Framing Strategies in Pakhtunistan: Exploring the Role of Pakhtunwali in Defining Ideological, Social and Political Interactions.

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Framing Strategies in Pakhtunistan: Exploring the Role of Pakhtunwali in Defining Ideological,

Social and Political Interactions.

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Abstract

The Pakhtuns are a large tribal community whose territory overlaps the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both states have attempted to politicize the Pakhtun community through framing their national identity with ethno-national and pan-Islamic narratives. A key feature of these narrative strategies is their attempted alignment with a Pakhtun ideology called the *Pakhtunwali*. This thesis explores what social effect such narratives have had on *Pakhtunwali* and related Pakhtun tribal institutions as a result. Implications for regime stability in Afghanistan are assessed using visual models that identify points of congruence between social narratives and their Pakhtun audience.

The theoretical foundations established by "framing" in social movement theory literature is relied upon for this study of strategic narratives. These narrative-based framing interactions are considered in the larger context of English School theory's international and regional "world" societies. Both primary and secondary academic sources were consulted for the case study in the absence of field research. This thesis contributes to the academic field by suggesting potential methods of visualizing ideological competition, as well as encouraging deeper consideration of how common perception of the Pakhtuns have changed as a result.

Frontispiece

Dedication

I thank my parents for supporting me throughout my education and instilling the value of intelligence in my personal, as well as professional development. Several close friends who have supported me throughout the years (by patiently sitting through long-winded conceptual tangents) are also remembered, though not directly named. I also thank the academic faculty who have been a positive influence in my educational pursuits, especially those involved in this thesis for helping me maintain its original vision.

Acknowledgments

My thesis director, Dr. George Soroka, was of invaluable assistance in helping me finish this project that culminates my studies at the Harvard Extension School. Dr. Soroka's suggested application of social capital theory for this thesis became a central feature in its conceptual development. His critical feedback to my theoretical approach and ongoing support throughout the thesis writing process greatly improved its contribution to this field of study. Dr. Michael Miner's helpful suggestion that I review competitive framing literature helped me establish a strong foundation in the early development of my visual models. I also recognize the assistance of Trudi Goldberg Pires, who was always available to answer my ceaseless editing questions.

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Definition of Terms

English School Theory

Institutions: Widely accepted norms and practices that are represented primarily as conceptual entities in English School Theory and secondarily as tangible organizations (Bull, 2002, p. 71; Helmke & Levitsky, 2006, p. 5).

Primary Institutions: A collection of norms that structure social interactions. They are embodied by "…relatively fundamental and durable practices, that are evolved more than designed." (Buzan, 2004, pp. 167-168). Primary institutions differ in the absence of any formalized rules to prevent actor deviation, though most will abide by its regulations out of self-interest (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 891).

Secondary Institutions: The embodiment of primary institutions through bureaucratic organizations. These are typically reinforced through shared observance of rules to mandate primary institutions and force actor cooperation (Buzan, 2014, pp. 16-17; Stivachtis, n.d., p. 29).

World Society: A social system comprised of private individuals and sub-state organizations as primary actors (Buzan, 2004, pp. 44-45). Traditional definitions of world society emphasize its global unification of cosmopolitan values (Clark, 2007, pp. 30, 32-33; Pella, 2013, pp. 74-75). For this thesis, world society is considered at the regional

level and recognizes there is a wide range of norms contributing to societal interactions beyond those stipulated in the *Pakhtunwali*.

International System/Society: A social network comprised of states as primary actors. Their participation is presumably bound through forms of official or unofficial rules to prevent actor deviancy (Little, 2004, p. 48). To paraphrase Buzan (2014), state interactions are both conditioned and limited by a shared understanding of social boundaries that derive from common sets of rules or norms (Buzan, 2014, p. 13). These rules are often institutionalized and do not fully align with Pakhtun tribal society as presented in the case study.

Frame Theory

Frames/Framing: An interpretive narrative for social and political events (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). Frames will draw upon cultural material in constructing their message and have an implicit ideological appeal (Snow et al., 2014, p. 135; Snow & Byrd, 2007, p. 123). Frames are used to inspire rapid mobilization in the context of social movement theory (Snow et al., 1986, p. 456). However, no distinction is made between communicative and social movement frames as I consider them to be related processes in the case study.

Master Frames: In comparative models throughout Chapter V, master frames provide core narrative content that other frames draw upon in constructing their sociopolitical message (Snow & Benford, 1992, pp. 138-141). This includes shared social or political objectives, as well as tactics and strategies that appear commonly across

related social movements.[1] Master frames might also be considered as "global interpretive frames" as opposed to limited "domain specific frames" (Snow et al., 1986, p. 474).

Frame Alignment: The linking of independent frames. Snow et al. (1986) identify Frame Alignment as "the linkage or conjunction of individual and SMO [Social Movement Organization] interpretive frameworks." (pp. 467, 469, 473). Alignment is important for establishing congruence between existing frames and is discernable from "frame resonance" that is a population effect.

Frame Resonance: The positive effect of connecting a frame's central values with the receiving audience (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 204). A frame's salience is solidified with the receiving audience through what is described by Benford & Snow (2000) as "experiential commensurability", or how relevant the frame is in everyday life (p. 621; Mooney & Hunt, 1996, p. 178). Aspects that determine a frame's resonance potential also include consistency, credibility, the application of existing cultural material as well as narrative fidelity (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, pp. 10-11).

Frame Transformation: When a frame undergoes a drastic transition from its original intended purpose to adopt new social objectives (Noakes & Johnston, p. 12).

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[1] Similar to Tarrow's (1993) "repertoires of contention" (pp. 284-286).

Value Ambivalence: The uncertainty encountered by an audience when exposed to competing frames (Borah, 2019, pp. 138-139). Value ambivalence presupposes that individuals rely on core values in helping them to decide between social movement narratives (Borah, 2011a, pp. 251-252). Perhaps this phenomenon should be represented with the noun "bias" rather than "ambivalence", though its peculiar phrasing is well recognized in the field of competitive framing (Zaller & Feldman, 1992, pp. 584, 602).

Conceptual Terms

Ideology: A system of moral values or beliefs (Elster, 2016, pp. 142, 146). An ideology is distinguishable from a frame as it precedes framing development (Oliver & Johnston, 2000, p. 42; Snow & Byrd, 2007, pp. 120-122). Competitive frame theory postulates that values must be accentuated in a frame's message to have audience appeal.[2] This implies that values and ideologies are pre-existing within the culture that social narratives are constructed from.

Norms: Regular and predictable patterns of social behavior guided by interpersonal values (Elster, 1989, p. 100; Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 939; Wendt, 1999, p. 185).

Social Capital: A system of exchange that instills interpersonal values with social power (Portes, 1998, pp. 4-7). This power can be accumulated through transaction-based norms and institutions (Serageldin & Grootaert, 2000, p. 45). Social capital is classified

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[2] See Chapter IV's subheading "Competitive Framing".

among different types depending on the nature of its related norms and institutions. Cultural capital refers to the values originating from the *Pakhtunwali,* whereas religious capital is personified by Islamic institutions.

Values: Internalized moral beliefs relating to personal conduct. Values are conceptualized as building blocks for norms and are an important consideration in the frame development process (Finnemore, 1996, p. 342; Brewer, 2002, pp. 304-305). Values likely originate from the cultural environment and are historically developed through beliefs and regularized patterns of social activity (Goldman, 2006, p. 74).

Case Study and Technical Terms

Federally Administered Tribal Territories (FATA): A geographic space predominantly inhabited by the Pakhtun tribes and managed by the state of Pakistan. It consists of seven key territories including the Northwest Frontier Province, the western border with Afghanistan, and Baluchistan province (Johnson & Mason, 2008, p. 45). These territories are largely self-regulated by the Pakhtun tribes and discussions of FATA commonly overlap with definitions of *Pakhtunistan* (Khan, 2014, pp. 154-156).

Global Jihad (Frame): The narratives found in Salafi and Wahhabi Islam are condensed under the single title of the global *jihad* frame. This allows for alternative variations between Salafism and Wahhabism to be considered in a simpler format with common

norms, values, and beliefs (Baran, 2010, pp. 5-6; Kepel, 2002, pp. 59, 219-220; Armstrong, 2000, p. 193).

Pakhtunistan: A stateless territory between Afghanistan and Pakistan comprised of ethnic Pakhtuns. This region is largely self-governed by local *Jirga* council leaders who represent the various Pakhtun tribes inhabiting Pakistan's northwestern frontier (Wahab & Youngerman, , pp. 118-119). It is located across Baluchistan, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), and the FATA.[3]

Pan-Islam (Master Frame): This master frame broadly references the Islamic revivalist movement. It considers the historical influences of important ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb, Abu Musab al-Suri and Adbullah Azzam. This master frame requires either active or passive resistance to induce sociopolitical change. Its key objective is to implement *Shariah* law*,* though it is distinct from the more outwardly militant factions that comprise the global *jihad* movement (Armstrong, 2000, pp. 234-258; Kepel, 2002, Ch. 1).

Pakhtunwali Terms

Pakhtunwali: The seemingly uncodified norms and values that govern Pakhtun tribal interactions (Naumann, 2008, p. 117). *Pakhtunwali* literally translates to "the way

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[3] Refer to FATA in the terminology list for further details on its geographical characteristics (Johnson & Mason, p. 43).

of the Pakhtuns." (Yousaf, 2019, p. 2). Commonly perceived values of this tribal code

include honor, hospitality, and reciprocity.[4]

Nang: A composite phrase or "complex norm sanction" that broadly encompasses

notions of honor in *Pakhtunwali* (Naumann, 2008, p. 141; Shams-ur-Rehman, 2015, p.

302)*.* The core values of *tura* and *aql* are considered part of this inter-personal social

construct (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 5).

Tura: Directly translating to "sword", *tura* denotes a readiness to commit violence

in defense of honor (Glatzer, 1998a, pp. 5-6). It relates only to the individual and is

counterbalanced with the value *aql* as part of the *nang* complex norm (Mohammad et al.,

2016, p. 79)*.*

Aql: To "reason" in the context of social responsibility or to act in a way that

consciously reflects well on *Pakhtunwali* principles (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 6). It is a

counterbalancing value to *tura* and contributes to the larger complex norm of *nang*.

Melmastya: Often referred to as "hospitality", *melmastya* is generally considered

the act of providing housing for a guest (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2018, p. 60). Other

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[4] (Tariq et al., 2018, pp. 106-107); Mohammad's et al., (2016) publication explores the deeper meanings
behind these beliefs and serves as an example of how this definition is likely to expand with further
research.

interpretations suggest it means "chivalry" and is a key aspect of becoming a *khan* (Johnson & Mason, 2008, pp.63-64; Coulson et. al., 2014, p. 13).

Badal: More accurately interpreted as "reciprocity", though *badal* is often equated with revenge (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2018, p. 60). *Badal* provides "targeted imposition cost" within the Pakhtun social system, though it oftentimes results in long lasting feuds (Mohammad et al., 2016, pp. 77-79).

Arbakhi: A militia gathered to enforce a *jirga's* ruling (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 114). The *arbakhi* or *lashkar* have been politically mobilized as well, especially under the religious guidance of popular *murids* (Haroon, 2007c, p. 63).

Narkh: The *narkh* is said to represent fundamental norms and values of *Pakhtunwali* through customary tribal law (Wardak, 2003, p. 8). These laws differ among various tribes and require dedicated specialists to interpret the *narkh* in specific circumstances (Wardak, p. 8).

Nanawatey: A complex tradition in the mediation process preceding a tribal *jirga*. The accused party seeks refuge with another family who acts as their sponsor in the upcoming resolution process (Pelevin, 2022, p. 693). The act displays humility, and in the

context of a social capital system could be thought of as total relinquishment of accumulated capital.

Sakhawat: Displaying generosity or freely giving (Rzehak, 2011, p. 15). To gift prolifically implies wealth, real or perceived, and is likely a sub-component of the norm complex *melmastya.*

Ghairat: The idealized Pakhtun personification of *Pakhtunwali* core values. Those who accumulate significant social capital through the *Pakhtunwali* system of norms are termed *Ghairatman* (Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 81).

Pakhtun Institutions

Shurah: An overtly Islamic alternative to the Jirga. The Shurah deliberates based off *Shariah* principles as opposed to the Pashtunwali (Coburn, 2011, pp. 178-179).

Jirga: *Jirgas* are described as egalitarian councils with their decisions executed by *arbaki* and *lashkar.* They are one of the main secondary institutions that embody *Pakhtunwali* norms as part of a larger social capital system. as a means of instilling the socially accepted norms by threat of punishment to outsiders (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 6).

Mullah: Quasi-political actors who seek employment in a tribe as Islamic experts and act as its religious figurehead (Johnson, 2014, pp. 131-132). Oftentimes, they lack formal education and only propagate existing narratives (Magnus & Naby, 1998, p. 75). *Mullahs* are historically known to use their political influence in cultivate social movement followings (Akbar, 2004, p. 91).

Khan: Head of clans or extra-familial social units who attend *jirgas* in a ceremonial role. They do not participate in a *jirga* directly but chair or mediate in the discussion (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2018, p. 61). Their societal position is at the center of a patron-client relationship through land and arm distribution awarded to their followers (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 115).

Maliks: A "democratically elected" speaker for the tribe, with subjectively greater authority than a Khan (Johnson & Mason, 2008, p. 62; Canfield, 1984, p. 81). *Maliks* are carryovers of historical policy whereby states implanted a government representative within a tribe to act as a liaison with state affairs. Over time, the position has been culturally subsumed with *maliks* oftentimes serving addition roles, such as a *mullah* or *khan* (Coburn, 2011, pp. 77-79).

Chapter I:

Introduction

The Afghan state has sought to align itself throughout history with a large tribal powerbase known as the "Pakhtuns". This tribal group presides across the territorial borders of both Afghanistan and Pakistan (Tanner, 2009, p. 113). The Pakhtuns have been portrayed as coterminous with the Afghan government through creation of an intentionally "framed" sociopolitical narrative. This narrative – sponsored by the Afghan government – draws upon extant cultural material like the *Pakhtunwali* tribal code of honor (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, pp. 110, 112). The accuracy of such narratives is unclear when they are also a byproduct of historical manipulation by different governing regimes. Regardless, the *Pakhtunwali* is still considered an objective feature of Pakhtun society. It is therefore important to consider what implications can be inferred from the *Pakhtunwali* as it relates to framing strategies waged by Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other sub-state entities attempting to mobilize the Pakhtun tribes.

This thesis utilizes visual models in displaying framing interactions that have occurred between warring parties over control of the colloquially termed Pakhtun territory of "*Pakhtunistan*". These models represent ongoing research in developing practitioner tools that raise awareness for ideological considerations in strategic planning. The models are applied to a historical case study that analyzes various strategies by state and non-state actors to competitively frame Pakhtun cultural identity. This case study focuses on frames used during the 21st century and includes a brief discussion of the neo-Taliban regime currently governing Kabul. An attempted construction of Pakhtun

ideology precedes this analysis based academic publications relating to *Pakhtunwali*. This ideological depiction is necessary for the competitive frame analysis as it identifies what core values resonate most in *Pakhtunwali*. Further evidence of these values is found in their institutional representation in the Pakhtun's tribal system of social capital.

Research Question

Ideological preferences or values are important for social movement strategists as they oftentimes determine what narrative content resonates most with a targeted audience. Identifying what core values are instilled through the *Pakhtunwali* offers important insight as to what narrative frames have the strongest potential for long-term alignment success with the Pakhtun population. The leading question for this thesis is:

"What are the core values of *Pakhtunwali* and how are these values reflected in the general society?"

Implications for long-term stability can be deduced from how these values are supported or rejected by different framing strategies, such as the ethno-nationalist frame sponsored by Afghanistan or pan-Islamic narrative supported by Pakistan. If a governing regime like the Taliban do not appeal to culturally endemic values, or if they force an alternative system of values in its place, then it is unlikely their frame alignment strategy will be conducive to long term political success.

Hypothesis

The *Pakhtunwali* is expected to embody a coherent set of intrapersonal values that are mostly incongruent with the pan-Islamic based, global *jihad* movement. *Pakhtunwali*'s values can later be referred to when analyzing how effectively external framing strategies have been aligned with the local culture. Intentional efforts at aligning cultural values with extremist Islamic doctrine were likely initiated by members of the global *jihad* movement shortly after the Soviet Afghan War (Crews & Tarzi, 2008, pp. 38-40). The Taliban are expected to be the most evident byproduct of these framing efforts at transforming Pakhtun tribal society (Franco, 2009, p. 273; Snow et al., 2018, p. 401). It is hypothesized this frame alignment is not conducive to long-term success given variations in how the *Pakhtunwali* is codified in comparison to extremist Islamic political theory (Lia, 2008, pp. 92-93; Tariq et al., 2018, pp. 103-105; Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 12). To summarize, the Pakhtuns are not expected to be fully aligned with the Taliban, global *jihad,* or the pan-Islamic master frame.

Methodology

A qualitative review of literary sources on the *Pakhtunwali* guides the creation of a visual model showcasing its core values and attributes in Chapter II. Cataloging these attributes is important for assessing how effectively various framing strategies have aligned with the *Pakhtunwwali.* Their relevance as part of the larger Pakhtun social system is explored throughout Chapter III's application of social capital theory. A historical case study in Chapter IV provides an overview of how different framing strategies have been competitively introduced to alter the development of Pakhtun

political identity. The case study's findings are collated into a final analysis in Chapter V, whereby visual models are introduced to compare different framing interactions. Long term resonance potential can be inferred based on how closely these sociopolitical narratives align with their intended Pakhtun audience.

