighting with Pakistan and Iran, the two neighbours of Afghanistan which are both Islamic republics. On the other hand, there is another identity that may unite these three countries: the Islamic identity built on the idea of a single *ummah*. That is why EXPERT-4 sees national identity as a breach of the idea

⁵⁹ The word *qawm* or *aqwam* also has a meaning of relatives.

of a single *ummah*. He shows it by explaining the rulings of Islam about treating others in a good way, including “our neighbours.” He then contrasts it with the idea of national identity otherising the neighbours, which constitutes its “negative parts.”

Another respondent points to the extreme end of the same discourse:

EXPERT-10: When I lived in a village as a kid, I thought everybody would be the same, thinking like me and saying “I am Afghan.” But when I came to Kabul, I saw people saying, “no, I am not Afghan.” Political people are always after saving the day. It is an issue we have to solve. *Some even think that it is a sin*; but it’s not. Afghanistan is for people. (italics mine)

In this quotation, we get an insight into the childhood memories of EXPERT-10 who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials of the Ministry of Education. Having grown up, presumably, in a Pashtun majority village, he was astonished to see the rejection of the Afghan identity probably by non-Pashtuns living in Kabul. He then links this story to the political people who only try to “save the day.” What he means is that those in politics highlight their own *qawmi* identity in order to get the support of their *qawm*. They may even be seen as heroes just because they reject the Afghan identity. Then, he adds that accepting the Afghan identity is even seen as a sin by some people who place it in opposition to the Islamic identity. This shows how some people use Islam as an excuse for not adopting the national identity. This is the reason why Islam is presented in the textbooks as a part of the national identity together with the *Afghaniyat*.

As a final point, we need to add an exception to the more or less coherent discourse on Islam as a part of national identity. EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, gives her own description of “true Afghans” which excludes the Islamic identity:

EXPERT-8: *True Afghans* are those with a *national identity*, who are *humanists*. There is no discrimination here between religions or sects, because we also have *Hindus who may be true Afghans*. (italics mine)

According to this understanding, then, Afghanness means having a national identity as well as a humanistic perspective; rather than an Islamic identity. In this picture, Hindus may also be considered “true Afghans.” Although it is a rare conceptualisation considering all the interviews, textbooks and the Constitution which all stress on Islam as a part of national identity, it is still worth underlining. After all, EXPERT-8 is also a state employee working at the Ministry of Education and she is able to sustain an outlook which is different from that of the majority.

The examination made here has revealed certain difficulties behind the establishment of national identity in Afghanistan, which may be summarised as follows: (1) National identity is presented as having two elements: Islam and Afghanness; (2) Some people do not accept the national identity, as they see it in opposition to their Islamic identity; (3) Some people, non-Pashtuns in general, do not accept the ethnonym Afghan, as they take it to be synonymous with the ethnonym Pashtun; (4) National identity, even while accepted by some people, is seen as the sum of *qawmi* identities. It is the last item that explains the basic understanding of national identity in Afghanistan which is not seen as a distinct identity on its own; but always dependent on the *qawmi* identities.

7.5. *Watan* (Homeland)

In this final theme, we arrive at the fourth major element in the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan*: the *watan* or the homeland. This concept has a strong presence in the general discourse in Afghanistan, which is visible on TV, mass media and social media both within and outside the country. The millions of Afghans living outside the country inevitably play their part in the conceptualisation of this idea. Here, our main effort will be to uncover the content of the homeland of Afghanistan.

Among the primary resources, textbooks emerge as the main resource providing us with the basic material in this regard, followed by the interviews. The Constitution does not offer much stuff on the conceptualisation of the homeland, except for a single article (Article Twenty One) that specifies Kabul as the capital city. As for the textbooks, here are the major chapters that construct an idea of homeland:

- Chapters in the textbooks of Social Studies:
 - Chapter 5 titled “Our Homeland” in 4-SS
 - Chapter 6 titled “Our World” in 4-SS
- Chapters in the textbooks of Patriotism:
 - Chapter 19 titled “Heart of Asia” in 7-PA
 - Chapter 28 titled “Afghanistan, Cradle of Science and Civilisation” in 7-PA
 - Chapter 24 titled “Importance of the Geographical Position of Afghanistan” in 8-PA

The data presented in these chapters will be treated as a total discourse that is supposed to reveal the idea of homeland. As definitions constitute a perfect place to start, here are two definitions of homeland presented in the textbooks of Patriotism and Social Studies:

Homeland of a person is the place where they came to the world and where they have chosen to live. (8-PA: 6)

Homeland [*watan*]: Where we and our ancestors have lived (4-SS: 51).

According to the first definition, there are two requirements for a place to be called the homeland: (1) being born into it; and (2) choosing to live in it. Notice that the second requirement is not simply living in it; but *choosing* to live in it, where we see a conscious choice. It may be a reference to the numerous Afghans who have *chosen* to live outside Afghanistan which is no longer their homeland, according to this definition. The second definition offers a historical understanding of homeland which is not only where we live; but also where our ancestors lived. So is formed a bond between us and our ancestors through the homeland. Here is a further explanation:

Humans and other living creatures choose a place to live. The smallest location of living is a house. Houses form a village and villages form an administrative unit such as a district. In the same way, a collection of districts forms a province and a collection of provinces forms a country. In total, *a homeland is formed as a unified geographical unit located in a corner of the world with recognised borders, whose inhabitants are recognised through its name.* (9-PA: 89) (italics mine)

This quotation shows how the smallest units of a homeland come together and form bigger units and reach the size of a country at last. At the end, we see a clear definition of what a homeland is, stating that the inhabitants are recognised through the name of that homeland. One of the textbooks, 4-SS, clearly names the homeland:

The name of our dear homeland is Afghanistan (4-SS: 53).

In this quotation, we see not only the naming of homeland; but also an endearment of it, which works to construct an emotional attachment to it. On the other hand, the interviews reveal a different story on the naming of the homeland:

EXPERT-11: Even the *name of Afghanistan is problematic.* Aryana, Khorasan are proposed. The country cannot decide even on its name. (italics mine)

The ‘problem’ mentioned here is, once again, related to the problematic perception of the ethnonym ‘Afghan,’ as discussed in 7.4. *Afghaniyat*. Given that some people

reject to be called Afghan, so they also reject their country to be named Afghanistan. That is why different groups propose different names for the country. “Aryana” is one of the suggestions, making a reference to the lands where the ancient Aryans lived, including parts of Afghanistan, Iran and India. Another suggestion is “Khorasan,” the name given to the east of Iran which also covered much of the territory of Afghanistan in the past. The mere proposal of such alternative names astonishes EXPERT-11 who concludes that the people of Afghanistan cannot even decide on the name of their country.

Moving from the definitions to the content of the concept of *watan*, we first need to make a distinction between an *internal* conceptualisation and an *external* conceptualisation of the homeland, both of which we see in the primary resources. The data reveals both an idea of Afghanistan with its internal features and an idea of Afghanistan that is placed against external forces, i.e. neighbours and foreigners.

The primary thing that constructs a country both internally and externally is its map. In the above-listed chapters that focus on the idea of homeland, we see the map of Afghanistan in various places (4-SS: 51; 5-SS: 73; 7-PA: 34; 8-PA: 59; 9-PA: 14; etc.). Especially the maps which show the administrative divisions of Afghanistan work towards internally constructing the homeland of Afghanistan. EXPERT-4 explains the reasons behind the presence of such maps in the textbooks as follows:

EXPERT-8: In this book, we see a section called “My Country” where you can see information about the homeland, languages spoken there and the *qawms* living there as well as famous people. We *include a map* to give the idea that *each city belongs to this homeland*. We would like them to *feel a part of this map at first sight*. (italics mine)

That is to say, the presence of a map helps visually construct the idea of an integrated country with all its parts. As students see their own hometown on the map, they feel themselves included in this country, which works to grow an attachment to it in the form of patriotism. A further step is teaching students how to draw that map:

EXPERT-9: They [students] learn *how to draw the map of Afghanistan*. We ask them from which city they come and they learn which other cities neighbour their own city. (italics mine)

Indeed, in 4-SS (52) students are asked to draw the map of Afghanistan, which works to teach them the position of their hometown and its neighbours. Though the experts

use the word “city” in these quotations, the word “province” is much more commonly used, as the major administrative unit is called province in Afghanistan:

Administratively, Afghanistan is divided into 34 provinces...The *big provinces* of our homeland are: Herat, Qandahar, Mazar-e Sharif, Kunduz, Jalalabad, Ghazni and others. The *biggest city* of Afghanistan is Kabul city which is the centre and capital of the country. (4-SS: 54) (italics mine)

Each province has several districts which, in total, amount to 364 in our country. (6-SS: 3)

These two quotations show that the basic administrative system in Afghanistan is based on a system of provinces and districts. A province has a major city as well as several districts and villages. Although we do not see the villages defined as administrative units here; they are the ones where the majority of the population of Afghanistan lives:

Majority of the people live in villages while the rest lives in cities. (6-SS: 3) (italics mine)

A great number of the people of our country *live in the villages*...*Villagers form the majority* of the population of our country. (7-CE: 39) (italics mine)

EXPERT-11: *Afghanistan is a rural country*, although there is a lot of migration to big cities like Kabul because of the drought and insecurity in the countryside. (italics mine)

All of these three quotations establish Afghanistan as a “rural country” where “villagers form the majority of the population,” which is something confirmed in 7.3. *Qawm*. The statement of EXPERT-11 also shows that there is an ongoing migration to big cities, which implies an ongoing urbanisation process. These very basic demographic features are followed by geographical features internally constructing Afghanistan as homeland:

Afghanistan is a mountainous country where nearly eighty percent of the surface area is formed by high mountains...The existence of the mountains of Afghanistan is the *best blessing and gift of God to us*. (4-SS: 57, 60) (italics mine)

This quotation establishes the homeland of Afghanistan as a mountainous country, which is something very much esteemed. Presented as a “gift of God” to the people of Afghanistan, these mountains give a sense of exclusivity and pride, which amplify the feelings of patriotism. It is not only the mountains but also other geographical features like cascading rivers that add to the natural beauties of Afghanistan:

Our country Afghanistan, in terms of nature, is counted among *one of the most beautiful countries in the world*. With its lofty mountains, magnificent castles, roaring rivers, flourishing valleys, lush plains and flat deserts, this country catches the eye of every viewer and pounds their hearts. (7-PA: 48) (italics mine)

This quotation states that the geographical features of Afghanistan make it “one of the most beautiful countries in the world.” This is a statement not to be surprised at, since it is in the nature of patriotism to see one’s own country as the most beautiful in the world, as it is explained by one of my respondents:

EXPERT-7: In Pashto, there is a proverb which says: “For everybody, homeland is Kashmir.” Kashmir is beautiful and green; so, homeland is something like that for each person. *Our Kashmir is the thirty four provinces of Afghanistan*. (italics mine)

Kashmir, the contested terrain between Pakistan and India, is a region located on the Himalayan mountain range, known for its natural beauty that is made in to a legend through proverbs. Interestingly, the proverb mentioned here is in Pashto language, which is something that probably results from the large Pashtun population living in Pakistan, that is even larger than that in Afghanistan. The fact that EXPERT-7, a male Uzbek, refers to this Pashto proverb shows that it is a very common proverb in Afghanistan, travelling through the borders. At the end, EXPERT-7 says that he sees the entire Afghanistan, with its 34 provinces, as the beautiful Kashmir.

Besides the natural beauties, natural resources of Afghanistan are also presented among the important features of this homeland:

...[B]eing one of the *richest countries* in the region in terms of underground resources, our homeland is *world famous* for its precious stones... (7-PA: 49) (italics mine)

In terms of *underground resources*, Afghanistan is a *rich country*; however, the majority of these natural resources has, until now, not been used in a correct and technical way. (5-SS: 75)

These quotations establish the homeland of Afghanistan as a very rich country in underground resources. Although the first quotation only refers to the “world famous” precious stones, it is known⁶⁰ that Afghanistan is affluent in other resources such as coal, copper, natural gas, petroleum, gold, lithium, uranium, gold and rare

⁶⁰ Source: *Worldatlas*, available at [<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-major-natural-resources-of-afghanistan.html>], retrieved on March 12, 2020.

earth elements. However, as the second quotation states, much of these resources have not been extracted yet or extracted in non-technical ways.

Besides such underground resources, we see the overground resources underlined:

Soil of Afghanistan is *fertile and suitable* for agriculture and animal herding. Weather of Afghanistan is great, its water is tasty, its plants are beneficial and fragrant, its fruits are tasty. (7-PA: 49) (italics mine)

Having *suitable conditions*, our land Afghanistan has various breeds of domesticated and wild animals (5-SS: 34). (italics mine)

Both of these quotations paint a fertile land that is suitable both for agriculture and animal herding. In many other places in 5-SS (29, 30, 34-38) do we see constant references to the suitable conditions of the land of Afghanistan in terms of fruits, vegetables, plants and animals. The implication here is that the homeland of Afghanistan is an inhabitable land offering ample resources. The motivation behind such a description is explained by a respondent as follows:

EXPERT-10: We need to encourage people that Afghanistan has *enough resources*; it is *a country to live* and that we are *connected to the world*. (italics mine)

In this quotation is hidden many realities about contemporary Afghanistan. First of all, the word usage that includes the expression “we need to encourage people” shows a certain lack in people which is the lack of belief in three things: (1) that Afghanistan has enough resources; (2) that it is a country to live; and (3) that it is connected to the world. What people in reality believe is that: (1) even while Afghanistan may have enough resources, under foreign occupation it is not allowed to extract, utilise and manage them; (2) Afghanistan, with all the daily blasts and suicide bombings, is not a secure and stable country to live; and (3) Afghanistan is isolated from the world; especially the modern world. These are the reasons why so many people leave Afghanistan and settle outside their homeland. That is why the discourse of education includes such ‘encouragements’ about living in Afghanistan.

Besides these geographical and natural features, another feature employed to internally construct Afghanistan as a homeland is its ancient history:

Thanks to having a suitable weather as well as having smart and hardworking people, Afghanistan has been one of the *oldest cradles of various civilisations*. That is why its Balkh is counted among the oldest cities in history. (7-PA: 49) (italics mine)

Our country Afghanistan has an ancient and glorious history. Our land is the *original home of the ancient Aryans* who spread out from this land and founded human civilisations in India, Iran, Europe and other places. (9-PA: 14) (italics mine)

Differing from the above-mentioned natural features, here, we see a historical feature that establishes Afghanistan as one of the “oldest cradles of various civilisations” which is exemplified through the ancient Aryans. The proof of antiquity is provided through the city of Balkh in the north of Afghanistan which is known in ancient history as Bactria (2500-2000 BC). In fact, the mere existence of Chapter 28 titled “Afghanistan, Cradle of Science and Civilisation” in 7-PA works to construct this discourse, which is consolidated further through the presentation of scholars that lived here in history:

Our dear country Afghanistan has a *shining scientific and civic history*. Our land is the *birthplace of distinguished scientists* who did great services for the *human civilisation* in different fields of science. (7-PA: 86) (italics mine)

Our country Afghanistan is *the cradle of* scientists, writers, poets and famous people. Each of them have taken great steps in different fields for the progress of the homeland and the happiness of compatriots. (9-PA: 52) (italics mine)

These quotations depict the image of a homeland that is the cradle of scholars who have served the human civilisation. 7-PA (86) gives a list of these scientists and scholars as: Imam Muhammad Ghazali; Imam Fakhraddin Razi; Abu Rayhan Al-Biruni; Ibn-i Sina-ye Balkhi; Abu Naser Farabi; Mawlana Jalaladdin Balkhi; Khaje Abdullah Ansari; Abdalhi Gardizi; Sayyid Jamaladdin Afghani; Pir Rushan; and so on. In fact, these are all classical scholars who lived in the region before the modern age. Even while an entity called Afghanistan did not exist during the lifetime of these scholars, they are still presented as belonging to this homeland:

These scientists, who arose from this country, have each made important achievements in one or more scientific fields and played a role in the progress and enrichment of human knowledge and civilisation. (7-PA: 87)

In other words, all the classical scholars who were born into the territory of today’s Afghanistan are considered as the national values of this country. That is why they are presented among the important personalities of Afghanistan. This idea is, actually, part of a larger discourse of education that benefits from the greater *civilizational context* of Afghanistan in constructing the idea of nation. It comes up in the interviews, as well:

EXPERT-8: In presenting men of letters, *we do not differentiate between them as Iranian or Afghan or Tajik. We do not pay attention to modern borders. What matters is Persian civilisation. We include whoever writes in Persian. Balkh is where Persian was born and then divided into three as Tajiki, Irani and Dari. We introduce all the men of letters coming from the past as Afghan.* (italics mine)

This quotation clearly reveals a civilizational approach rather than a ‘national’ approach in the discourse of education specifically in the field of literature. EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, explains how literature in Afghanistan is viewed as part of the greater Persian civilisation. She legitimises it with the claim that Balkh is the birthplace of Persian language. As Persian was born in the lands of Afghanistan, all the men of letters writing in Persian language are presented in the textbooks as ‘Afghan.’ This is an approach that is very far from the reality of the current world order. It totally ignores the modern states of Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, ruling out the modern borders between them. As EXPERT-8 clearly states: “What matters is Persian civilisation.” In that case, it means that all the discourse of education works towards building up not the modern nation of Afghanistan; but the Persian civilisation. Then, there is no use in presenting all the men of letters writing in Persian as ‘Afghans;’ for they should be presented as ‘Persians.’ What this quotation shows is that the main emphasis in the discourse of education is on Persian literature; not on national Afghan literature. It means that there will always be a reference to the Persian literature, which will be reproducing the Persian civilisation instead of the national Afghan literature.

The data presented until this point has revealed an internal depiction of Afghanistan as: (1) a rural country; (2) a mountainous country; (3) one of the most beautiful countries in the world; (4) one of the richest countries in the region in underground resources; (5) an inhabitable country with suitable conditions and resources; and (6) a cradle of civilisations and scientists.

Now is the time to have a look at the external depiction of Afghanistan as homeland. The first step in this regard is geographically positioning Afghanistan in the world. What is interesting is that the textbooks of Social Studies and Patriotism declare different locations for the exact geographical position Afghanistan in the world. While the first locate Afghanistan in South Asia; the latter locate it at the centre as the “heart of Asia.” Here are three quotations from these textbooks:

The continent of Asia is one of the biggest continents of the earth, which has high mountains. Being the cradle of the major world religions, Asia is where most of the historical and human civilisations came into being. Our dear country Afghanistan, with its own culture and civilisation of several thousand years old, is *located in the south of this continent*. (4-SS: 67) (italics mine)

Afghanistan is *located in South Asia* (6-SS: 1). (italics mine)

Our beautiful and lovely country Afghanistan is *located at the centre or heart of Asia*. (8-PA: 59) (italics mine)

The first two quotations explicitly establish the position of Afghanistan in South Asia; while the third one places it at the centre of Asia. The duality revealed here is a part of the general trend in the academic literature in specifying the exact position of this country. On the maps, Afghanistan is generally shown as a land that belongs neither to South Asia nor to Central Asia. The reason is that Afghanistan historically does not belong to what defines South Asia, i.e. British colonialism, or Central Asia, i.e. Russian colonialism; even while it came under the influence of both in different time periods. The historical journey of Afghanistan is different from the countries in South Asia such as India or Pakistan as well as those in Central Asia like Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Still, for the sake of describing an exact location, there are two major trends in viewing Afghanistan as part of one of these regions: (1) The Turkic and Tajik populations inhabiting the north generally tend to describe Afghanistan as a Central Asian country; while (2) the predominantly Pashtun populations inhabiting the south tend to describe Afghanistan as a South Asian country. Apart from this duality, there is a third tendency to view Afghanistan right at the centre of Asia, as seen in the quotation above. This idea is rooted in the historical metaphor ‘heart of Asia’ that was first coined in a poem by Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) who is known not only as one of the biggest poets of Persian and Urdu languages but also as the national poet of Pakistan today. In 7-PA, Chapter 19 titled “Heart of Asia” explains the underlying idea behind this metaphor:

Afghanistan is an ancient country which is *located at the heart of Asia*. Therefore, it has a *specific significance*. Security, peace and stability of Afghanistan means *peace and stability in Asia* and the region. The *strategic location* of Afghanistan has made this country into a *turning point in the world*. (7-PA: 58)

This explanation becomes more meaningful with Iqbal's poem (7-PA: 58) the translation⁶¹ of which is presented below:

In our nature, fever and ardour spring from the heart;
waking and slumber possess the body from the heart.
When the heart dies, the body is transformed:
when the heart vies for glory, the sweat turns to blood.
The body is nothing, nothing, when the heart is corrupt;
so fix your eyes on the heart, and be attached to naught else.
Asia is a form cast of water and clay;
in that form the Afghan nation is the heart;
if it is corrupt, all Asia is corrupt,
if it is dilated, all Asia is dilated.
So long as the heart is free, the body is free,
else, the body is a straw in the path of the wind.
Like the body, the heart too is bound by laws—
the heart dies of hatred, lives of faith.
[The power of faith derives from unity;
when unity becomes visible, it is a nation.]

Following the poem, 7-PA (59-60) also gives a detailed explanation of it. In brief, it is stated that human body is created from the earth and ruled by the heart or the soul which is a breath of the soul of God according to Islamic belief. That is why the most honourable part of the body is the heart. The poet resembles the continent of Asia to a human body whose heart and soul is the "Afghan nation." In this metaphor, if the Afghan nation is corrupt and ruined, then the entire Asia will also fall into ruins. And if the Afghan nation is in a good condition, then the entire Asia will be in a better situation. As Afghanistan is the heart of the body of Asia, the body will be free as long as the heart, or Afghanistan, is free from shackles. At the end, the poet points to the significance of religion, morality and spirituality. As the body is subject to the heart; so is heart to religion and faith. The heart dies of hate, envy and superstition; while it may only live and endure with religion and spirituality which is a divine gift. 7-PA ends the poem here, excluding the final two stanzas of the original poem, which actually gives a critical description of nation through the concept of unity.

Such positioning of Afghanistan as the 'Heart of Asia' is strengthened through another metaphor depicting this country as a bridge between her neighbours:

⁶¹ Iqbal, Muhammad (2011). *Javid-Nama*. Translated by Arthur J. Arberry. Vol. 14. London and New York: Routledge.

In terms of its location in the Continent of Asia, our homeland has a specific importance and it is *like a bridge* which connects many of the Asian countries. (4-SS: 51) (italics mine)

Located at the junction of cultures and civilisations between Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, Afghanistan has played an important role in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the region. (8-PA: 59) (italics mine)

The idea of a bridge gives Afghanistan a central position in Asia, as the second quotation places it at the centre of three regions. The bridge metaphor is further strengthened and historicised through references to the ancient Silk Road:

Afghanistan, since ancient times, has been *located on the trade routes* between Asia and Europe, by which silk and other goods from China; and spices and ingredients from India would be transported through Afghanistan to the lands of ancient Greeks and Romans while trade goods from these lands would be transported through the same route to Asian countries and therefore, this trade route has come to be *known as the Silk Road* and still remains in the minds of people as such. (5-SS: 68) (italics mine)

This country was *located on the route of the Silk Road*...*Located at the junction of commercial relations in the region*, Afghanistan played a major fundamental role and came to be known with *various nicknames* such as; Passage, Pass, Highway and the Key to India. (8-PA: 60) (italics mine)

Both of these quotations historicise the bridge metaphor through the Silk Road on which Afghanistan was located. The reference to the Silk Road works to establish Afghanistan as a bridge between Indo-China and Europe; that is, Eastern and Western civilisations. Such an understanding further strengthens the centrality of Afghanistan in the region, which is evident from the nicknames used for Afghanistan that are presented in the second quotation. The words ‘Passage’ and ‘Pass’ both give the sense of a bridge; while the word ‘Highway’ gives the idea of a road. Finally, the nickname ‘Key to India’ paints Afghanistan as a door opening to India and the Indian civilisation. Centrality of Afghanistan is also something underlined in the interviews:

EXPERT-10: Afghanistan was the *centre of many empires*. For some, the centre was Iran; for some it was Bukhara. This region was a bigger Islamic centre. But *Afghanistan has been the centre*. Old cities like Ai Khanum are the *proof of civilisation*.