<div align="center">Literature Review</div>

It is important to remember that social movements often use written publications – including academic literature – as a means for disseminating political messages. Much of this thesis acts as a literature review as it carefully analyzes existing trends in the academic discourse on *Pakhtunwali*. For example, Kushal Khan Khattak's *Dastar-Nama* is often credited as the earliest known publication on *Pakhtunwali.* A translated copy of the *Dastar-Nama* by Kunitskaya (2021) with accompanying commentary was referred to for this thesis.

Excellent summaries of the *Pakhtunwali* by Omarkhel et al. (2023) and Mohammad et al. (2016) helped complement this reading through highlighting common norms and values referenced in the *Dastar-Nama*. Inconsistencies in how these norms and values are conceptualized informed Chapter III as it sought to reconcile such deviations with how "realpolitik" is conducted in Pakhtun society. Publications that recognize the effects of historical framing on Pakhtun cultural identity include Kakar's (2012) "Popular misconceptions about Pashtunwali" and Monsutti's (2013) "Anthropologizing Afghanistan: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters". These articles are good examples of what literature has influenced the direction of research for this thesis. Naumann's (2008) thorough categorization of Pakhtun values and his use of

"binary logic" in describing these normative interactions were highly informative in framing discussions.

Other sources not directly related to the *Pakhtunwali* that still provide necessary insight into how Pakhtun tribal systems function are Lindholm's (1982) *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan* and Coburn's (2011) *Bazaar Politics*. Both publications are repeatedly referenced in the discussions of Pakhtun values and customs, as they are excellent sources in using theoretical principles for interpreting tribal dynamics. Barfield (2003) and Roy (1990) were also helpful resources for understanding the broader social, political and ethnic history of the different Pakhtun tribes.

Chapter IV's case study relies heavily upon Peter Tomsen's (2011) *The Wars of Afghanistan*. Inherent bias in Tomsen's book might be called into question given his status as a former U.S. diplomat. However, Tomsen's publication also highlights numerous failings of U.S. foreign policy and details his personal experience meeting with Northern Alliance leaders that occurred after his time in federal service (Tomsen, p. 561). Tomsen's publication is valuable, though his first-hand accounts are difficult to verify given its autobiographical nature. Where Tomsen substantiates his own observations with footnotes – such as what specific *mujahideen* fronts were trained for the Taliban – suggests his claims are credible, as they remain consistent with the findings outlined in Chapter V (Tomsen, p. 257, footnote 17, p. 766).

Conceptualization of the pan-Islamic frame was informed by publications on key ideologues in the global *jihad* movement. These publications include Bryanjar Lia's (2008) book *Architect of Global Jihad*, Muhammad Hanif Hassan's (2014) *The Father of Jihad* and Thomas Hegghammer's (2020) *The Caravan*. Ethno-nationalist framing

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dynamics were developed from cross-referencing material from a dissertation by Sungur (2013) with authoritative publications by Faridullah Bezhan and Thomas Ruttig. Leake (2023) and Roy (2015) were also important sources on the topic of ethno-nationalist framing.

Research Limitations

In the absence of dedicated field research, this thesis was restricted to examining existing literature on the topic. Its contributions are strictly qualitative and dependent on the accuracy of common narratives relating to Pakhtun society, its culture, and history. Certain inconsistencies have been identified in how the Pakhtuns are depicted in wider literature. It remains unclear whether this is a natural result from ongoing reproduction of intellectual viewpoints, or potentially a contagion effect as a result sociopolitical narrative construction. Furthermore, all sources are English translations of original works, thus presenting a linguistic barrier in the full integration of sources written directly in Pakhtun or Dari. In recognizing such limitations, this thesis has avoided becoming another byproduct of ethno-nationalist framing narratives through careful scrutiny of its literary sources. Academic publications are one of the means used by frames in spreading sociopolitical narrative regardless of their veracity as explored further in Chapter IV (Hyman, 2002, p. 308; Nawid, 2012, pp. 36-38).

Historical and Cultural Background

Afghanistan has played host to warring empires for over two millennia. Alexander the Great's conquest of Persia brought him deep into the heart of lower Central Asia, where his forces pierced the Hindu Kush Mountain range forming Afghanistan's eastern border (Tanner, 2009, p. 40). The Arab campaigns of 7th century A.D. brought Islam to the region, although their victories were subsequently overshadowed by the Mongol Golden Horde in the 1200s (Tanner, pp. 75, 97-98; Barfield, 2010, p. 10). In the Modern era, international attention was drawn away from Afghanistan, which experienced a short-lived Durrani Pakhtun Kingdom in the 18th century (Tanner, p. 115; Tomsen, 2011, p. 53). In the 19th century, Afghanistan was recognized as providing little more than a strategic buffer separating British East India from Imperial Russia. It is best to consider recent events from the 19th century moving forward, as the contemporary borders of Afghanistan were delineated by Mortimer Durand in 1893 to demarcate the edge of British East India (Wahab & Youngerman, 2007, p. 96).

The Durrand Line attempted to make practical use of geographical terrain to demarcate the edge of British territorial holdings (Margolis, 2001, p. 13; Crews & Tarzi, 2008, p. 15). However, in contemporary times, it has failed to encompass the ethnolinguistic spread of tribal communities that give Afghanistan its cultural identity. The largest of these tribal groups associated with Afghan political identity are the Pakhtuns. Also referred to (somewhat) interchangeably as Pashtuns or Pathans, their society is composed of numerous tribes tracing their origins back to popular male ancestors in Islamic history (Margolis, p. 10; Barfield, p. 22). The importance of the Durrand Line for Pakhtuns is how it split the population in half with roughly equal

portions living on opposite sides of the Hindu Kush. In Pakistan, the Pakhtuns reside in a

Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) that is, ironically, not federally managed

(Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 109). In Afghanistan, the Pakhtuns comprise about 40% of

the population, although the accuracy of these numbers is difficult to verify and

potentially inflated (Barfield, 2010, p. 24).

The Pakhtun territory is colloquially referred to as *Pakhtunistan* given its

propensity for self-government under the tribal code of *Pakhtunwali* (Tariq et al., 2018,

pp. 106, 108-110; Wahab & Youngerman, 2007, pp. 118-119). This tribal code differs

little from other highland cultures with similar emphasis placed on concepts of freedom,

hospitality, and revenge (Margolis, 2001, pp. 11-12). Although Pakhtun society is

composed of tribal configurations, Barfield (2010) argues that ethnic and tribal labels in

Afghanistan "are more descriptive than operational" and ideology has a negligible effect

on local intertribal politics (Barfield, p. 40). Tribal affiliations are portrayed as a mostly

fluid phenomena, with association being determined based on recent events and

individual perception of a tribe's image (Barfield, p. 21). This point is contrary to the

Taliban's strategy of using religion and ethnicity to mobilize their Pakhtun followers

(Sinno, 2008, pp. 75-78). If ethnicity held no sway in Afghanistan, then why would the

Taliban selectively identify as Pakhtun? Ultimately, whether the average Pakhtun cares

for the mostly isolated politics of Kabul does not preclude him from experiencing its

effects.

Chapter II:

Pakhtun Values and Ideology

To provide a conceptual foundation for Pakhtun ideology requires identifying what values constitute a system of moral ideas in the *Pakhtunwali* (Elster, 2016, pp. 142, 146). Values provide core ideological content for the framing of sociopolitical narratives. Such values also imbue institutions with cultural legitimacy in Pakhtun society. This chapter concludes with a visual model of Pakhtun values as part of an ongoing process to create practitioner tools for managing framing interactions. Conveniently, many scholars begin their exploration of *Pakhtunwali* through identifying its core, inter-personal values (Naumann, 2008, p. iii).

It must be said that *Pakhtunwali* is not considered a tribal code of law for this study. By the conclusion of my thesis, I had not found any evidence that *Pakhtunwali* has ever been formally "codified". Moreover, there already is a term for legalized Pakhtun norms – the *narkh* – that suggests *Pakhtunwali* is not by itself a legal system, but rather a collection of values that might inform the creation of laws. *Paktunwali* is considered in the following discussion to contain a system of values – or ideology – for the purpose of preserving Pakhtun cultural identity. Khattak (2010) uses a similar definition without distinguishing the institutional manifestation of related *norms* and *values* (p. 15). Once these ideological components are identified, they can be recognized in narratives used in social movement framing.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory is directly relevant for the study of *Pakhtunwali.* As

described by Coleman (1988): "Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single

entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of

some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors—whether

persons or corporate actors—within the structure." (Coleman, 1988, p. 16). What will be

seen is *Pakhtunwali* elevates key values by instilling them with latent social or political

power in the tribal system. In the context of a highly ambiguous term like *Pakhtunwali*, it

follows that social capital would also be vaguely defined. Serageldin and Grootaert

(2000) suggest the following working definition:[5]

"Social capital generally refers to the set of norms, networks, and organizations

through which people gain access to power and resources that are instrumental in

enabling decision-making and policy formulation." (Serageldin and Grootaert, p. 45).

Social capital is distinct from other forms of logistical capital like industry or the

economy (Coleman, 1988, p. 19). In circumstances where reciprocity ensures the

repayment of social obligations (a core feature of *Pakhtunwali*), Coleman (1988) suggests

that social capital assumes a similar role to financial capital with visible overlap (p. 20).

Grootaert and Bastelaer (2002) refer to this form as cognitive social capital*,* since it is

"…more subjective in nature and aligns with generally accepted attitudes, norms of

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[5] Serageldin and Grootaert (2000) state that Coleman (1988) is credited with having introduced social capital theory to the field of sociology (footnote 4, p. 45). It was actually in an earlier French publication that the term was first introduced (Portes, 1998, p. 3). Putnam et al. (1993) certainly popularized the term with the controversial publication *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* and in Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone* (p. 45).

behavior, shared values, reciprocity and trust." (Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2002, p. 3). As social norms are institutionalized their ambiguity is reduced, thus resulting in the transition of social capital from cognitive to structural form (Grootaert and Bastelaer, p. 3). Such a transition is indicated by the presence of secondary institutions as per English School definitional standards. Regardless of institutionalization, all forms of social capital are believed to erode over time in the absence of regular use (Ostrom, 2000, p. 179). This increases emphasis on the cultural role of *Pakhtunwali* since it preserves traditional norms that guide the formation of culturally distinct Pakhtun institutions.

Insight provided from social capital theory is dependent on recognizing subtle nuances and unique cultural conditions in Afghanistan. Coburn (2011) provided a preliminary mapping of how different social capital strains affected Tajik civil society in a village outside the capital of Kabul. Although his research focused on a different ethnic group, some cultural overlap is evident through terminology used, such as *qawm* representing an extended social network in both Tajik and Pakhtun communities (Canfield, 1984, pp. 89-90).

While Coburn's research does not translate directly to the study of outlying Pakhtun villages, it does help provide a general foundation for labeling various forms of underlying values. At least seven "categories of authority" were identified by Coburn as existing between "internal" and "external" forms of social capital.[6] The internal forms of social capital were those cultivated within the village and fostered among civil society

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[6] Coburn uses different channels of social capital to define his seven categories that differs from Wardak's (2003) "forms of authority" (p. 106). Wardak generally refers to these same positions as being dependent on charismatic, legal-rational or traditional methods of authority (with each definition provided by Weber (1964). Considering different methods of authority nested within existing channels of social capital is worth further academic inquiry, though this theory has not specifically expanded upon the concept.

(Coburn, p. 108). The most common values in social interactions among the Pakhtun embody honor, hospitality and reciprocity, similar to Coburn's description of cultural capital among the Tajik (Coburn, p. 108). While some institutions might rely upon physical or financial capital for empowerment, most often it is value legitimacy – cultural capital – that determines institutional stability. It appears most – if not all – Pakhtun institutions rely on the embodiment of cultural values to provide institutional integrity (Coburn, p. 109). In short, Pakhtun society is bound together through shared sociopolitical competition that relies upon the prevalence of values shared in the *Pakhtunwali.*

<center>Ideology and the Pakhtunwali</center>

"Ideology" as it is used here exclusively refers to values or beliefs (Oliver & Johnston, 2000, pp. 42-45).[7] Many studies begin with identifying the presence of values in a host population to assess a frame's likelihood for success (Brewer, 2002, pp. 304-305). In theory, this helps to explain why certain narratives resonate more effectively with some populations more than others (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 205). Identifying the values present within *Pakhtunwali* should thus provide a general understanding of what is being targeted for narrative alignment by strategic framing practitioners (Wiktorowicz, 2004, pp. 161-162).[8] Conveniently, *Pakhtunwali* is often approached in this exact way; it is widely portrayed as a system of norms or values as seen in the following examples (Taj, 2011, pp. 1-2).

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[7] See Zaller & Feldman (1992) for other examples of testing pre-formed ideological beliefs.
[8] Framing is the construction of social movement narratives and is introduced in Chapter IV as it is most relevant to the case study.

Glatzer (1998b) provides a very straightforward definition by calling

Pakhtunwali a code of ethnic norms and values (p. 13). How ethnicity is incorporated as

part of this definition is especially important. It is often thought that *Pahtunwali* is an

ethnic byproduct of Pakhtun cultural history. As Chapter IV will elaborate, it is possible

that attempts to "ethnicize" *Pakhtunwali* came from ethno-nationalist framing efforts by

the Afghan state. Some Pakhtuns even reportedly do not recognize the term

"*Pakhtunwali*" (Rzehak, 2011, p. 3, footnote 3; Rehman, 2015, p. 302). Regardless of

whether *Pakhtunwali* is legitimately an ethnic byproduct, there are inherently features of

it practiced by Pakhtun tribal society (Nauman, 2008, pp. 12-13). For example, Coulson

et al. (2014) refer to the Pakhtuns as a tribal conglomerate (foregoing any mention of

ethnicity) and note how this cultural identity has become conflated with Afghan

nationalism (Coulson et al., 2014. p. 8). Complex inter-tribal rivalries generally prevent

widescale unification of the Pakhtuns, though a shared sense of "pakhtuness" has been

interwoven throughout historical memory (Kakar, 2004, pp. 2-3). The reoccurring – and

presently unanswered – question of this thesis is whether the *Pakhtunwali* and Pakhtuns

are really a distinct ethnic group on the basis of accurate ethnographic research.

Barfield (2003) describes *Pakhtunwali* as "[a] code of conduct that stresses

personal autonomy and equality of political rights in a world of equals." (p. 5). This

definition covers both norms and values while also inferring that distribution of power is

based off of shared liberal principles. However, it is unclear whether liberal norms should

be conceptually used to interpret the *Pakhtunwali*. Some scholars commonly elevate what

they perceive to be liberal norms in Pakhtun society, thus suggesting the Pakhtuns are

democratically inclined (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2018, p. 61; Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013,

p. 62; Mushtaq et al., 2020, p. 13). The presence of a single democratic institution in Pakhtun society though, does not justify labeling the entire Pakhtun system as one premised on democratic or liberal values.[9]

First-hand accounts substantiate this point on how democratic norms are perceived in Pakhtun society. Although Lindholm (1982) recognizes "equality" as a foundational tenet of *Pakhtunwali,* this is not necessarily an equality of rights, but perhaps an equality enforced through potential for violent repercussion (p. 211). Coburn's (2011) observations further suggest that violence is just one of many social mechanisms used to impose equality in Afghanistan (p. 215). It is unclear whether this means the system is un-democratic because violence is a common social norm – and a particularly accessible one at that – or if the tribal political system could still be considered democratic in spite of accessible violence (Coburn, pp. 219-221).

Johnson and Mason (2008) offer a more comprehensive definition that advances this study beyond simply viewing the *Pakhtunwali* as a collection of norms and values. They state that, "Pashtunwali is the sum total of the tribes' collective expectations…that ensure the group's survival as a distinct sociocultural entity." (p. 60).

Whereas many definitions exclusively rely on interpersonal values to define *Pakhtunwali,* Johnson and Mason (2008) consider the term representative of a larger effort to ensure cultural preservation of historical Pakhtun traditions and customs (pp. 58-64). Their definition encourages a wider perspective of *Pakhtunwali's* social relevance as not just a linguistic tool, but also the focus of shared historical memory. Johnson and

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[9] Wardak (2003) suggests the *Jirga* system might be an effective mechanism for transitioning Afghanistan into a new democratic order. Still, Wardak recognizes such a transition would have to occur in the absence of any modern democratic culture (p. 13).

Mason are not the only scholars to recognize how *Pakhtunwali* is representative of more complex social phenomena, though their definition provides a useful basis for more nuanced interpretation (Kakar, 2004, p. 2; Rzehak, 2011, p. 17; Dawar, 2019, p. 279).

Despite most definitions referring to it as such, I do not consider *Pakhtunwali* to be a social or tribal code. No evidence in the literature has been found to suggest that codification has ever occurred in written form outside of verbal diffusion (Kakar, 2004, p. 2; Rzehak, 2011, p. 17; Dawar, 2019, p. 279). Historically high rates of illiteracy are partially to blame for any comprehensively written account of *Pakhtunwali.* Such limitations are especially pertinent for the dissemination of Afghan law. Under the reign of King Ammanullah Khan, attempts to propagate his own written interpretation of *Shariah* law were impeded because, aside from state representatives and possibly religious Mullahs, few Afghans were expected to read (Ahmed, 2016, p. 659). This might explain the absence in legal codification of *Pakhtunwali* since there is no written material from tribal society that could be referred to in creating state laws. Oftentimes, Islam is deferred to for legalization and thus most state laws based on the *Pakhtunwali* adopt an exceptionally religious character.[10] The most recent attempt to do so was the merging of *Shariah Law* with the *Jirga* system under the 2004 Afghan Constitution.[s]

In the absence of codification, Pakhtuns have relied on maintaining *Pakhtunwali* almost exclusively through oral tradition (Rzehak, 2011, p 3; Pelevin, 2022, p. 692). In fact, transliteration of the Pashto language itself is considered a relatively recent phenomena (Garcia & Munir, 2016, p. 160; Pelevin, 2019, p. 489). There is a strong

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[10] Barfield (2003) provides a list of reasons why this occurred during the Soviet Afghan era that likely apply to other historical periods as well (p. 33; Ahmed, 2016, p. 657-658, 661; Rather & Naby, 1998, pp. 36-38). The most recent attempt at merging *Shariah* law with the Jirga system was under the 2004 Afghan Constitution (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2004, pp. 35-36).

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tradition within Pakhtun culture of social values being passed on through music, verbal

poetry, and popular myths.[11] It is unsurprising that similar practices in Islam have likely

reinforced these traditions, especially in the case of Sufism. The word *qawaal* in Pashto is

associated with Sufi singers or storytellers, and likely refers to traveling mystics who

used these skills as a preferred method of preaching (Lingdocs.com, n.d.; Green, 2017,

pp. 20-21). These methods of preaching have evolved into their own unique form of

social capital that is explored further in Chapter III's discussion on *Pakhtunwali*

institutions. Regardless, it appears that village *mullahs* currently retain control over most

of this social power, and now almost exclusively control the Pakhtun historical narrative

(Johnson, 2014, p. 130).

It appears *Pakhtunwali* could only be codified through widespread verbal

dissemination thus becoming intrinsic knowledge. However, the conspicuous lack of any

written source to dictate how *Pakhtunwali* should be implemented has led to a noticeable

elasticity in how it is perceived among the various tribes.[12] It is likely that in such cases

Pakhtunwali has been confused with other cultural traditions common among many

different tribal groups, or mistakenly attributed to another concept called the *narkh*. The

narkh refers to a "centuries-old body of the civil and penal tribal 'customary laws.'"

(Wardak, 2003, p. 7). It is unclear what relationship the *narkh* has alongside *Pakhtunwali,*

but it is possible that its quasi-legal status is a better representation of value codification.

When it has been witnessed, the *narkh* provides a separate process for legal reasoning

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[11] The Pakhtun phrase "*lowz*" stands for the importance of spoken word in their culture and has likely reinforced such verbal practices (Khattak 2010, p. 33). Also see: Pelevin, 2022, p. 687; Wasai & Bano, 2015, pp. 117-120.

[12] Primarily from observations by Lindholm, 1982, p. 90. Also see: Barfield, 2003, p. 1; Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 76; Shams-ur-Rehman, 2015, p. 302.

that is referred to in passing judgement during a village *jirga* assembly (Shams-ur-Rehman, 2015, p. 7).

If the *narkh* is a separate system within the *Pakhtunwali,* then further questions arise as to what norms or rules it currently embodies. Further research into the role of *narkh* in Pakhtun society is paramount for two reasons. First, it represents a potential loophole in the argument surrounding codification. The *narkh* might be a codification of *Pakhtunwali* with its manifestation of secondary institutions, most notably through the jirga assembly.[13] There is even a specific social class dedicated to memorizing the *narkh* (known as *narkhi*) that could be thought of as a Pakhtun legal scholar.[14] Second, if the *narkh* equates to the law, then a sizeable portion of the literature has incorrectly assumed that *Pakhtunwali is* the law.[15] It is possible the *narkh* represents the implementation of rules that ensure compliance of Pakhtun norms or values. Since many variations of *narkh* exist among the tribes, it is difficult to assess whether it is effectively codifying the norms of *Pakhtunwali.*

<p style="text-align:center">The Apparent Values of Pakhtunwali</p>

Kushal Khan Khattak's *Dastar-Nama* (Book of the Turban) is the most popular primary source used for interpreting the *Pakhtunwali.* The *Dastar-Nama* is the oldest

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[13] Although the definitions for primary and secondary institutions by Buzan (2014) were developed for studying the international system, they have been applied to this sub-regional case for their ability to discern between cultural concepts and the physical manifestation through governing bodies (pp. 16-17).

[14] The *narkhi's* role is left ambiguous in the literature and is rarely mentioned, but they act mostly as advisors with expansive memorization of tribal laws. Allegedly, Sayyids, Sufi mystics, and other religious figures can act in a similar capacity, except this would likely deviate towards *Shariah* as opposed to Pakthun law (Rzehak, 2011, p. 13; Tariq et al., 2018, pp. 104-105).

[15] Pelevin (2022) states that, "the elaboration of 'a system of recorded precedent'" could reduce the ambiguity of orally transmitted rules and transform Pashtunwali "from a code of honor into a real code of law." (p. 687). It is implied legal institutions do not indicate a "codification" of *Pakhtunwali,* especially if these institutions are representative of the *Narkh* instead.

known written account to name the *Pakhtunwali* directly, and many scholars consider it a guide for understanding how the Pakhtun social system works.[16] The *Dastar-Nama* is explicitly dedicated to identifying the interpersonal values that Khan Khattak considers ideal of any Pakhtun leader. Therefore, its relevance is much more limited for studying how Pakhtun society functions today than many researchers seem to realize. Scholars have already noted that *Dastar-Nama* was not intended to be read by the average Pakhtun and in many ways is a collection of hyperboles used for Khattak's own life experiences[17]. The *Dastar-Nama* is focused on presenting the emerging Pakhtun nobility with a cultural ethos that is unique and reinforces its own ethnic identity (Khattak, 2010, pp. 53-54). The *Dastar-Nama* might be seen as the *Art of War* for successful Pakhtun leadership (Sunzi, 2007).

Despite these limitations, it is standard practice to cite the values listed in *Dastar-Nama* as if they reflected contemporary norms or values in the *Pakhtunwali* (Kakar, 2012, p. 10). Khan Khattak separates his book into two sections, with the second half dedicated to interpersonal traits of the ideal Pakhtun (Kunitskaya, 2021, p. 55). Kakar (2012) presents the twenty values most succinctly in the following quote:

> "Consultation (Salah), Determination (Azam), Calmness (Khamoshi) , Righteousness (Rasthi), Virtue of modesty (Sharam wa Haya), courtesy (Murawath), Forgiveness (Afo wa Karam), Sense of good and bad (Thameez), Justice and equity (Adal wa Insaaf), Trust in God (Tawakal), Favor of close relatives, Modesty (Sahram), Fear and hope (Khowf wa Rija), Administrative sense, Courage(Himmat), Humility (Halam), Honor (Ghairat), farsightedness (Hazam), Alertness (Ahtiath), Obedience of the leader (Attauath) and Seeking Forgiveness from Allah (Asthaghfaar)." (Kakar, 2012, pp. 11-12).

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[16] No official publication date exists beyond an estimate of 1666 (p. Kunitskaya, 2021, p. 7).
[17] Further details surrounding Khan Khattak's *Dastar-Nama* can be found in the literature review, including a dedicated discussion as to what limitations other researchers perceive in using his book.

While overlap certainly exists between the values outlined in *Dastar-Nama* with the *Pakhtunwali*, it should not be assumed that one is a complete reflection of the other. The *Pakhtunwali* consolidates several of *Dastar-Nama's* values into norms that inform a larger system of social capital. This has led to scholars presenting the values of *Dastar-Nama* as hierarchically arranged within Pakhtun society (Johnson & Mason, 2008, p. 62). For example, honor is perhaps the most widely repeated concept as it is representative of a Pakhtun social credit system indicative of the trustworthiness of an individual. This value is referenced in the *Dastar-Nama* as "ghairat", though honor has also been referred to as "nang" in other cases (Glatzer, 1998, p. 4; Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 81). It is unsurprising that honor is perceived as the core of *Pakhtunwali* given its centrality as most Pakhtun norms are structured around it. However, other scholars have claimed hospitality and revenge (or reciprocity) are equally valued – if not more important – than honor.

Honor

"Honor" is not representative of a single concept in *Pakhtunwali,* but rather a composite term for multiple inter-related values. This phenomenon has been described as a "norm-sanction complex" as it typically houses a "binary logic" for dictating social interactions.[18] Since values will often be shared through this norm-sanction complex, *ghairat* or *nang* are often repeated as comparable definitions for the word "honor" (Shakoor, 2013, p. 68; Dawar, 2019, p. 279). Lindholm (1982) clarifies in his study of Swati Pakhtuns that:

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[18] For norm-sanction complex: Naumann, 2008, p. 132; For binary logic: Naumann, pp. vi, vii, 133.

"Nang means being willing to die or otherwise sacrifice oneself for Pukhtunwali, but it has the specific meaning of sacrifice for a friend. This is the quintessence of nang. Gherat, on the other hand, has the more positive meaning of living up to the principles of the code…" (p. 237).

Ghairat has further association with the term *ghairatman*, or one who represents themselves fully as the ideal embodiment of Pakhtun values. Mohammad et al. (2016) considers it to be the leading norm-sanction complex in *Pakhtunwali* because, "…*Ghairat* pools almost all values and rules of behaviour of the code of honour of the Pashtuns." (p. 81).[19] Among the wide range of values drawn together under *Ghairat* include dignity, zeal, bravery, indignation and modesty (Mohammad et al., p. 81).[20]

Nang is specifically a communal term as it refers to the defense of collectively accrued honor (Rzehak, 2011, pp. 9-10). A variation of the word, *nanga,* is specifically used in reference to the defense of personal honor (Rzehak, pp. 9-10)*.* Pakhtuns supposedly distinguish between traditional highland communities and other sedentary lowland populations through use *nang* and *qawlang* (Johnson & Mason, 2008, p. 60; Sungur, 2013, p. 18). It is likely that *ghairat* is conceptually closest to a direct translation of honor, whereas *nang* addresses its social relevance. Both terms are still heavily imbued with social displays of honor.

One possible way of interpreting honor as a specific value is through use of the word *tura.* Directly translated *tura* means a "sword", but it is also used to describe one's personal heroism, gallantry and willingness to commit violence (Lindholm, 1982, pp. 237-238; Glatzer, 1998a, p. 2; Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 79). *Tura* is highly

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[19] To clarify, it is inferred rather than directly stated that *Ghairat* is a *norm-sanction complex*.
[20] It should be noted this commentary on *Ghairat* was influenced primarily by the *Dastar-Nama.*

individualized and cannot be attained through collective action. It is represented through the proactive cultivation of a heroic persona while simultaneously defending said prestige. This includes group honor as well despite *tura* relating to the individual (Glatzer, p. 6). This description of *tura* might seem familiar as it encompasses the general aspects of *ghairat* and *nang*. It is recommended that *tura* be labeled as the foundational "value" in *Pakhtunwali* given its many manifestations in the social arena, such as in *ghairat* and *nang*.[21]

Reciprocity

Badal is often portrayed as revenge and the second most prevalent value in *Pakhtunwali* (Lindolm, 1982, p. 211; Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 108; Coulson et al., 2014, p. 3). Whereas honor acts as a source of power, reciprocity prevents deviance from social norms and rules (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 112, footnote 46). Ahmed and Yousaf (2018) clarify that reciprocity is a more accurate interpretation of *badal* as opposed to generalized revenge (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2018, p. 60). Further descriptions of *badal* consider it commonplace for "high context societies" (Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 82).

Environments that foster proportional retribution are thought to encourage cultural acceptance of "retributive morality" (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 112). *Badal* imposes a high cost for deviance, though it assumes members of a community are equally balanced in terms of their ability to reciprocate violence (Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 77). This can result in disproportionate balancing of justice that leads to unending "blood

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[21] It is possible that *tura* is an alternative translation of *Ghairat*. Further review of the literature was unable to clarify this point further and it remains a potential analytical shortcoming.

feuds" and other cyclical forms of violence (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 112). While *badal* offers a re-balancing of norm or value equilibrium, it is important to remember that revenge is supposed to be a direct violation of Islamic Law (Sungur, 2013, p. 20; Coulson et. al, 2014, p. 12). A lengthier definition from McCollough et. al (2013) uses the term "targeted imposition of cost" to describe the social function of *badal* (In Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 77).

There are various pseudo-legal traditions associated with *Pakhtunwali* that are often confused as synonymous with *badal.* Foremost among them is *nanawatey* that is seeking amnesty before appearing in front of a tribal *jirga* (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013, p. 67). *Nanawatey* is a complex, multi-step process dedicated to violence de-escalation after one Pakhtun has severely slighted another (Wardak, 2003, p. 197). Any neutral party – even the "plaintiff" – can be approached to act as a host for the defendant until a *jirga* has officially convened (Wardak, p. 197). While the *jirga* deliberates, the host is expected to provide for the defendant's well-being and safety. Once the case is concluded, the defendant can be robbed – or worse – by their previously amicable hosts (Lindholm, 1982, p. 234).

Aspects of humiliation during public exposure are prevalent throughout *nanawatey* and highlight the ongoing relevance of honor during the mediation process. It is difficult to tell whether honor is the most centralized feature of this tradition since reciprocity is meant to reinstate the honor of those affected. In this way, *nanawatey* is more likely a norm rather than a specific value, or better put, "a standardized ritual with a set of widely acknowledged regulations…" (Pelevin, 2022, p. 694). *Badal* is therefore considered a value alongside *tura* as a central ideological component of *Pakhtunwali*.

Hospitality

One final value to be addressed is hospitality as it is commonly mentioned alongside honor and reciprocity as the formative pillars of *Pakhtunwali* (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 3; Ahmed & Yousaf, 2018; Coulson et al., 2014, p. 3). *Melmastya* is more than just a tradition of hospitality as it is laden with implications for one's social standing among the community. The purpose of *melmastya* is to provide for guests using whatever means are available to the host. This provides an opportunity to demonstrate "wealth" among the community as guests are often cared for beyond the host's practical limitations (Lindholm, 1982, p. 231). Although its violation is shameful in Pakhtun culture, other considerations can affect whether a host will receive a guest or not, such as their participation in violent extremist movements (Wasai & Bano, 2015, p. 123). For example, Taj (2011) notes that seeking *melmastya* during a blood-feud is considered reasonable grounds for refusing hospitality.[22]

It is important to note *melmastya* is also erroneously confused with *nanawatey* since both concepts embody some form of hospitality (Naumann, 2008, pp. 104-105). The two are easily distinguished from one another as *melmastya* is not a means of resolving conflict (Taj, 2011, p. 2). *Melmastya* is intertwined with a host's perception of "power" in the local community based on housing a guest. Leaving the care of one host for another is thus seen as an admonishment of their ability to care for visitors (Lindholm, 1982, p. 232). Providing refuge for caravans or travelers from distant capitals, such as Kabul or Peshawar, could potentially give Pakhtun hosts a certain level of power as the

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[22] Taj (2011) critically deconstructed popular myths surrounding *melmastya*. He claims this concept has been greatly exaggerated by the notion that Pakhtuns refused to extradite Osama Bin-Laden on the grounds of *melemastya* when there is no evidence to support this claim (pp. 2-3).

first in receiving news from outside the village (Haroon, 2007b, pp. 72-74). This further

explains the competitive nature in hosting travelers to ensure information capital is

centralized around a single individual (Lindholm, 1982, p. 228).

Melmastya more accurately refers to a *norm* since it is a social practice of hosting

guests and acting as their community "sponsor". Johnson and Mason (2008) note

melmastya is similar to "chivalry", since its sub-aspects include an obligation to provide

refuge and care even for enemies that goes beyond simple "hospitality" (p. 63-64). The

word *sakhawat*, however, translates to "generosity" or "freely giving" and is likely the

foundational value at the heart of *melmastya* (Pelevin, 2019, p. 489). The value,

sakhawat, is distinguishable because it is represented in the *norm-sanction complex* of

melmastya rather than comprising one itself. For example, *sakhawat* is not demonstrated

solely through *melmastya,* but hospitality is not expected in a way that would suggest it is

an extension of reciprocity (Lindholm, 1982, pp. 223, 228). *Sakhawat* is therefore

selected as a third and final value to represent the ideological foundations at the core of

Pakhtunwali.

Visual Diagram

Pakhtunwali's complexity is further obscured by how it has been presented in

academia. Its traditions are often perceived as representing a single form of *honor,* but

when there are numerous interpretations of the same *value*, it is easy to confuse them

with other social norms. The sheer scope of trying to identify every possible *value*

represented in *Pakhtunwali* is beyond this thesis. Honor is indisputably prevalent and

might even be the single most centralized value that *Pakhtunwali* is structured around.

Pakhtunwali is typically presented by scholars as having three core values ranging from

honor, revenge, hospitality, and shame among many others. This thesis follows suite by selecting of sample of at least three *values* that are distinguished from their normative representation through social interactions in Pakhtun society. These values are not solely representative of *Pakhtunwali,* but it is likely these same values are the key to developing effective frames for altering Pakhtun social or political behavior.