Here, EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, depicts the region encompassing Afghanistan, Iran and Bukhara as a “bigger Islamic centre.” Then, he claims that the centre of this region is

Iran for some people by whom is probably meant the Persian-speaking world at large or the Dari-speaking people of Afghanistan that are generally called the *Farsiwan*. On the other hand, some other people, who may be the Turkic populations of Afghanistan, describe this centre as Bukhara. But EXPERT-10 establishes Afghanistan as *the* centre itself and shows the ancient cities like Ai Khanum, or the “Lady Moon” which is a city founded in the 4th century BC during the Greco-Bactrian rule, as the “proof of civilisation.” The following respondent pursues the same discourse:

EXPERT-3: Afghanistan is *not only a war country*. Afghanistan has a civilisation 3.000 years ago, if we consider Ai-Khanum.

The main motivation of EXPERT-3, who is a male Pashtun, is to emphasise on a less known feature of Afghanistan which is today, primarily, recognised as a war-torn, unstable and de-historicised country. On the contrary, it was this rich civilisation that has always made Afghanistan a point of attraction for world conquerors throughout history, as it is claimed in the textbooks:

Thanks to its important geographical location, *Afghanistan has caught the attention of the biggest world-conquerors* such as Darius, Cyrus, Alexander the Great, Genghis and the Mongols, the British, Russians *and others*. (8-PA: 59) (italics mine)

In this quotation, we see a list of the world powers attacking or conquering Afghanistan in three different time periods: (1) the ancient period: Cyrus the Great (600-530 BC) and Darius the Great (550-486 BC) of the Achaemenid Empire as well as Alexander the Great (356-323 BC); (2) the medieval period: Genghis Khan (1162-1227) of the Mongol Empire; and (3) the modern period: the British and the Russians (Soviet Union). It is through this discourse that some of the ‘historical enemies’ of Afghanistan are displayed in a statement which ends with the expression “and others.” Among these ‘enemies,’ the last two need further emphasis, as we encounter them very frequently in the textbooks:

[People of Afghanistan] defeated and expelled from their soil the British Empire in the early twentieth century and the Soviet Union in the late twentieth century, both of which had attacked for occupying the homeland and trampling our religious and national honour. Thanks to her prominence, our homeland Afghanistan has *gained a reputation in the world as the Graveyard of Conquerors*. (7-PA: 49)

Besides the titles conferred upon Afghanistan such as the ‘Heart of Asia,’ the ‘Passage’ and the ‘Key to India,’ here comes another one: the ‘Graveyard of Conquerors.’ The implication here is that Afghanistan not only catches the attention of world conquerors; but also becomes a graveyard for them no matter how strong they are. The same idea may also be applied to the case of the US, today’s ‘world-conqueror,’ which has been stationed in Afghanistan in the last twenty years. Yet, the textbooks make absolutely no mention of it. In fact, we do not see any clear reference to the present-day ‘enemies’ of Afghanistan, even if there are some hidden references like the presentation of Pakistan through the ‘imposed’ Durand Line (see below). One of my respondents, who is one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, touches upon the issue of enemies:

EXPERT-10: ...[W]e need to establish a sense of friendship. *Afghanistan has no natural enemy*. Pakistanis are our brothers; so are Iranians; and so are the *Turktabar* [of Turkic descent]. We have to assure them all that they can live in this country so that *they can feel like a member*. (italics mine)

This is a fundamental quotation that reveals more than it shows in the first glance. On the surface, EXPERT-10 talks about the need to establish friendly relations with the neighbours. At that moment, he makes the vital statement: “Afghanistan has no natural enemies.” What he means by *natural* is, probably, a relationship of enmity that is a natural part of two countries; an enmity that is deeply rooted in history something like a feud. Right after this statement comes a reference to Pakistan which is, since its foundation in 1947, perceived as a threat to Afghanistan due to the problematic border between the two. Yet, EXPERT-10 labels Pakistanis as “brothers,” together with Iran and the Turkic republics such as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan bordering Afghanistan. What is critical here is that the people of Afghanistan are ethnically connected to the people of these neighbouring countries; that is why they are “brothers.” This is the case with Uzbeks, Turkmens, Tajiks, Pashtuns, etc. EXPERT-10 states that only by seeing the people of these neighbours as brothers can we gain the hearts of the people of Afghanistan who have ethnic bonds to them. Only in that way can people live in Afghanistan as ‘members of Afghanistan’ by which is probably meant the ‘citizens of Afghanistan.’ The underlying idea is that Turkmen Afghans may ethnically be Turkmen; yet, they are the citizens of Afghanistan and not Turkmenistan. Thus, Afghanistan needs to be friends with Turkmenistan for the sake of the Turkmen Afghans that it shelters.

A fundamental part of the construction of Afghanistan as homeland is formed by the depiction of its modern borders through which it is positioned among her neighbours: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in the north; Pakistan in the south and east; Iran in the west; and China in the north-east. Among these neighbours, Pakistan is, without doubt, highlighted the most due to the problematic border relations:

In the east and south of our country is located the Islamic Republic of Pakistan by way of the *imposed* Durand Line which is *officially not recognised by the people of Afghanistan*. (4-SS: 51; 6-SS: 1; 8-PA: 59) (italics mine).

Above all, it should be underlined that three textbooks, i.e. 4-SS, 6-SS and 8-PA, make the same statement in defining the Durand Line. In other words, we see a textual coherence in describing this problematic issue. A number of points need further emphasis with reference to this statement: (1) Part of the borders of the homeland is defined as an “imposed border;” however, it is not explained by whom this border is imposed. It might give the first impression that it was imposed by the state of Pakistan while, in reality, it was drawn by Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893 during the reign of the British India, much before Pakistan was established in 1947. (2) It is written that the imposed Durand Line is *officially* not recognised by the “people of Afghanistan.” In reality, however, an ‘official recognition’ is something that is bestowed on the state level. In the international order of states, recognition or non-recognition by “people” does not have an *official* meaning. The fact that we do not see any reference to the state of Afghanistan here shows that the very basic political role of the state is ignored. (3) What we understand from the expression “imposed” is that part of the borders of this homeland were not defined by the state of Afghanistan; but imposed by outsiders who remain undefined. The idea of imposition of borders brings forth a complicated understanding of territorial integrity, which, in return, complicates the understanding of a territorially limited homeland. In such an understanding, we see an interruption to the borderlines of Afghanistan, which opens doors to irredentism.

The reason why the Durand Line remains a problematic border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is explained by one of my respondents as follows:

EXPERT-11: [O]ur borders were established by the British. This is *not a natural formation* of a country...Pashtuns are divided between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This is the *source of our conflicts*. Afghanistan was *not formed naturally* from the beginning. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-11 explains the “source” of the border issue as British colonialism. Given that its borders were delineated by foreigners, i.e. the British, the formation of Afghanistan at the beginning was not a “natural” process. The main reason is that this external border delineation divided the Pashtun population into two between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Interestingly, EXPERT-11, who is not a Pashtun but a Qizilbash, defines the source of the conflict in Afghanistan as the division of Pashtuns. We understand the reason why in his following statements. Upon the question: “If all the Pashtuns lived together in Afghanistan, then, would there be a national identity?” EXPERT-11 answers in the affirmative, adding other points:

EXPERT-11: Yes. For example, Herat is close to Iranian culture. They did not belong to Pashtun areas. Herat and Mashhad are closer. Herat and Qandahar are not similar.

This is an interesting quotation that is in need of further analysis. What EXPERT-11 means by the affirmative answer is that if Pashtuns had been together, they would have a country of their own with a national identity. (He may even be referring to ‘Pashtunistan.’) In that case, Herat would have been in Iran; not in Afghanistan. The reason is that Herat, a western city in Afghanistan, is closer to the neighbouring Mashhad in Iran rather than Qandahar in southern Afghanistan. At the bottom of the story, EXPERT-11 is referring to the difficulty of bringing two culturally different cities like Herat and Qandahar under the umbrella of a common nation.

What EXPERT-11 describes as an “unnatural” formation of country may become more meaningful if we can find out how a ‘naturally formed’ Afghanistan would look like. That part of the story is provided by the textbooks of History and Patriotism which refer to Ahmad Shah Baba, the founder of today’s Afghanistan:

Ahmad Shah Baba...founded a strong and firm empire which extended *from the Amu Darya to the Arabian Sea; and from the Sind River*⁶² to Mashhad. (7-PA: 28) (italics mine)

[Ahmad Shah Baba’s goals were:] (1) unity and the re-establishment of central power; (2) establishment of the *natural borders of Afghanistan* which had an area extending *from the Amu Darya to the Sind River* or the Sind Sea (9-HI: 11). (italics mine)

Both of these quotations describe the limits of the territory that Ahmad Shah Baba founded, which is shown in Figure 14, where we see the Oxus River (Amu Darya) in

⁶² The Indus River is known in Persian, Dari and Pashto as *Ab-e Sind*, or the Sind River.

the north; the Arabian Sea in the south; the Indus River (Sind River) in the east; and Nishapur (a city near Mashhad) in the west. In the second quotation, these boundaries are described as the “natural borders of Afghanistan” which is a fundamental expression. We encounter this expression more than once in the text, which implies an imagination of the *natural* territory of Afghanistan that is different from the reality of today. Furthermore, this imagination is revealed through someone who is defined as the ‘founder’ of Afghanistan, which gives the impression that the founder had originally imagined it in that way. In sum, if Afghanistan had been formed “naturally” within its “natural borders,” it would have been as Ahmad Shah Baba imagined it.

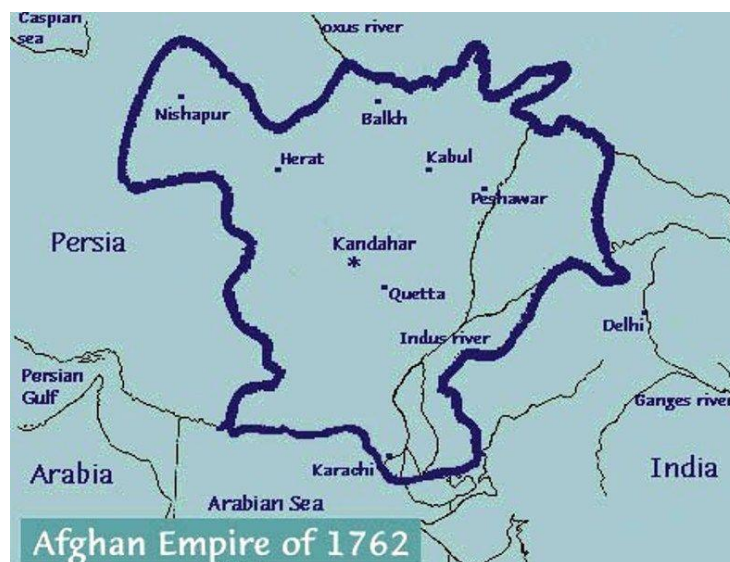


Figure 14. Map of Afghanistan in 1762⁶³

A final part of the external depiction of the homeland comes up as presenting Afghanistan as a part of the global world. See the following quotations:

EXPERT-7: Afghanistan is a *part of the global society*. We should have progress, civilisation and unity...The *villages of Afghanistan* are not like what is seen from the US or Turkey. Afghans living even in the remotest villages *do know what is happening in the world*. They have mass media, radio, mobile phones, etc. It is the same in our 34 provinces. (italics mine)

EXPERT-3: ...[W]e are *part of the global village*. (italics mine)

Although Afghanistan is a landlocked country and does not have a direct connection to the free waters of the seas, it has *commercial relations with most of the global markets*. (5-SS: 64) (italics mine)

⁶³ Source: [<https://wikibio.in/ahmad-shah-abdali/>]

The two respondents above establish today's Afghanistan as a part of the "global society" and the "global village" while 5-SS presents Afghanistan as a part of the "global markets." The first quotation explains it through the "villages of Afghanistan" where majority of the population lives and connects to the world through mass media. Here, people of Afghanistan, even while they may be rural villagers, are presented as informed about the world. In sum, neither rurality nor a landlocked position stops Afghanistan from being a part of the global village.

The data presented until this point has revealed an external depiction of Afghanistan as: (1) a country in South Asia or the 'Heart of Asia'; (2) a strategic 'bridge' on the Silk Road; (3) a 'Graveyard of Conquerors' (4) a country with 'imposed' borders; (5) a country not 'naturally' formed; and (6) a country that is part of the global world.

As we complete our examination of the internal and external depictions of Afghanistan as a homeland, we may now have a look at the metaphors used to describe this homeland. The reason why we include metaphors in this analysis is that they work to build up an image of the homeland in a concrete way. Across the textbooks and the interviews, we see two major metaphors employed in describing the homeland as: (1) a common house and (2) a mother. Especially the common house metaphor is encountered many times, since it is presented as a "national value" of Afghanistan (9-PA: 12). But before Afghanistan, a country is described as a "big house" in general terms:

A country is like a *big house* in which everybody takes part for repairing and places a brick for its well-being. At the end, the strength, building and beauty of that house is the product of the tireless efforts of people who, by taking a part in this process, come to be known as the architects of *that big house which is the homeland*. (8-PA: 63) (italics mine)

In the story that is told in this quotation, we see the metaphor of the construction and *repair* of a big house by people, which seems to be describing the reconstruction process in today's Afghanistan. In another textbook, 9-PA, we see a clearer contextualisation:

Land of Afghanistan is the *common house of Afghans*. For protecting this land, Afghans have joined hands for alliance and brotherhood. Each Afghan sees the other as their brother. Not only that, but also they wish for their brothers whatever they wish for themselves...Afghans are a free and integrated nation. They have deep thoughts about prosperity and *reconstructing the common house under the national flag and the constitution*. (9-PA: 68) (italics mine)

This quotation clearly establishes Afghanistan as a common house in which Afghans live as brothers. Thus, besides the common house metaphor, we also see a family metaphor, as it is a family that lives in a house. Furthermore, we see here a process of reconstructing the common house, i.e. the homeland, under the presence of a national flag and a constitution. As usual, we see a hidden reference to the state whose role is given to the homeland. This depiction also evokes the gate depicted on the national flag and national insignia, which represents the homeland of Afghanistan that stands with two national flags at its entrance (see 5.2. National Flag).

Just as the above quotation defines Afghanistan as a common house in which Afghans live as brothers, the following quotation names those ‘brothers’ one by one:

In terms of *qawm*, Afghanistan is the *common house* of numerous *aqwam*. In this country, Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Nuristani, Pashayi, Arab, Pamiri, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Brahui, Ghojar, and other *aqwam live like brothers side by side*. (9-PA: 11) (italics mine)

The *aqwam* listed here are the ‘brothers’ who live together in their common house that is Afghanistan. This quotation seems to be echoing the lyrics of the national anthem (see 5.3. National Anthem) which also employs the same metaphor: “This homeland is the home of all: the Baluch and the Uzbek and the Pashtun and the Hazara and the Turkmen and the Tajik and with them are the Arab and the Gojar, the Pamiris, the Nuristanis, the Brahui and the Qizilbash, also the Aimaq, also the Pashais.” As we see, the national anthem also declares Afghanistan as “the home of all.” One of my respondents explains how the curriculum builds up the idea of homeland as a common house:

EXPERT-9: We have a *unique curriculum* which teaches the student to say: “I am an Afghan. I am a Muslim. I live in this city, you live in that city, but *we are all Afghans*. No matter where we come from, *Afghanistan is our common house*. *Afghanistan is for all Afghans*.” We are trying to establish these ideas through the textbooks. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-9, who is a male Pashtun, mentions a “unique curriculum” that presents the idea of a common house of Afghanistan for all the Afghans. He is talking exactly about nation-building through education whereby textbooks are employed to establish certain ideas.

The second metaphor that is encountered in the textbooks is the mother metaphor to describe the idea of a homeland. The quotation below clearly explains why:

Homeland is resembled to a mother, due to the fact that *a person is born of a single mother and comes into the world from the body of the mother*. A mother nurtures her child with her milk and sacrifices all her happiness, peace, desires and wants for the child. *Homeland is a mother*, because the bond between a mother and her child is counted among the *most stable bonds*; and the child must *show respect* towards the mother under all conditions and *be under her service* with all their strength and ability. (8-PA: 6) (italics mine)

This quotation clearly states that “homeland is a mother.” Just as a person may only be born of a single mother, s/he may only be born in a single country. The mother metaphor gives the impression that it is the homeland that ‘gives birth’ to a person out of her ‘body.’ In this way, it establishes an organic and intimate relationship between a person and the homeland. At the end, the quotation reveals two major motivations behind this metaphor: (1) that the bond between a person and their homeland must be like a mother-child relationship which is the “most stable bond;” and (2) that a person must respect and serve their homeland just as a child respects and serves their mother.

We encounter the mother metaphor also in other places, including the various chapters on national heroes. See the examples below taken from different textbooks:

Our dear homeland is the cradle of many famous elders, mujahedeen, scientists, writers, poets and heroes *who were bred in her bosom*. (8-PA: 33) (italics mine)

Afghanistan is the birthplace of famous scholars, *ghazis*, writers and poets. Throughout history, this country has always *bred personalities in her bosom*, who have served their society and people in different aspects. (7-PA: 17) (italics mine)

Afghanistan is a *hero-breeding* country. (7-PA: 27) (italics mine)

Dear Afghanistan is a land of the *shohada* and our nation is a *shahid-breeding nation*. (8-PA: 28) (italics mine)

All these quotations work towards constructing an idea of the homeland which is personified as a mother breeding heroes in her bosom. It is also encountered in the national anthem, as well, which states: “Each of its sons are heroes” (see 5.3. National Anthem). Implicit in this idea is a fertile mother, the homeland, who gives birth to innumerable heroes and *shohada*. There is an implicit pride in it, as well, which works to construct the idea of a *heroic* homeland.

A final point that needs to be underlined in relation to the idea of the *watan* is the concept of patriotism, i.e. the love of homeland. As we know, there is a specific

course titled Patriotism, *Watandoosti*, that is offered for grades 7-9. The textbooks of this course are the primary resource that constructs the idea of the love of homeland. Specifically, the concept of patriotism is explained as follows:

People love the place where they came into the world and grew up. *Drinking* from the waters of the homeland, *eating* from her fruits and products, *living* with the people of the homeland and *making use of* the facilities and blessings of the homeland generates a strong and direct bond and heartfelt sentiment between a person and their homeland, which is called patriotism. The feeling of patriotism forces people to have a sense of *responsibility towards their homeland and its people* and to make an effort for the peace, progress and development, moral and material, of the motherland (8-PA: 6) (italics mine)

This quotation explains patriotism as the feeling of love felt for the homeland where one is born into and grows up. This feeling is generated through the relationships that one enters into with the homeland by feeding on it; making use of its facilities; and living with the compatriots. In return, one grows a sense of responsibility not only towards the homeland but also towards the compatriots. As the text contextualises the patria as Afghanistan, we see religion, i.e. Islam, articulating into the picture of patriotism:

Afghanistan is our homeland. Defending this land, working and waging *jihād* for its excellence and progress is a religious duty [*wajeeba-ye shar'i*] for every Afghan. (8-PA: 19) (italics mine)

This quotation portrays an understanding of patriotism which means defending the homeland; working for the homeland; and waging *jihād* for the homeland. All these acts are described as an Islamic duty, or *wajeeba*. The underlying reason why the homeland of Afghanistan should be defended with *jihād* is because it is viewed as a *dar-ul-salam*, i.e. the land of peace or land of Islam, where the majority of people adhere to the Islamic faith. That is why “every Afghan” should be ready to sacrifice their life to keep the homeland as a land of Islam. We see a similar understanding in the interviews, as well:

EXPERT-7: Each citizen in the world loves their country. It is important for them to know about and love their homeland; *work for it; fight for it; and become a martyr for it...*We should teach this to students through textbooks. *If we do not love our country, it may be invaded.* We should *prepare students for sacrifice.* (italics mine)

EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, summarises patriotism as working for; fighting for; and becoming a

martyr (*shahid*) for the homeland. When there is no such love, then, the homeland becomes vulnerable to invasions, according to him. What is implied here is that all the invasions that Afghanistan has suffered until now have resulted from a lack of love for the homeland. That is the reason behind his call for preparing the students for sacrifice. Yet, love only for the land is a “problematic” conception, according to another respondent:

EXPERT-6: Of course, it [patriotism] is taught in texts. It is something good and important. *Afghans generally love their country, but in a problematic way.* They do not love it *with compassion*. They say, this is our own land, so we love it. But they easily bribe or cheat people. People of other countries *love their compatriots, too*. But our people say, *I love my country and I am not interested in others*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-6, who is a female Hazara, views the conceptualisation of patriotism in Afghanistan as “problematic.” She means to say that it is just a militaristic love for the land; it does not mean love for the people of that land, i.e. the compatriots. That is where she sees a lack of interest and compassion for compatriots in Afghanistan compared to other countries. The reason is that patriotism in Afghanistan is primarily a land-based conceptualisation that is understood in Islamic terms as waging *jihad* for the homeland.

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented us with the elements of nation as they emerge out of the discourse of education defined within the limits of this thesis. This discourse has shown us that the idea of nation in Afghanistan has four major elements: Islam, *qawm*, *Afghaniyat* (Afghanness) and *watan* (homeland). As it is the task of the next chapter to give an expansive discussion of all these elements, together with the symbols, memory and concepts of nation, this chapter ends here.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

8.1. Introduction

We have now completed the three major chapters on data analysis which have greatly revealed the content of the idea of ‘nation’ as presented in the discourse of education in Afghanistan. It means that the primary research of this thesis has been answered to a great extent. Now is the time to consolidate this answer together with the answers to be given to the other two questions. Just to remind the reader, here are all the research questions posed in this thesis:

1. What is the content of the idea of ‘nation’ that is presented in the discourse of education at the 9-year compulsory level in Afghanistan?
2. What does this idea of ‘nation’ conceptualised by the Ministry of Education as a representative of the state of Afghanistan tell us about the society of Afghanistan?
3. Does this conceptualisation of ‘nation’ presented in the discourse of education in Afghanistan suggest the idea of a modern nation as defined in the West?

This chapter will make an effort to answer all these questions in relation to one another in three major sections based on: (1) the findings of data analysis on the discourse of education; (2) the views of the discourse producers in the field of education in Afghanistan; and (3) the theoretical framework as outlined in Chapter 3.

8.2. Discussion Based on Findings

This section will present a consolidated discussion of the idea of nation as presented in the discourse of education. To this end, it will bring together all the basic data collected and examined on the symbols, memory, concepts and elements of the nation and display the finalised conceptualisation of the *millat-e Afghanistan*. In this way, this section will be giving a compact answer to the first and second questions.

Based on the minute data analysis conducted in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, here is the basic content of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ with its four major elements:

Nation of Afghanistan (*Millat-e Afghanistan*):

- Islam is the basis of the nation of Afghanistan.
- *Aqwam* are the components of the nation of Afghanistan.
- *Afghaniyat* is the identity of the nation of Afghanistan.
- *Watan* is the homeland of the nation of Afghanistan.

Besides these four elements, the data analysis has also revealed a vital feature of the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan* as presented in the discourse of education:

- The state and the individual citizens are weakly conceptualised in relation to the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’

Below is a compact analysis and discussion of the features of *millat-e Afghanistan*.

- **Islam is the basis of the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’**
 - Nation of Afghanistan is a Muslim nation.
 - Religiosity is the primary feature of Afghanness.
 - Islam is the primary element of national identity.
 - Islam is the most common commonality among the people of Afghanistan.
 - The basis of national unity is Islamic brotherhood.
 - War against enemies is conceptualised as *jihad*.
 - There is an Islamic understanding of heroism whereby the *shohada* and the *ghazis* appear as national heroes.
 - Religion is the primary national interest to be protected against enemies.
 - Islam appears dominantly in the two major national symbols, i.e. the national flag and the national anthem.
 - Nation of Afghanistan is a part of the Islamic ummah.

First and foremost, we need to be reminded that the state of Afghanistan is an Islamic republic, which makes Islam a fundamental part of the ideology and policies of this state. That is the reason why the analysis conducted here has revealed that Islam lies at the basis of the idea of nation in Afghanistan. Accordingly, we see Islamic tenets

and understandings leaking into all the symbolisations and conceptualisations related to nation. Above all, the *millat-e Afghanistan* is clearly described as a ‘Muslim nation’ in the discourse of education. That is to say, this nation is primarily described through its religion. Furthermore, it is not only the nation as a group; but also the individual Afghans that are described through their religion. Among the four most common features presented in the discourse of education as the attributes of Afghan people, i.e. being religious, freedom-lover, endeavouring and manly, religiosity appears as the first characteristic. We need to underline here, however, that this characteristic does not solely describe ‘being Muslims;’ but has a larger meaning of ‘being religious.’ This is related to the nature of the *aqidawi* society of Afghanistan, which means that faith and convictions play a vital role in the daily lives of people in taking action or decisions. That is the reason why Afghanness, or *Afghaniyat*, primarily means being religious.