The following model presents honor *(tura),* reciprocity *(badal),* and generosity *(sakhawat)* as baseline values of *Pakhtunwali.* There is no hierarchical distinction between them as suggested by other scholars. However, it appears that norms traditionally associated with a single value can include multiple sub-values at the same time (Naumann, 2008). First level *norms* are considered representative of a single value*,* such as *ghairat* and honor. Second level norms indicate that two values can coexist together within a single tradition. *Arbakhi* tribal militias are gathered to ensure compliance with a jirgas ruling (Wardak, 2003, p. 12; Rzehak, 2011, pp. 13-14; Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 114). Participating in the *arbakhi* is considered an honorable feat, and therefore is indicative of at least two distinctive values. A third level norm includes all three values selected as examples for the thesis. *Nanawatey's* confusion with generosity while ensuring reciprocity suggests these two values are at least representative, while the presence of shame suggests it also considers the cultural relevance of honor. In conclusion, the interpersonal values identified below offer a working representation of Pakhtun ideology to associate with related norms and institutions.
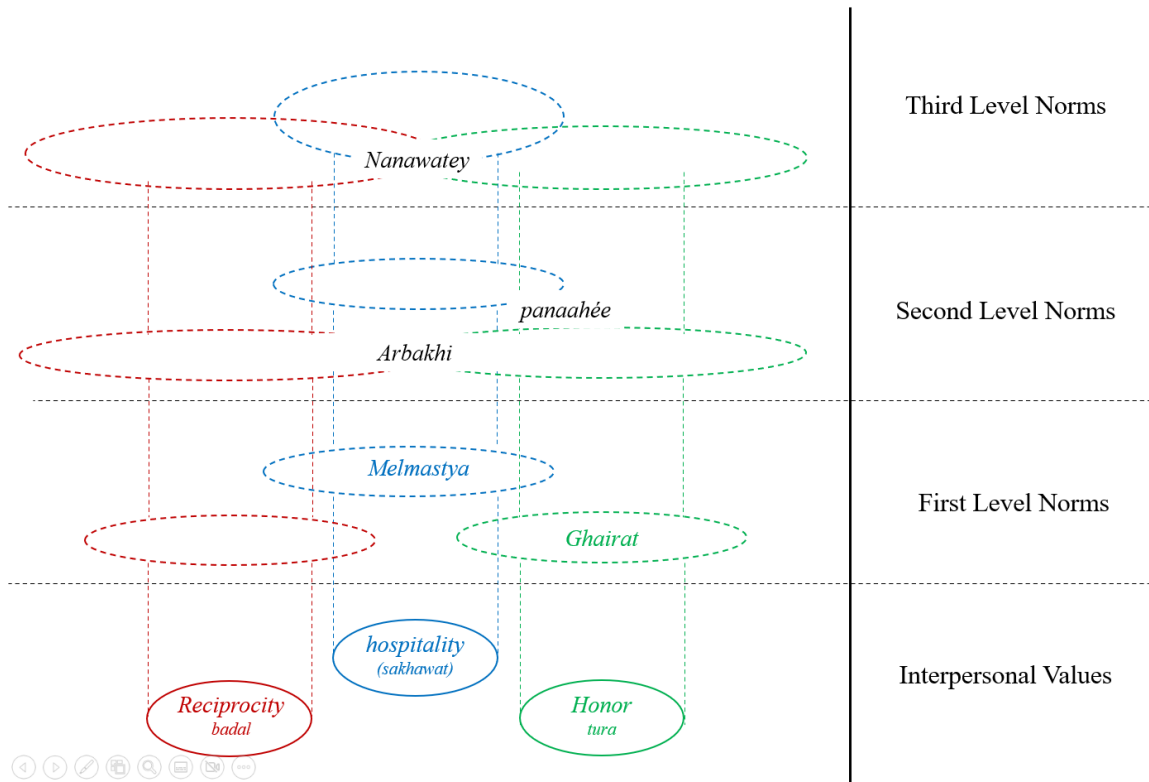
Figure 1.1. Norm-Value Hierarchy

Figure 1.1. depicts the binary logic cycle of values as they progress into norm-sanction complexes.

Chapter III.

The Pakhtun Reality

Pakhtunwali's lack of codification has led to malleable interpretation as a host of cultural values, norms and institutions. Deviation in how such values and norms are institutionalized is apparent when they inform systems of legal reasoning such as the *narkh* (Wardak, 2002, p. 193). It is unclear whether such deviation stems from *Pakhtunwali's* idealized portrayal in common literature, or perhaps it is simply the nature of tribal society in Afghanistan (Shams-ur-Rehman, 2015, p. 302). This variation in *Pakhtunwali* between theory and practice is conceptually defined as "Pakhtun reality". Simply put, it is the "realpolitik" demonstrated among Pakhtun tribes.

At the center of this dynamic is a social credit system that defines power competition among at least five different bases of institutionalized norms. Two of these bases are grounded in *Pakhtunwali* as seen in the *jirga* tribal assembly and the *khan* strongmen. A third institution, the *malik,* is an advisor from the state who ensures cooperation among the tribe and provides access to external network resources. The *mullah* relies upon religious capital for his position, thus revealing a parallel system of legitimacy that openly competes with traditional *Pakhtunwali* norms. Finally, militia commanders running rampant in Afghanistan represent the institutionalization of violence as a norm thanks to prolific arming of *mujahedeen* forces both during and after the Soviet-Afghan War.

English School Institutions

The identification of important cultural institutions is one method of distinguishing how *Pakhtunwali* affects sociopolitical reality among the Pakhtun tribes. Key to the analysis of Pakhtunwali's social elements is the concept of primary and secondary institutions (Buzan, 2004, p. 172). Institutions can be perceived a number of ways, but this thesis has modified a definition of Buzan's (2004) interpretation that largely reconciled the perception of institutions in English School theory (pp. 181, 194). It may come as a surprise that a theoretical discipline structured around states as primary actors of the international system can relate to sub-regional analysis. However, Buzan (2014) addresses an important aspect of normative interactions that has found salience in this study of *Pakhtunwali.* He defines institutions as being either primary or secondary representations of culturally developed norms. Primary institutions are described as "…deep and relatively durable social practices in the sense of being evolved more than designed" (Buzan, 2014, p. 16). Alternatively, secondary institutions represent the manifestation of these "durable social practices" as evidenced in the following definition:

They [secondary institutions] are the products of a certain types of international society (most obviously liberal, but possibly other types as well) and are for the most part intergovernmental arrangements consciously designed by states to serve specific functional purposes. They include the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the nuclear non-proliferation regime (Buzan, 2014, p. 17).

Buzan clearly presents institutions as a product of state interactions, with norms developing from regular interactions contributing to an "international society" (Buzan, 2004, p. 37; Buzan, 2014, p. 12). His definitions also provide clarification in the case of *Pakhtunwali,* as it recognizes some norms are not directly represented through

bureaucratic arrangements. Such primary institutions most closely represent norms that are widely recognized like serving a guest tea as part of *melmastya.* Although the norm of hospitality is manifested through the physical act of serving tea, there is no institutional collective to ensure this practice is adhered to. Alternatively, a *jirga* assembly would be a secondary institution since there are processes to ensure a ruling is followed, such as being targeted by an *arbakhi* militia for punitive actions (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 6).

Primary and secondary institutions are not necessarily defined by separating formal from informal procedures. While institutionalists generally take this approach, it is dependent on some pre-existing formality to juxtapose the presence of informal norms (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006, pp. 3, 5). This presumed dichotomy simply does not apply to *Pakhtunwali* due to its overall lack of codification. The only noticeable evidence of formality would be in the presence of quasi-legal rules, such as the *narkh*, that prevent norm defection. Unfortunately, not enough is known of the *narkh* to enable such a comparison. Furthermore, the entire Pakhtun society in some ways functions as its own primary institution since many of its norms are combined from a wide array of existing social capital systems. While the *Pakhtunwali* might be therefore be seen as a unified social capital system, it would be at the cost of recognizing how some institutions are not entirely dependent on tribal values for their legitimation.

At the heart of secondary institutions is a shared network of values identified in the previous chapter as *Pakhtunwali's* ideology. This system of values instills secondary institutions with cultural legitimacy so long as *Pakhtunwali* continues to be socially relevant. Secondary institutions therefore provide a dual function: they enable the manifestation of *Pakhtunwali* values while also ensuring these values remain relevant in

the minds of Pakhtuns. The importance of these values is in how they provide an alternative moral or cultural resource that circumvents economic means of social progression (Grootaert & Bastelaer, 2002, p. 8). The absence of a stable economy in Afghanistan encourages the accumulation of "subjective goods", like honor, that is heavily dependent on how one is perceived by the general public (Coburn, 2011, p. 106). This places a much greater emphasis on different forms of verbal and non-verbal communication that are characteristic of "high context" societies (Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 75). Mohammad et al. (2016) provides a brief glimpse of how values achieve "higher context" in Pakhtun society with the following quote.

> Much of the communication is achieved by nonverbal cues and the meaningful use of silence. Basically, in high-context cultures messages are conveyed by inferring meaning that is explicitly not said… silence and what is not said in a conflictual situation carries a great message (Mohammad et al., p. 75).

Societies that are centralized around honorific notions, such as the Pakhtuns, find greater emphasis placed on seemingly innocuous social interactions since their prestige is built off public opinion (Lacy, 2011, p. 81 in Mohammad et al., 2016, p. 82). Honor thus achieves an ambiguous, yet culturally distinct role, in legitimating certain institutions separate from other roles of authority that rely upon the distribution of "physical" resources. Historically, it seems the Pakhtuns encouraged a balancing of institutional legitimacy by promoting competing forms of social capital.

The Jirga (Pakhtunwali)

A *jirga* is arguably the most traditional of *Pakhtunwali*-based institutions. It is a meeting convened to deliberate on important matters concerning a village, tribe or even the "Pakhtun nation" under extreme circumstances (Rashid, 2001, p. 10). As one of the

most popular social mechanisms associated with Pakhtuns, it is often referred to as an example of how tribal politics generally function in Afghanistan (Ahmed & Yousef, 2018, p. 62). While other ethnic groups also practice the *jirga* or similar equivalents, some inferences taken from eyewitness testimonies have expanded this example beyond its limited context to become representative of Pakhtun society as a whole (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013, p. 62).

One of the most notable examples of such observations is the perceived equality of all participants in a *jirga* assembly (Mushtaq et al., 2020, p. 13). This point has been further expanded to suggest that equality is a prevalent norm of Pakhtun society to include the representation of women in *jirga* assemblies (Shams ur-Rehman, 2015, p. 302). However, there are many types of *jirgas* with subtle cultural nuances to distinguish participant roles. These include differences in village, tribal, religious and ethnic backgrounds that all affect how a *jirga* functions. These minor, though important details must be recognized when examining eyewitness accounts before assuming such observations are indicative of the entire Pakhtun system.

First and foremost, Ahmed & Yousef (2018) state that women "can and do" participate in *jirga* assemblies, therefore implying some regularity of gender equality norms among the Pakhtuns (p. 63). In fact, equality is regularly espoused as a key norm of the *jirga* given its representation of deeply ingrained democratic "values". Evidence for this is commonly drawn from its "participatory nature" with anyone welcome to participate in its deliberations.[23]

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[23] Mushtaq et al. (2020) refers to the presence of democratic *values,* though this thesis would conceptualize *democracy* as a *norm* or even a belief as an idealized standard of governance (p. 13).

Without the benefit of field research personally conducted for this thesis, it is difficult to argue for or against the presence of democratic "values" in Pakhtun society. However, evidence found among the literature strongly suggests this assumption has been greatly exaggerated. There are many different variations of *jirgas* ranging from a local *maraka* convened over intra-tribal affairs, a state convened *Sarkari Jirga* unique to the Pakhtun tribal areas, and a "national" *Loya Jirga* that involves representatives from across many different tribes (Ahmed & Yousef, 2018, p. 62). In each case, it appears there is some form of primary authority exhibited through an individual or collective within the *jirga* holding the greatest measure of power. This includes a *marakachan*, whose cultural authority is measured by the popularity of previous rulings and knowledge of tribal laws (i.e. the *narkh*) (Wardak, 2003, pp. 7-8). The mid-level *Sarkari Jirga* is headed by a *malik* intermediary acting on behalf of the state (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2018, p. 62). Under such circumstances, the *jirga's* legitimacy is deeply challenged as it appears primarily as an extension of state authority. A final *Loya Jirga* calls upon representatives from different Pakhtun tribes typically chosen from the existing *marakachan* (Wardak, 2003, p. 13; Mushtaq et al., 2020, p. 13).

While all male members of a community will likely be present at a *maraka* or *Olesi Jirga,* this is not an equal distribution of political authority among the Pakhtuns. Similarly, their ability to partake in deliberations does not mean they all produce a ruling when such roles are reserved strictly for *marakachan*. Furthermore, other institutionalized positions will participate in the *jirga* who are hierarchically distinct among the average Pakhtuns such as the *khan* or *mullah*. It is likely their influence will still be expressed

during a *jirga* regardless of whether every Pakhtun is considered an equal participant.[24]

The *khan* traditionally serves as a mediator for the *jirga*. His authority is supposedly limited though, since he is unable to leverage coercive power during a *jirga* meeting to influence its final decision (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 115).[25] Additionally, the local *mullah* whose position relies on religious legitimacy can also influence a *jirga* meeting by fulfilling the role of a *khan*. Authority is balanced under normal circumstances between these competing institutions. If a monopoly emerges over certain forms of social capital – such as the *mullah* wresting control from a *khan* or vice-versa – this can tip the balance of power in a *jirga* thus leading to more centralized authority (Noori, 2021, p. 353; Canessa, 2022, p. 725).[26]

Further evidence in the literature also strongly suggests that women are not welcome participants in tribal *jirgas* at the local level (Alam, 2021, p. 353). In fact, their explicit lack of representation and legal rights resulted in the first ever attempt to create an all-women "Kwendo Jirga*"* headed by Tabassum Adnan in 2013 (BBC, 2013; U.S. Department of State, 2015).[27] It seems that women are most likely to appear during a *jirga* when they are the subject of a local dispute (Canessa, 2022, p. 731). Even so, it is still necessary for them to be represented by a male family member. It is possible that claims of women participating in *jirgas,* such as those referenced by Ahmed and Yousef (2018), are in specific reference to two *Loya Jirgas* held in 1964 and 1976 to ratify a

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[24] Noori (2021) notes that *mullahs* have been known to exert religious authority over *maliks,* though such observations might be in the context of a *shura,* rather than a *jirga* (p. 73).

[25] …in theory at least, though it is hard to believe a *maraka* would rule against a particularly powerful or violent *Khan*.

[26] As noted in Wardak (2002; 2003), public faith in *Jirgas* has receded in certain areas due to the extent of perceived corruption (p. 198; p. 4).

[27] Adnan is a victim of child marriage and domestic abuse. Adnan later attended an all-male state *jirga* assembly, and her advocacy for women's rights has revealed inherent flaws in the traditional *jirga* system.

constitution for the Afghan state. Wardark (2002) briefly notes that in 1964 was the first example of women historically participating in a *jirga* assembly. Women later comprised 15 percent of the 1976 *jirga* convened to re-write the previous constitutional draft (p. 198). It is important to note these *Loya Jirgas* were held under exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, it is unlikely that in Pakhtun reality women are allowed to participate in tribal *jirgas* (Leake, 2023, p. 305).

Regardless of how salient democratic values are within the *jirga* assembly, this institution is deeply instilled with cultural capital to ensure its legitimacy (Wardak, 2002, p. 199). The *jirga* is so acutely representative of *Pakhtunwali* norms that its implementation as part of the governing system is a necessary prerequisite for the Afghan state to be considered culturally legitimate (Wardak, p. 199). The *jirga* in turn receives its cultural legitimacy by implementing *Pakhtunwali* norms through a system of legal reasoning known as the *narkh* (Wardak, 2003, p. 7; Rzehak, 2011, pp. 2, 17). It is unclear how exactly the *narkh* differs from *Pakhtunwali,* though it is likely the most direct example of codified Pakhtun laws. With *Pakhtunwali* as the basis for legal reasoning of the *narkh,* this distinguishes *jirgas* significantly from another type of tribal council witnessed in Pakhtun areas of Afghanistan called a *shura*. In some cases, a *shura* is mistakenly referred to as a *jirga,* although a *shura* defers to Islamic law rather than Pakhtun cultural norms in producing a ruling (Roy, 1990, pp. 34-35; Haroon, 2007b, pp. 66-67; Canessa, 2022, p. 720). This point is significant as the *shura* is directly challenging the *jirga's* tribal authority with Islamic authority as a form of religious capital.

The Khan (Pakhtunwali)

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Certain institutions in the Pakhtun reality are centered around an individual rather than being represented through collective representation. The position of *khan* is one such example that epitomizes patron-client relationships in the Pakhtun reality (Jackson & Minoia, 2018, p. 1081). A *khan* is the head of a clan or an extra-familial social unit who commonly attends *jirgas* in a ceremonial capacity. Glatzer (1996) claims the role of *khan* is not institutionalized since anyone can achieve the position through routine social transactions (P. 36). These transactions typically take the form of securing land for followers and hosting travelers (the norm of *melmastya*) in a *hijra* guest house (Khattak, 2010, p. 34). To regularly engage in transactional arrangements is a necessity for *khans* to retain their position. Although the role might not be formally "institutionalized", *khans* are certainly representative of *Pakhtunwali's* most traditional values given their regular appearance in the literature of Pakhtun history.

The appeal of becoming a *khan* is to wield political respect acquired through a personally developed network of clients (Lindholm, 1979, p. 490). Coburn (2011) observed that associating with a *khan* was often considered a competitive alternative to becoming a member of a *qawm*.[28] Although a *Khan* might not outright challenge a *jirga's* decision, it will likely require a *khan* to organize the *arbakhi* that will implement a *jirga's* ruling. A *khan* can likely influence a *jirga's* deliberations, but he cannot produce nor overturn a ruling (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 9; Benson and Siddiqui, 2014, p. 115).

The position of *khan* fits somewhere between a primary and secondary institution. As a primary institution, it is conceptually similar to *ghairatman,* or one who

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[28] A *qawm* is a general term for any extra-familial association. It can be within a village, among certain professions, or include distant friends acquired through the distribution of *physical capital.*

epitomizes honorable identity in Pakhtun culture (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 3). This suggests a *khan* relies on the same form of social capital that instills the *jirga* with its cultural legitimacy. However, the distribution of physical capital*,* such as land and women, also have a role in the social ascension of a *khan.* The ambiguous political prestige inherent of a *khan* also suggests it can be labeled a secondary institution despite lacking formality in his appointment. As land and women are specific forms of physical capital to be distributed by a *khan*, it is appropriate to label this position a secondary institution alongside the *jirga* assembly (Sungur, 2013, p. 22).