Looking at the major concepts related to nation, we first see national identity where we observe a two-layered conceptualisation. At the primary level lies Islam and at the secondary level lies *Afghaniyat* whose primary feature is being religious. In other words, we see religion playing a vital role at both levels of national identity.

Moving on to other concepts, we see that Islam appears as the most common commonality among the people of Afghanistan, presented as the ‘strongest bond’ that is able to melt away all the *qawmi*, sectarian and linguistic differences. The reason is that at times of ‘national unity,’ i.e. in situations when the *aqwam* come together against a common enemy, the concept of ‘Islamic brotherhood’ is strategically employed as the basis of national unity. The reason behind such strategic employment is that the same idea of Islamic brotherhood does not function with the two Muslim neighbours of Afghanistan, i.e. Pakistan or Iran, which generally appear as enemies or ‘others’ in the discourse of education. The concept of *jihad* does not function with them either, as it is a war waged in the name of God against those defined as ‘infidels.’ Thus, the idea of Islamic brotherhood appears to be more meaningful in the face of non-Muslim enemies, uniting the *aqwam* around the idea of *jihad*. As it is also evident in the historical discourse, wars against enemies are consistently presented as *jihad*, be it the wars against the British Empire in the 19th century or those against the Soviet Union in the 20th century. The Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919), which seems closest to the idea of a national war of

independence, is also presented as a war of *jihad* waged against the ‘infidel’ British to expel them out of the homeland of Afghanistan.

As national unity, i.e. unity of the *aqwam*, becomes possible through Islam, its protection is also presented as an Islamic duty, or *wajeeba*, which involves waging *jihad* against all sorts of separatist ideas of tribalism and factionalism. In line with the discourse of Islamic brotherhood, the *aqwam*, who are invited to unify in the name of Islam, are entitled to wage a *jihad* against those failing to unite. In this way, the Islam-based idea of national unity is protected by the Islam-based idea of struggle that is *jihad*.

Where struggle against enemies is conceptualised as *jihad*, the war heroes are, inevitably, conceptualised within the Islamic framework, as well. Among the different groups of national heroes, we see the *shohada* (martyrs) and the *ghazis* (veterans) emerging as the two dominant groups, which clearly reveals an Islamic understanding of heroism. In this specific understanding, the main motivation for heroes is fighting in the name of God; being ready to sacrifice their lives for God; and protecting the religion of Islam as well as the homeland which is the land of Islam, or the *dar’ul-salam*. Furthermore, the memory of these Islamic heroes is presented as something to be eternally cherished so that the nation of Afghanistan lives forever. In other words, remembering the *shohada* is presented as an indicator of the life of a nation.

The importance of protecting the homeland which is the abode of Islam becomes evident in the conceptualisation of national interests, too. Among the national interests to be protected against foreign enemies, religion and spirituality top the list, which is also supported by the historical discourse that presents the Mujahedeen struggling against the Soviet Union. The major message here is that the primary interest of the nation of Afghanistan in the face of foreign threats is to protect Islam.

Islam appears not only in the concepts related to nation; but also in the symbols of nation. On the national flag, as well as the national insignia, we see beyond the gates of the homeland of Afghanistan the interior of a mosque displaying a pulpit and an altar, which symbolises the centrality of Islam in this country. These Islamic symbols are supported by the Arabic inscriptions of *Allahu Akbar* (God is the greatest) as well as the Islamic *shahada*, or testimony, which states: “There is no God but Allah and

Mohammad is his Prophet.” Such inscriptions and depictions give the message that this is the national flag and national insignia of a ‘Muslim nation.’

Similarly, in the lyrics of the national anthem, we see a depiction of the society of Afghanistan as one divided into fourteen *aqwam* and, at the same time, unified by the Islamic faith. Near the very end of the anthem, we see the following verse: “Our leader is *al-Haqq* (God). We say ‘Allah is the greatest.’” Here, Allah emerges as the leader of Afghans who confirm it by repeating the Islamic expression *Allahu Akbar* for three times. In sum, it is also confirmed in the national anthem that Islam is the basis of the unity of all the *aqwam* which is conceptualised as national unity.

A final point to be made in relation to Islam is that the *millat-e Afghanistan* is presented as a part of the larger Islamic *ummah* in the world. A mutual relationship is portrayed between the *ummah* and the nation of Afghanistan, whereby Islam brings forth unity and conquests to the people of Afghanistan who, in return, have served Islam throughout history. In the historical discourse, the arrival of Islam into Afghanistan is presented as the initiator of a glorious era of unification of tribes, establishment of states and achievement of great conquests. In return for that, Afghans are invited to love and work for the Islamic *ummah* besides their own nation. Solidarity with the *ummah* is further emphasised, as Afghans are called to look upon the *ummah* as a solution for resolving their problems. In sum, Muslim nation of Afghanistan is part of the Islamic *ummah*; therefore, it is invited to turn to the *ummah* for help. On the other hand, we know that the two neighbours of Afghanistan, i.e. Pakistan and Iran, which are both Islamic Republics and constituents of the larger Islamic *ummah*, are presented in a negative light, which is something that contradicts with the ideas presented here. This situation, once again, confirms the strategic use of Islam throughout the discourse of education.

- ***Aqwam* are the components of the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’**
 - Nation is the sum of the *aqwam*.
 - National unity means unity of the *aqwam*.
 - Equality, social justice and balance are viewed in terms of the *aqwam*.
 - National symbols are the signs of the unity of the *aqwam*.
 - National history is understood as ‘common history.’

- National interests, as distinct from the *qawmi* interests, are weakly conceptualised.
- National will is represented through an institution that unites the *aqwam*: the *Loya Jirga*.
- The state is understood as a government at the service of all the *aqwam*.

Just as the first three articles of the Constitution establish Islam as the religion and regime of the state of Afghanistan, the fourth article describes the society, or the “nation of Afghanistan.” In this article, we see a list of the fourteen *aqwam* (and “other *aqwam*”) living in Afghanistan, which are officially recognised. The existence of such a list indicates that the *qawm* is legally recognised as a unit of social membership. In other words, it is legally acceptable to have the membership of a *qawm* in Afghanistan.

Besides this reference to the *qawm*, we also see a reference to the individual Afghans where the “nation of Afghanistan” is described. In other words, we see a two-layered structure of nation which is made up of: (1) fourteen *aqwam* and other *aqwam*, and (2) all individuals who possess the citizenship of Afghanistan. The first layer depicts a *qawm*-based nation while the second layer depicts an individual-based nation which is tied to the state through the bonds of citizenship. Yet, it needs to be reminded at this point that citizenship, or *tabaiyat*, appears in the primary resources as membership of the homeland, or *watan*, and not the state. In this understanding, then, all individuals, who are ‘members of the homeland of Afghanistan,’ make up the nation. The same individuals are, at the same time, members of the *aqwam* which also make up the nation. In such a picture, the individuals of Afghanistan are members of the nation both through the homeland and through their *aqwam*.

Even while the Constitution presents this two-layered structure of nation which includes both individual citizens and the *aqwam*, it is more common in the discourse of education to describe the nation as made up of the *aqwam*. Wherever the Afghan citizens are mentioned as members of the nation, it is immediately followed by a reference to the *qawm*. It confirms that the idea of nation is accompanied by the idea of the *qawm*. That is to say, the idea of nation becomes intelligible only through the

idea of the *qawm*. It proves that the *aqwam* are more readily perceived as components of the nation of Afghanistan, rather than individual citizens.

When nation is conceptualised as the sum of the *aqwam*, all the other related concepts are inevitably conceptualised in a similar fashion. The primary concept in this regard is national identity which will be explained in the upcoming discussion on *Afghaniyat* below. As for the concept of national unity, we see it conceptualised as the unity of the *aqwam*; not as the unity of Afghan citizens. In other words, unity is understood not on an individual level; but on a group level. This conceptualisation is strengthened with the garden metaphor whereby the nation of Afghanistan is consistently depicted as a garden with many colourful flowers that are the *aqwam*. The historical discourse also confirms this idea, portraying the coming together of the *aqwam* in the face of common enemies as national unity. Here, we actually see cases of purposeful, temporary and situational alliance whereby normally antagonising tribes unify against a common threat and then quickly disperse when the threat is cast aside. This has been the case not only in the very distant past; but also in the modern age. The two most common examples encountered in the textbooks are; (1) the wars against the British where the *aqwam* united around the idea of *jihad* to expel the British out of the homeland and regain the independence of Afghanistan in 1919; and (2) the Mujahedeen struggle against the Soviet Union where the *aqwam* united around the idea of *jihad* to expel the Soviets out of Afghanistan in 1989. Yet, in the aftermath of both wars, we see a failure to unite and establish a sustainable central authority, both in the case of the Amirs in the 19th and 20th centuries (including Amir Amanullah Khan in the 1920s who was overthrown only ten years after gaining independence from the British) and that of the Mujahedeen government formed in the 1990s after the Soviet withdrawal. These examples show that as soon as the foreign enemies are cast aside, the unity of the *aqwam* weakens, leading to internal power struggles and radical takeovers (including the dethronement of Amanullah Khan, the hero of independence, by a hostile tribal alliance in 1929 as well as the takeover of the Taliban over the Mujahedeen government in 1996). This kind of temporary and purposeful unification looks more like a tribal *alliance* rather than a stable national *unity* which is supposed to be based on the unity of the individual citizens. Still, it is described in the discourse of education as national unity.

Where national unity is conceptualised as the unity of the *aqwam*, we see certain conditions of unification requested by the *aqwam*. All the *aqwam* claim to have an equal part in the formation of the nation. They argue that that national unity may become stronger only if the *aqwam* recognise one another as equals and respect the rights of one another. This understanding is also evident in the concept of social justice which is commonly encountered in the interviews. The conceptualisation of social justice is more like *qawmi* justice which urges for a just treatment of all the *aqwam* by the state. We see a call to the state for giving an ‘equal opportunity’ to all the *aqwam* so that social justice is established. These ideas are also described with the term ‘balance’ by which is meant a ‘balanced treatment’ of all the *aqwam* at least, if not full equality. What matters here is that the concepts of equality, social justice and balance are all understood in terms of the *aqwam*; not individuals.

The conceptualisation of nation as composed of the *aqwam* also influences the perception of national symbols. It is clearly stated in the textbooks that national symbols such as the national flag and national anthem represent the unity of the *aqwam*. In other words, these symbols exist to remind and sustain the unity of the *aqwam* of Afghanistan. Yet, we need to check how far they have that potential. The national flag seems to pass the test, as it is a symbol accepted by all the *aqwam*. The reason is that it is believed to represent all the *aqwam*; not just one. Indeed, it does not display any specific *qawmi* sign; anything written in Pashto or Dari languages. Instead, it is full of Islamic signs and Arabic inscriptions as well as symbols denoting the homeland of Afghanistan. As Islam and *watan* are generally accepted by all the *aqwam* as points of commonality, they readily accept the national flag as a national symbol. Yet, the national anthem fails the same test. Even while listing all the fourteen *aqwam* in its lyrics, this anthem is not accepted as a common national symbol especially by non-Pashtuns, because it is in Pashto language. The criticism of non-Pashtuns results from a rejection to have the common national anthem in a language that is peculiar to only one *qawm*. It is viewed as a breach of social justice to treat the Pashtun *qawm* as a privileged *qawm* while the Constitution officially recognises it only as one among the fourteen *aqwam*. Yet, the same Constitution also recognises the Pashto language as one of the two official languages of Afghanistan, which automatically ‘privileges’ the Pashtun *qawm* over the other *aqwam*. A possible solution offered in the interviews is to have the national anthem half in Pashto and

half in Dari. This is the point where we witness an alignment of groups on the basis of language as Pashto-speaking Pashtuns and Dari-speaking non-Pashtuns. The goal here is to make all the *aqwam* accept the national symbols. This is also proof that the nation is perceived as the sum of *aqwam*.

As for the conceptualisation of the memory of nation, we see history described as ‘common history’ rather than ‘national history,’ which has some implications. In the word ‘common’ we see an understanding of history that is *common to all the aqwam* of Afghanistan. That is why the interviews reveal an emphasis on including the history of every *qawm*, which is an impossible task considering the nature of history-writing. For including the history of all the *aqwam* in a history textbook would scramble up the understanding of who is an ally and who is an enemy in relation to which *qawm*. What matters is that as long as history is conceptualised as common history, there will always be claims for the inclusion of all the *qawmi* histories.

Where nation is conceptualised as made up of the *aqwam*, the understanding of national interests also becomes fragmented. The main question is: Can we really talk about national interests that are separate from the interests of the *aqwam* in Afghanistan? The *qawm*-based nation automatically means that each *qawm* will be pursuing their own separate *qawmi* interests. That is why negotiations between the state, or rather the *government*, and the *aqwam* are very common in Afghanistan whereby the *aqwam* formally request certain rights or privileges from the government. In a way, the *aqwam* are in competition with one another in grabbing their share from the government. In such a picture, it becomes more difficult to imagine national interests that are independent of the interests of the *qawm*. Furthermore, many of the *aqwam* living in Afghanistan have their ethnic counterparts living in the neighbouring countries, which further complicates the understanding of national interests. Where an Uzbek of Afghanistan identifies more with Uzbekistan rather than Afghanistan, how can they adopt and pursue the national interests of Afghanistan? Especially when those national interests are believed to be designed not by the native people of Afghanistan but by outsiders. As the interviews reveal, it is difficult to talk about domestically defined national interests for a country like Afghanistan which remains under foreign occupation since 2001. It may be the reason why the textbooks only present a general picture on the issue of national interests, where we see Islam as the primary interest to be protected against

foreigners, which is followed by independence and economic welfare. It shows that national interests are described only at the points that are common to all the *aqwam*.

The conceptualisation of nation as unity of the *aqwam* also influences the concept of national will. It needs to be reminded that in Afghanistan, we see a duality in the representation of national will which comes up in the form of two institutions: the *Shura-ye Milli*, or the National Assembly, and the *Loya Jirga*, or the Grand Council. While the first is a modern parliament operating through regular elections; the latter is originally an irregular tribal council of negotiation at the highest level which is made into a state institution. In terms of membership capacity, the *Loya Jirga* is a much larger organisation reaching several thousands at times; while the *Shura* consists only of two hundred and fifty members at all times. The *Loya Jirga* includes the members of the *Shura* as well as the presidents of the provincial and district assemblies, which means the leaders and opinion-leaders of all the *aqwam* living in different provinces of Afghanistan. In other words, the *Loya Jirga* is perceived as an institution that brings together all the *aqwam* and achieves national unity. That is why it is officially recognised in the Constitution as ‘the highest representation of national will’ in Afghanistan. In the same line, it is not the National Assembly but the *Loya Jirga* which is presented in the textbooks as a sign of national identity; as an institution for protecting the national interests; and as a peculiarly Afghan tradition. That is how national will is conceptualised through the *Loya Jirga* as an institution uniting the *aqwam*.

Last but certainly not the least, we need consider the state in relation to the *aqwam*. Although a detailed discussion on the state will be provided below, suffice it to say that the state is presented in the discourse of education as a government at the service of all the *aqwam*. In the historical discourse, we see the *aqwam* unifying against enemies around Islamic brotherhood and then establishing states. In return, the state is expected to serve the *aqwam*. Here is revealed a government-*qawm* relationship rather than a state-citizen relationship, which is a vital point to be examined below.

- ***Afghaniyat* is the identity of the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’**
 - Nation is called the “nation of Afghanistan” in the Constitution.
 - Individual citizens of Afghanistan are named as “Afghans” in the Constitution.

- There is a big controversy around the ethnonym Afghan.
- National identity has two elements: (1) Islam and (2) *Afghaniyat*.
- Afghanness exists in relation to the *qawmi* identities.
- National identity is not a distinct identity separate from the Islamic identity or the *qawmi* identities.

National identity is primarily denoted by the name of the nation as well as that of its members. Such names are generally legalised through the Constitution of a country. It is the same with Afghanistan where the Constitution, in its Article Four, names the nation as the “nation of Afghanistan” and the individual citizens as “Afghans.”

The discourse of education, however, reveals that the ethnonym Afghan has a controversial perception among some of the people of Afghanistan, which is something rooted in history. As the ethnonym Afghan and the ethnonym Pashtun were used interchangeably in the past, non-Pashtuns largely refuse to be called Afghans. Some of them prefer to be called ‘Afghanistani’ instead. Yet some others also reject to use ‘Afghanistan’ as the name of the country, offering some other alternative names like Khorasan or Aryana. It is also due to this controversy that we rarely see an expression like the ‘Afghan nation’ or *millat-e Afghan* in the discourse of education. Instead, we see the expression ‘nation of Afghanistan’ or *millat-e Afghanistan* in the Constitution and other resources. It gives the impression that this nation is not based on a national identity; but on the homeland of Afghanistan.

Controversy around the ethnonym Afghan also complicates the conceptualisation of national identity as a common identity for all. In order to overcome the difficulty, two facilitators to the conceptualisation of national identity are offered in the discourse of education: (1) Islam is presented as the primary element of national identity; and (2) *Afghaniyat*, which is the secondary element of national identity, is presented as accompanied by the *qawmi* identities. The first point works to overcome a possible perception of the national identity as a threat to the idea of the Islamic single *ummah*, or *ummat-e-waheda*. The second point works to overcome a possible perception of the national identity as a threat to the *qawmi* identities. Consequently, the concept of Afghanness is presented together with the recognition of the *qawmi* identities. That is why in the primary resources, we consistently see that the mention of national identity is followed by immediate references to the *qawmi* identities.

After all, it is legally recognised in the Constitution to have both the Afghan identity and a *qawmi* identity, which is not viewed as something contradictory.

Based on the Constitution, then, it is in the nature of national identity to include both Afghanness and the *qawmi* identities in Afghanistan. It implies a concern over a possible weakening of the separate *qawmi* identities in the face of the common Afghan identity. That is why we encounter, in the interviews, an offer of hybrid identities such as ‘Hazara-Afghan’ or ‘Tajik-Afghan.’ Yet, we never hear an identity like ‘Pashtun-Afghan,’ which confirms the idea that the two are perceived as the same. It is as if the hybrid identities are offered only for non-Pashtuns as a way of accommodating them within the Afghan identity. Even if the Constitution does not officially recognise such hybrid identities, the two-layered structure of nation (Afghans-based nation and *aqwam*-based nation) presented in Article Four does not seem very far from such a view. Though we never see such hybrid identities in the textbooks, the current conceptualisation of nation prepares the ground for it.

This specific conceptualisation of national identity is a way of accommodating the national identity with the *qawmi* and religious identities. Yet, such conceptualisation makes it impossible for the Afghan national identity to be established as a distinct identity separate from all the *qawmi* identities and the Islamic identity. That is to say, *Afghaniyat*, or Afghanness, does not stand as a distinct national identity.

- ***Watan* is the homeland of the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’**

- Internally, the homeland of Afghanistan is depicted as:
 - A rural country of 34 provinces where majority lives as villagers;
 - A mountainous country;
 - One of the most beautiful countries in the world;
 - One of the richest countries in underground resources;
 - An inhabitable country with suitable conditions and resources;
 - A cradle of civilisations and scientists.
- Externally, the homeland of Afghanistan is depicted as:
 - The ‘Heart of Asia’ located in South Asia;
 - A strategic ‘bridge’ on the Silk Road;
 - A ‘Graveyard of Conquerors’;

- A country with ‘imposed’ borders (the Durand Line);
 - A country not ‘naturally’ formed;
 - A country that is part of the global world.
- Homeland is depicted as a common house in which all the *aqwam* live like brothers.
 - Homeland is depicted as a mother sheltering her sons, the *aqwam*, who serve her in return.
 - Patriotism is understood in Islamic terms as love for the land where Islam prevails and which must be defended with *jihad*.

The discourse of education reveals both an internal and external depiction of the homeland. Internally, we see Afghanistan depicted as a rural country where the majority of the population lives as villagers, which clearly confirms the low level of urbanisation that is established by the official population figures. Moreover, the fact that it is a mountainous country explains the separation of the *aqwam* from one another due to the geographical conditions. In terms of natural beauties, the homeland is depicted as one of the most beautiful countries in the world, in line with patriotism. In terms of natural resources, it is portrayed as one of the richest countries in underground resources in the region, which implies that Afghanistan has a rich economic potential. This idea is further strengthened by its depiction as an inhabitable country with suitable conditions and resources, revealing an effort to reverse its general depiction as an uninhabitable country. This effort is also supported by the historical discourse which shows Afghanistan as a cradle of civilisations as well as scientists.

As for the external depiction, we see the homeland of Afghanistan described as the Heart of Asia and located in South Asia. The historical discourse is employed to portray this homeland as a strategic bridge on the Silk Road, linking Indo-China to Europe. Having such a critical location, this land has always been threatened by world conquerors from Alexander the Great to the British Empire and the Soviet Union. Yet, no power has been able to conquer this homeland which has come to be known as the ‘Graveyard of Conquerors.’ Such victories over the biggest world powers portrays an Afghanistan that is able to change the course of the world history. And this historical discourse helps construct the memory of a warrior, freedom-loving, anti-colonialist and enemy-killer nation. Despite its success in beating its

enemies, however, this homeland was not ‘naturally’ formed with ‘natural’ borders that were defined by its founder, Ahmad Shah Baba. At this point, the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan emerges as an ‘imposed border,’ even though the discourse does not explicitly specify who imposed it. Still, it is clearly stated that this border is not recognised by the people of Afghanistan, which reveals a complicated picture of territorial integrity. That is probably the reason why territorial integrity is presented as the second most important national interest to be protected against the enemies. And finally, despite all the problems, the homeland of Afghanistan is portrayed as a country that is a part of the global world.

Besides these internal and external depictions, there are two significant metaphors employed to denote the homeland of Afghanistan: the common house metaphor and the mother metaphor. Especially the common house metaphor is extensively used in textbooks, interviews as well as the national symbols. On the national flag is seen the gate of a building that symbolises Afghanistan; while the national anthem clearly states: “This homeland is the home of all.” The textbooks consistently describe the homeland of Afghanistan as a common house for all the *aqwam* that live like brothers. In this house, we also see a mother figure representing the homeland, who shelters her sons, the *aqwam*, that serve her in return. This mother homeland, or rather the *motherland*, also enjoys certain rights over her sons who are expected to work for her, which is explained through the notion of working for the homeland.

And finally, we see a conceptualisation of patriotism, or love of homeland, which is described as an Islamic duty, or *wajeeba*. In this conceptualisation, patriotism is understood as love for the land which must be defended with *jihad* because this land is a land of Islam, or the *dar-ul-salam*, where the majority of people adhere to the Muslim faith. That is why all of its inhabitants must struggle to keep the homeland as a land of Islam and be ready to sacrifice their lives and become a martyr (*shahid*) for the homeland. These ideas clearly point to an Islamic understanding of patriotism.

- **The state and the individual citizens are weakly conceptualised in relation to the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’**

This examination has shown that the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as revealed in the discourse of education does not stand as a distinct entity; but is intrinsically tied to the *qawm* and the *ummah*. References to nation are consistently accompanied by

references to the *qawm* or the *ummah*. What is perceived as national is, in fact, either *qawmi* or religious.

What is happening here is that the concept of nation is being placed, by force, into a society where the two most important social groups are the *qawm* and the *ummah*. In very brief terms, this society is made up of numerous *aqwam* which temporarily unite in the name of Islam and become the *millat-e Afghanistan* which rather looks like the *ummah* of Afghanistan. Original meaning of the word *millat* as religion should also be considered at this point, which is to be explained below. Although it is claimed in the discourse of education that the unity of the *aqwam* constitutes the nation of Afghanistan; it actually constitutes the *ummah* of Afghanistan, as it is a unification based on Islam. Even while it may seem like the *aqwam* unite for the sake of the homeland, they actually unite for the sake of defending the homeland that is the *dar-ul-salam*, i.e. the land of Islam. Here, the homeland only functions as an image; while the real motivation is defending Islam and protecting *qawmi* autonomy from outside interference.

In the discourse of education, then, we see an effort for carefully accommodating the idea of nation into the society of Afghanistan without destabilising it. The reason is that this externally-introduced concept of nation has the potential of clashing with the ideas of the *qawm* and the *ummah*. Consequently, it articulates into the current society of Afghanistan as it exists, so that it will not be viewed as a threat. In that case, however, it becomes something else which is far from the idea of a modern nation based on individual members defined as citizens.

Examination of the discourse of education has revealed that the components of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ are the *aqwam* rather than individual citizens. The citizen, who is officially defined in the Constitution as an “Afghan,” only emerges in relation to the state, since it is an identity established specifically for the sake of the state. In other words, an inhabitant of Afghanistan becomes an “Afghan citizen” only at the point of entering into a relationship with the state, i.e. at the point of citizenship. The *qawm* of an inhabitant may be Tajik; yet, there is no official definition for Tajik citizenship; but only Afghan citizenship. Even while the hybrid identity ‘Tajik-Afghan’ may be on offer, the Afghan identity must still be there to denote the Tajik’s membership and citizenship in the state of Afghanistan. The reason is that the

Constitution does not recognise a Tajik citizen; but the Tajik *qawm*. The only citizen that the Constitution recognises is the Afghan citizen, even while the implication may be a Tajik-Afghan individual. The Constitution recognises the *aqwam* only on a group level; not on an individual level.

Given the controversy behind the ethnonym “Afghan,” the official individual identity defined in the Constitution as Afghan is not accepted by all the people of Afghanistan; especially by non-Pashtuns who prefer to use their *qawmi* identities and remain in their own circles of *qawm*. In other words, members of the *aqwam* refuse to become individuals at the state level, i.e. citizens, because then, they will have to become Afghans, i.e. Pashtuns according to some. That is how the institution of the *qawm* is sustained; while that of the citizen-based nation fails. Where the citizen is weakly conceptualised, the idea of a modern nation or nation-state cannot hold on.

This view is confirmed in the discourse of education, as we see a weakly conceptualised state besides the weakly conceptualised individual citizen. This is not to say that the textbooks have no content on the state. On the contrary, there are specific chapters, i.e. Chapter 1 titled “The State” in 6-SS and Chapter 1 titled “The State” in 9-CE, which explain the need for a state in society; types of the state; duties of the state; organs of the state; provision of social services by the state; etc. What is sought here is an association between the idea of nation and the state. Yet, the examination of the symbols, memory, concepts and elements of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ that has been undertaken in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 reveals that the state rarely appears in the conceptualisation of nation. In other words, the state is not something automatically remembered in relation to nation, like *qawm* or Islam. For the state of Afghanistan is not conceptualised as a nation-state; but as an *Islamic government at the service of the aqwam*.

Even the word choice related to the state is very revealing of the conceptualisation of the state in Afghanistan. In the discourse of education, we generally see two words, the ‘state,’ or *dawlat*, and the ‘government,’ or *hokumat*, being used interchangeably. Although the Constitution, as the supreme official document, as well as the textbooks of Civic Education consistently employ the word ‘state’; the interviews, as well as the textbooks of Patriotism, reveal a popular preference for the word ‘government’ over the word ‘state.’ It is observed that even some of the questions asked

specifically about the ‘state’ are answered with the word ‘government.’ It indicates a natural tendency to employ the word ‘government’ in daily language; while the word ‘state’ remains tied to the official text. See the following respondent answering the question: “How is the state presented in the textbooks?”

EXPERT-9: The issue of the *state* comes up in the 6th grade Social Studies textbooks where the responsibilities and rights of citizens towards the *government* are given.

Here, we see that EXPERT-9, who is a male Pashtun, starts his answer by using the word ‘state,’ employing the same term used in the question. But then, he switches to the word ‘government’ where it is actually more apt to use the word ‘state.’ As we know, the ‘state’ is an impersonal institution; while the word ‘government’ means specific people who administer the state for a specific term, such as the National Unity Government (NUG), or the *Hokumat-e Wahdat-e Milli*, that was in power in Afghanistan from 2014 to 2019. The perception of the institution of the state as ‘government’ means that it is primarily viewed through the ruling people, or perhaps even the ruling *qawm*. That explains why the state of Afghanistan is viewed as a ‘Pashtun government.’ Here is a respondent exemplifying this point:

EXPERT-1: History books show all the *kings coming from one tribe*. There are two messages going to the students: *Only one group* will always be ruling; so you will *always have to obey*. And the second is that the *rest does not have the capacity*. (italics mine)

EXPERT-1, who is a male Tajik, criticises the textbooks of History for showing that all the kings of Afghanistan come from one *qawm*, i.e. Pashtuns. He is concerned about the impressions that this attitude may leave on students who may believe: (1) that Pashtuns will always be the ruling *qawm*; and (2) that non-Pashtuns will always have to obey Pashtuns, as they do not have the capacity to rule. This understanding complicates the perception of the state which is seen as a ‘government’ ruled by Pashtuns rather than as an impersonal institution. In this *qawm*-based understanding of the state, we see non-Pashtuns ‘obeying’ Pashtuns; instead of just citizens. It is because the state is seen as the *qawmi* property of Pashtuns; and not an institution. Another respondent, who reveals the same idea, has a milder attitude on it:

EXPERT-2: ...[T]he people have come to believe: the *government does not represent me*. They believe that *the state belongs to only one family*: the Durrani⁶⁴. But it's understandable, as they trust to people from *their own group*.

EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, explains the major reason behind the lack of identification with the state: disbelief in representation. As some people believe that “the state belongs to only one family,” they think that the ‘government’ does not represent them or their family (which may also be considered as *qawm*). The implied desire here is that the state should also belong to other families or *qawm* so that all the *aqwam* take their turns in government. What needs emphasis here is that we are talking on the basis of *qawm*; and not individuals. It seems, however, that EXPERT-2 personally finds it understandable to trust people from your own *qawm*. For in a *qawm*-based society, favouring the members of your own *qawm* seems perfectly normal, as the social structure operates on that. That is why the state is perceived as a ‘Pashtun government’ that is expected to serve all the *aqwam* justly. For the state is obliged to provide services to all the *aqwam* in order to consolidate national unity, i.e. unity of the *aqwam*.

Where the state is viewed as a government at the hands of a peculiar *qawm*, like a dynasty, it is inevitable that not all the people identify with it. Instead of the state, something else comes to the foreground as a stronger point of identification: the homeland. The discourse of education is full of references to living in a homeland under a single flag and a constitution. Though what is meant by a single flag and a constitution is the state, it is not clearly named as such. It is as if the state, which has a controversial perception, is hidden from view while the homeland fills its role. It is also evident in the conceptualisation of citizenship which is presented not as membership in a state but as *membership in a homeland*. Moreover, it is denoted with the word *tabaiyat* which gives the impression of ‘being subject to a homeland.’ Indeed, there is a discourse on the rights of the homeland over its inhabitants, which is in line with the usage of the term *tabaiyat*. The mother metaphor used for the homeland also represents the same view, depicting a mother and her sons who are subject to her and expected to work for her sake. In this conceptualisation of citizenship, we see citizens who are subject to a ‘rightful’ homeland.

⁶⁴ The Durrani, also known as the Abdali, is the tribe of Ahmad Shah Baba, the founder of Afghanistan who founded the Durrani Dynasty in the 18th century. See Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan.

In answering the research questions of this thesis, the discussion that has been carried out so far has been on the findings of the primary data obtained on the conceptualisation of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ in the discourse of education. Now is the time to have a look at how the producers of the discourse of education in Afghanistan view the policy of nation-building in the field of education, which is expected to give more meaning to the entire examination conducted so far.

8.3. Discussion Based on Views of Discourse Producers in Afghanistan

This section will present a discussion based specifically on the views of the producers of the discourse of education in Afghanistan in relation to the current state of the society. The discussion will start with the issues behind nation-building through education and then pass on to the larger social issues. In other words, here, we will be observing the society of Afghanistan through the opinions of the discourse producers, which will help us understand why the state, i.e. the Ministry of Education, conceptualises the *millat-e Afghanistan* in this way. Therefore, this section will help us answer especially the second research question among others.

The first point to be made is that the experts in my sample display varying attitudes towards nation-building through education, ranging from positive to negative. Where they merge is the claim that there is an increasing effort for reflecting the policy of nation-building in the curriculum or the textbooks. Especially the top officials at the Ministry of Education, being the top policy makers in Afghanistan, reveal a positive attitude towards nation-building through education. The primary tool for nation-building specifically in the field of education comes up as a single curriculum:

EXPERT-8: The *goal of a single curriculum is already nation-building*. Teachers are obliged to obey the Constitution; they may not declare their own opinions. (italics mine)

EXPERT-8, who is a female Tajik, presents the single curriculum as the primary tool for standardisation in education based on the Constitution. That is why she associates it with the obligation to obey the Constitution no matter how different teachers may personally think. As the interview proceeds, we understand what she means by it:

EXPERT-8: We have a single curriculum. It is *very difficult for everybody to accept it*; I don’t have to accept the *culture of others*...For *social justice* to exist, there *should not be a single curriculum*. Even I, myself, am *damaging social justice*; I ruin it, *because it is the state policy*. (italics mine)

What this quotation reveals is that a single curriculum means a single standardised culture, i.e. the national culture in the words of Gellner. EXPERT-8 describes the imposition of a single culture on everybody as a violation of social justice. At this point, the state enacting a single curriculum with the goal of nation-building appears as damaging social justice. EXPERT-8 defends the protection of all cultures, i.e. all the *qawmi* cultures, through multiple curricula in different languages so that social justice is achieved. Still, she is aware of the realities on the ground:

EXPERT-8: *Some languages have no resources, no universities and no influence.* Not every language is a medium of science. Even if students are educated in their mother tongues, they will encounter Pashto or Dari at the universities. Therefore, *the state is obliged to standardise*, because the state wishes that *everybody is educated under the same conditions*. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-8 admits that even if the *qawmi* cultures are protected through multiple curricula at the level of general education, students will encounter the two official languages, i.e. Dari and Pashto, in higher education at the university. That is why “the state is obliged to standardise” through a single curriculum so that everybody receives a standard education.

Moving from the implementation of single curriculum as a tool for nation-building, we arrive at specific courses deemed to be important in terms of nation-building:

EXPERT-2: Karzai⁶⁵, in the second phase of his administration, suggested a new book for higher education: *Hubb-ul Watan* or *Watandoosti* [Patriotism] which is *very important in nation-building*. Now, we have it in the General Education period as well. Although the books were prepared and published two years ago, the idea emerged like five-six years ago during Karzai. Of course *many teachers are not very happy* with the content of these books. The *consciousness of nation and national identity is something new* among the education specialists of Afghanistan. (italics mine)

EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, describes the Patriotism course as an important platform for nation-building. His explanation reveals that the content of this course has a controversial nature, as it is not welcomed by all the teachers. He explains it through the novelty of the “consciousness of nation” among the education experts of Afghanistan. This novelty means that it is an issue still being discussed and debated; or not discussed in details yet, as the following respondent claims:

⁶⁵ Hamid Karzai was the first President of Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era from 2001 to 2014.

EXPERT-4: There has been *no detailed discussion at the Ministry* about national identity during the development of our syllabi and curriculum. My personal view is that our textbook writers *should focus more* on it so that history helps us create the national identity of students. Our heritage and our achievements in history are important. However, in some cases, teaching the national identity is not something good. For our country it may be good; but for other countries, it may not be good. For example, in Iran, Pakistan or Turkey, they translate their national identity as something not good for us. We should be thinking just in the Islamic framework or the human framework. But *maybe we should do the same and make a strong national identity*. We're still discussing this issue. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-4, who is a male Hazara, reveals an indecisive attitude towards national identity which is one of the expected outcomes of nation-building. He starts with the claim that forming a national identity through history-writing is vital for students. Then, he warns that national identity formation in Afghanistan may not have good consequences for other countries like Iran, Pakistan and Turkey where national identity translates into something bad for Afghanistan. He probably refers to the potential of 'otherising' that the discourse of nationalism has, feeding upon us vs. them dichotomies. For EXPERT-4, this is something that rules out the Islamic framework or the humanity framework. Probably that is why he explains his case through Muslim-majority countries like Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. If all these countries acted upon the framework of Islam or humanity, then, they would not be the 'others' of Afghanistan; but all would constitute a single *ummat-e waheda* as he would later emphasise. But we know that even while Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan are all Islamic republics, there is a certain level of enmity between them due to historical issues of neighbourhood. It shows that national identity may be strong in Islamic republics, too, at least in the face of 'enemies.' It may be the reason why he quickly abandons the idea, stating that perhaps Afghanistan must also have a strong national identity like other countries. Then, he ends with an open-ended statement, claiming that nation-building is still being discussed at the Ministry.

On the other hand, another respondent argues that there is no capacity for discussing a controversial issue like nation-building at the Ministry of Education:

EXPERT-11: The problem is that there is *no capacity for discussing these issues at the Ministry*. If you raise this issue at a meeting, there will be *tension*. So, we *usually ignore these issues at the Ministry*. Eventually, the person who has *the most power tries to impose* his own ideas... We had a discussion about

the content of the Social Studies and there was *no consensus* on national identity and the Deputy Minister *had to stop the meeting*. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, explains that it is not possible to discuss the issue of nation-building due to lack of consensus at the Ministry. Even while the President and the Minister of Education instruct the Ministry staff to include the aspects of nation-building in the curriculum, the discourse producers fail to discuss; let alone reach a consensus on them. The only solution seems like ignoring the issues of nation-building all together. That is why EXPERT-11 finds the current efforts at nation-building through education “shallow:”

EXPERT-11: Education can play an *important role in nation-building, potentially*. But we are *not using the potential*. There are some efforts, but, personally, I find it *shallow*. There is no depth; no analysis. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-11 underlines the potential of education in nation-building, which is, according to him, not being used in Afghanistan. It results from the reasons counted until this point: (1) novelty of the “consciousness” of nation among the education experts at the Ministry of Education; (2) the ongoing debates on nation-building which fail to arrive at a consensus; (3) the controversial nature of the issues of nation-building; (4) low capacity for discussion at the Ministry of Education which end up in tensions; (5) the inevitable consequence of ignoring the issues of nation-building all together or undertaking some superficial efforts without depth or analysis. These are the major reasons why education fails to play its role in nation-building in Afghanistan.

It needs to be emphasised, however, that the problems seen in the field of education are a part of the real-life conditions outside the Ministry, as the respondent below says:

EXPERT-2: We can accelerate the national identity formation process, but we *need the grounds for that, such as urbanisation, education, etc. at every level* from the parents, family, village and country. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-2, who is a male Hazara, refers to the modernisation process at all levels of society, which he presents as the “grounds” for national identity formation, or nation-building. He further explains the importance of parents as follows:

EXPERT-2: The first source for Afghanising kids in forming their identity is *their parents*, who are very important, and *what they do unconsciously*. *Education is an external source* in this regard, which steps in as children get older. The most important thing is *to what extent I, as a parent, am an Afghan myself*. For example, when I complain about Afghanistan, my children get

influenced...When parents do not have the conception of national identity, how could they *translate it to their children?* (italics mine)

Parents constitute the adult society at large. What EXPERT-2 means is that the state of the current society and the larger discourse produced in that society are indicative of how nation-building proceeds in a country. As identity formation in young people starts at home before school, parents do play a role in the nation-building process. Another respondent points to the role of grandparents as carriers of “radical ideas”:

EXPERT-6: It’s true that we are in the 21st century, but *Afghanistan is living in the 17th century or 18th century*. In culture, custom, religion we have a lot of problems. *We just speak about modernisation, but in reality we don’t accept it...* Grandparents of people still have the same ideas. They think that their own way of life is true and that of others is wrong. They *do not approve the modern rules of life* in Europe or America. They call them *kafir* [infidel]. They have radical ideas...Such changes cannot easily take place from one generation to another. *Ideas and mind set of people must change.* (italics mine)

EXPERT-6, who is a female Hazara, claims that Afghanistan does not belong to this century. There may be much talk on modernisation, but in reality, it is not something accepted by the society. It results from the ‘rejection of modernisation’ seen in the elders of the society. She believes that the “17th century” life-style is sustained through the reproduction of the mind set of older generations. Her conclusion is that unless this mind set changes, which would require a long time, there cannot be a real change in Afghanistan. According to EXPERT-6, in this mind set is also included an ‘inherent’ idea of the *qawm* which hampers the nation-building process:

EXPERT-6: At the Ministry of Education, in policy and plan, every day they say that *we should make Afghanistan national*. But it’s *just in words*; not in implementation. They cannot implement it, because there is the *issue of qawms*. In official meetings, they do not directly and openly admit it, but in the *unconsciousness of people, it is a fact*. I think, in the people of Afghanistan, it is *inherent that we have a qawm identity*. (italics mine)

This is a fundamental quotation which presents the *qawm* identity as an “inherent” feature of the people of Afghanistan, that is sustained at the level of “unconsciousness.” That is why it keeps coming up as an obstacle before the implementation of the expressed policy of the Ministry of Education for ‘making Afghanistan national,’ i.e. nation-building in Afghanistan. The unconsciousness of people proves to be stronger than any policy, as EXPERT-6 further discusses:

EXPERT-6: Education is very important, but the Ministry of Education *alone cannot change* this view. They *just change the content* of the textbooks, but *culture may be the same*. The government, the society, organisations, etc. all have important roles; they *emphasise on differences*. For example, our politics directly or indirectly emphasise that *Afghanistan is made up of many different groups*...[E]verything in our society emphasises that *you belong to one group* and that another group is *different* from you. (italics mine)

What we understand from this quotation is that education, by itself, is not enough in implementing nation-building as long as the ‘inherent culture of the *qawm*’ sustains an emphasis on difference. Departing from this point, we may argue that including aspects of nation-building in the content of the textbooks, i.e. constructing a discourse on nation in the textbooks, will fail to hold on in the face of a discourse on the ‘culture of the *qawm*’ that is produced by the society, the government, the organisations, the mass media, everyday politics, etc. What our analysis of the discourse of education has revealed is that the constructed idea of the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ is also a product of the discourse on the ‘culture of the *qawm*.’ In other words, the discourse on the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ that is produced for the sake of nation-building also serves the discourse on the ‘culture of the *qawm*.’ It means the reproduction of the ‘culture of the *qawm*’ rather than a ‘culture of the nation.’ Consequently, it becomes a vicious cycle as this discourse reproduces the same mind set which, in return, reproduces the same discourse. The newcomers into the context of Afghanistan are also inevitably pulled into this vicious cycle, as we learn from the personal story of EXPERT-6, a female Hazara:

EXPERT-6: For example, I was born in Iran and received both my BA and MA degrees there. I wanted to return to Afghanistan with ideas in my mind about equality between the people of Afghanistan. But when I returned and started working, I saw that it was not the case and there *are* differences between people...Especially in workplaces, *qawm identity is very important*. If a director belongs to one group, they make an effort to *hire people of their own group*...You might have *less rights* because you belong to another *qawm*. So, I *started to resemble others*, too. I started to *care more about Hazaras*. Unfortunately, the *society has also influenced me*. Actually, I *don't like it this way*, but it happens. They don't let you progress, so you resemble them. Still, I don't want to change too much. I still want to have a *national mind set*. (italics mine)

What we understand from the story of EXPERT-6 is that anybody entering into the context of Afghanistan is eventually led to behave in line with the ‘culture of the *qawm*.’ This is what she means by being exposed to ideas of *qawm* unconsciously. It

proves how fundamental the discourse on the ‘culture of the *qawm*’ is. The question to be asked here is this: Are the people of Afghanistan also exposed unconsciously to the ideas of nation through a discourse on nation? No.

Gellner claims that a nation cannot be built without the discourse of nationalism. On the other hand, all the countries in the world order, whether they possess this discourse of nationalism or not, are expected to have the form of nation and nation-state so as to be internationally recognised, as Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework has shown. That is the point where we see the emergence of ‘nation-building as foreign policy’ which is implemented in a country in the aftermath of a foreign intervention. Even while a country may be devoid of the discourse of nationalism, it is expected to have the *form* of a nation, if not the *content*, as it is summarised in the words of the following respondent:

EXPERT-3: ...[W]e are *part of the global village*; we need to have Civic Education.

Here, EXPERT-3, who is a male Pashtun, forms an association between being a part of the global world and offering the course of Civic Education in the curriculum. In this association, Civic Education emerges like a condition for being part of the global world, i.e. being integrated into the world order of nation-states. The reason why he singles out Civic Education is obvious enough, since it is where the modern concept of citizenship is presented to students. It also this course, besides History, that the Taliban opposes:

EXPERT-1: In some schools, there is opposition from the Taliban. They say, we allow you to operate, but we want to change certain things, *you should not teach History and Civic Education*, for example...[B]ecause the Taliban does not want to see a bad thing about itself taught to students in History classes. And the Civic Education textbooks have much material about the government. (italics mine)

It is a well-known fact that the Taliban opposes modern secular education. That is why they continually make trouble for public schools that operate under the Ministry of Education, threatening or harming the teachers and students; even blowing up school buildings at times. Here, EXPERT-1 shows them typically involved in negotiating with the state on education, ‘allowing’ the state operate schools on certain conditions. One such condition is the suspension of History and Civic Education courses both of which are very closely related to nation-building. Civic

Education constructs the idea of a modern state; while History constructs the memory of a nation, as seen in Chapter 5 Symbols and Memory of Nation. As seen above, Civic Education appears as a condition for being a part of the global world. The reason why the Taliban rejects this course is to prevent Afghanistan from integrating into the global world order. Similarly, their reason for rejecting the History course is to prevent the teaching of the history of their own reign in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. Indeed, as seen in 5.5. Common History, the discourse of history at the 9-year compulsory level by no means mentions the Taliban, ending with the year 1973 that marks the end of the Afghan Monarchy.

While the Taliban totally rejects Civic Education; the state of Afghanistan adapts it into its own social context, ‘localising’ Civic Education. As our examination of the discourse of education has revealed, we see a rather ‘local’ understanding of citizenship that is denoted with the word *tabaiyat* (being subject to) and associated more with the homeland rather than the state. This process of ‘localisation’ is presented as vital when adopting the values of the global world:

EXPERT-7: We should have a look at the other examples in the world. But of course we have *our red lines about being Islamic and being national*. We benefit from all the examples in the world and we *localise them through Islamisation and nationalisation*. Western culture is different from Eastern culture...We Afghans seek progress, but it is not merely progress by itself; we want *progress along with our Islamic and national values*. (italics mine)

In this quotation, we see the proposition of a model of progress that is customized for Afghanistan. EXPERT-7, who is a male Uzbek working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, explains how the values of other countries are localised through “Islamisation and nationalisation,” given that “being Islamic and being national” constitute the “red lines” of Afghanistan. What he means by “being national” is actually interwoven with being Islamic, as he describes, in the rest of the interview, some of the basic Islamic values as the national values of Afghanistan (see 7.2. Islam). Yet, this process which sounds akin to a ‘localisation of modernisation’ produces a “conceptual problem,” according to the respondent below:

EXPERT-11: I think there’s a *conceptual problem*. Most of the *civic education in Afghanistan is within Islamic education* actually. How to behave, etc. are issues that may be seen under Islamic subjects. It’s a bit *different* from the civic education that is based on democracy and political participation. That is a

conceptual problem. People don't have a *clear understanding* of these issues. (italics mine)

EXPERT-11, who is a male Qizilbash, claims that there is a problem in the conceptualisation of civic education in Afghanistan where civic values interweave with Islamic values. About the Western conceptualisation of civic values like democracy or political participation, people "don't have a clear understanding." By now, we know that such "conceptual problems" in the discourse of education result from other conceptual problems in the larger discourse of Afghanistan:

INTERVIEWER: Now I would like to focus on the English equivalents of some Dari words like *millat*, *qawm*, *shahrwand* and *tab'e*.