The Mullah (Islam)

Whereas a *khan's* legitimacy derives from *Pakhtunwali* norms, the *mullah* is an embodiment of Islamic values and acts as a type of secondary institution. It is a position with deep historical roots in the Pakhtun culture despite it being an alternative form of social capital to *Pakhtunwali*. Coburn (2011) identifies the *mullah's* source of social power as stemming from religious capital (i.e., Islam), and Lindholm (1982) cautions its position is dependent on knowledge more than charismatic authority (Coburn, pp. 116-117; Lindholm, p. 93). Coburn states that moral legitimacy is cultivated through demonstrating piety visible to public perception. Examples include dressing modestly and maintaining an appearance of serenity (Coburn, p. 117). The actual power afforded to a *mullah* is inconsistent and dependent on fluctuating social or political circumstances. At times, the *mullah* is considered inferior in status to essentially any other societal role (Lindholm, 1979, p. 489; Roy, 1990, p. 32). A *mullah* is most effective when framing existing social or political rivalries through Islamic narratives (Akbar, 2004, p. 84).

Therefore, discussing the role of a *mullah* invites a larger exploration of how religion has impacted Pakhtun history and its cultural identity.

Islam has achieved a symbiotic relationship with *Pakhtunwali* thanks to norm and value commonalities that have allowed for the bridging of frames.[29] Frame bridging refers to the act of finding congruence in the logic of two different socio-political narratives. In this case, Islam and *Pakhtunwali* conflict in their interpretation of certain values, but find other points of congruence that allows for long term stability. An example is how *badal* is considered inherently un-Islamic since equally measured retribution is not covered by *Sharia law* (Abraham, 2016, pp. 74-75)*.* Alternatively, music and dance are featured predominantly in Pakhtun culture, yet extremist interpretations of Islam, like *Salafism* or *Wahhabism* (in conjunction with *Naqshbandi Sufism*), strictly forbid these traditions (Wagemakers, 2012, p. 149). The *mullah* represents the point of convergence, or bridging*,* between two different ideologies (Magnus & Naby, 1998, p. 78).

A *mullah* is not a religious expert in the context of Islam's orthodox hierarchy, but they are the most knowledgeable source of religion within a limited tribal space (Akbar, 2004, p. 91). Some *mullahs* exist as prior appointments and have inherited underlying political networks to impose a system of control through *Shariah Law* (Barfield, 2003, pp. 31-32). Memorization of the *Quran* or having undergone foreign education in Islamic studies was often considered a prerequisite to becoming a *mullah*, though many times these qualifications were overlooked in the Pakhtun reality (Akbar, 2004, pp. 84-85; Coburn, 2011, p. 122)*.* The type of Islam practiced by a tribe can also

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[29] "By frame bridging we refer to the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem." (Snow et al., 1986, p. 467).

affect how a *mullah* is perceived, along with the strength of *Pakhtunwali* institutions that prevent monopolization of his Islamic authority.

A *mullah* is a framing practitioner; his ability to mobilize a following is specifically tied to how well he can portray a social or political issue through an Islamic perspective (Akbar, 2004, p. 84; Haroon, 2007b, p. 74). Many Islamic traditions are embedded within *Pakhtunwali* institutions, thus offering a means of disseminating an Islamic *frame* or sociopolitical narrative. Participating in a *jirga's* deliberation is one such example of how religious capital can affect the legitimacy of traditional *Pakhtunwali* institutions. The potential for a *mullah* to capitalize on his dispensation pf religious legitimacy is well recognized in Pakhtun historical memory (Noelle, 1997, pp. 238-239; Johnson, 2014, pp. 126). The *mullah's* power is therefore counterbalanced – under ideal circumstances – by positions that do not rely on religious legitimacy such as a *khan,* village elder or *narkh* legal expert. Empowerment of the *mullah* equates to promoting an alternative system of social capital that can supersede traditional *Pakhtunwali*-based institutions.

The *mullah* is a key institution for pan-Islamic practitioners to alter the existing political structure (Noori, 2021, p. 73). This is likely why certain field observations perceive religion, or specifically institutions like the *mullah* that embody it, as leading forms of tribal governance. From a framing perspective, it is mostly *Sufi* Islam that is coterminous with *Pakhtunwali's* norms. *Mullahs* are not always *Sufi* practitioners, thus leading to competition between them and *pirs* who are broadly understood to be *Sufi* "mystics" or "saints" (Canfield, 1984, p. 94; Canfield, 2022, p. 219; Haroon, 2007, pp. 36-37). With the neo-Taliban government in Kabul, the role of a *pir* is likely extinct

among Pakhtun villages since *Sufism* is considered a heretical practice (Ziad, 2013, p.

124).[30] Instead, the *mullah* represents the strongest extension of Salafi-Wahhabi control

by religious rather than cultural capital (Coburn, 2011, p. 116; Noori, p, 73). To clarify,

not all *mullahs* are *Salafi-Wahhabi* extremists*,* yet their position is vulnerable to influence

by the pan-Islamic movement through education in Islamic *madrassah* schools (Behuria,

2008, pp. 70-71; Westhead, 2009, pp. 1-2).

<center>The Malik (the State)</center>

The *malik* is an extension of state authority embedded within tribal society. It is a

position instilled with deep historical context like the *mullah*, though it is different in its

reliance on external authority. During Imperial British rule over the Indian subcontinent,

a closed border policy was adopted to govern the Northwestern Frontier commonly

termed "masterly inactivity" (Roy, 2015, p. 70). This plan sought the use of political

agents and tribal leaders to represent state authority in local politics (while mostly

allowing the tribes to govern themselves) (Benson & Siddiqui, 2014, p. 110). Remnants

of the masterly inactivity policy are still reflected in present day by the presence of

maliks supported by Pakistani in the FATA, Baluchistan and other tribal communities

within its borders (Noori, 2021, p. 353).

By calling upon the resources of the state, the *malik* represents formal ties

between civil society and state authority. In the Pakhtun reality*,* a *malik* will likely

cultivate social capital through the same distributive network as a *khan,* though his

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[30] Sufism is regarded with ambivalence by many popular Salafi ideologues. If Sufi practices are allowed to continue, this would signify a notable point of divergence between the Taliban's own nationalist interpretation of Islam versus Salafi-Wahhabism (Hegghammer, 2020, p. 299. For further reading on the transformation of systems under the Taliban refer to page 355 in Alam (2021).

position will not hold the same authority (Glatzer, 1996, p. 37). Coburn (2011) distinguishes these "internal network" benefits as "…social capital…through an individual's network of relationships (with kin, friends, and neighbors), primarily in the town" (p. 108). Alternatively, "external network" benefits that provide *maliks* with the premise of authority include "…relationships with government officials in Kabul, international NGOs, and the military, but also friends, classmates, and business partners from time spent in Pakistan as refugees" (Coburn, p. 108).

A wide range of other institutionalized positions have simultaneously filled the role of a *malik* in the tribal system. Historically, *maliks* have been represented by tribal leaders or elders, and even *khans* have served in this capacity (Sungur, 2013, p. 28; Ahmed & Yousef, 2018, p. 61). Coburn notes that a local *malik* was even referred to as a *mullah* in recognition of his religious knowledge (despite receiving no formal education or having ever completed the *Hajj* pilgrimage) (Coburn, p. 78). Those with pre-established tribal network would make ideal candidates as a representative of the state. Most *malik's* today are likely patrilineal descendants who attained their position through generational connections (Coburn, p. 79).

Like the *khan,* a *malik's* position within the tribe is dependent on how effectively he distributes resources among his followers. Whereas the *khan* is limited to internal network forms of capital like land or women, the *malik* relies upon external network resources that are typically comprised of economic capital. A *malik's* success is inherently dependent on fostering connections with external network benefits to include relationships with governmental and non-governmental actors. Therefore, he is often the

first to approach, or be approached by members of the international system like humanitarian organizations.

It is unclear what status the *malik* has following the neo-Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. Under the coalition-backed Afghan government, the *malik's* position benefited from foreign investment through prolific aid from humanitarian organizations (Coburn, pp. 84, 195). In the absence of a functioning government and powerful international donors, it is likely the *malik's* authority has been weakened unless it has been assimilated into the Taliban's new governing strategy.

Militia (or Military) Commanders

The final secondary institution to be addressed is the role of militia commanders, who are perceived as a byproduct of incessant warfare and meddling by the international system (Barfield, 2003, p. 31; Wardak, 2003, pp. 2-3). The sudden increase in military resources provided to the *mujahideen* in the 1980s – such as weaponry, training centers and tunnel complexes – resulted in the weaking of traditional, secondary institutions. Following the war, connections between these militia leaders and foreign backers set the foundation for ongoing conflict in Afghanistan lasting well into the present day. This unfortunate nexus of disintegrating authority, tribal militarization, and ideological manipulation have all contributed to producing an institution of sponsored violence in the Pakhtun reality.

Most scholars generally allude to the martial aspects of Pakhtun culture and suggest they are generally more prone to violence (Coburn, 2011, p. 219). In the Pakhtun reality, however, violence is conceptualized differently as one of many political tools available in mediating disputes (Coburn, p. 219). Coburn (2011) elaborates on this

particular norm in the greatest detail and suggests its misinterpretation by western analysts that violence is indicative of failed democratization (Coburn, p. 219). Alternatively, violence is perceived as legitimately justified under very specific circumstances. Ideally, institutions such as the *jirga* serve as preventative measures against the overuse of violence. Among the Pakhtuns, it seems there is a shared interest in limiting the spread of violence to maintain the existing "status-quo" and dissuade external intervention by the state (Coburn, p. 217). As a result, fragile boundaries separating group identities would be reinforced with intense posturing to suggest a social unit might be stronger than it really was (Coburn, p. 217). The arming of Afghan *mujahideen* by foreign actors thus increased accessibility to violence. This also led to the creation of new institutionalized roles for disseminating foreign armaments.

A militia commander is the least likely to be motivated out of ideological concerns for his cause (Kuntzsch, 2008, p. 27). A foreign benefactor's own ideological disposition, however, does seem to influence whether a particular militia leader is supported. For the commander, his interest is in cultivating external network connections through paramilitary mobilization. By securing the backing of powerful international donors, militia commanders secure a constant flow of physical capital that is used to recruit additional followers. In the context of war, this obviously takes the form of munitions, manpower, and other logistical benefits. Conflict thus becomes a form of advertisement for these paramilitary organizations who compete for sponsorship to ensure a sustainable flow of military capital.

This opportunity is of mutual benefit to foreign agents of both state and non-state affiliations as a low-cost means of projecting influence. A commonly cited example of

this strategy is how the United States organized funding of the Afghan *mujahideen* during the 1980s. However, support for these loosely associated militias was received from a broad spectrum of international donors to include Saudi Arabia, China, Pakistan and Iran (Johnson, 2012, p. 224). From the international system/society perspective, competitive distribution of resources was influenced by strategic rivalries (Johnson, 2012, p. 229). This had the added effect of producing sub-factional schisms that are most easily distinguished based on their ideological identities.

Without addressing how this ideological background impacts popular militia leaders (a topic left for review in the following case study), the most important feature of the militia commander is their *institutionalization of violence*. While being described as a political tool and possibly a norm held in check by peace mechanisms like the *jirga,* a militia commander is dependent on his dispensation of violence. While certain commanders might exhibit ideological characteristics – such as being a nationalist Pakhtun or an advocate of pan-Islam – they do not properly represent an international social movement and are instead proxies for extra-regional actors.

In conclusion, the Pakhtun reality is comprised of more than just five institutionalized forms of social capital. For the sake of analytical precision, the *jirga, khan, malik, mullah* and militia commander have been scrutinized more thoroughly than others. This is because while some positions like the *narkhi* legal expert might be important in the overall Pakhtun reality, it is not a central feature of the framing competition covered in this case study (Rzehak, 2011, p. 13). In this context, it is important to remember that a *malik* and *mullah* represent external systems of authority embedded within the Pakhtun sociopolitical reality and not necessarily *Pakhtunwali*.

While their competition would ideally balance other institutionalized forms of social capital, these positions also offer a means to manipulate the Pakhtun reality from outside.

The pan-Islamic movement and its beneficiaries are keenly aware of these socio-cultural vulnerabilities. By empowering the *mullah* and other forms of religious capital, they have engaged in a more complex strategy to fundamentally alter the systems of power that create balance in Pakhtun tribal politics. These alterations to the Pakhtun reality are occurring at a deeper, ideological level that necessitates a firm conceptual grasp of how values, norms and institutions come to define not just *Pakhtunwali's* ideology, but the Pakhtun reality at large.

Chapter IV.

Case Study

Pakhtunistan has long served as a backdrop for framing competition between Afghanistan, Pakistan and other foreign actors during international conflict. Ethno-nationalism was a favored narrative of the Afghan government, who sought to align state legitimacy with a latent powerbase in the Pakhtun tribal society. When Pakistan formed in 1947, a counter-narrative was adopted that also targeted the Pakhtuns, but promoted religious identity based on pan-Islamic political theory (Bhattacharya, 2015, p. 234). The Taliban's rise to power thus poses an interesting question as to whether this current governing regime in Kabul embodies Pakhtun ethno-nationalism, pan-Islam or both.

Discussing the different narrative strategies used by state and non-state actors is simplified with the concept of "framing" in social movement theory (SMT) and media studies. A brief overview of the subtle, yet important differences in how frame theory is conceptualized across disciplines is first addressed. The historical case study that follows simplifies many abstract concepts with framing terminology that must be understood before engaging its analysis. The case study also continues the use of other theoretical terminology across English School theory, such as international and world society, alongside concepts from social capital theory.

Frame Theory

Robert Benford and David Snow introduce various framing types throughout multiple publications under social movement theory.[31] Originally conceived as "collective action frames", these are: "…relatively coherent sets of action-oriented beliefs and meanings that legitimize and inspire social movement campaigns and activities." (Snow et al., 2018, p. 395).

Benford and Snow's initial publications focused primarily on aspects of micro-mobilization that draw inspiration from Tarrow's (1993) "cycles of protest" and Tilly's (1978) "repertoires of collective action" (Snow et al., 1986, p. 476).[32] The most important phases in frame development were theorized as coinciding with different stages in cycles of protest (Snow & Benford, 1992, pp. 142-143) (Snow & Benford, 1992, pp. 142-143). The first "diagnostic phase" attributes blame for a social or political problem to specific individuals and institution. The secondary "prognostic phase" suggests potential solutions that are indelibly linked with a mobilization as covered in a final "motivational" framing phase (Benford & Snow, 1988, pp. 200-203). If a frame "resonates" enough to extend across multiple protest cycles or encapsulate more than one social movement, it could be thought of as constituting a "master frame" (Snow et al., 2018, p. 395).

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[31] David Snow and Robert Benford's publications highlighted here are from 1986, 1988, 1992, and 2014. Frame Theory was first introduced by Bateson (1954), who theorized its relevance in interpersonal metacommunication (Gorp, 2007, p. 65). Goffman (1974) later introduced frames to the field of sociology (Oliver Johnston, 2000, p. 40).

[32] A cycle of protest is described as reoccurring waves of violence, "whose aggregate frequency, intensity, and forms increase and then decline in rough chronological proximity." (Tarrow, 1993, p. 287). A "repertoire of contention" is a common set of activities that characterize actor performances (Tilly, 2006, p. 40).

Embedded within these "core framing tasks" are specific tactics that improve narrative resonance potential (Benford & Snow, 2000, pp. 619, 621). A frame's ability to resonate is heavily dependent on the credibility of framing practitioners, as well as the narrative's own conceptual logic (Benford & Snow, pp. 619. 621). Most important for this thesis is the phrase "experiential commensurability", or how effectively a narrative is aligned with a host audiences' own experience (Benford & Snow, p. 621). Definitions for "experiential commensurability" are similar to "cultural resonance" in frame theory. The latter is distinguished by a series of domain assumptions – or the "derived ideology" – of a host audience (Gouldner [1970] and Rude [1980] in Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 622).

Although it is never directly stated, it stands to reason that cultural resonance is primarily related to the "frame alignment" process. Frame alignment was originally conceived as the attempted process of linking two previously unconnected frames (Snow et al., 1986, p. 467). However, with the introduction of frame alignment comes several conceptual loopholes that are commonplace in frame theory literature. Referring to "culture" as a host narrative implies frames are continuously imposed upon pre-existing frames. Therefore, every framing process would theoretically devolve into frame alignment. Furthermore, culture loses its necessary conceptual distinction from frames and ideology by assuming it is simply yet another "frame".[33]

While ideologies are relevant at all stages of the framing process, this case study is focused mostly on strategies to intentionally "align" pan-Islamic frames with Pakhtun values. Snow et al. (1986) considers minor sub-tasks as part of the frame alignment

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[33] "Culture" is conceptualized between constructionist and institutionalist definitions of the term. It comprises norms or values that legitimize organizational form, while also including frames that contribute to a larger "collective experience" (Finnemore, 1996, p. 329; Gorp, 2007, p. 62).

process, such as "bridging" that links frames through commonly shared values or beliefs (Snow et al., 1986, pp. 467-469). When such values are intentionally promoted as congruent between frames, this is perceived as "amplification" (Snow et al., p. 469). A final, pertinent tactic in the alignment process is frame "transformation". As frames are exposed to different ideological systems, a transformation might occur where older values and beliefs are modified or removed to ensure successful alignment (Snow et al., p. 473). While Snow et al., portray transformation as an intentional process, this case study suggests the Taliban were an unexpected transformation of the pan-Islamic frame in Afghanistan. This suggests that not all framing effects are intentional.