EXPERT-10: [*He almost laughs.*] These are the words that *people fight for* among themselves. (italics mine)

This dialogue reveals that conceptual problems start from the level of words. EXPERT-10, who is a male Pashtun working as one of the top officials at the Ministry of Education, shows that the terminology of nation and citizenship constitutes a point of hot debate among the people of Afghanistan. Another respondent explains it as follows:

EXPERT-11: *Many Afghans don't know the meanings of these concepts*. It's not because you are a foreigner and you don't know. Even I don't know the translation of *qawm*. [*He laughs.*] (italics mine)

In other words, the reason why people fight on the words related to nation-building is that many of them do not really know their meanings or have a consensus on their possible meanings. The weakness in conceptualising these terms results from the fact that some of them are alien to the context of Afghanistan; they do not have counterparts in real life. Even while the discourse of education constructs a 'localised' version of the concept of nation, it is still not fully understood nor voluntarily adopted. The following respondent explains the difference between the discourse of education and real life:

EXPERT-6: In recent years, the government of Afghanistan said *all children should be national Afghans*. But we have a *long way to be national* and for every student to be an Afghan *in the real world*. In the content of textbooks, *nationalism is taught*. But when you go out of school; in the street, in the family or anywhere else, you see that *people are not national Afghans*. Afghanistan is a mix of many parts of people: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek. So, in real life, a Tajik student is just a Tajik student; a Hazara student is a Hazara student. *It is just in the book that they are Afghans...* Children are told at school that they are

Afghans; but *everything outside school tells them that they belong to a qawm*. Therefore, the thing learnt at school weakens and is *eventually forgotten*. (italics mine)

In this quotation, EXPERT-6, who is a female Hazara, refers to the nation-building policy of the “government of Afghanistan” for making all the children “national Afghans.” Then, she explains why there is a long way for it. The major reason is that nationalism, the idea of nation and “national Afghans,” even while they are taught at school, do not exist in reality. There are no “national Afghans” in real life; but Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Pashtuns, etc. The idea of nation and national identity remains limited to school. Even while the students are told at school that they are Afghans, they do not see its counterpart in real life. That is why “it is just in the book that they are Afghans.” Thus, students are exposed to two different discourses: (1) the discourse of education at school and (2) the larger discourse outside school:

EXPERT-6: It is confusing for students. Am I a national Afghan or a Hazara? But the thing is that...the *winner is the qawm identity*. Pashtuns say we are Pashtuns. Tajiks say we are Tajiks. So, *first comes the qawm identity*. *Afghan identity is not very important*. It may be important some 20, 30 or 50 years later... Of course education is important, but it *changes everything slowly*. (italics mine)

In other words, the *qawmi* identity wins over the national identity even at school, according to EXPERT-6. The reason is that the discourse of education cannot fulfil its purpose when the larger discourse in a country says something else. Still, EXPERT-6 does see a possibility of change through education in 50 years-time, for such changes take time. The question asked by another respondent explains why:

EXPERT-4: Does the new generation, *as the product of our curriculum, know about the national identity*? It is a big question. Still, we have *problems with the national identity*. Not all the students have *an interest* in national identity or *take care* of it. (italics mine)

Here, EXPERT-4 questions the functionality of the discourse of education in a short-term like twenty years-time. Considering that the current curriculum was enacted in the post-Taliban period after 2001, he questions whether the first products of that curriculum have adopted the aspects of nation-building such as national identity. His negative answer proves that the discourse of education will be insufficient on its own to implement the goals of nation-building. The reason is that it will continue reproducing the same conceptualisation of society based on the *qawm* and the *ummah* in Afghanistan; rather than functioning as a nation-building process.

8.4. Discussion Based on Western Theories of Nation

In answering the research questions posed in this thesis, we have presented, until this point, a discussion based on the findings of the data analysis and the views of the producers of the discourse of education in Afghanistan. All in all, we have delved into the case of Afghanistan deep enough. Now is the time to examine our case in relation to theory in order to answer the third research question. In this final section, we will turn back to Western theory which shelters the origins of the term ‘nation’ and evaluate the case of Afghanistan in that light. What needs to be underlined here is that our goal is not to make Afghanistan fit into the Western theory; but to show how the local *content* of ‘nation’ in Afghanistan stands in contrast to the Western theory at the background.

Nation as Millat in the Case of Afghanistan

The word for nation in Afghanistan in both Dari and Pashto languages is *millat* which is a loan word from the Arabic *millah* or *milla*. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*⁶⁶, this word is originally rooted in the Hebrew and Aramaic word *milla* meaning “utterance, word.” According to *İslam Ansiklopedisi*⁶⁷ (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*), in Arabic, this word acquired the meaning of “religion” as it is based on something dictated and written down. That is why in the Holy Quran, the word *millah* always means “religion,” such as “*millat Ibrahim*” meaning “the religion of Ibrahim.” According to the *Moujam Allougha Al-Arabiyya Al-Mouassara*⁶⁸ (*Modern Arabic Language Dictionary*), the word *millah* has two meanings in contemporary Arabic language: “(1) religion or what is being dictated by God through His messengers; (2) a group of people united by a common doctrine under one name.” In the second meaning presented here, we see the modern counterpart of the English word nation.

⁶⁶ Source: Buhl, F. and C.E. Bosworth. “Milla” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, available at [http://dx.doi.org.iiij.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5199], retrieved on July 30, 2020

⁶⁷ Source: Şentürk, Recep. “Millet” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, available at [<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/millet#2-osmanlilarda-millet-sistemi>], retrieved on August 10, 2020.

⁶⁸ Source: Omar, Ahmed Mokhtar (2009). *Moujam Allougha Al-Arabiyya Al-Mouassara*. Cairo: Alem Al Kotob Press.

The Arabic word *millah* has also been lent to the Persian language as *mellat* and to the Turkish language as *millet*. Especially the semantic shift observed in the meaning of the Turkish word *millet* is worth noting. This word is very much expressive of the social structure of the Ottoman Empire, which is generally described as the ‘*millet* system.’ In this system, the Ottoman subjects living in the territory of the Empire were identified as different religious communities, i.e. *millets*, such as the Jews, the Greek Orthodox, etc. Until the reform movements starting with the *Tanzimat Fermanı* (the Edict of Gülhane) (1839), the word *millet* referred “invariably to non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman empire (Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Roman Catholic Christians as well as Jews with the status of *dhimmīs*)” according to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*⁶⁹. As the *Tanzimat Fermanı* promised a guarantee of rights to all Ottoman citizens regardless of religion or ethnic group, it also led to a change in the meaning of the word *millet*. In other words, the semantic shift observed in the word *millet* is indicative of the modernisation process in the late Ottoman Empire.

Similarly in Iran, the word *mellat* achieved its current meaning parallel to the modernisation process. “The term ‘*mellat-e Iran*’ (nation of Iran) was heard first on the streets of Tehran during a protest rally in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 (Abrahamian, 1982: 81-82). Prior to this, there is little evidence that the term *mellat* has ever been used, especially with its current connotation” (Moradi 2014: 32). That was how the Persian word *mellat* has come to be used as a counterpart to nation.

Not unexpectedly, a similar transformation took place also in the Dari language, parallel to the modernisation process in Afghanistan. King Amanullah Khan, who reigned from 1919 to 1929, is especially known for his addresses to his people as *millat* or *millat-Afghan*, as seen in the following quotation by him presented in a textbook of Patriotism:

“We do not have Hindu, Hazara, Shia, Sunni, Ahmadzai or Popalzai. We are all a *single nation* which is the *Afghan nation*. For me, all the Afghans are brothers” (9-PA: 42-43) (italics mine).

⁶⁹ Ursinus, M.O.H., “Millet” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, available at [http://dx.doi.org.ij.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0741], retrieved on July 30, 2020.

Here, Amanullah does not make a religious distinction between the Shia, the Sunni or the Hindu; or a *qawmi* distinction between the Hazaras and the Ahmadzai or Popalzai, i.e. the families under the Pashtun *qawm*. He uses the word *millat* in the modern sense. Besides, a book published during his reign in 1928 by Ghulam Muhyi al-Din had the title of *Dawlat-i Mustaqila-ye Afghanistan wa Wazayef-e Millat-e Afghan* which may be translated into English as *The Independent State of Afghanistan and Duties of the Afghan Nation*. According to the *World Digital Library*⁷⁰, “the book likely would have been a useful instructional tool for the teaching of civics to citizens of different ages and backgrounds in a rapidly modernizing Afghanistan.” It clearly shows that the expression *Millat-e Afghan* seen in the title of this book denotes the ‘Afghan nation’ in the modern sense, as the content of the book is about the duties of the citizens towards the state.

According to the Persian Dictionary *Farhang-e Farsi Amid*⁷¹, the word *millat* has three meanings in contemporary Persian (as well as Dari): “(1) people of a country, who are of the same race and citizens of the same state; (2) [*old*] sharia, creed, religion; (3) [*old*] followers of a religion.” While the final two entries present the older meanings related to religion; the first entry presents the modern meaning this word has achieved in Persian.

The etymological discussion presented here reveals that the English word ‘nation’ and the Dari word *millat* have two very different etymological roots. Compared to the origins of the English word nation which is derived from the Latin word *nationem* denoting birthplace; origins of the word *millat* used in the context of Afghanistan originally denotes a religion or religious community. Even if this word may not be used in relation to religion today, conceptualisation of the *millat-e Afghanistan* as revealed in the discourse of education may seem similar to a religious community at first glance. Yet, the Dari word *millat* is still different from the original meaning of the Arabic word *millah* as religion, since *millat-e Afghanistan* denotes a *qawmi* alliance united in the name of Islam. That is to say, we still see the *aqwam* as components of nation in this conceptualisation. What is more, in the general

⁷⁰ Source: *World Digital Library*, available at [<https://www.wdl.org/en/item/17674/>], retrieved on August 6, 2020.

⁷¹ Source: *Vajehyab*, available at [<http://www.vajehyab.com/?q=%D9%85%D9%84%D8%AA&d=en>], retrieved on August 4, 2020.

discourse observed in Afghanistan, the word *millat* may even be used in the sense of the word *qawm*. It is common to hear expressions like *millat-e Hazara* or *millat-e Tajik* just in the sense of the *qawm-e Hazara* or *qawm-e Tajik*. It proves that the word *millat* is no longer used to denote religion in Afghanistan; but has acquired a non-religious and ethnic dimension.

Nation as Blood and Kinship in the Case of Afghanistan

As seen in Chapter 3, scholars grouped under primordialists treat nation as a primordial formation based on common blood and kinship. Connor (1994: 202) is one of those defining nation as a group of people who feel they are ancestrally related. For him, a nation is “the fully extended family” based on “felt kinship ties.” It is people’s “belief” in common blood that matters; its authenticity is not questioned. Thus, a nation is the largest group that commands a person’s loyalty.

Looking at the case of Afghanistan, we may easily employ Connor’s definition of nation to define the institution of the *qawm*, as well. For a *qawm* is perceived to be an extended family that is ancestrally related and founded upon felt kinship ties. Applying the idea of nation as fully extended family to Afghanistan, we see an entity of numerous *aqwam* which all believe that they have their own distinct ancestors. That is the point where this idea fails in denoting a nation. The case of Afghanistan perfectly shows that the efforts for defining a nation on the basis of common ancestors and common blood fail to operate. Blood, kinship and similar commonalities do not guarantee the emergence of a nation, for they may work to unite as well as divide. A modern nation does not arise from common characteristics, although some *invented* common features are necessary.

Nation as Homeland in the Case of Afghanistan

In the conceptualisation of nation based on homeland, we generally see primordialist scholars who treat land as a given like skin colour or race. They explain nation as a bonding between people and land, which is described as love of homeland or patriotism. Smith (2000), who is not a primordialist but an ethno-symbolist, also underlines homeland as a defining feature of modern nations. Modernist scholars, on the other hand, claim that homeland does not guarantee the emergence of a nation; there needs to be a modern state for that. For what is meant by ‘homeland’ will be limited to an understanding of ‘hometown’ in the absence of a modern state.

Even while the discourse of education reveals a strong conceptualisation of homeland in Afghanistan, it is not a modern conceptualisation; but a primordialist one, seeing land as a given like skin colour or race. That is why the people of Afghanistan treat land as their own property; as one of their extensions like race or religion. Outside the framework of a modern state, many of the *aqwam* living in Afghanistan identify with specific parts of the country as their ‘hometown’: Qandahar (in the south-east) for Pashtuns; Badakhshan (in the north-east) for Tajiks; Balkh (in the north) for Uzbeks; Bamyan (in the centre) for Hazaras and so on. This *qawmi* love of land does not count up to a love of homeland that exists within the boundaries of a modern state. Instead, patriotism in Afghanistan is understood in Islamic terms as love for the land which must be defended by all the *aqwam* with *jihad* against foreign enemies. It is only in the face of a common enemy that the *aqwam* come out of their *hometowns* to defend a bigger unit, i.e. the *homeland* of Afghanistan. Yet, such conceptualisation of homeland as *dar-ul-salam* is defined on the basis of Islam; not that of a modern state. That is why we see identification with the land here; but not identification with *all* the people of that land, i.e. compatriots.

Nation as Will in the Case of Afghanistan

In the conceptualisation of nation as will, we see Renan (1882) who defines nation as an “everyday plebiscite.” In his words, a community becomes a nation everyday through the conscious will of its members to continue their communal life. Gellner (1983), on the other hand, criticises the idea, claiming that there are innumerable groups that will themselves to persist as various communities; which do not necessarily count up to nations. The case of Afghanistan provides two examples in this regard: (1) the will-to-*qawm* and (2) the will-to-*ummah*. People in Afghanistan also have the will to exist as a community; but that desired community emerges as either a loose alliance of the *aqwam* or the Islamic *ummah*. The discourse of education even on the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ reveals the vitality of the *qawm* and the *ummah* in relation to nation.

The case of Afghanistan confirms that it is not will that differentiates a nation from another community. A nation may only be formed through the systematic efforts of putting that *will-to-nation* into the hearts of common people. Both Weber (1946) and Gellner (1983) give the responsibility to produce and reproduce a discourse of nationalism to intellectuals. As seen in Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework,

Afghanistan constitutes a case of nation-building as foreign policy where we do not see the introduction or generation of a discourse of nationalism. Considering Gellner's contentment that it is the discourse of nationalism that gives rise to a nation, the current cases of nation-building in today's world will never give birth to modern nations; but remain limited to offering the form of nation as an obligation.

Nation as Nation-State in the Case of Afghanistan

In the conceptualisation of nation as nation-state, we see scholars from the modernist school, such as Giddens and Hobsbawm as well as Weber. All of these scholars point to the vitality of a modern state for nation. Weber (1946) claims that a nation tends to produce a state of its own, which is a reference to the concept of 'nation-state' whereby the nation is supposed to be sovereign in its own state. Giddens (1985) also defines nation through the presence of a state that has an administrative reach in its entire land of sovereignty. Hobsbawm (1990) specifies this state as the "citizen state of the French Revolution" that is at a particular stage of economic development.

As stated in Chapter 4 Context: History of Modern Afghanistan, the state of Afghanistan currently has full control only in circa 30% of the entire country. Around 60% of the country is contested territory, changing hands between the central state and the Taliban. It needs to be reminded that these are fluid figures, moving back and forth depending on the struggle for power. The respondents below also show that the state does not exist ubiquitously across Afghanistan:

EXPERT-7: We have a problem of insecurity. *The government or the state doesn't exist in many areas under Taliban's control.* There are such areas even in Kabul. (italics mine)

EXPERT-2: There is not much respect towards the state in Afghanistan, because most people are villagers. *The state does not exist in villages.* For example, look at the traffic rules in Kabul. Most drivers do not respect the rules because they are driving as if they are driving in villages where there is no rule. A strong state is also related to urban development. (italics mine)

EXPERT-6: I cannot say that all Afghanistan accepts the state. Some live like feudal people where a powerful person has all the authority and benefits from people by force and oppression. In such cases, *the state or laws have no importance in many places of Afghanistan.* (italics mine)

These respondents suggest three major reasons behind the 'absence' of the state in the country: (1) the Taliban as a threat to the central state; (2) dominance of rural life and lack of urbanisation; and (3) 'feudal,' or rather tribal, way of living. The second

and third reasons explain the social structure of Afghanistan, which we have been examining specifically on the discourse of education. It is actually these two reasons, among other things, that prepare the grounds for the first reason. In other words, it is the rural and tribal society that sustains the Taliban as an alternative power to the central state. Where a state fails to monopolise power and institutionalise itself as a distinct entity, it is viewed only as *one of* the competitors for power among others. That is why people do not “accept the state” or “respect the state.”

In Afghanistan, we see a weak state that is in a constant power struggle with the Taliban, failing to have full sovereignty across the entire country. That is to say, the state fails to reach out to the whole nation. Under such conditions, we cannot talk about a nation-state where a nation becomes sovereign in its own state. Thus, the case of Afghanistan confirms the idea that a nation fails to assume its real meaning outside a modern state.

Nation as Modern Industrial Society in the Case of Afghanistan

In the conceptualisation of nation as modern industrial society, we primarily see Gellner who defines nation in relation to modernisation. Gellner (1983) describes the industrial society through what he calls “exo-socialization” which means the production and reproduction of individuals outside their local intimate community, with the help of a unified education system that is offered outside the community. He contrasts it with the agrarian society defined by “acculturation” where men are trained and reproduced within the community through a master-apprentice relationship at the end of which they gain a profession for life. Industrial society produces mutually substitutable individuals who can move between professions, which gives rise to the modern division of labour. It is through the unified education system that solely the community of nation is reproduced in the industrial society while other communities no longer reproduce themselves.

Gellner’s conceptualisation of nation has many implications for the case of Afghanistan. First of all, if we admit that Afghanistan is not an industrial but an agrarian society %75 of whose population lives a rural life in villages, then, it is unreasonable to look for an entity like nation in Afghanistan. The reason is that agrarian societies continue to reproduce multiple communities rather than a single community of nation through a unified education system. In the society of

Afghanistan, we see two dominant communities, the *qawm* and the *ummah*, both of which are reproduced. Basically, the *qawm* is reproduced primarily because it is a social unit legally recognised in the Constitution; and the *ummah* is reproduced because Afghanistan is an Islamic republic.

Following Gellner's theory, we also need to have a look at the education system in this country. Although officially presented as a unified and centralised system, the education system in Afghanistan fails to function properly across the entire country due to the weakness of the state itself. Where the state-sponsored central education is weak, people send their children to foreign-sponsored schools, NGO-sponsored schools, private schools or to mosques which may also act as village schools. On the other side, there is the Taliban which operates its own education system based on the *madrassas* in places under its control. Under these conditions, it is hard to talk about a unified and centralised system of mass education in Afghanistan, which is supposed to reproduce a single community, i.e. the nation. Considering Gellner's theory, as long as a mass education system fails to be established and functioning in Afghanistan, other communities like *qawm* and *ummah* will continue to be reproduced. Where the state-sponsored modern education fails to reach especially the rural areas, the "acculturation" of young people within their *qawm* continues. Gellner's theory is important in showing us how communities like the *qawm* are sustained through acculturation.

Nation as Imagined Community in the Case of Afghanistan

In the conceptualisation of nation as an imagined community, we see Anderson (1991) who underlines the role of print capitalism in sustaining an imagination of nation in the minds of people. Underlining individual agency in forming an idea of nation, Anderson claims that a nation is what its members make of it.

Parts of Anderson's theory explains the case of Afghanistan, underlining the importance of literacy, communication channels as well as print capitalism. A nation only comes into being when people living, say, in Faryab (in the north of Afghanistan) have the necessary communication channels to know about the people living, say, in Nangarhar (in the east of Afghanistan). It is only when the people of these two cities can identify with one another that they become the members of the same imagined community, i.e. nation. At this point, Anderson underlines a factor

that facilitates the imagination of a common community through the communication channels: uniformity of language. Looking at the case of Afghanistan, we see many mass media channels ranging from newspapers, the TV as well as the online social media. Yet, we do not see a uniformity of language in these channels, as there are two official languages recognised in Afghanistan, Dari and Pashto, while it is also legally possible to broadcast in six languages. Still, it is not the lack of a uniformity of language that prevents the people of Afghanistan from imagining their community as a nation. It is the context in which people live that determines what is being imagined as a community. In the context of a weak state failing to reach out to every corner of the country and an agrarian society with a very low level of urbanisation, what is imagined as a community might be something totally different from a nation. If nation really were what its members make of it, as Anderson claims, the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan* that emerges from the discourse of education would really be functioning as a nation. Yet, it reveals the imagination of a different community; not a modern nation in the Western sense.

Nation as Invented Tradition in the Case of Afghanistan

In the conceptualisation of nation as invented tradition, we see Hobsbawm (1983) who underlines the constructed nature of nation which he describes through the “invention of tradition” and “social engineering.” Such construction becomes especially evident in the national symbols of a state, such as national flag, national anthem and so on. Here, Hobsbawm highlights the ‘building’ aspect in all kinds of nation-building activities ranging from the earliest ones *as process* to the latest ones *as foreign policy*. With this emphasis, he underlines the vitality of the elite efforts in all cases of nation-building.

In the case of Afghanistan, we see the elites of an Islamic republic constructing the idea of a *millat*, or nation, in line with the impositions of the international powers. Islam appears as a dominating element in all the national symbols including the national flag, national emblem and national anthem, as our analysis has revealed. Even while the international powers impose the form of nation on Afghanistan, elites of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan construct the idea of a nation with the local content of a *millat*.

8.5. Conclusion

This chapter has been an effort to discuss the major findings of this thesis in relation to the three major research questions. In this line, it has presented a three-layered discussion based on the data analysis conducted on the discourse of education; the views of the discourse producers in Afghanistan; and the Western theories of nation.

In an effort to answer the first research question in a consolidated manner, the first section has presented a compact view of the *millat-e Afghanistan* as revealed in the discourse of education, with its four major elements as well as a vital feature that is uncovered through analysis. In this picture, we see the ‘nation of Afghanistan’ presented as: (1) founded on the basis of Islam; (2) made up of the *aqwam* as its components; (3) reinforced with *Afghaniyat* as its national identity; and (4) furnished with *watan* as its homeland. The key aspect that comes out of such a picture is that the state and the individual citizens are weakly conceptualised in relation to the ‘nation of Afghanistan.’ All these discussions have prepared the grounds for answering the other two questions.

The second section has made an effort to answer the second research question posed in this thesis. To this end, it has discussed what the conceptualisation of the *millat-e Afghanistan* presented in the discourse of education reveals about the society of Afghanistan. In answering this question, it has employed a discussion of the views of the discourse producers themselves, so that the relationship between the discourse of education and the real-life conditions of the society of Afghanistan is better understood. In this way, the presentation of the discourse of education in the context of the society of Afghanistan has paved the way for answering the final question.

Finally, the third section has brought the case of Afghanistan and the Western theory face to face so as to answer the third research question of this thesis. To this end, the various conceptualisations of nation formed in Western theory, as displayed in Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework, have, once again, been presented here in relation to the case of Afghanistan. The conclusion reached at the end is that the *millat-e Afghanistan* constitutes a community different from the modern nation as defined in the West, which will be elaborated more in the next and final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

As stated at the very beginning, this study has been designed to contribute to the knowledge on Afghanistan that is accumulating in the global academia. Being an understudied country, Afghanistan has been suffering from many misinterpretations and stereotypical depictions that are stuck on it by those who view it not on its own terms but through their own frames. In order to overcome these epistemological constraints to the extent possible, this study has been designed as an Area Studies research to extract information from the local context of Afghanistan. At the end, its findings have revealed the local conceptualisation of a foreign idea, i.e. nation, that is being imposed on this country in the aftermath of the US-led NATO intervention since 2001. More specifically, it has been shown how the Western idea of nation is locally perceived and managed on the ground in Afghanistan. In that regard, this study has displayed Afghanistan as an actor that has the agency to interpret and deal with a foreign concept in its own manner; not just as a passive receiver of it.

Findings of this study suggest that the local content of the idea of nation in Afghanistan, as presented in the discourse of education, portrays a different picture when displayed before the Western theories of nation. This divergence basically results from the fact that nation, as described specifically by the modernist scholars among the Western theorists, denotes the community of individual citizens who form the unit called the nation-state. The state in question is a modernised state that has an administrative reach in the entire territory of a country; while the society in question is an industrial and urban society. In the case of Afghanistan, however, we see a context that is very different from the one in which the Western idea of nation was born. It is this context which defines the contours of the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan* conceptualised by the state of Afghanistan.

First of all, we need to be reminded time and again that the current state of Afghanistan is not a fully sovereign state across the country, which is something that

disqualifies it for being a nation-state. Its sovereignty is breached both by the Taliban resurgence that constantly snatches territory from it and by the international forces that are stationed in this country since 2001. At the same time, it is an aid-dependent state which can hardly survive without Western support. Still, its weakness results not only from these external factors; but also from structural factors. Historically, Afghanistan does not have a strong state tradition, whereby centralisation of state power in the face of numerous tribes have always been a major issue for the rulers. In consequence, the state is not much institutionalised as an impersonal organisation and is viewed rather as ‘government’ through the people in power. That is why in the local conceptualisation of the *millat-e Afghanistan*, the state is almost invisible. Its role seems to be assigned to the concept of the *watan*, or homeland, which appears as something easier to identify with.

Second, we need to recall that in Afghanistan, we are in the context of a rural and agrarian country where nearly three quarters of the population live in the countryside and only one quarter lives in cities. In simpler terms, majority of the inhabitants of Afghanistan are villagers. Such low level of urbanisation is enough by itself as an indicator of low level of modernisation. It also helps explain the weakness in the centralisation of the state which is greatly confined to Kabul, failing to reach out to the villages. Rural life prepares a perfect ground for the sustenance of local communities called the *qawm* which constitutes the dominant institution in the society of Afghanistan. As one of my respondents claims, the idea of *qawm* exists not only in the visible symbols of the society; but also in the unconsciousness of the people of Afghanistan. It is something that defines the mind-set and the way of thinking about other people and the society. That is the reason why political party formations, employment policies, aid distribution, education opportunities and many other things are, not surprisingly, coloured by the frame of the *qawm*. Under such conditions, discrimination based on the *qawm* is also a part of everyday life. Most of the *aqwam* have political leaders who negotiate for power with the central ‘government’ in order to have their share in power and fight for the rights of their own *qawm*. That is to say, the *aqwam* are also political players, which is something that empowers them as the principal components of the socio-political structure in Afghanistan. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan* is conceptualised not on individual citizens; but on the *aqwam*.

Third, we need to keep in mind the fact that the state of Afghanistan is an Islamic Republic. But there is something beyond that which needs to be emphasised: that the society of Afghanistan is known as an *aqidawi* society, i.e. a society of creed. Being *aqidawi* has more meanings than just being Islamic; it means acting on the impulse of beliefs and convictions, whether formal and scriptural (based on the Holy Quran) or informal and oral (such as superstitions). That is why the *fatwas* issued by local *mullahs* on daily issues have a binding role in the lives of people. In brief, both the regime of the state and the nature of the society interweave a discourse of education where Islam diffuses into the foundations of the idea of the *millat-e Afghanistan*. In other words, even while the form of nation is introduced and imposed by international powers, the content of nation is still produced by the state of Afghanistan which is an Islamic Republic. In fact, the state generates this discourse in line with the expectations of the society in order to sustain its legitimacy. Clear enough, the *aqidawi* society of Afghanistan expects to see the dominance of the Islamic values and rulings in the discourse of education.

Derived from the local context of Afghanistan, the findings of this study have larger implications for what is called nation-building in today's world. It shows that in all the cases of *nation-building as foreign policy* observed in the world, it remains a major question to be addressed how far this foreign-imposed *form* of nation can operate with the local *content* of nation. Analysis of the case of Afghanistan in the light of Western theories confirms that nation is a Western and modern concept. In the non-West, it may only exist as a form with a different content. On the other hand, this form will continue to be imposed on non-Western countries as long as the West dominates the world order. At that point, non-Western states, such as the state of Afghanistan, will keep facing a major dilemma in adopting this Western form while not alienating their own society.

In this study, we have clearly seen the reflection of this dilemma into the discourse of education. The concept of national identity, which is defined as *Afghanityat*, is carefully adjusted into the conceptualisation of society in Afghanistan, where it encounters the *qawmi* identities and the Islamic identity as rivals. In order to overcome the tension with these rivalling identities, two solutions are offered: (1) Islam is presented as the major feature of Afghanness; and (2) Afghanness is allowed to function only together with the officially recognised *qawmi* identities. What is

happening here is that the state of Afghanistan is carefully accommodating this Western form of nation in its society, while giving concessions to the most powerful two local institutions, i.e. the *qawm* and the *ummah*. As discussed above, the *qawm* exists in the collective unconsciousness as the underlying institution in the society of Afghanistan. That is why any conceptualisation related to the society, be it that of a nation, becomes meaningful and intelligible only in terms of the *qawm*. Furthermore, considering the political mechanism of constant negotiations between the state and the *aqwam* for power, the *aqwam* appear to be natural players in the political arena. That is why the state, while defining the political arena as a nation, presents the major components of the nation as the *aqwam*. As for the institution of the *ummah*, the state needs to take it into consideration, as well, especially in the face of the power-base of the Taliban in the public. That is to say, the state has to prove to this *aqidawi* society that it is also an Islamic government urging for ‘moderate Islam’ as opposed to the fundamentalist interpretation of the Taliban. Therefore, the *ummah* still has a meaning in this context whereby the nation of Afghanistan is presented in the discourse of education as a part of the Islamic *ummah*.

Basically, this is how the state of Afghanistan compromises with the local social institutions while adopting the Western form of nation. This care also results from the lessons drawn from its history of fast modernisation during the reign of Amanullah Khan in the 1920s. In order not to draw the hostility of its own society, it takes careful steps in adopting and implementing the nation-building policies defined by the West. Obviously, it is walking a tightrope in sustaining its power as a central state; struggling against the Taliban resurgence; adapting to the modern world order of nation-states; and going with the pace of its own society at the same time.

9.1. Scope for Further Research

This study has made an effort to present the idea of ‘nation of Afghanistan’ as it is revealed specifically in the discourse of education. Similar efforts may be undertaken in other research platforms such as the discourse of the mass media; the discourse of the online social media; the discourse of popular literature such as novels and poems; or the political discourse based on the official records of the *Shura-ye Milli* or the *Loya Jirga*; addresses of the President; speeches of politicians; etc. Such studies may help uncover the conceptualisation of nation in these other discourses in Afghanistan, which would give a complete picture of the *millat-e Afghanistan*.

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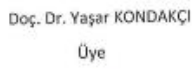




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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER	 ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
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Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.	
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B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

AFGANİSTAN'DA EĞİTİMİN İNŞA ETTİĞİ MİLLET: BİR MİLLET İNŞASI ÖRNEĞİ

Giriş

Afganistan'a baktığımızda Asya'nın tam kalbinde fakir ve gelişmemiş bir ülke görürüz. Özellikle son kırk yıldır savařlardan başını kaldıramamış bu ülke, günümüz dünyasında çok parlak bir imaja sahip değildir. Canlı bombaların, patlamaların ve saldırıların gündelik hayatın bir parçası haline geldiğı bu ülkenin insanları da canlarını kurtartmak için başka ülkelere iltica etmektedir. Ancak, ülkenin ve bölgenin tarihini inceleyenler, Afganistan'ın mevcut durumunun, kirli dünya siyasetinden bağımsız düşünölemeyeceğini anlarlar.

Aslında Afganistan, 1980'lere kadar çok fazla bilinen bir ülke değildir. 1979'da Sovyetler Birliğı'nin bu ülkeyi işgal etmesiyle birlikte küresel siyasi arenaya çıkmış; o günden beri de inmemiştir. Önce Sovyetlere karşı savařan Afgan Mücahitlerin mücadelesi (1979-1989); sonra Sovyetler Birliğı'nin 1989'da Afganistan'dan çekilmesi; peşinden gelen Taliban rejimi (1996-2001) ve 11 Eylül 2001 saldırıları sonrasında El Kaide lideri Usame bin Ladin'e yaptığı yardım ve yataklık; hemen ardından ABD ve Birleşik Krallık önderliğinde NATO'nun Afganistan'ı işgal etmesi ve Taliban rejimini devirmesi (2001); ve o zamandan günümüze değin Taliban ve NATO destekli Afganistan devleti arasında geçen mücadele, Afganistan'ın son kırk yıldaki genel durumunu özetlemektedir. Tüm bu karmaşık olaylar zinciri sonucunda bugün Afganistan güvensiz, istikrarsız, yoksul ve dış yardım bağımlısı bir ülke haline gelmiştir.

2001 sonrası dönemde BM, NATO, yabancı STK'lar ve diđer birimlerden oluşan uluslararası toplumun Afganistan'da konuşlanmasıyla birlikte bu ülkede bir yeniden yapılandırma süreci başlamıştır. Bu dönemde 'millet inşası' (veya 'ulus inşası') (*nation-building*) kavramı, Afganistan'la ilgili en sık kullanılan kelime haline

gelmiştir. Ancak dış güçler tarafından ayakta tutulan Afganistan devletine bakıldığında kimin hangi milleti inşa etmekte olduğu anlaşılmadığından bu kavram, bir belirsizlik bulutu içinde kalmıştır. İşte bu belirsizlik, bu tez çalışmasının çıkış noktasını oluşturmuştur. Bu kapsamda ortaya çıkan temel soru, Afganistan’da ‘millet’ kavramının ne anlama geldiği olmuştur. Buradan hareketle, çalışmanın amacı, 2001 sonrası dönemde Afganistan’da başlatılan millet inşası sürecinde özellikle eğitim söyleminde inşa edilen millet fikrinin temel unsurlarını ortaya çıkarmak olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu amaçla, çalışmada üç temel araştırma sorusu sorulmaktadır:

1. Afganistan’da 9 yıllık zorunlu eğitim dönemindeki eğitim söyleminde ortaya konan ‘millet’ fikrinin içeriği nedir?
2. Afganistan devletinin bir temsilcisi olarak Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından kavramsallaştırılan bu ‘millet’ fikri, Afganistan toplumu hakkında ne söylemektedir?
3. Afganistan’da eğitim söyleminde öne sürülen bu ‘millet’ fikri, Batı’da tanımlanmış haliyle modern millet fikrinin izlerini taşımakta mıdır?

Bu soruları cevaplayabilmek için çalışma 9 bölüm olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışmanın genel hatlarıyla ilgili bilgi veren *1. Bölüm - Giriş*’ten sonra *2. Bölüm - Metodoloji*, çalışmada sorulan araştırma sorularının hangi yöntemlerle cevaplanacağını; *3. Bölüm - Teorik Çerçeve: Millet İnşası ve Millet* ise bu soruların teorik çerçevede nasıl ele alınabileceğini tartışmaktadır. Ardından gelen *4. Bölüm - Bağlam: Modern Afganistan Tarihi* ise çalışmanın daha iyi anlaşılabilmesi için tarihsel arka plan bilgisi vermektedir.

Veri analizinin yapıldığı ve ilk iki araştırma sorusunun cevaplandığı 5, 6 ve 7. bölümler, bu tez çalışmasının özünü oluşturmaktadır. Veriyi en anlamlı şekilde yansıtılabilmek için bu bölümler, somut olandan soyut olana doğru ilerlemektedir. *5. Bölüm - Afganistan’da Eğitimin İnşa Ettiği Millet Sembolleri ve Hafızası*, ‘Afganistan milletine’ ilişkin olarak eğitim söyleminde öne çıkan üç ana sembolü; yani milli bayrak, milli marş ve milli kahramanları incelemekte; ayrıca, milli hafızanın unsurlarını tahlil etmektedir. *6. Bölüm - Afganistan’da Eğitimin İnşa Ettiği Millet Kavramları*, ‘Afganistan milletine’ ilişkin olarak eğitim söyleminde öne çıkan dört ana kavramı; yani, milli birlik, vatandaşlık, milli irade ve milli çıkar

kavramlarını incelemektedir. Son olarak 7. *Bölüm - Afganistan'da Eğitimin İnşa Ettiği Milletın Unsurları*, 'Afganistan milletine' ilişkin olarak eğitim söyleminde öne çıkan dört ana unsur; yani, İslam, *qawm*, *Afghaniyat* (Afganlık) ve *watan* (vatan) unsurlarını tahlil etmektedir. Veri analizi sonrasında gelen 8. *Bölüm - Tartışma*, bu çalışmada sorulan üç araştırma sorusunu birbiri ile bağlantılı olarak cevaplamaya çalışmakta; Afganistan örneğini teorik çerçeve içerisinde ele almaktadır. Son olarak 9. *Bölüm - Sonuç*, elde edilen sonuçları özetlemektedir.

Çalışmanın Önemi

Bu tez çalışması, Afganistan'ın yerel dilde yazılmış kaynaklarının kullanımı ve yerinde saha çalışması yardımıyla bir Bölge Çalışmaları (*Area Studies*) araştırması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Araştırma soruları, araştırma platformu ve araştırma yöntemleri bakımından orijinal bir çalışmadır.

İlk olarak, bu çalışmada sorulan temel araştırma sorusu, bir 'ne' sorusudur. Bilindiği gibi, 'nasıl' ve 'neden' soruları, 'ne' sorusu cevaplanmadan sorulamamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın cevaplamaya çalıştığı 'ne' sorusu, Afganistan hakkında önemli bilgiler vermektedir. Bu sorunun içeriği, yani Afganistan'daki millet fikrinin ne olduğu, çalışmanın önemini daha da artırmaktadır. Çünkü Afganistan toplumu, akademik dünyada çok iyi tanınmamaktadır. Afganistan devletinin eğitim söyleminde ortaya koyduğu 'millet' kavramsallaştırmasının, bu toplum hakkında önemli bilgiler açığa çıkaracağı aşıkardır. Bununla birlikte Afganistan özelinde elde edilen bu bilgilerin, milletler ve milliyetçilik literatürüne de katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

İkinci olarak, bu çalışmanın temel araştırma platformu eğitim söylemi olarak belirlenmiştir. Eğitim, Afganistan özelinde çok yaygın bir araştırma alanı değildir. Diğer ülkelere kıyasla zaten daha az çalışılan Afganistan hakkında yapılan çalışmalar çoğunlukla terörizm, siyasal İslam, bölgesel ve uluslararası güvenlik, çatışma çözümü ve dünyadaki Afgan mülteciler üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Öte yandan, iktidar sahiplerinin nasıl bir toplum inşa etmek istediğini yansıtmamasından dolayı eğitim söylemi, çok önemli verilere sahiptir. Afganistan'daki eğitim söylemi de devlet tarafından üretildiği için bu devletin ideolojisi, zihniyeti ve toplum tahayyülünü yansıtacaktır. Kısacası, eğitim söylemi üstündeki 'millet' kavramsallaştırmasının, Afganistan'daki toplumsal yapı hakkında önemli ip uçları

vermesi beklenmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın Afganistan sosyolojisine mütevazı bir katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

Son olarak, bu çalışma, araştırma yöntemleri açısından da orijinal bir biçimde tasarlanmıştır. Temelde Afganistan'ın birincil kaynaklarını kullanan çalışma, bu ülkenin yerel dilinde (Darice) yazılmış dokümanların ve sahada yapılmış mülakatların detaylı analizini içermektedir. Özellikle son yıllarda artan güvenlik endişeleri nedeniyle sahaya gitmenin zorluğu ve yerel dilde kaynak kullanımının eksikliği nedeniyle Afganistan üstüne yazılmış Batı literatürü, genelde masabaşı araştırmalarına, istatistiksel verilere veya raporlara dayanan ikincil kaynaklarla sınırlı kalmıştır. Afganistan'ın yerel dilde yazılmış birincil kaynakları kullanılarak saha çalışması yardımıyla yapılmış olan bu çalışma, mevcut sınırlamaları büyük ölçüde aşmaktadır.

Yöntem

Bu tez çalışmasındaki temel araştırma paradigması, yapılandırmacı (*constructivist*) ontoloji ve yorumlayıcı (*interpretivist*) epistemoloji üstüne kurulmuştur. Daha açık bir ifadeyle, bu çalışmada, sosyal gerçeğin yapılandırılmış olduğu; bu nedenle de ancak yorumlanarak anlaşılabilceği savunulmaktadır. Çalışmaya konu olan 'millet' kavramı, özellikle 'millet inşası' kavramıyla beraber düşünüldüğünde, inşa edilen bir olgu olarak karşımıza çıkar. Farklı vakalarda inşacılar değişse de (devlet, entelijensiya, yabancı aktörler, BM, vs.) her durumda millet olgusu, kurgulanmış bir kavramdır. Bu kavramın özellikle eğitim söyleminde nasıl inşa edildiğini inceleyen bu tez çalışması da yapılandırmacı ontoloji üstüne kurulmuştur. Öte yandan bu kavram, somut bir içeriğe sahip olmadığı için onu pozitivist yöntemlerle anlamak mümkün değildir. Bu kavramı anlamanın en iyi yolu onu nedensellik ilkesi çerçevesinde açıklamak değil; yorumlamaktır. Bu çalışma için yorumlayıcı epistemolojinin seçilmesinin nedeni budur.

Çalışmadaki araştırma stratejisi ise nitel araştırma stratejisidir. Afganistan'da eğitim söyleminin kurguladığı 'millet' fikrinin içeriği, çok katmanlı bir yapı sunduğundan ancak derinlemesine nitel bir araştırma ile açığa çıkarılabilir. Bu çok katmanlı anlam yapısını incelemeye en müsait yer, bu çalışmada eğitim söylemi (*discourse of education*) olarak belirlenmiştir. Bir başka deyişle, eğitim söylemi, bu çalışmanın temel araştırma platformunu oluşturmaktadır. Burada altı çizilmesi gereken husus, bu

tezin odak noktasının doğrudan eğitim olmadığı; eğitimin, ‘millet’ fikrini ortaya çıkaracak bir platform olarak kullanıldığıdır.

Elbette ‘eğitim söylemi’ Eğitim Bakanlığı, okullar, öğretmenler, eğitim materyalleri, ders kitapları, medya ve daha bir çok bileşenden oluşan çok geniş bir alana yayılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda eğitim söylemi üç ana kaynağa indirgenmiştir: (1) resmi devlet belgeleri; (2) ders kitapları; (3) Eğitim Bakanlığında çalışan uzmanların görüşleri. Hepsi Afganistan’a ait birincil kaynak teşkil eden bu kaynaklar, çalışma için gerekli verilerin toplandığı üç ana kaynağı oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın akışı da bu kaynaklara erişim doğrultusunda üç aşamalı olarak ilerlemiştir. İlk aşama, Afganistan devletinin kurguladığı eğitim söyleminin en temel şekilde anlaşılması amacıyla resmi dokümanların incelenmesiyle başlamıştır. Burada edinilen temel bilgiler doğrultusunda ikinci aşamaya geçilmiş, ders kitapları incelenmiş ve verinin büyük kısmı toplanmıştır. Üçüncü aşamada ise Afganistan’daki saha çalışması esnasında Eğitim Bakanlığında mülakatlar yapılmış ve eğitim söyleminin inşacılarından doğrudan veri toplanmıştır.

Tezin veri kaynaklarına daha detaylı bakacak olursak ilk sırada 2001 sonrası dönemde yeniden yapılandırılan Afganistan devletine ait resmi belgeleri görürüz. Tüm bu belgeler arasından amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile üç temel belge seçilmiştir.

Resmi Devlet Belgeleri Örnekleme			
	Belge	Yürürlük Tarihi	Onaylayan Makam
1	Afganistan Anayasası	2004	Anayasal <i>Loya Jirga</i> tarafından hazırlanmış; resmi olarak Cumhurbaşkanı Hamid Karzai tarafından onaylanmıştır.
2	Afganistan Müfredat Yapısı	2003	Eğitim Bakanlığı, Afganistan
3	Afganistan Eğitim Kanunu	2008	Eğitim Bakanlığı, Afganistan

Afganistan devletinin temel ideolojisini yansıtan bu üç belge, ‘Afganistan milleti’ fikrinin içeriğini anlayabilmek için en temel veri kaynağını oluşturmaktadır. Eğitim söyleminde yer alan her fikrin temeli bu belgelerde, özellikle Anayasada, mevcuttur. Örneğin, Anayasada yer alan ‘Afgan vatandaşı’ tanımı hem ders kitaplarına da yansımış hem de Eğitim Bakanlığında çalışan uzmanların görüşlerini şekillendirmiştir. Bu nedenle, resmi belgeler, eğitim söyleminin *temeli* olarak düşünülebilir.

Kaynakların ikinci sırasında 2001 sonrası dönemde Afganistan devleti tarafından basılan ders kitapları yer almaktadır. 9 yıllık zorunlu eğitim seviyesinde kullanılan tüm kitaplar arasından amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile dört derse ait on iki ders kitabı seçilmiştir.

Ders Kitapları Örnekleme				
	Ders Kitabı	Seviye	Sınıf	Basım Tarihi
	5. Sosyal Bilgiler			
1	4. Sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler (4-SS)	İlkokul	4-6	2010
2	5. Sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler (5-SS)			
3	6. Sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler (6-SS)			
	6. Vatandaşlık Eğitimi			
4	7. Sınıf Vatandaşlık Eğitimi (7-CE)	Ortaokul	7-9	2011
5	8. Sınıf Vatandaşlık Eğitimi (8-CE)			
6	9. Sınıf Vatandaşlık Eğitimi (9-CE)			
	7. Vatan Sevgisi			
7	7. Sınıf Vatan Sevgisi (7-PA)	Ortaokul	7-9	2017 (2015 tarihli 7-PA hariç)
8	8. Sınıf Vatan Sevgisi (8-PA)			
9	9. Sınıf Vatan Sevgisi (9-PA)			
	8. Tarih			
10	7. Sınıf Tarih (7-HI)	Ortaokul	7-9	2017
11	8. Sınıf Tarih (8-HI)			
12	9. Sınıf Tarih (8-HI)			

Bu örnekleme de yer alan ders kitapları, ‘millet’ fikrinin anlaşılması için incelenebilecek en uygun kitaplar olarak belirlenmiştir. Eğitim Bakanlığı çalışanları tarafından yazılıp bastırılan bu kitapların, Afganistan devletinin ideolojisinin taşıyıcıları olduğu aşıkardır. Bu nedenle, devletin ‘millet’ kavramsallaştırmasının gözlemlenebileceği en güvenilir kaynaklardan birini oluşturmaktadırlar. Bu çalışmadaki temel amaç eğitim söylemini incelemek olduğundan kitapların sunduğu içerik, ders bazında ayrı ayrı değil; bütün bir söylem (diskur) olarak incelenmiştir. Çalışmadaki verilerin en büyük kısmını sağladığından dolayı ders kitapları, eğitim söyleminin *merkezi* olarak düşünülebilir.

Kaynakların üçüncüsünü ise Eylül 2018’de Afganistan Eğitim Bakanlığında bizzat yapmış olduğum uzman mülakatları oluşturmaktadır. O dönemde Eğitim Bakanlığında çalışan uzmanlar arasından kar topu örnekleme yöntemi ile on bir uzman seçilmiştir.

Mülakat Katılımcıları Örnekleme				
Katılımcı	Cinsiyet	Konum	Eğitim Seviyesi	Qawm
UZMAN-1	Erkek	Yönetici	Yüksek Lisans	Tacik
UZMAN-2	Erkek	Memur	Lisans	Hazara
UZMAN-3	Erkek	Yönetici	Yüksek Lisans	Peştun
UZMAN-4	Erkek	Yönetici	Yüksek Lisans	Hazara
UZMAN-5	Kadın	Memur	Lisans	Kızılbaş
UZMAN-6	Kadın	Stajyer	Yüksek Lisans	Hazara
UZMAN-7	Erkek	Üst Düzey Yönetici	Doktora	Özbek
UZMAN-8	Kadın	Memur	Yüksek Lisans	Tacik
UZMAN-9	Erkek	Memur	Lisans	Peştun
UZMAN-10	Erkek	Üst Düzey Yönetici	Doktora	Peştun
UZMAN-11	Erkek	Memur	Doktora	Kızılbaş

Bu örnekleme yer alan on bir uzmanla yarı-yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlar yapılmıştır. Mülakatların altısı İngilizce; beşi Darice (Farsça) dilinde bizzat benim tarafımdan yapılmış; hiç birinde tercüman kullanılmamıştır. Güvenlik endişelerini en aza indirmek için ses kayıt cihazı kullanılmamış ve katılımcıların kimliği gizli tutulmuştur. Örnekleme içinde yer alan katılımcıların ikisi Eğitim Bakanlığında en üst düzeyde çalışan politika belirleyicileri arasındadır. Bazıları ise ders kitaplarının yazarlarıdır. Bu nedenle, burada yer alan uzmanlar, eğitim söyleminin *inşacıları* olarak kabul edilebilir.

Veri toplama yöntemlerinin yanı sıra veri analizi yönteminden de bahsetmek gerekirse, bu tez çalışması için en uygun yöntem, Nitel İçerik Analizi olarak belirlenmiştir. Bunun nedeni, çalışmanın temel amacının eğitim söylemi içerisinde ön plana çıkan temaların belirlenmesidir. Bu temaların keşfedilmesiyle birlikte ‘Afganistan milleti’ fikri ortaya çıkmaktadır. Burada altı çizilmesi gereken nokta,

temaların söylem içerisinde çekilip çıkarıldığı; önceden belirlenmiş temaların söyleme empoze edilmediğidir.