Although frame theory provides useful terminology for conveying abstract ideas relating to ideologies, it is also subject to conceptual loopholes and contradictions that have been recognized elsewhere in the literature. One of the most important points of debate surrounds how "ideology" is defined when frames have all but superseded it across social movement theory.[34] Snow and Byrd (2007) recognize that ideology is certainly an aspect of framing, but it is just one of many features to determine the direction and character of a social movement (p. 120). Alternatively, Oliver and Johnston (2000) argue that ideologies are central to understanding the origins of not just frames, but their related social movements as well (p. 38). Both positions address the lack of definitional consensus surrounding use of the word "ideology" in frame theory and recognize the prevalence of theoretical inconsistencies (Oliver & Johnston, p. 51; Snow & Byrd, pp. 121-122). However, it is also clear that some form of belief system exists

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[34] For further clarification as to why ideology is used in lieu of frames during the case study, see Chapter I: Methodology.

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outside of the framing process and is likely to be an internalized psychological process (Steinburg, 1998, p. 847).

Competitive Framing

If ideology is considered distinctive from a "frame", then conceptualization of framing changes from theories of collective action to individual audience has effects at a psychological level (Borah, 2011b, p. 304, 306; Chong & Druckman, 2007, pp. 100-101). Media studies provide a method for examining how intra-personal and meta-cognitive communications affect society through a process titled "competitive framing". This method assumes underlying values within a frame can be manipulated to alter audience perception of a narrative. Frame resonance is therefore determined by the alignment of a frame's central values and the receiving audience's own ideological beliefs. In theory, the presentation of certain values within a narrative can influence audience reception and possibly alter how later communications are perceived as well.[35]

Advocates of "competitive framing" emphasize the importance of considering the environmental factors that affect frame creation (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 112-113; Detenber et al., 2018, p. 177). As Carragee and Roefs (2004) aptly state, "…framing of issues and events does not develop in a political vacuum; it is shaped by the frames sponsored by multiple social actors, including politicians, organizations, and social movements." (p. 216). The presence of opposing frames suggests that alternate values exist in a permanent state of macro-competition. The resulting "value ambivalence" is thought to elicit further information gathering by an audience to decide upon what

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[35] Refer to Niederdeppe et al. (2014) on how values can be proactively tailored to influence decision-making.

narrative most closely aligns with their own personal values. Although the concept of "value ambivalence" shares some similarities with how this thesis portrays framing interactions, "competitive framing" is not comprehensive enough to uncover latent cultural values that define *Pakhtunwali* social institutions.[36]

Competitive framing presumes political narratives are presented equally in a more liberalized environment than what has been witnessed in the Pakhtun reality. It is also dependent on the audience demonstrating freedom of choice when presented with opposing narratives (Borah, 2019, pp. 142-143). Based on first-hand accounts by Coburn (2011) and others on Taliban propaganda, it appears that experiential commensurability and a lack of opposing narratives was more important in resolving Pakhtun value ambivalence than information gathering (p. 220). Additionally, one of the most important environmental features of Pakhtun political society is how violence can be used to enforce frame resonance. To assume that Pakhtuns are given a choice by the Taliban of whether to adopt their ideology or not is simply unrealistic (Williams, 2008, p. 54).

To summarize, frame theory terminology is useful for labeling the interactive qualities of frames and reveals deeper insights into their ideological substructure. While the methodologies of social movement theory and competitive framing provide important context for frame theory's academic evolution, relying exclusively on them reduces conceptual flexibility. This is not to say SMT or competitive framing are irrelevant to the topic; the Taliban's selective use of violent "repertoires" (such as suicide bombing) suggests that SMT offers a practical approach for evaluating strategic framing efforts in

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[36] When presented with an opposing frame, the audience will be expected to rely upon commonly instilled cultural values. It is theorized that if these values were accentuated regularly, then they would be more easily recalled for deciding between opposing media narratives (Brewer, 2002, p. 304; Carragee & Roefs, 2004, p. 219).

Pakhtunistan (Ahmadzai, 2021, p. 27). Furthermore, competitive framing is relevant for analyzing how non-written forms of media dissemination or subtle differences in culturally-specific phrasing can affect strategic framing of the Pakhtuns.

<center>Afghanistan as a Framing Actor</center>

Afghanistan's first transformative steps towards modernity coincide with the evolution of its political landscape into one conducive to "competitive framing". With the educational reforms of King Amanullah Khan in the 1920s came two major changes to Afghan society and politics. First, it was the creation of a new social class of Pakhtun "intelligentsia" with access to higher education previously unavailable to those outside upper-class nobility. These academic circles would eventually transform into Afghanistan's first political parties and embody different policy stances surrounding the topic of ethno-nationalism. The second major change to Afghan politics was how these political parties provided foreign states with internal access to domestic policy. By aligning their political interests with extra-regional allies, these parties essentially invited external actors to come and influence local affairs (Leake, 2023, p. 304). One of the primary channels for foreign influence was through educational connections established with local institutions. These provided the bulk of nascent political activists who participated in Afghanistan's communist revolution to be discussed further (Hyman, 2002, pp. 305-306).

The first social movement to become a political party was the Awakened Youth Movement (AYM) who campaigned on an ethno-nationalist platform despite their multi-ethnic origins (Ruttig, 2006, p. 4). Ethno-nationalism in Afghan politics had existed long

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before the emergence of the AYM, however.[37] Where AYM differed from the state was in its desire to reform the Afghan government as a constitutional monarchy (Ruttig, 2006, p. 4).[38] Therefore, while ethno-nationalism was already an active "frame" supported by the government, the AYM represented an alternate variation in how this policy should be politically interpreted. Such variance could signal the ethno-nationalist narrative had evolved into a type of master frame by this time, though further research would be required to substantiate this point.

Ethno-Nationalist Framing

The importance of ethno-nationalism is second only to Islamic frames in the Afghan political arena. Ethno-nationalism essentially provided the first opportunity for foreign frame alignment between the Afghan state and a more powerful actor in the international system. From the 1930s through 1940s, this powerful actor was Nazi Germany. Political representatives of the Afghan state maintained close relations with Germany and intentionally aligned their own ethno-nationalist policy that was likely inspired by the Third Reich.[39] Although the strategic depth of this alignment process was never fully explored before WWII ended, there are specific framing characteristics that suggest German advisors influenced ethno-nationalist policy under the Afghan monarchy.[40]

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[37] "The idea of Pashtun nationalism peaked during the period of Ahmad Shah Durrani, who consolidated Pashtun areas into a confederation to form Afghanistan in 1747." (Abraham, 2013, p. 78).

[38] It should be noted that AYM was likely a governmental proxy under the guise of diversifying political competition in the public sphere (Leake, 2023, p. 303).

[39] Supposedly a coup was planned by German provocateurs if Afghanistan aligned with the British (Wahab & Youngerman, 2007, pp. 114-116). Also see: Sungur, 2013, p. 50.

[40] One of the most prominent features was Germany's inability to resolve ideological incongruence between different Islamic frames. Some jurisprudential tracts are unique to specific demographics in such a

Germany has a historic relationship with strategic framing dating back to the First World War (Sungur, 2013, p. 62; Motadel, 2014, p. 8). Specifically, the mobilization potential of pan-Islam was theorized by German scholars well before the global *jihad* movement was conceived (Anderson, 2014, p. 39). It is interesting that ethno-nationalism was seemingly promoted alongside pan-Islam by Germany despite it being antithetical to its own pro-Aryan (and anti-religious) narrative.[41] Blatant connections between the Nazi party and important Pakhtun politicians – like Abdul Majid Zabuli, a leading founder of the AYM and head of the Afghani banking system – reinforce the notion that Axis ideology affected early frame development in Afghanistan (Wahab & Youngerman, 2007, p. 115; Bezhan, 2012, p. 449; Leake, 2023, p. 305).

The decision to align Pakhtun ethno-nationalism with German foreign policy in the early 1940s was driven by Afghanistan's political reality at the time (Roy, 2015, p 140). Ethno-nationalism served as a means to distinguish it from the Iranian cultural influence that had guided aspects of its state development leading up to the 20th century (Hopkins, 1978, p. 90). For example, a key step in the gradual takeover of Afghan governmental systems was to elevate the status of Pashto language over other dialects already in use (Bezhan, 2012, p. 450). Persian had long served as the formal language of Afghan politics, but with the creation of an official Pashto Academy in 1937, Persian was distanced from its governmental applications and steadily replaced with Pashto.[42] India

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way that it is difficult to rely upon shared ethnicity in overcoming theological disputes. It remains unclear just how aware Germany was of these ideological divisions, though it should be noted that two of regions subjected to its frame alignment strategy were heavily influenced by the *Naqshbandi* school (Motadel, 2014, p. 40; Sungur, p. 63).

[41] Framing stability as measured by the "competitive framing model" in Smolucha, 2022.

[42] It should be noted that "Dari", another popular phrase for Farsi, was created with the explicit intention of further distancing cultural affinity of western Afghanistan to Iran. However, it was never fully removed from state functions and oftentimes appears regardless of government policy that favored the Pashto dialect (Nawid, 2012, pp. 34-40; Leake, 2023, p. 302).

under the British Raj represented another immediate regional competitor for Afghanistan, but mainly for newer political generations since older royalists favored pro-British policy (Bezhan, 2014, p. 175). Lastly, Soviet expansion into Central Asia presented a tangible, though less immediate concern. Instilling Afghanistan's independence as a sovereign entity was the most pressing issue for early Afghan rulers who fostered Pakhtun ethno-nationalism until it become a political norm upheld internally by the ruling family (Bezhan, 2014b, p. 199). As a result, its frame transformation provided a basis for domestic and international policy moving forward (Kuntzsch, 2008, p. 9).

Although Afghanistan never entered WWII on the side of the Axis powers (despite its explicit intention to do so), dissemination of the ethno-nationalist frame was largely successful and shared similarities with Germany's *Grossdeutschland* foreign policy.[43] Pashto (alongside Persian) briefly became the official language of the state. Afghan cultural institutions, such as the *jirga*, were officially implemented into the governing structure. When Pakistan was officially made a separate state in 1947, Afghanistan's ethno-nationalism had a new opportunity for strategic application. The Northwest Frontier Province that was historically home to a large population of ethnic Pakhtuns was given the option to either become a territory of Pakistan or India. No option was provided to *Pakhtunistan* to join with Afghanistan or be given independent statehood. This was an especially devastating turn of events for Afghanistan after having pushed its ethno-centric policy doctrine for decades. *Pakhtunistan* is believed to have voted along ideological lines, though suppression of any tribal-based nationalist movement and a refusal to include an option in the vote for "independence" suggests

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[43] See footnote 40 for further expansion on German framing attempts.

joining with Pakistan was the "lesser of two evils" (Bhattacharya, 2015, p. 245). Afghanistan began directing its framing strategy against Pakistan through inciting Pakhtun ethno-nationalist uprisings.

Afghanistan saw *Pakhtunistan* not just as an issue for regional stability, but also a means for entering the International System and Society. As the exclusive and self-appointed representative of the Pakhtun "nation", Afghanistan could justify its inclusion as part of global institutions like the United Nations justified through ethnic representation. The Afghan government cultivated such aggressive, ethno-nationalist sentiments in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) that a trade embargo was eventually imposed by Pakistan.[44] While Afghanistan was attempting to build its relationship with other global powers, it failed to recognize that Pakistan was doing the same with an opposing framing strategy (Leake, 2023, p. 303). It is believed the United States chose not to engage with the topic of *Pakhtunistan* from the Afghan angle, as Pakistan represented a more reliable ally for the West during the Cold War through its pan-Islamic master frame (Sungur, 2013, p. 72).

The Communist Revolution

The dynamic created by foreign relations between Afghanistan and the international system can be condensed in a "competitive framing" summary. It is likely the values relied upon for resolving ambivalence were introduced in the early 1900s through ethno-national framing of the *Pakhtunwali*. These values became instilled in the education system, thus resulting in highly politicized cultural norms and secondary

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[44] This event resulted in the resignation of then Afghan President Mohammad Daud, who would later instigate the invasion of Soviet forces into Afghanistan in 1979 (Hyman, 2002, p. 308).

institutions like the KYP and the overall Afghan government. When Germany was no longer supporting Afghan integration with the international system, new potential backers were leveraged (Hyman, 2002, p. 305). The values inherent of the previously instilled ethno-nationalist frame would likely find greater resonance with Marxist/Communist ideals. As a result, alignment with the Soviet Union advanced too quickly for Afghanistan to resist state capture.

Universities acted as a nexus for the dissemination of Marxist frames leading up to the Soviet invasion (Hyman, pp. 305-306; Wahab & Youngerman, 2007, pp. 125-126). In 1964, additional reforms allowed for more political parties to form and some deviated from the ethno-nationalist narrative that defined Afghan policy for decades (Ruttig, 2006, pp. 6-7). Ruttig (2006) classifies the various factions to emerge at this time under four general categories of leftist, moderates, conservatives and Islamists. Marxist elements within the left would eventually combine to form the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Although the PDPA was noted for being internally unstable, it eventually became the single party faction of the state after assisting in a military coup to overthrow the government in 1977.[45]

International assistance from the Soviet Union further deepened its patron-client relationship with Kabul before the official overthrow of the government. Financial investment and development support were also critical for reinforcing Afghan reliance on the Soviet Union. Some of these development reforms were committed for the purpose of competing with other Western-backed projects, such as a brief attempt at land reform in

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[45] It is interesting to note that upon declaration of the PDPA as the single-party authority in Afghanistan, its registered enemies included the Afghan *Millat*. This party took its name from the "greater Afghanistan" policy touted in the 1930s and 1940s (Stoakes, 1983, pp. 93-95; Sungur, 2013, p. 63).

southern Helmand Province and construction of Kandahar airport funded by the U.S. government (Wahab & Youngerman, 2007, p. 116; Reed, 2010, pp. 7-8). While these efforts were undertaken as part of the U.S. international containment strategy of the Soviet Union, it seems little effort was made to ideologically counteract the dissemination of Soviet frames in the Afghan education system. Magnus and Naby (1998) state the United States provided academic advisors from Columbia University to assist in modernizing education at both the university and elementary level (p. 106). It seems these efforts were limited to Kabul University – a haven for ethno-nationalist framing with greater alignment potential for Marxism – and were further circumvented by Soviet infiltration of the government (Magnus & Naby, p. 106).

Additional factors could also explain why the ethno-nationalist narrative was chosen as a platform for most Afghan governmental policies. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union likely reinforced framing resonance by rewarding Afghanistan with development support assistance. In the case of the Soviet Union, this resulted in total transformation of the Afghan state. While the United States also lent similar assistance, it seems there was no significant political support by way of fostering ideological commitment to liberalism. At least, it was not to the same extent that liberalism could compete with Marxism or Islamism within the Afghan government. In the case of Marxism, it was able to bridge itself more effectively with the ethno-nationalist platform sponsored by Nazi Germany in the early 20th century (Roy, 2015, pp. 135-136). In fact, this would have been the only logical choice given the alternative of seeking unlikely support from Islamic institutions.

While analysis of frame alignment helps to explain ideological divisions leading up to the Soviet-Afghan War, it does little to address what role – if any – the Pakhtun people had in these strategic framing interactions. Pakhtun culture served as a host for ethno-nationalist framing policy, but this policy originated from the centralized government of Kabul. It did not emerge from the traditional Pakhtun tribal territories as a method of attaining greater representation in Afghan politics. It is also clear the *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* system (discussed next) is a powerful political force residing in the NWFP that ethno-nationalism was leveraged against. If Pakhtun ethnicity can be framed in such a way as to resist the most powerful political entity inhabiting the NWFP, then this further suggests the *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* network has been unable to align its own frame with Pakhtun cultural values (Green, 2017, p. 21).

Pakistan as a Framing Actor

Pakistan's perception of *Pakhtunistan* was influenced by different systemic and strategic concerns than those affecting Afghanistan. From an internal perspective, Pakistan's discordant polity was the result of institutions warring over control of the state government. One of the most powerful systems within Pakistan's territory was the historic network of *Deobandi* Islamic *madrassas* across the NWFP (Ziad, 2017, p. 105). The evidence suggests this deeply rooted connection with the *Deobandi* political network was a major influence that brought Pakistan's foreign policy into alignment with a pan-Islamic master frame. It must be clarified, however, that classic *Deobandism* is largely disconnected from the type of extremist framing used by global *jihadists* in the pan-Islamic movement. An important question to be considered is whether *Deobandi Islam* is

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therefore preferred by pan-Islamic framers for its ideological congruence, or if it is simply the most accessible Islamic network in the NFWP.

From an external perspective, Pakistan's foreign relations have been shaped by historical grievances and proximity to geostrategic rivals. Conflict with Afghanistan over the NWFP has resulted in armed military intervention on at least one occasion. Although, hostilities are mostly reserved for territorial disagreement with India over the tri-border region of Kashmir (Williams, 2008, p. 42). At one time this tension was enough to justify predictions the next flashpoint for major international conflict would be in southwest Asia (Margolis, 2001, p. 180-191). It is interesting that Pakistan's relation to Kashmir shares interesting parallels to Afghanistan's fixation on *Pakhtunistan* (Williams, 2008, p. 42). Pakistan's prioritization of Kashmir might give the impression that Pakhtun independence in the NWFP is not a major concern. Calls for Pakhtun independence have not gone unnoticed, however. Redirecting national attention towards the issue of Kashmir and emphasizing historical rivalry with India has offered a useful distraction from Pakhtun independence (Khan et al., 2020, p. 387). Historical evidence clearly indicates that Pakistan recognizes the strategic potential *Pakhtunistan* offers in waging guerrilla warfare against India and the coalition forces who were previously in Afghanistan (Williams, 2008, p. 41).

Religious identity has always been emphasized by Pakistan as a counter-framing strategy against mobilization of the Pakhtuns on an ethno-nationalist basis (Khan et al., 2020, p. 38). It is difficult to measure how successful this framing strategy has been among the average public in the NWFP. For example, the original 1949 referendum that decided *Pakhtunistan* would be governed by Pakistan offered union with India as the

only alternative (Franck, 1952, p. 56). Only a small minority of the population voted in favor of joining Pakistan, and political opposition demanding a third option for an independent *Pakhtunistan* was brutally suppressed (Hussain, 2005, pp. 42-43). Pakistan's preference for using pan-Islamic framing must also be considered in the context of *Naqshbandi-Deobandi Sufism's* religious network pervasive throughout the Pakhtun territories.

The Pan-Islamic Master Frame

In its simplest form, pan-Islam is the global unification of all Muslims under *Salafi* or *Wahhabi* sociopolitical doctrine. It would be considered a master frame because pan-Islam provides organizations with core narrative content used by other new and interrelated social movements.[46] However, pan-Islam is still conceptually distinct from its underlying *Salafi* and *Wahhabi* theories that have influenced, though do not represent the master frame in its entirety. Pan-Islam is prone to framing contradictions that reveal its lack of homogeneity especially with the global *jihad* frame (Lia, 2011, pp. 79-81).

Despite its complexity, pan-Islam's broad definitional capacity covers a wide range of framing practitioners in *Pakhtunistan* that make it a viable label for this analysis. Pan-Islam supports at least three possible frames that are relevant in this case study. The first two, *Salafism* and *Wahhabism,* could also be viewed as ideologies since certain values are referenced extensively throughout the pan-Islamic literature (Snow & Byrd, 2007, p. 182; Calvert, 2007, p. 88). The third frame, known as global *jihad,* actually

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[46] Hassan (2014) believes that "*jihad* for Islam", or the global jihad movement, should be considered a master frame (152). However, the definition of "master frame" provided by Snow et al. (2018) seems more appropriate for use in the greater pan-Islamic movement rather than the sub-trend of violent activism as seen in global *jihad* (p. 395).

refers to a specific mobilization tactic employed by *Salafists* that target cultural values for "alignment" with the pan-Islamic narrative. The relationship of these three frames is further influenced by state support for militant Islamic extremists that coincides with foreign policy interests (albeit temporarily).

Salafi and Wahhabi

Salafism is at the core of the pan-Islamic master frame. It provides narrative material that most, if not all, global *jihad* actors refer to in creating their own pan-Islamic movements. *Salafi* theorists believe the *Ummah* – or global Islamic society – must be purified through strict adherence to pre-modern sociolegal doctrine (Gauvain, 2011, p. 7). The contemporary pan-Islamic movement seen today diverged from a brief period of *Salafi* "enlightenment" experienced in the early 20th century (Haykel, 2014, p. 46). *Salafism's* intense focus on emulating the "earliest generation of Islam" takes inspiration from the *Hanbali* school of jurisprudence, thus resulting in its labelling as "puritanical" or "fundamentalist".[47] Where *Salafism* deviates from *Hanbali* interpretation is the former's utter rejection of all other religious jurisprudence (Haykel, p. 43). By considering itself distinct from other schools of Islamic philosophy, *Salafism* has initiated clear boundary framing to distinguish itself from other Islamic institutions.[48] This boundary also serves to differentiate itself with *Wahhabism,* another form of *Salafi* reasoning with deep ties to the Saudi state. A specific brand of *Salafism* – known as

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[47] There are four major "schools" of socio-legal reasoning in Sunni Islam (Wagemakers, 2012, p. 4). The Hanbali school is premised on the writings of Ahmed Hanbal, who sought to verify the transmission of Islamic practices back to their original sources (Picken, 2011, pp. 237-238 in Marensson).

[48] Relegating other social movements to outer-group distinctions constitutes boundary framing (Hunt et al., 2009, p. 194).

global *jihad* – shares similar theoretical characteristics as *Wahhabism,* thus leading to

confusion over what differentiates *Salafism* and *Wahhabism*.

Wahhabism is an alternative form of Islamic legal reasoning theorized by

Muhammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab in the 18th century as a sub-branch of *Salafism* and

Hanbali Islam (Picken, 2011, pp. 249-250). *Wahhabi* framing tactics are similar to *Salafi*

in how they conduct "boundary activation" against other Muslims.[49] Both *Salafis* and

Wahhabis regularly use the word *takfir* to label un-Islamic institutions.[50] This method of

de-legitimizing improper authority has provided justification for political violence against

other Muslims, and as such remains preferred framing tactic of global *jihad* practitioners.

Ironically, this boundary activation has contributed significantly to pan-Islam's own

disunification since each movement struggles to compromise with allies that are deemed

too impious (Hafez, 2011, pp. 27-28).

Although *Wahhabism* is heavily influenced by *Salafi* ideas, divergence in these

two theories is exacerbated by *Wahhabism's* historic affiliation with Saudi Arabia

(Picken, 2011, p. 250). *Wahhabism* is the official doctrine of the Saudi state, and its

dissemination acts as an extension of Saudi foreign policy. *Wahhabi* political strategy

allows for the infiltration of other state systems in preparation to overthrow an existing

government (Wagemakers, 2012, p. 98). Participation in any *kufir,* non-Islamic institution

is strictly forbidden by the global *jihad* frame (Paz, 2011, pp. 205-209 in Moghadam &

Fishman). *Wahhabism's* association with Saudi Arabia holds implications for state

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[49] "In boundary framing, strategies of polarization accentuate differences and draw sharp ingroup/outgroup distinctions" (Wiktorowicz, 2004, p. 165).
[50] "Takfirism is the accusation of unbelief against another Muslim, the idea the founders of the Muslim Brotherhood structured their movement upon. The Brotherhood saw the Muslim leadership of countries such as Egypt to be Islamic only in name." (Lea-Henry, 2018, p. 72).

influence on the pan-Islamic movement, since strategic framing is not just conducted externally against non-Muslim states, but also internally between different sub-frames like global *jihad Salafists* and *Wahhabis,* and the *Deobandi Sufism* commonly associated with the Pakhtun tribes.

Naqshbandi-Deobandi Network

The *Dar Uloom Deoband* was founded in 1866 after a failed mutiny against colonial British forces ruling India in 1857 (Behuria, 2008, pp. 60-61). The *Deobandi* movement was reactionary in that it sought to preserve Muslim nationalist ambitions through either active or passive political resistance (Siddiqui, 2020, pp. 43-44). *Deobandism* is often attributed to contemporary extremist or "Islamist" movements given its orthodox interpretation of the *Quran* and Hadiths. This includes discouraging traditional ecstatic displays of piety common in *Sufi* spiritual practices (Roy, 1990, pp. 57-58)*.* Regardless, its theological basis is largely within *Sufism* despite being influenced by political scholars such as Shah Waliullah and Sayyad Ahmad Barelvi, both of whom were influenced by *Wahhabi* doctrine (Roy, pp. 54-55; Behuria, 2008, p. 59). The shared concept of a political Islamic caliphate established through terrorism is one example of how external Islamic frames have influenced the *Deobandi* school (Roy, p. 57). Despite sharing similar political objectives, the theological foundation at the heart of *Deobandi* Islam is primarily from *Naqshbandi Sufism,* thus setting it apart from the predominantly *Salafi* pan-Islamic master frame (Singh, 2012, pp. 151-152).

The doctrinal link of *Naqshbandi Sufism* and *Deobandism* is an incredibly important feature for this particular movement. *Naqshbandi* Islam is notorious for its potential to politically mobilize one of the most orthodox interpretations of *Sufism*

(Magnus & Naby, 1998, pp. 94-95). The popular *murid* system referenced in first-hand accounts from Afghanistan are a direct byproduct of *Naqshbandi* political theory. Overall, the *Naqshbandi* school believes in the purification of *Sufism* through sober displays of piety and the implementation of *Shariah Law* (Philippon, 2019, p. 153). As previously examined in the section on *Mullahs* in Chapter III, piety is a type of religious capital akin to honor in the *Pakhtunwali.* Accumulated piety in this context is rewarded with a following of students, or *murids,* who accompany the *murshid* as his personal cohort. This system has latent political potential, as well as offering a vast network for mobilization across the system of educational institutions known as *madrassas* that connect *Naqshbandi ulama* throughout Central Asia (Magnus & Naby, p. 75).

  Naqshbandi integration with the *Deobandi* school raises questions as to how this might affect strategic constructions of Pakhtun religious identity.[51] The *madrassa* network essentially maintains a monopoly over religious education in *Pakhtunistan.* This system also once provided the only means for education prior to modernization reforms under King Amanullah Khan (Magnus & Naby, 1998, p. 76). The *mullahs* trained at these (secondary) institutions would receive instruction in the *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* frame and disseminate its sociopolitical doctrine through local services. Such services include officiating a *jirga*, presiding over legal matters, establishing new educational centers (*madrassas),* and managing community mosques (Magnus & Naby, pp. 76-77). This *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* frame has underlying political ambitions for penetrating Afghanistan and Pakistan's respective parliaments (Magnus & Naby, pp. 75-77; Johnson, 2012, p. 190; Chua, 2013., pp. 44-45). Afghanistan avoided state capture by Islamic

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[51] For "strategic construction" see Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 910.

forces for most of the 20th century (to become a Communist state by 1979). Pakistan, however, was more susceptible to these framing efforts. The main vehicle for contesting secular legitimacy came through the *madrassa* network affiliated party known as the Jumiat-i-Uiema-i-lslam (JUI).[52]

Although the JUI were consider unpopular by many of their tribal constituents, they still succeeded in reforming Pakistan from a semi-secular institution into one that integrated *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* scholarly clerics (the *ulema*) into the polity (Haroon, 2008, p. 62). A major step in achieving this was a series of political and judicial reforms under the title of the "Hudood Ordinances" passed in 1977. General Zia-ul Haq was the primary instigator in passing this legislation that effectively ended any notion of secularization in the Pakistani government. A key feature of these ordinances is how they forcibly integrated the *ulema* into the state's governing structure by way of its legal institutions. The ordinances declared *Shariah Law* and necessitated that a dedicated branch of the court system be created to oversee its implementation (Kennedy, 1987, p. 307). Of course, this *Shariah*-bench would have to be staffed by *Ulema* of the *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* branch likely connected to the JUI party itself. The passing of these ordinances implies an attempt at state capture predicated upon religious legitimacy. This intertwined pan-Islamic interests with Pakistan's own state identity, as these actions were further legitimated by a polity under considerable influence by the JUI.[53]

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[52] Haroon (2008) states the *Deobandi's* first political presence was a party known as *Jamiyatul Ulama Sarhad* (JUS). It is unclear whether this party was distinct from the JUI or related to it, though most sources associate this JUI with *Deobandi* political representation (GPO, 2011, p. 27; Lindholm, 1979, p. 500).
[53] Similar attempts were made to dethrone Amanullah in Afghanistan by the *Naqshbandi* ulema through the *Shariatization* of the state. Amanullah successfully avoided these attempts before his own abdication, and his eventual successor Nadir Shah was equally uninterested in sharing power with this cross-border religious polity (Green, 2017, p. 17).

Zia's takeover of the government by way of a military coup heralded major changes to Pakistan's overall relationship with the pan-Islamic movement on an international scale. It is under Zia's regime that efforts to cultivate an insurgency were led by strategic application of the pan-Islamic master frame. Furthermore, this period also brought with it the global *jihad* movement who built connections within the Pakhtun *mujahideen.* These actors benefited from a prolific network set in place by the *Naqshbandi-Deobandi madrassas* that had been operating for centuries (Haroon, 2007a, pp. 66-67). The rise of the Taliban should then be considered in the context of how Pakistan strategically framed the Soviet-Afghan War to establish alignment between the *mujahideen* and global *jihad* frame.

<center>Sub-State Actors</center>

When the communist regime in Kabul failed to establish legitimacy, an insurgency war began that was waged by *mujahideen* guerrillas with the backing of anti-Soviet sponsors. The Soviet invasion served as a catalyst for the decades-long political framing competition that was mostly restricted to actors of the international system. To summarize, it is likely that Afghanistan's decision to lean heavily in the direction of ethno-nationalism was to align itself with the Third Reich's national-socialism policy in the 1940s (Sungur, 2013, pp. 62-63). Following the defeat of Axis powers, Afghanistan directed these framing efforts to linking itself with a potential power base in the Pakhtun tribes through ethnic representation. These efforts were resisted by Pakistan, who was simultaneously competing against the deeply entrenched network of *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* religious institutions prevalent throughout the NWFP (Leake, 2023, p. 303). This *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* network represented a third actor in the competitive framing

<center>66</center>

environment that was neither a state nor wholly representative of Pakhtun traditional society.

The *mujahideen* anti-Soviet resistance were not a single, unified faction beyond sharing an interest in toppling the Communist government in Kabul. International support for the *mujahideen* was not unilaterally distributed either. It appears that state sponsorship was determined based on ideological congruence with individual *mujahideen* commanders (Johnson, 2014, p. 224). This broadly translates to states considering the frame alignment potential of individual groups who were most likely to assume power following the Soviet's military withdrawal. Many important *mujahideen* leaders began as political activists in pre-Soviet Afghanistan, though some maintained direct ties to Pakistan well before their escape during government crackdowns in 1973 (Tomsen, 2011, pp. 100, 106). Most notably, the Islamic "right" supported by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence organization (ISI) eventually became what most people broadly associate with the *mujahideen* resistance in the 1980s (Rashid, 2000, p. 13; Ruttig, 2006, pp. 9-10).

Roy (1990) explains that factional divisions within the *mujahideen* generally coalesced around the supposed moderate Borhanuddin Rabbani and his extremist rival Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.[54] To portray Rabbani and Hekmatyar as political rivals suggests they individually represented competing frames within the *mujahideen* or represented the most generalized conditions for internal framing alliances. If the framing environment was polarized around Rabbani and Hekmatyar, then one would assume the frames they represent would be incongruent, or at least sponsored by competing states. This does not

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[54] Hegghammer (2020) states there were at least four extremist parties - two of which were led by Rabbani and Hekmatyar - and three "traditional" or moderate parties, with ideological divisions generally divided between them (p. 174).

appear to be the case, however, as both Rabbani and Hekmatyar benefitted from the same overall sponsors.

Rabbani has been erroneously depicted as a moderate because his following among the *mujahideen* were perceived to be the "least radical" in contrast to other movements hosting foreign fighters and harboring closer ties to the pan-Islamic network (Roy, 1994, p. 160; Tomsen, 2011, p. 309). This was mostly a reflection of Rabbani's potential for "cross-cutting cleavage" as his Tajik ethnicity invited participation across non-Pakhtun ethnic groups.[55] Rabbani was primarily a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and a zealous advocate for their political movement (Tomsen, pp. 101, 193, 309).

While Hekmatyar was also sponsored by the MB, it is unclear how deep his association with the organization went aside from membership in their Peshawar affiliate, the *Jamaat-e Islami* party.[56] Association with the MB therefore suggests both leaders shared the same frame not just of Islam, but how to operationally achieve pan-Islamic goals (Hegghammer, 2020, p. 159-160). Yet, Rabbani and Hekmatyar remained divided and even on opposing sides of the Afghan Civil War throughout the 1990s.[57] Other circumstances could easily explain why these two political leaders failed to unify under a joint framing strategy, but it is worth considering whether the framing intensity – in this case, *Wahhabism* – might have differed between them.

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[55] "A cross-cutting cleavage exists when some characteristics of a group overlap or are in common with another group(s)." (Das, 2019, p. 4).

[56] The *Jaimaat-e Islami* and *Jamiat-e ulemi I Islam* were all interrelated parties cooperating with the Pakistani government to foster an Afghan Islamic insurgency (Tomsen, pp. 244, 304).

[57] Referring to the analysis of the pan-Islamic master frame, the Muslim Brotherhood is a *Wahhabi* movement that does not completely align with the broader global *jihad* circuit.

One possible way of assessing frame intensity is by looking at the strength of state support for Rabbani as opposed to Hekmatyar coming from Pakistan. Pakistan's Islamic powerbase was intertwined with *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* institutions that were not entirely congruent with the *Wahhabi* frame adopted by the MB. State support would therefore be expected to decrease in the presence of an oppositional frame, like the depth of association between Rabbani, Hekmatyar and the MB. Tomsen (2011) notes that Pakistan and the ISI's lack of trust in Rabbani only exacerbated tensions as increased funding was visibly channeled to his rival, Hekmatyar (Tomsen, 2011, p. 309; Tribal Analysis Center, 2012, p. 10). This potentially reflects a higher level of framing intensity in Rabbani, as evidenced by the strength of his political connections to the MB internationally, that affected Pakistan's decision on who should lead the next Afghan government (Tomsen, p. 290).[58]

Even so, Rabbani's rival Hekmatyar was still a recipient of *Wahhabi* support to the *mujahideen* that contradicts presumptions of his ideological disposition. This can partially be explained by how international support was funneled through the international system down to a sub-state social movement. The United States and Saudi Arabia were actively using *Wahhabism* as a strategic method to contain Iranian revolutionary theories (Calvert, 2007, p. 89). While a major source of the *mujahideen's* funding came from pro-*Wahhabi* framers, it was Pakistan who decided how these funds were distributed.[59] If Pakistan directed this support in favor of Hekmatyar, it would

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[58] It is likely that Pakistan's interests were just as driven by practical, logistical considerations as much as ideological alignment (Rashid, 2000, p. 26). Attempts to coincide *Pakhtunwali* with pan-Islamic political objectives suggest Pakistan was at least considering how Pakhtun cultural norms align with pan-Islam (Rashid, p. 90).