Teorik Çerçeve

Bu tezin teorik çerçevesi iki ana kavram üzerine inşa edilmiştir: millet inşası ve millet. Girişte de bahsedildiği gibi millet inşası kavramı, bugün çok belirsiz bir hale gelmiştir. Bu belirsizliği aydınlatmak için kavramın etimolojik yolculuğu takip edilmiş; Hippler'in (2005: 6-7) sınıflandırmasının yardımıyla üç aşama ortaya çıkarılmıştır: (1) sosyo-politik bir gelişim *süreci* olarak millet inşası; (2) taklit yoluyla benimsenen veya benimsetilen bir *model* olarak millet inşası; ve (3) bir *dış politika* hedefi olarak dayatılan millet inşası.

İlk aşamada 'millet inşası' fikrinin esasen Batı Avrupa'da Westphalia Anlaşması (1648) ile başlayıp Fransız Devrimi (1789) ile devam eden modern milliyetçilik söylemine ait olduğu görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda millet-inşası, modern ulus-devletin kurulması; yani, ulusun/milletin kendi devletinde egemen olması sürecini tanımlamaktadır. Modernleşme sürecine paralel olarak ilerleyen bu süreçte siyasi ve ekonomik birim 'ulus-devlet'; toplumsal birim 'millet'; bireysel birim ise 'vatandaş' olarak inşa edilmektedir.

19. ve 20. yüzyıllarda Batı Avrupa'daki siyasi birimler birer birer modern ulus-devlet haline dönüştükçe ilk bu bölgede şekillenen ulus-devletler sistemi zamanla dünyaya yayılmaya başlamış ve önce 1920'de Milletler Cemiyeti; sonra da 1945'te Birleşmiş Milletler'in (BM) kurulmasıyla tamamen kurumsallaşmıştır. Böylece millet inşası kavramının tarihsel gelişiminde ikinci aşamaya geçilmiş ve bu kavram ulus-devlet olmayan siyasi birimlere de bir model olarak dayatılmaya başlanmıştır. Batılı ve Batılı olmayan devletler arasındaki güç mücadelesi çerçevesinde ilerleyen bu süreçte ulus-devlet modeli, Batı dışı toplumlara bazen sömürgecilik yoluyla doğrudan dayatılmış; bazen de milliyetçilik akımının ilgili ülkeyi etkisi altına almasıyla bu ülke tarafından mecburi bir model olarak benimsenmiştir. Burada altı çizilmesi gereken husus, millet inşası kavramı, bu ikinci aşamada, ilk aşamada Batı toplumlarında olduğu gibi modernleşme süreciyle beraber işleyen doğal bir süreç olarak değil; Batı dışı toplumlarda, küresel ekonomik ve diplomatik ilişkiler gereğince, taklit edilmesi gereken bir model olarak öne çıkmıştır.

Her ne kadar 1990'larla başlayan 'küreselleşme sürecinin' bu modeli zayıflattığı tartışılrsa da aslında küreselleşen şeyin ta kendisinin ulus-devlet modeli olduğu Billig (2003) ve Calhoun (2007) gibi yazarlar tarafından savunulmuştur. Bugün ABD'nin önderlik ettiği 'küresel dünya düzeninde' resmi tanınırlık kazanabilmek için tüm siyasi birimlerin birbiriyle aynı şekilde ulus-devlet formatında var olması gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, NATO veya BM önderliğinde 'başarısız devletlere' yapılan askeri dış müdahaleler sonrasında bu devletleri ulus-devletler sistemine entegre etme sürecine 'millet inşası' denmekte; bu da bu kavramın ulaştığı üçüncü aşamayı göstermektedir. Ancak bu aşamada, millet inşası kavramı orijinal anlamından epey uzaklaşmış olarak, milliyetçilik söylemi ve modernleşme beraberinde milletin inşa edilmesi *sürecini* veya onun bir *model* olarak taklit edilmesini değil; dış güçlerin kendi *dış politikası* dahilinde 'başarısız devletlere' 'millet' formatını dayatmasını ifade etmektedir. Ancak, dayatılan şey yalnızca 'millet' fikrinin formatıdır; içeriği değil. Çünkü bu içeriği sunacak bir milliyetçilik söylemi mevcut değildir. Bu nedenle, 'millet' fikrinin formatı, harici olarak dayatılırken içeriği, dahili olarak belirlenmektedir. Yani, bir dış politika hedefi olan millet inşası örneklerinde 'millet' fikrinin *formatı* yabancı olsa da *içeriği* yereldir. Bu tez çalışması da Afganistan örneğindeki yerel içeriği incelemektedir.

Teorik çerçevenin bundan sonraki kısmında 'millet' fikrinin içeriğinin ne olduğunun anlaşılması için Batı kaynaklı millet teorileri incelenmiştir. Elbette milliyetçilik tartışması çok geniş ve kapsamlı olduğundan her teori ve anlayışa bu çalışmada yer vermek mümkün olmamıştır. Ancak bu konuda en çok öne çıkan teorisyenlerin görüşlerine yer verilmiştir. Bu teorisyenleri ilkçiler; eskilciler; modernleşmeciler; yapılandırmacılar; ve etno-sembolcüler olarak gruplandırmak mümkündür. Çok kısaca; (1) ilkçiler, her toplumda millet altyapısının olduğunu, sadece uyandırılmayı beklediğini; (2) eskilciler, millet formatının tarihin her aşamasında var olduğunu; (3) modernleşmeciler, milletin yalnızca modern endüstriyel toplumların formatı olduğunu; (4) yapılandırmacılar, milletin elitler ve devlet tarafından inşa edildiğini; (5) etno-sembolcüler ise milletin modern çağ öncesindeki etnik mit ve sembollerden beslenen modern bir olgu olduğunu savunurlar.

İngilizcede 'millet' kelimesini karşılayan 'nation' kelimesi, Latince 'nationem' kelimesinden doğmuş; bu kelime ise 'doğmak' fiilinden türemiştir. Yani, millet kelimesi etimolojik olarak doğulan yerle ilişkilidir. Her ne kadar bugünkü anlamı

farklı olsa da ilkçi düşünürler, milleti kan bağı ile açıklarken onun bu orijinal anlamının da altını çizerler. Bu ilkçi düşünürlerden biri olan Connor (1994), milleti ‘kendinin farkında olan etnik grup’ olarak tanımlar. Connor’a göre, burada önemli olan, milletin üyelerinin ortak kan bağı olduğuna *inanmasıdır*. Ancak modernleşmeci düşünürler, bu inancın kendi kendine oluşmadığını; bilinçli olarak inşa edildiğini savunurlar. Yine ilkçiler arasında bir diğer grup, milleti vatan üzerinden açıklar. Alman İdealistlerinden Fichte (1762-1814) ve Herder (1744-1803), milletin, halk ve toprak arasında oluşan bağdan doğduğunu savunur. Günümüze daha yaklaştığımızda bir etno-sembolcü olan A. Smith’in (2000) de vatani millet fikrindeki belirleyici unsur olarak öne çıkardığını görürüz. Modernleşmeci düşünürler ise bir etnik grubun veya kavmin de belli bir toprak parçasıyla bağ kurabileceğini; bu nedenle vatan algısının doğrudan millet fikrine yol açmayacağını; bunun için vatanın bir devletin sınırları içinde yer alması gerektiğini savunurlar.

Bir başka ünlü düşünür, Renan (1882), milleti irade kavramı üstünden açıklar. Yani milletin ‘gündelik bir referandum’ olduğunu; üyelerinin millet olma konusundaki iradelerini her gün yinelediklerini söyler. Renan, milleti ilkçilerin yaptığı gibi verili unsurlar üzerinden değil de bilinçli olarak edinilen bir statü olarak açıklamasıyla diğerlerinden farklılaşır. Ancak yine de Gellner (1983) gibi modernleşmeci düşünürler, sadece milletlerin değil; diğer toplum biçimlerinin her gün belli bir irade gösterdiğini ve kendi toplum biçimlerini bu şekilde ayakta tuttuğunu savunmuştur. Weber (1946) millet olma iradesinin ancak toplumdaki entelektüeller tarafından inşa edilebileceğini savunurken Geller (1983) bunu ‘milleyetçilik söylemi’ olarak özetlemiştir.

Modernleşmeci düşünürlere geldiğimizde millet kavramıyla ilişkili olarak karşımıza çıkan başat unsur, modern devlettir. Weber’e (1946) göre, bir millet kendini ancak kendi devleti içerisinde açığa çıkarabilir. Bu kavramsallaştırma da ‘ulus-devlet’ kavramına işaret eder. Benzer şekilde Giddens (1985), milletin ancak devlet tüm vatan sınırları içinde tam bir egemenliğe sahip olduğunda anlam kazanabileceğini söyler. Aynı şekilde Hobsbawm (1990) da milletin ancak devletin bir fonksiyonu olduğunu öne sürer. Konuyu daha sosyoloji temelli olarak açıklayan bir diğer modernleşmeci düşünür Gellner’e (1983) göre ise millet, modern endüstriyel toplum anlamına gelmektedir. Tarım toplumlarında usta-çırak ilişkisi yoluyla ilerleyen kültürel bilgi paylaşımı (*acculturation*) görülürken endüstriyel toplumlarda halkın

tamamı kitlesel bir eğitim sistemine dahil edilerek yüksek bir yazılı kültür eğitimine tabi tutulur. Böylece ortak kültür haline gelen yüksek kültürü Gellner ‘milli kültür’ olarak tanımlar. Sonuç itibarıyla tarım toplumlarında çeşitli topluluklar üretilmeye devam edilirken endüstriyel toplumda, kitlesel eğitim sistemi sayesinde tek bir topluluk üretilmiş olur: millet. Dolayısıyla Gellner’in düşüncesindeki temel nokta, milletlerin milliyetçiliği değil; milliyetçilik söyleminin milleti doğurmasıdır. Bir başka modernleşmeci düşünür olan Anderson (1991) da bu söylemin yayılmasında etkili olan basın yayın araçları üzerinden millet kavramını anlatır. Bu araçlar, milletin üyelerinin zihninde bir millet hayali üretirler; böylece millet ‘hayali bir cemaat’ olarak ortaya çıkar. Anderson burada milletin üyelerini ana aktörler olarak gösterse de bir diğer modernleşmeci Hobsbawm (1992), millet fikrinin aslında elitler tarafından ‘icat edilmiş bir gelenek’ olduğunu savunur. Bu tez çalışmasında bu ve benzeri modernleşmeci düşünürlerin millet teorilerinden hareketle, millet, modern bir olgu olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Afganistan’a Genel Bakış

Afganistan İslam Cumhuriyeti, (Farsça/Darice: *Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Afghanistan* (جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان)) Güney Asya ve Orta Asya bölgelerinin kesişim noktasında konumlanmış, denize kıyısı olmayan bir ülkedir. Güney ve doğusunda Pakistan (2430 km’lik en uzun sınır); batısında İran; kuzeyinde Türkmenistan, Özbekistan ve Tacikistan; doğusunda Çin (76 km’lik en kısa sınır) yer almaktadır. Başkenti Kabil’dir.

Afganistan toprakları, üç büyük medeniyet ile çevrilmiştir: (1) güney ve doğuda Hint medeniyeti; (2) batıda Fars medeniyeti; (2) kuzeyde Türk medeniyeti. Geçmişten günümüze değin Afganistan bu üç komşu medeniyetin etkisinde kalmış; Hint, Fars ve Türk ırklarına mensup insanların karşılaşma ve kaynaşma noktası olması nedeniyle ‘Asya’nın Kalbi’ olarak anılmıştır. Bu ‘kalbin’ içinde çeşitli etnik gruplar ve kavimler; diller ve lehçeler; dinler ve mezhepler; ve farklı yerleşim biçimleri yer almaktadır. Yerine göre kavim veya etnik grup anlamına gelen *qawm*, ülkedeki başat toplumsal birimdir. 2004 Anayasası, Afganistan’da yaşayan on dört *qawm*’i resmi olarak tanımaktadır: Peştun, Tacik, Hazara, Özbek, Beluç, Türkmen, Nuristanlı, Pamiri, Arap, Gucar, Brohi, Kızılbaş, Aymak ve Paşai. Ancak, 1979’dan beri resmi nüfus sayımı yapılmadığından *qawm*’lerin toplam nüfus içindeki dağılımı tam olarak

bilinmemekle birlikte genellikle dört ana *qawm* öne çıkmaktadır: Peştun, Tacik, Hazara, Özbek.

Bu toplumsal zenginlikten hareketle çok-dilli bir ülke olan Afganistan'da iki dil resmi olarak tanınmıştır: Darice (Afgan Farsçası) ve Peştuca. Arap alfabesini kullanan her iki dil de Hint-Avrupa dil ailesine mensuptur. Afganistan'da konuşulan toplam dil sayısının otuz-kırk arasında değiştiği söylenmektedir. Halkın çoğunun iki veya üç dil konuşabildiği bu ülkede Darice, ortak iletişim dili (*lingua franca*) olarak geçmektedir.

Resmi devlet dininin Anayasada İslam olarak belirlenmiş olduğu Afganistan, aynı zamanda, bir İslam Cumhuriyetidir. Neredeyse tamamı (%99.8) Müslüman olan bu ülkede nüfusun %85-90'ı Sünni mezhebine; %10-15'i ise Şii mezhebine mensuptur. Ayrıca, Hindu ve Sih gibi çok küçük dini azınlık grupları da ülkede mevcuttur.

Afganistan'da yerleşim biçimi, toplumsal yapıyı etkileyen önemli bir unsurdur. 2019 rakamlarına göre 31.6 milyon olan nüfusun 1.5 milyonunu (%4.8) göçebeler (*kuchi*) oluşturmaktadır. Toplam nüfusun 22.6 milyonu (%71.5) kırsal kesimde; sadece 7.5 milyonu (%23.7) şehirlerde yaşamaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, şehirleşme oranının çok düşük olduğu Afganistan toplumunda nüfusun çoğunluğu kırsaldır.

Araştırma Bulguları ve Tartışma

Bu çalışmada eğitim söylemi üzerinde yapılan veri analizinden elde edilen bulgular, 'Afganistan milleti' fikrinin içeriğinde dört temel unsur ortaya çıkarmıştır:

'Afganistan Milleti' (*Millat-e Afghani*):

- İslam, Afganistan milletinin temelidir.
- *Aqwam*, Afganistan milletinin bileşenleridir.
- *Afghaniyat*, Afganistan milletinin kimliğidir.
- *Watan*, Afganistan milletinin vatanıdır.

Yapılan veri analizi, bu bileşenlerin yanında, 'Afganistan milleti' kavramsallaştırmasına ilişkin olarak aşağıdaki özelliği de açığa çıkarmıştır:

- 'Afganistan milleti' fikrine ilişkin 'devlet' ve 'bireysel vatandaş' kavramsallaştırması zayıf kalmıştır.

Şimdi bu özellikleri teker teker inceleyelim.

- ***İslam, Afganistan milletinin temelidir.***

Afganistan devleti, mevcut Anayasada da belirttiği gibi, bir İslam Cumhuriyetidir. Bu nedenle, resmi devlet ideolojisinin ve politikalarının önemli bir parçasını oluşturan İslam, millet kavramının temelini oluşturmaktadır; millet fikrine ilişkin sembol ve kavramların içine sızmaktadır. Her şeyden önce, Afganistan milleti ‘Müslüman bir millet’ olarak tanımlanmıştır. Sadece toplumsal düzeyde değil; bireysel düzeyde de Müslümanlık ve dindarlık, Afganlığın (*Afganiyat*) temel özelliği olarak yansıtılmıştır. Burada belirtilen dindarlık unsuru, Afganistan toplumunun genellikle akidevi (*aqidawi*) olarak tanımlanması ile yakından ilgilidir. Yani, bu toplumun dindar insanları gündelik kararlarını akideleri temelinde alır; ona göre eyleme geçerler. Bu nedendir ki mollalar tarafından verilen fetvalar, insanların gündelik hayatında belirleyici bir rol oynar.

Milli kavramlara baktığımızda İslam’ın Afganistan’da yaşayan insanlar arasındaki en yaygın *ortak özellik* olarak yansıtıldığını görürüz. Çünkü İslam, bu insanlar arasındaki *qawm*, mezhep ve dil farklılıklarının hepsini gidermeye muktedir olan en güçlü bağdır. Bu bağ, eğitim söyleminde ‘İslam kardeşliği’ (din kardeşliği) kavramıyla açıklanır. Dindaş olan bu *qawm*’ler, ortak bir düşmana karşı cihat etmek için İslam etrafında birleştiğinde milli birlik oluşmuş olur. Yani Afganistan’da *milli birlik* kavramı aslında *qawm birliği* anlamına gelir. Ancak burada İslam’ın stratejik olarak kullanıldığının altını çizmemiz gerekir. Çünkü Afganistan’ın kendi gibi İslam Cumhuriyeti olan iki komşusu Pakistan ve İran, eğitim söyleminde din kardeşi olmaktan ziyade birer ‘öteki’ veya ‘düşman’ olarak yansıtılmaktadır. Onlara karşı cihat söylemi de işlemez hale gelir; çünkü cihat, ‘kafir’ olarak tanımlanmış düşmanlara karşı geçerlidir. Bu nedenle, *qawm*’lerin ortak düşmanı, Müslüman olmayan ‘kafir’ bir düşman olduğunda hem İslam kardeşliği hem de cihat kavramları daha anlamlı hale gelir. Tarihsel söylem de bu fikirle uyumlu olarak 19. yüzyılda Büyük Britanya İmparatorluğunu; 20. yüzyılda da Sovyetler Birliğini cihat ilan edilen ‘kafir’ düşmanlar olarak yansıtmaktadır.

Savaşın cihat olarak tanımlandığı bu tabloda *milli kahramanlar* da İslami bir çerçevede kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Kahramanlar arasında en baskın iki grup şehitler (*shohada*) ve gazilerdir (*ghaziyan*). Böyle bir İslami kahramanlık anlayışında kahramanların temel motivasyonu Allah adına savaşmak; canlarını Allah yolunda

fedâ etmek; İslâm dinini korumak; ve bir İslâm ülkesi, yani darü'l İslâm, olan vatânı korumaktır. Özellikle bu son nokta, aynı zamanda *millî çıkar* kavramında da karşımıza çıkar. Afganistan'daki millî çıkarlar arasında en önemlisi, dinin ve maneviyatın korunması olarak yansıtılmıştır. Bu fikir, tarihsel söylemde Sovyetler Birliğine karşı Mücahitlerin verdiği mücale örneği ile daha da güçlendirilmiştir. Buradaki temel mesaj, Afganistan milletinin dış tehditlere karşı en önemli çıkarının İslâm'ın korunması olduğudur.

İslâm, sadece millî kavramlarda değil; millî sembollerde de kendini net bir şekilde gösterir. Millî bayrak ve millî arma üzerinde görülen ve Afganistan'ı temsil eden büyük bina kapısının ardında bir caminin iç kısmını yansıtan bir mihrap ve bir minber resmedilmiştir. Bu resim, bu ülkede İslâm'ın merkezi rolünü açıkça beyan etmektedir. Ayrıca bu resmin üst kısmında Arapça *Allahu Ekber* ('Allah en büyüktür') ifadesi ile birlikte Kelime-i Şehadet ('Allah'tan başka ilah yoktur ve Muhammed O'nun elçisidir') yer almaktadır. Hem bu yazılar hem de resimler bu bayrağın, 'Müslüman bir millete' ait olduğu mesajını vermektedir. Benzer şekilde, millî marşın sözleri de Afganistan toplumunu İslâm inancı etrafında birleşmiş on dört *qawm*'den oluşan bir yapı olarak yansıtmaktadır. "Liderimiz Hak'tır. Biz Allahu Ekber deriz," diye biten millî marş, İslâm'ı *qawm* birliğinin temeli olarak yansıtmaktadır.

Son olarak, eğitim söyleminde Afganistan milleti, İslâm ümmetinin bir parçası olarak yansıtılmıştır. Bu ikisi arasında karşılıklı bir ilişkiden bahsedilmiş; İslâm'ın Afganistan'a birlik ve beraberlik getirerek devletler kurdurduğu ve zaferlere vesile olduğu; Afganistan halkının da her daim İslâm'a hizmet ettiği yazılmıştır. Eğitim söylemi, Afganları, kendi milletlerinin yanında İslâm ümmetini de sevmeye davet etmektedir. Hatta Afganistan'ın sorunlarının çözümü için ümmeti işaret etmektedir; çünkü Afganistan o ümmetin bir parçasıdır. Öte yandan, Müslüman komşular İran ve Pakistan'ın bile olumsuz şekilde resmedilmesi, bu fikirlerle çelişmektedir. Bu durum da millet kavramsallaştırmasında İslâm'ın stratejik olarak kullanıldığını kanıtlamaktadır.

- *Aqwm, Afganistan milletinin bileşenleridir.*

Afganistan devletinin dinini ve rejimini İslam olarak belirleyen ilk üç Anayasa maddesinin hemen ardından gelen dördüncü madde de ‘Afganistan milletini’ tanımlamaktadır. Bu tanıma göre, ‘Afganistan milleti’ iki katmandan oluşur: (1) on dört *qawm* (ve “diğer *qawm*’ler”) ve; (2) Afganistan vatandaşlığına sahip tüm bireyler. İlk katman *qawm*-temelli bir millet resmi çizerken ikinci katman vatandaş-temelli bir milletten bahseder. Ancak burada hatırlatılması gereken, eğitim söyleminde Afganistan’da vatandaşlığın *tabiyet* olarak tanımlandığı ve devlete değil vatana mensup olmak anlamına geldiğidir. Bu anlayışa göre, ‘vatana mensup olan’ tüm bireyler milleti oluşturur. Bu bireyler, aynı zamanda, bir *qawm*’e de mensuptur. On dört *qawm* isminin Anayasada açıkça zikredilmesi, *qawm* kurumunun Afganistan’da toplumsal bir birim olarak tanındığının göstergesidir. Bir başka deyişle, Afganistan’da bir *qawm*’e mensup olmak yasal olarak kabul görmektedir. Her ne kadar ilgili Anayasa maddesi, iki katmanlı bir millet resmi çizse de eğitim söyleminde ‘Afganistan milletini’ *qawm*’lerden oluşan bir yapı gibi göstermek daha yaygındır. Ne zaman millete mensup olan ‘Afgan vatandaşlarından’ bahsedilse hemen *qawm*’lere bir gönderme yapılmaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, millet fikri, ancak *qawm* fikri ile anlaşılır hale gelmektedir. Bu da *qawm*’lerin milletin bileşenleri olarak düşünölmeye daha müsait olduğunu göstermektedir.

Böyle bir millet kavramsallaştırması, diğer bütün milli kavramları da etkilemektedir. Yukarıda da bahsedildiği gibi, *milli birlik* kavramı, Afgan vatandaşlarının birliği değil; *qawm* birliği olarak düşünölmektedir. Yani, birlik bireysel temelli değil; grup temelli algılanmaktadır. Tarihsel söylem de *qawm*’lerin ortak bir düşman karşısında bir araya gelmesini milli birlik olarak yansıtmaktadır. Halbuki bahsedilen durum, normalde birbiriyle çatışma halinde olan *qawm*’lerin belli bir amaç için, geçici bir süreliğine, ortak bir tehdit karşısında birleşmesi ve tehdit ortadan kalkar kalkmaz tekrar dağılmasıdır. Bu durumun örnekleri çok uzak geçmişte değil; yakın geçmişte de mevcuttur. Eğitim söyleminde en çok verilen iki örnek, (1) İngilizlere karşı cihat çağrısıyla birleşen *qawm*’lerin onlarla savaşarak 1919 yılında Afganistan’ın tam bağımsızlığını elde etmeleri; ve (2) Sovyetler Birliğine karşı cihat çağrısıyla farklı Mücahit grupları altında birleşen *qawm*’lerin onlarla savaşarak 1989 yılında Sovyetlerin Afganistan’dan tamamen çekilmesini sağlamalarıdır. Her iki savaşın sonunda ise merkezi otorite kurma noktasında zayıflık görülür. İngilizlere karşı

yapılan savaşlarda dönemin kralı Amanullah Han'a destek veren *qawm*'ler, bağımsızlığın elde edilmesinden sadece on yıl sonra 1929 yılında ona karşı örgütlenerek kralı devirirler. Benzer şekilde, Sovyetler Birliği'nin Afganistan'dan çekilmesinden sonra 1992'de kurulan Mücahitler Hükümeti kısa süre içinde ülkeyi iç savaşa sürükler. Her iki örnek de ortak düşman ortadan kalktığı an *qawm*'lerin her zamanki iç çatışma haline geri döndüğünü göstermektedir. Bu şekilde kavramsallaştırılmış bir *qawm* birliği fikri, bireysel vatandaşların birliğine dayalı sabit bir milli birlik durumundan ziyade; amaçlı ve geçici bir kabile ittifakına benzemektedir.

Milli birliğin *qawm* birliği olarak algılandığı bu kavramsallaştırmada *qawm*'ler bir araya gelmek için çeşitli koşullar öne sürerler. Tüm *qawm*'ler millet yapısı içinde eşit paya sahip olmak isterler. Ancak her *qawm* diğerini eşit görüp haklarına saygı gösterdiğinde milli birliğin güçleneceğini savunurlar. Bir nevi *qawmi eşitlik* anlamına gelen bu anlayış, sosyal adalet kavramına da yansımıştır. Daha ziyade *qawmi adalet* anlamında kullanılan bu kavram, devletin tüm *qawm*'lere adil davranması ve her birine eşit imkan tanınması anlamına gelmektedir. Yüzde yüz adalet mümkün olmasa da *dengeli muamele* beklenmektedir. Burada altı çizilmesi gereken husus, tüm bu kavramların birey temelli değil; *qawm* temelli olarak kavramsallaştırılmasıdır.

Tüm bu kavramsallaştırma kendini milli semboller üstünde de göstermektedir. Milli bayrak ve milli marş gibi sembollerin *qawm*'lerin birliğini temsil ettiği ders kitaplarında açıkça belirtilmiştir. Yani bu semboller, *qawm* birliğini hatırlatmak ve devam ettirmek için vardır. Ancak bu potansiyele ne kadar sahip oldukları meçhuldür. *Milli bayrak*, her hangi bir *qawm*'e ait bir simge veya yazıya sahip olmadığından tüm *qawm*'ler tarafından kabul edilmiş görünmektedir. Ancak *milli marş*, on dört *qawm*'in ismini tek tek saysa da Peştuca dilinde yazıldığı için özellikle Peştun olmayanlar tarafından kabul görmemektedir. Buradaki eleştiri, ortak bir sembol olan milli marşın sadece tek bir *qawm*'in konuştuğu dilde yazılmış olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Anayasa Peştun *qawm*'ini sadece on dört *qawm*'den biri olarak tanımlarken Peştunların ayrıcalıklı bir *qawm* olarak öne çıkması diğer *qawm* mensuplarını rahatsız etmektedir. Ancak aynı Anayasanın Peştuca dilini Afganistan'ın iki resmi dilinden biri olarak tanıdığını unutmamak gerekir. Mülakatlarda öne çıkan önerilerden biri, milli marşın yarısının Peştuca yarısının

Darice söylenebileceğidir. Neticede varılan nokta, milli sembollerin ancak tüm *qawm*'ler tarafından kabul gördüğünde anlamlı hale geldiğidir.

Milli hafıza kavramsallaştırmasına baktığımızda ise tarihin milli tarih olarak değil; *ortak tarih* olarak tanımlandığını görürüz. Burada kullanılan 'ortak' kelimesi ile 'tüm *qawm*'ler için ortak olan tarih' kast edilmektedir. Bu nedenle mülakatlarda her *qawm*'e ait tarihsel geçmişin Tarih dersinin kitaplarında yer alması gerektiğine vurgu yapılmaktadır. Ancak tarih-yazımının doğası düşünüldüğünde bu pek mümkün görünmemektedir; çünkü o durumda kimin düşman kimin müttefik olduğunun hangi *qawm*'e göre belirleneceği meçhul olacaktır. Kısacası, tarih bu şekilde 'ortak tarih' olarak kavramsallaştırıldığı sürece tüm *qawm*'ler oradaki yerlerini almak isteyecektir.

Milletin *qawm*'lerden oluştuğu bu kavramsallaştırmada her bir *qawm*'in çıkarından ayrı bir *milli çıkar*dan bahsedilebilir mi? Afganistan'da çok yaygın olarak görülen şey, *qawm*'lerin devletle, daha doğrusu 'hükümetle,' görüşme ve pazarlık yapıp hak ve ayrıcalık talep etmesidir. Yani *qawm*'ler, hükümetten paylarını almak için birbiri ile rekabet içerisindedir. Bunun da ötesinde, Afganistan'da yaşayan bir çok *qawm*'in etnik soydaşlarının komşu ülkelerde yaşıyor olması, milli çıkar konusunu daha da karmaşık hale getirmektedir. Afganistan'da yaşayan bir Özbek kendini Afganistan'dan ziyade Özbekistan'a ait hissederse Afganistan'ın milli çıkarlarını nasıl benimseyebilir? Hele ki bu milli çıkarların Afganistan halkı tarafından değil de dış güçler tarafından tasarlandığı düşünülürse onlara sahip çıkmak kimse için anlamlı olmayacaktır. Hali hazırda 2001 yılından beri dış güçlerin işgalinde bulunan Afganistan gibi bir ülke için iç güçler tarafından belirlenmiş milli çıkarlardan bahsetmek çok zordur.

Milletin *qawm* birliği olarak algılandığı bu kavramsallaştırma, milli irade kavramını da doğrudan etkilemektedir. Afganistan'da milli iradenin temsil edildiği iki kurum mevcuttur: *Shura-ye Milli* (Milli Meclis) ve *Loya Jirga* (Büyük Konsey). Düzenli seçimlerle işleyen modern parlamento yapısındaki ilk kurumun yanında ikinci kurum, aslen düzensiz bir kavmi istişare konseyi iken sonradan bir devlet kurumuna dönüştürülmüştür. Kapasite bakımından *Shura* her zaman iki yüz elli milletvekiline sahipken *Loya Jirga* hem *Shura* üyelerini hem de eyalet ve ilçe meclislerinin başkanlarını da içerdiğinden zaman zaman birkaç bin katılımcıya ulaşmaktadır.

Kısacası *Loya Jirga*, Afganistan'ın tüm eyaletlerinde yaşayan *qawm*'lerin liderlerini, kanaat önderlerini ve ihtiyarları bir araya getirmesinden dolayı milli birliği sağlayan kurum olarak görülmekte ve Anayasada Afganistan'da "milli iradenin en yüksek temsili" olarak tanınmaktadır. Bu yüzden ders kitaplarında milli kimliğin sembolü ve bir Afgan geleneği olarak yansıtılan kurum Milli Meclis değil; *Loya Jirga*'dır. Yani, Afganistan'da milli irade, *qawm*'leri birleştiren *Loya Jirga* üzerinden kavramsallaştırılmaktadır.

- **Afghaniyat, *Afganistan milletinin kimliğidir.***

Afganistan Anayasasında millet, "Afganistan milleti"; bireysel vatandaşlar ise "Afgan" olarak adlandırılmıştır. Eğitim söylemi ise Afgan kelimesinin büyük bir tartışma konusu olduğunu gözler önüne sermektedir. Kökenleri geçmişe uzanan bu tartışmada Afgan ve Peştun etnonimlerinin tarihte birbiri yerine kullanıldığı ve aynı anlama geldiği savunulmaktadır. Buradan hareketle Peştun olmayanlar Afgan ismiyle anılmayı kabul etmemekte; bazıları 'Afganistanlı' kelimesini tercih etmektedir. Ancak bazıları da ülkenin mevcut ismini dahi kabul etmemekte; bu ismin 'Horasan' veya 'Aryana' olarak değiştirilmesi gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Bu derin tartışma nedeniyle eğitim söyleminde millet, "Afgan milleti" olarak değil "Afganistan milleti" olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu etiket, milletin milli kimlik üstüne değil; vatan üstüne kurulduğunu göstermektedir.

Afgan kelimesi etrafındaki tartışma, milli kimlik kavramsallaştırmasını da zora sokmaktadır. Bu zorluğu aşmak için iki kolaylaştırıcı öne sürüldüğü gözlemlenmiştir: (1) İslam, milli kimliğin birincil unsuru olarak sunulmuştur; (2) Milli kimliğin ikincil unsuru olan Afganlık ise *qawm* kimlikleri ile beraber sunulmuştur. Buradaki ilk kolaylaştırıcı, milli kimliğin 'İslam ümmeti' fikrine; ikinci ise *qawm* kimliklerine bir tehdit olarak görülmesini engellemek için tasarlanmıştır. Bu kavramsallaştırma, Anayasa ile de uyum içerisindedir; çünkü Anayasa, Afganistan devletinin dinini İslam olarak belirlerken *qawm* kimliklerini de resmi olarak tanır. Bu nedendir ki Afganlık neredeyse Müslümanlıkla eş tutulmakta ve çoğu zaman bir *qawm* ismiyle beraber anılmaktadır. Örneğin, mülakatlarda 'Hazara-Afgan' veya 'Tacik-Afgan' gibi hibrit kimlikler çokça zikredilmiştir. Ancak hiçbir zaman 'Peştun-Afgan' gibi bir adlandırma yapılmaması, bu iki etnonimin birbirine eşit görüldüğünü bir kez daha kanıtlamaktadır. Bu tür hibrit kimliklerin, daha ziyade, Peştun olmayanları ortak

Afgan kimliđi ierisine oturma abasından dođduđu sylenbilir. Her ne kadar Anayasada resmi olarak hibrit kimliklerden bahsedilmese de Drdnc Maddede sunulan iki katmanlı millet fikri (Afgan-temelli millet ve *qawm*-temelli millet), buna zemin hazırlamaktadır.

Bu kavramsallařtırmadaki temel ama, milli kimlik kavramının, dini ve *qawm* kimliklerinin arasına *uyumlu bir řekilde* yerleřtirilmesidir. Sonu olarak Afganlık kavramı hem mmet hem de *qawm* kimlikleri ile beraber var olmaktadır. Bu da gstermektedir ki Afganistan'da milli kimlik, kendi bařına bađımsız bir kimlik olarak deđil; İslami ve *qawmi* kimliklere bađımlı bir kimlik olarak grnmektedir.

- **Watan, *Afganistan milletinin vatanıdır.***

Eđitim syleminde vatan aık bir řekilde Afganistan olarak belirtilmiř; hem dahili hem de harici olarak betimlenmiřtir. Dahili olarak Afganistan, nfusun ođunluđunun kylerde yařadıđı kırsal bir lke olarak tasvir edilmiřtir. Bu tasvir, lkedeki dřk řehirleřme oranını (yaklařık %25) yansıtan resmi nfus rakamlarıyla da uyumludur. Ayrıca, tasvirde vurgulanan dađlık cođrafi yapı da *qawm*'lerin birbirinden uzak yařayıřını aıklamaktadır. Her lkenin vatanseverlik syleminde olduđu gibi, dođal gzellik aısından Afganistan dnyanın en gzel lkelerinden biri olarak resmedilmiřtir. Dođal kaynaklar aısından ise blge lkeleri arasındaki en zengin lkelerden biri olarak betimlenmiř; ekonomik potansiyeli vurgulanmıřtır. Ayrıca, uygun kořulları ve verimli kaynaklarıyla yařanabilir bir lke olarak tasvir edilmesi, Afganistan hakkındaki 'yařanmaz lke' imajını yıkma abasını yansıtmaktadır. Bu tasvir, Afganistan'ı bir medeniyetler beřiđi ve ilim merkezi olarak betimleyen tarihsel sylemle desteklenmiřtir.

Harici tasvirinde ise Afghanistan, 'Asya'nın Kalbi' olarak Gney Asya'da konumlandırılmıřtır. Bu merkezilik vurgusu, lkeyi Hindistan-in hattını Avrupa'ya bađlayan İpek Yolu stndeki stratejik bir kpr olarak tasvir eden tarihsel sylemle de desteklenmiřtir. Bu kadar kritik bir konuma sahip olması, bu vatan topraklarını Byk İskender'den Byk Britanya ve Sovyetler Birliđi'ne kadar bir ok dnya fatihinin saldırısına maruz bırakmıřtır. Sonuta hibir gcn elde edemediđi Afganistan toprakları bugn 'Fatihlerin Mezarlıđı' olarak anılmaktadır. Dnya glerine karřı kazanılan bu zaferler, Afganistan'ı dnya tarihinin gidiřatını deđiřtiren bir lke olarak resmetmektedir. Ancak tm bu bařarılarla rađmen bu vatan,

kurucusu Ahmet Şah Baba tarafından tanımlanmış olan ‘doğal’ sınırlarla çevrili olarak ‘doğal yollarla’ kurulmamıştır. Bu noktada eğitim söylemi, Afganistan ve Pakistan arasındaki Durand Hattı’nı “dayatılmış sınır” olarak tanımlamış ve bu sınırın Afganistan halkı tarafından tanınmadığını belirtmiştir. Bu durum, toprak bütünlüğü anlayışını zora sokmuş; onu düşmanlara karşı korunması gereken en önemli ikinci milli çıkar olarak yansıtmıştır. Ve son olarak, Afganistan, küresel dünyanın bir parçası olarak tanımlanmıştır.

Bu dahili ve harici betimlemelerin yanında, vatan algısını güçlendiren iki ayrı metafor gözlemlenmiştir: ortak ev metaforu ve anne metaforu. Özellikle ilk metafor, eğitim söyleminde yaygın olarak kullanılmıştır. Milli bayrağın üstünde görülen büyük bina kapısı, bu ortak eve açılan kapıyı simgelerken milli marş da açıkça “bu vatan herkesin evidir” demektedir. Ders kitapları, Afganistan vatanını, içinde *qawm*’lerin (erkek) kardeş gibi beraber yaşayıp gittiği ortak bir ev olarak tasvir etmektedir. Bu evin içinde oğullarını büyüten anne figürü de yine vatani temsil etmektedir. Annenin emeklerine karşılık oğulları da ona, yani vatana, hizmet etmektedir. Vatanın bireyler üstünde bir anne gibi hak sahibi olması fikri, eğitim söyleminde aynen karşılık bulmaktadır.

Son olarak, eğitim söyleminde vatanseverlik kavramının İslami bir vecibe olarak tanımlandığını görürüz. Bu kavramsallaştırmada, vatanseverlik, cihat ile korunması gereken toprakların sevgisi olarak öne çıkar. Afganistan’da yaşayan nüfusun neredeyse tamamı Müslüman olduğu için bu ülkenin toprakları darül İslam sayılmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu vatanda yaşayan herkes bu ülkeyi bir İslam ülkesi olarak tutmak için şehit olmaya hazır olmalıdır. Bu fikirler, İslami bir vatanseverlik anlayışını yansıtmaktadır.

- ***‘Afganistan milleti’ fikrine ilişkin ‘devlet’ ve ‘bireysel vatandaş’ kavramsallaştırması zayıf kalmıştır.***

Yukarıdaki incelemenin gösterdiği gibi, eğitim söylemindeki ‘Afganistan milleti’ fikri, doğası itibarıyla *qawm* ve ümmet fikirlerine bağlanmıştır. Bunun temel sebebi, bu ülke toplumundaki en önemli iki kurumun *qawm* ve ümmet olmasıdır. Afganistan’daki mevcut millet inşası sürecinde yapılan şey, Batı tarafından dayatılan ‘millet’ biçiminin (*form*), yerelde *qawm* ve ümmetten oluşan içeriğin (*content*) üzerine oturtulmasıdır. Sonuç itibarıyla ortaya çıkan ‘Afganistan milleti’ fikri, ortak

bir düşman karşısında İslam adına geçici olarak birleşen *qawm*'lerin ittifakı anlamına gelmektedir. Bu fikir, vatandaş temelli modern millet kavramından uzak görünmektedir.

Eğitim söyleminin analizi, 'Afganistan milleti' kavramının temel bileşenlerinin bireysel vatandaşlar değil; *qawm*'ler olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Anayasada "Afgan" olarak tanımlanan vatandaş, sadece devletin varlığı için tasarlanmış bir kimlik olduğundan ancak devletle ilişkili resmi durumlarda ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bir diğer deyişle, Afganistan'da yaşayan bir birey, ancak devletle ilişki kurduğunda "Afgan vatandaşı" haline gelir. *Qawm*'i Tacik bile olsa resmiyette tanımlanmış bir Tacik vatandaşlığı kavramı yoktur; sadece Afgan vatandaşlığı vardır. 'Tacik-Afgan' gibi bir hibrit kimlik kullanımı kabul görse bile bu Tacik'in vatandaşlığını belirtmek için Afgan kimliği yine gerekecektir. Çünkü Anayasa birey olarak 'Tacik vatandaşını' değil; grup olarak Tacik *qawm*'ini tanımaktadır. Yani, *qawm*, birey değil grup seviyesinde tanınmaktadır. Anayasanın resmiyette tanıdığı tek birey Afgan vatandaşdır. "Afgan" kelimesinin etrafındaki tartışma nedeniyle Peştun olmayanlar *qawmi* kimliklerini kullanarak kendi gruplarının içinde kalmayı tercih etmektedir. Yani, bu *qawm*'lerin üyeleri devlet seviyesinde birey olmayı reddederler; çünkü o durumda Afgan, yani Peştun, olmak zorunda kalacaklardır. Böylece, vatandaş-temelli millet fikri zayıflarken *qawm* kurumu güçlenir. Vatandaş fikrinin zayıf kaldığı yerde de ulus-devlet fikri tutunamaz.

Eğitim söyleminde bireysel vatandaşların yanında devlet fikri de zayıf bir şekilde kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Aslında eğitim söyleminde devlet hakkında yeterli içerik mevcuttur. Özellikle Vatandaşlık Eğitimi ve Sosyal Bilgiler kitaplarında devlet hakkında bilgi sunulmuş; toplumun devlete ihtiyacı; devlet çeşitleri; devletin görevleri; devletin organları; devletin sağladığı sosyal hizmetler vb. konular işlenmiştir. Ancak devlet ve millet arasında bir bağ kurulmamıştır. 'Afganistan milletine' ilişkin semboller, kavramlar ve unsurlar incelendiğinde devletin millet fikri ile nadiren yan yana geldiği görülmektedir. Yani, Afganistan'da millet dendiğinde ilk akla gelen şeylerden biri, *qawm* veya İslam gibi, devlet değildir. Çünkü Afganistan devleti bir ulus-devlet olarak değil; *qawm*'lerin hizmetinde bir *İslami hükümet* olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır.

Eđitim söyleminde devlet konusuna iliřkin kelime kullanımı da devlet kavramsallařtırması hakkında ok 6nemli ip uları vermektedir. S6ylem ierisinde ađırlıklı olarak ‘devlet’ (*dawlat*) kelimesi yerine ‘h6k6met’ (*hokumat*) kelimesi kullanılmakta veya bu iki kelime birbiri yerine kullanılmaktadır. Her ne kadar Anayasa ve Vatandaşlık Eđitimi kitapları ‘devlet’ kelimesini kullansa da Vatan Sevgisi kitapları ve 6zellikle m6lakatlar, g6nl6k kullanımda ‘h6k6met’ kelimesinin daha ok kullanıldıđını net bir řekilde g6stermektedir. M6lakatlarda hususi olarak ‘devlet’ hakkında sorulan soruların ‘h6k6met’ kelimesi kullanılarak cevaplandıđı g6zlemlenmiřtir. Bu durum, g6ndelik hayatta ‘h6k6met’ kelimesini kullanmaya dođal bir eđilim olduđunu ve ‘devlet’ kelimesinin daha ok yazılı metinlerde getiđini g6stermektedir. Bilindiđi gibi devlet kelimesi kiřiler6st6 bir kurumu temsil ederken h6k6met kelimesi belli bir s6reliđine devlet kurumlarında g6rev yapan kiřileri belirtmektedir. Devletin ‘h6k6met’ olarak algılanması, onun kiřilerden bađımsız bir kurum olarak deđil; onu y6neten kiřiler veya *qawm*’ler olarak g6r6ld6đ6n6 g6stermektedir. Eđitim söyleminde yapılan inceleme, Afganistan’da devletin ok fazla kurumsallařmadıđını ve hatta bir ‘Peřtun h6k6meti’ olarak algılandıđını g6stermektedir. 6zellikle Peřtun olmayanlar, devleti adeta Peřtunların m6lkiyeti gibi g6rmekte; devletin kendilerini, yani kendi *qawm*’lerini, temsil etmediđini d6řunmektedir. Devletin her *qawm*’e adil davranması beklenirken aslında ‘Peřtunların h6k6metinin’ Peřtun olmayan *qawm*’lere adil řekilde hizmet etmesi gerektiđi kast edilmektedir. Diđer her konuda olduđu gibi devlet konusu da *qawm* temelinde iřleyen bir zihniyet mevcuttur.

Devletin belirli bir *qawm*’e ait bir h6k6met (veya hanedan) gibi algılanması, herkesin kendini devletle 6zdeřleřtirememesi sonucunu dođurmaktadır. Bu nedendir ki eđitim söyleminde devletin millet fikrine iliřkin kavramsallařtırması zayıf kalmaktadır. Bu noktada, Afganistan’da devlet yerine insanların kendini ok daha kolay 6zdeřleřtirebileceđi bir bařka unsur 6n plana ıkmaktadır: vatan. Eđitim söylemi, tek bayrak ve tek anayasa altında bir vatanda yařamakla ilgili referanslarla doludur. Tek bayrak ve tek anayasadan kast edilen řey devlet olsa bile net bir řekilde adı konmamaktadır. Devlet, insanlar arasında sıkıntılı bir algıya sahip olduđu iin yok sayılmakta; onun bořluđu vatan ile doldurulmaktadır. Vatandaşlıđın devlete mensubiyet deđil de vatana mensubiyet olarak kavramsallařtırılması da bu y6zdedir.

Sonuç

Bu arařtırmadan elde edilen bulgularla birlikte alıřmanın bařında sorulmuř olan  soru da cevaplanmıřtır. Arařtırmanın temel sonucu, Batı tarafından dayatılan millet fikrinin Afganistan'da yerel bir ierięe sahip olduęunu aıka gstermiřtir. Elbette bu ierik, Afganistan'ın kendi baęlamının bir rndr. Buna istinaden altı izilmesi gereken ilk nokta, Afganistan devletinin hali hazırda Taliban ile verdięi mcadele nedeniyle lkenin tamamına hakim olamayan zayıf bir devlet olmasıdır. Bu nedenle bu lkedeki mevcut durumda ulus-devletten bahsedilemez. Bunun yanında, devletin tarihsel olarak da yeterince kurumsallařmamıř olması, onun millet fikri iinde grnmez oluřunu da aıklamaktadır. İkinci nokta, Afganistan'da řehirleřme oranının ok dřk olması; nfusun oęunluęunun kylerde yařamasıdır. Dolayısıyla burada modernleřmiř endstriyel bir toplumdandan da bahsedilemez. Kırsal hayat biiminin *qawm* denilen toplulukları yeniden retmesi nedeniyle *qawm*, bu toplumun bařat unsuru olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu baęlamda retilmiř bir millet fikrini *qawm*'lerden baęımsız dřnmek imkansızdır. nc nokta ise Afganistan devletinin bir İslam cumhuriyeti olması ve buradan hareketle millet fikrini İslam temelinde kavramsallařtırmasıdır. Sonu itibarıyla Afganistan'ın kendi baęlamında incelendięinde arařtırmadan elde edilen bulgular, Afganistan devletinin yabancı bir kavram olan millet fikri ile nasıl bařa ıktıęını gstermiřtir. Sonuta ortaya ıkan 'Afganistan milleti' fikri, esasen Batı'da kavramsallařtırılmıř olan millet fikrinden epey farklıdır. Formatı Batılı olan millet fikrinin bu yerel ierikle anlamlı bir řekilde ne kadar iřleyebileceęi ise mehuldur. Bu durumun milliyetilik literatr iin anlamı ise gnmz dnyasında Batılı gler tarafından bir dıř politika hedefi olarak dayatılan millet inřası rneklerinde ortaya ıkan millet kavramının yerel baęlamda ok farklı řekillerde yorumlanabileceęi ve millet inřası dıřında her řeye hizmet edebileceęidir.

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AWARDS / PROJECTS

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ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Articles

Sungur, Z. T. (2016). "Early Modern State Formation in Afghanistan in relation to Pashtun Tribalism" in *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 16 (3).

Book Chapters

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Sungur, Z. T. (2014). “Tribal Encounters with Modernity: the Case of Pashtuns in Afghanistan,” paper presented at *WOCMES Ankara 2014: World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies*, Ankara: Middle East Technical University, August 18-22, 2014.

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