[59] Saudi support was matched dollar-for-dollar by the United States and is estimated to have amounted to 7.2 billion USD (Tomsen, 2011, p. 196; Johnson & Mason, 2008, p. 70).

suggest the state shared greater frame alignment with Hekmatyar's leadership style rather than indicate his personal advocacy of *Wahhabi* ideals.

Hekmatyar presented a greater opportunity for frame alignment and longer-term stability from a purely logistical standpoint as well. Hekmatyar had a notorious reputation as a brutally efficient *mujahideen* commander with his reputation excessively exaggerated (Tomsen, p. 292-293; Rashid, 2000, p. 26). Hekmatyar is consistently labeled a "radical" and was likely cognizant of the political undercurrents keeping the *mujahideen* relevant on the world stage (Hegghammer, 2020, pp. 153, 169). It remains unclear whether any of his associations with the *Wahhabi* network were out of genuine ideological interest in the movement or driven by superficial necessity (Barfield, 2003, p. 31; Lea-Henry, 2018, p. 76).

There is one last, yet fundamentally integral point regarding Hekmatyar's importance as a framing practitioner. Hekmatyar was a native Pakhtun unlike Rabbani. This is a crucial detail considering war against the Soviet Union was occurring shortly after intense efforts to cultivate an ethno-nationalist identity among the Pakhtuns. Hekmatyar would present the most obvious choice for drawing upon any ethno-nationalist sentiment, and his deep ties to the pan-Islamic movement offered a point of convergence in bridging the ethno-nationalist and pan-Islamic frame. Furthermore, the monopoly of *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* institutions predominating the NWFP would almost guarantee pre-established frame alignment with Hekmatyar's followers and religious institutions intertwined with the Pakistani government.

Hekmatyar's strategic value was premised on more than one flawed assumption. First, his ethnicity is not a pervasive representation of cultural identity among the

Pakhtuns. Instead, Hekmatyar could be a lasting byproduct of ethno-nationalist framing efforts that are not fully in alignment with the rest of Pakhtun identity. Second, it also assumes that Pakhtun identity – regardless of whether it is ethno-centric or culturally based – is even capable of alignment with the pan-Islamic master frame. Clarifying these two points would require some conceptually distinct framing of Pakhtun identity that is not wholly dependent on ethnicity and is also removed from the *Naqshbandi* quasi-political institutions.

Global Jihad

Peshawar became a global hub for anti-Soviet resistance towards the end of the war (Hegghammer, 2020, pp. 194-196). Charity organizations headquartered in the city operated in collusion with both state and non-state actors to fund the anti-Soviet *mujahideen* that elicited the presence of the global *jihad* network (Hegghammer, pp. 194-196). This transformed Peshawar not just into an operational hub, but a center for diffusion of the global *jihad* frame. At this time, global *jihad* was still in an early stage of conceptual development, and its evolution was helped in large part by recruiting international fighters for the *mujahideen*. These efforts produced a binary logic sequence predicated on the use of "jihad" that portrayed political activity as a violent social obligation.

The global *jihad* movement is a violent political trend at the intersection of *Salafism's* and *Wahhabism's* most uncompromising theories on political reform. At the core of this movement is how *jihad* is framed to legitimize violence and as a method of conducting boundary framing with other pan-Islamic groups. The word *jihad* is commonly interpreted by moderates as a struggle or personal striving to improve one's

spiritual piety (Hassan, 2014, p. 45). More dogmatic interpretations demand it be

represented through acts of active or passive political resistance (Hassan, p. 45). Global

jihadists believe spiritual piety is seen in active – and notably violent – forms of political

resistance against anyone who does not abide by *Salafi* tenets (Wagemakers, 2012, pp.

72-73). This essentially covers every social movement that is not a part of global *jihad's*

oppressive confines.

While extremist interpretations of Islam have strengthened the global *jihad*

movement's conceptual boundaries, it has also divided them internally. Among its most

famous strategists is Abu Musab al-Suri, who suggested *Salafism* was largely responsible

for infighting across the pan-Islamic master frame as they considered themselves at war

with essentially everyone (Lia, 2011, p. 74). Suri emphasized the need for a coherent

ideological core at the heart of the global *jihad* movement based on writings of Sayyid

Qutb and Ibn Taymiyah, as well as select *Salafi* and *Wahhabi* political doctrine (Lia, pp.

73-74). It is commonplace to reference Sayyid Qutb as a foundational source of global

jihad theory despite Qutb having never been a member of the movement in his own

lifetime (Brykczynski, 2005, p. 3). Other framing practitioners like al-Suri fit somewhere

between the role of practitioner and scholar. It is clear theorists like al-Suri and Abdul

Azzam were strategists at the very least. A key part of their operational strategy was to

consider how ideological values should be framed.

Sayyid Qutb – a key ideologue of the pan-Islamic and global *jihad* movement –

theorized value "layers" to *jihad* similar to how Pakhtun values are visualized in Figure

1.1. Qutb theorized a simple binary logic sequence by attributing greater social value to

the violent display of *jihad* (Qutb, 1981, pp. 59-64). This suggests that *jihad* functions as

a core value of the pan-Islamic master frame like *tura*'s role in the *Pakhtunwali*. Since

demonstrating religious piety equates to *jihad* as a necessary social activity, justifying its

violent interpretation results in a sequence of logic that justifies armed political resistance

(Hassan, 2004, pp. 167-168). Another way of understanding this process is to contrast

jihad with *tura* in *Pakhtunwali*. Both words embody a form of capital with *tura* premised

on cultural importance and *jihad* on religious significance. Accumulating these forms of

capital requires participating in a competitive social arena. Therefore, both values are

transformed into a binary logic sequence that justifies a specific course of action to

embody accepted cultural norms.

   This binary logic contains a justifier – or motivational language – that Benford

and Snow (1988) interpret as constituting a larger motivational framing phase (pp. 202-

203). *Jihad* represents a call to action, as well as the logic that justifies responding to said

call. Recruiting individuals who interpreted *jihad* as a violent obligation basically created

a melting pot for like-minded extremists in Peshawar to collaborate on developing a

global *jihad* frame (Hegghammer, 2010, p. 76). While the global *jihad* frame could rely

on a shared Islamic identity to establish resonance with the Pakhtuns, its political

relevance would be lost among local tribes once the Soviets left Afghanistan. To ensure

the ongoing relevance of the global *jihad* frame, key theorists like Abdullah Azzam

portrayed Afghanistan as an essential hub for the global spread of Islam. This would limit

the backing of any future regime to only the most radically aligned *Salafi* leaders, thus

promising long-term frame alignment between the global *jihad* frame and the next

Afghan government.

State Sponsorship

The Taliban originated from within the *mujahideen* and were affiliated to some extent with the global *jihad* network mostly through interpersonal connections. Official statements from the Taliban suggest their political interests are confined to Afghanistan and the Pakhtun territories (Giustozzi, 2019, pp. 24-26). To provide a brief overview of the Taliban's founding, Rashid (2000) states "the most credible story" is its origins as a student militia drawn together under the clerical leadership of Mullah Omar (Rashid, 2000, p. 25). They were supposedly gathered to persecute criminals who had taken advantage of the lawlessness brought about from state collapse as *mujahideen* commanders fought for control of Kabul. However, the Taliban's first notable actions were recorded at the town of Spin Boldak that served as a major arms cache for Hekmatyar (Sinno, 2008, p. 63).

It is believed the Taliban were initially well-received by the Afghans, who viewed the movement's rise to power as counterbalancing unchecked violence from rampant militia commanders (Sinno, p. 78).[60] By 2001, public support had waned in the face of intense religious persecution and corruption inherited from the failing Afghan political system (Crews, 2008, pp. 255-259). It was even claimed that over one-third of the Taliban (or roughly 40,000 fighters) had become disenfranchised and were ready to defect in support of U.S. military intervention (Tomsen, 2011, p. 599). While such estimates were likely aggrandized to elicit funding for the Northern Alliance opposition, tensions between the ethno-nationalist side of the Taliban and its other half influenced by

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[60] Recall that militia commanders had become an "institutionalized" role in Pakhtun society given the prolific access to arms from international sponsors.

global *jihad* were clearly visible during the 1990s (Tarzi, 2008, p. 292; Tomsen, 2011, pp. 257-262).[61]

These tensions would certainly have been exacerbated by the increasing presence of foreign nationals, such as Pakistan military advisors or Arabs from the global *jihad* movement (Tomsen, 2011, p. 546). The personal relationships, foreign funding, logistical networks and training accorded to the Taliban by Pakistan went beyond definitions of a proxy to the point it might have constituted a second military for Pakistan in the 1990s (Tomsen, pp. 535-536, 570-571). The movement's origins come from intentional efforts by Pakistan to manually align the pan-Islamic frame with *Pakhtunwali's* ideology.[62] Navigating this process requires further examination of framing networks that characterized sub-factions within the *mujahideen.*

It is tacitly understood the Taliban benefited from support provided by Pakistan's military and the ISI. However, the extent of these connections varies by source. The most damning evidence is cited in Tomsen's (2011) account of high-ranking officers in the ISI hand-picking future leaders of the Taliban movement (Tomsen, p. 333). He substantiates this account by tracing the Taliban's evolution from the Argestan Shura, a *mujahideen* branch of the JUI party, that were later indoctrinated by mullahs at *Naqshbandi-Deobandi madrassas* (Tomsen, 2011, p. 766, footnote 17). More general assessments still credit Pakistani logistical support for Taliban military offensives, whose operational complexity could not be accounted for without additional state assistance (Rashid, 2000, pp. 27-28, 48-49).

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[61] It should be noted the transitionary meeting was titled the "Rawalpindi Shura", rather than being considered a *jirga.* The overtly Islamic influence stemming from Pakistan's extremist network is apparent in this phrasing and recalls discussions in Chapter III relating to the importance of these terms.
[62] Refer to Chapter II on values in the context of *Pakhtunwali*.

A glaring contradiction of these accounts is why Pakistan or the ISI invested in creating the Taliban when they already commanded significant power over post-war Afghan politics. For example, the "Peshawar Seven" was a council gathered from the most important *mujahideen* leaders to represent a future transitionary system that eventually became the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) (Hegghammer, 2020, p. 174). However, the majority of its representatives had direct ties to Pakistan such as Rabbani and Hekmatyar. Other extremist ideologues like Abd Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf, Yunus Khalis and possibly more were also included.[63] Evidence of elicit ties does not mean Pakistan controlled these actors directly, but it does suggest the state exerted significant pressure over Afghanistan's political reconstruction during the post-war transitionary period.

The most common suggestion as to why Pakistan decided to create a new Islamic movement is that confidence in Hekmatyar was steadily waning (Johnson & Mason, 2008, p. 71). While Hekmatyar might have commanded respectable military power, it seems his value was mostly in the ability to rally ethno-nationalists under a pan-Islamic banner. Hekmatyar was still widely unpopular among the Pakhtuns. His excessively brutal reputation begs the question of whether he was really an ideological zealot or simply an enabled psychopath (Cristol, 2019, p. 2).

By 1992, it became clear that Hekmatyar would not be able to take full control of the Afghan government even with Pakistan's assistance. The Rawalpindi Shura that had been gathered to deliberate on forming a new Afghan government was considered illegitimate among Pakhtuns who witnessed blatant attempts by the ISI to influence its

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[63] Rabbani, Hekmatyar, Sayyaf and Khalis are the four most "radical" of the Peshawar Seven according to Hegghammer 2020 (p. 174).

outcome (Tomsen, 2011, pp. 257-262). It should also be noted that referring to the

meeting as a *shura,* rather than a *jirga*, favored religious legitimacy over tribal

institutions at the earliest stages of Afghanistan's reconstruction. With an ethnic Tajik,

Ahmed Shah Masood as Minister of Defense, and Rabbani the unelected president of

Afghanistan, Hekmatyar assaulted Kabul with rocket attacks from 1992-1993 provided

by Pakistan's military (Tomsen, p. 15). Shortly thereafter, the Taliban pushed both

factions out of Kabul.

There was no shortage of possible contenders with a suitable ideological

disposition for the global *jihad* frame. Most political efforts were spent on bridging

internal divides that locked the *mujahideen* in a cycle of perpetual infighting (Hassan,

2014, pp. 157-159). One might look to key ideologues of the global *jihad* movement for

an indication of who the most likely choice would be for future frame alignment

opportunities. Ironically, the so-called "godfather" of the global *jihad* frame, Abdullah

Azzam, declared the future Northern Alliance leader, Ahmed Shah Masood, to be the

"true face of Islamic *jihad*" (Lea-Henry, 2018, p. 78).

While Azzam's decision was clearly influenced from having grown

disenfranchised with the *mujahideen,* his decision to back the Taliban's future military

rival should not be ignored (Hassan, p. 24). Azzam pioneered construction of the global

jihad frame, especially its recruitment, to attract foreign fighters to the *mujahideen* cause.

Masood represented the most likely choice for integrating international volunteers and for

intra-faction coalition building because, like Rabbani, Masood was an ethnic Tajik. In the

context of a global *jihad* frame, his ethnic identity would be the ideal choice to offset the

historic effects of ethno-nationalist framing. However, backing Masood also threatened to

tip the balance of power away from ISI's preferred choice of Hekmatyar (Hegghammer, 2020, p. 426). Hekmatyar had established his own connections with the global *jihad* movement as evidenced by close association to Osama Bin-Laden (Christol, 2019, p. 2). It is thought that Azzam's public display of support for Masood brought ire from fellow *jihadis* and the ISI who likely orchestrated his assassination in 1989 (Lea-Henry, 2018, pp. 78-79; Hegghammer, 2020, pp. 428, 444-448). Azzam was likely correct in his assessment of Masood, as Hekmatyar later undermined his own strategic value by preventing foreign fighters from integrating with his ethno-nationalist *mujahideen*.[64]

The Taliban Frame

The integration of foreign fighters alongside Pakhtun *mujahideen* was a larger issue for the Afghan resistance movement. It seems that militia commanders like Hekmatyar had a greater incentive to cultivate personal working relationships with the global *jihad* movement for logistical benefits other than international recruitment (Hegghammer, p. 166, 169; Lia, 2008, p. 236). Interest in bringing foreign volunteers into the war effort appears to have been introduced by the global *jihadists* themselves with support from sympathetic states like Saudi Arabia (Hegghammer, p. 180). It is unclear whether Pakistan facilitated any of the future connections between the *mujahideen* and global *jihadists* that persist in the current Taliban era. What is known is the political identity of the global *jihad* movement clashed at times with the *mujahideen* and the Taliban enough to reinforce they are not one in the same.

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[64] Hekmatyar was likely more sympathetic to Arab volunteers than westerners given his affiliation with *Wahhabi* parties (Hegghammer, 2020, pp. 166-167).

It is likely the Taliban were instilled with a frame that was intended for compatibility with global *jihad* doctrine. By accentuating the Islamic features of Pakhtun identity, this also created an opening for alignment with pan-Islam as well. Rashid (2000) summarizes his observations on Taliban indoctrination by highlighting their poor understanding of Pakhtun cultural history (p. 32). He also notes their extreme dogmatism for traditionalist *Deobandi* interpretations accentuating *Salafi* and *Wahhabi* features (Rashid, p. 93). By the late 1990s, the Taliban's association with independent actors like Bin-Laden was likely carried over from previous relationships established with the *mujahideen*. The global *jihad* movement was struggling to remain relevant, and the Taliban's geographic proximity to conflict zones in neighboring Kashmir and Afghanistan provided an ideal place to cultivate their operational capabilities. While this made an ideal arrangement for the global *jihad* movement, the Taliban on the other hand had little to gain in supporting the global diffusion of the pan-Islamic master frame (Lia, 2008, p. 236; Tarzi, 2008, p. 297).

Statements from *jihad* scholar and operational expert al-Suri suggest that ideological schisms were already forming between the Taliban and global *jihadists* well before 9/11. In fact, there is evidence of a strong anti-Taliban current having developed within the global *jihad* movement embedded in Afghanistan. This ideological incongruence was fostered by the *Sufi* origins of the Taliban movement through their proxy relationship with Pakistan, as well as lasting influence from ethno-nationalist framing (Lia, pp. 234-246). It is not possible to verify Bin-Laden's popularity among the average Taliban Pakhtuns. Support for his position was likely fostered through interpersonal connections with important political figures. Such examples include

Jalaluddin Haqqani, the first Afghan *mujahideen* leader to incorporate Arab fighters into his personal network that became closely affiliated with the Taliban (Ruttig, p. 75, in Crews & Tarzi, 2008).

This inconsistency between organizational stance and public opinion between the Taliban and global *jihad* is reflected today in how such arrangements are maintained within the "network of networks" model. This phrase has been used to describe the newest iteration of the Taliban who have been termed the neo-Taliban after major restructuring efforts following the U.S. military intervention in 2001 (Tarzi, 2008, p. 276). Some warlords within the Taliban maintained closer ties to the global *jihad* network leading to the integration of foreign practices with cultural traditions. Examples include the use of suicide bombing that does not follow the traditional methods of Pakhtun warfare, as well as the use of local musical rhythms like *anashid* or *taranas* to spread *jihad* propaganda (Johnson & Waheed, 2011, pp. 23-24; Heghammer, 2020, p. 406; Ahmadzai, 2021, p. 22). The original Taliban frame clearly demonstrates, however, that Pakhtun cultural (or ethnic) identity was used as a foundational framing for the Taliban's political interpretation of Islam. It is one that relies on establishing congruence between *Pakhtunwali* and *Sharia* law. As such, the Taliban are dependent on both religious and cultural systems of social capital to legitimize their authority. Whether they are an ethno-nationalist, ethno-religious, or a pan-Islamic movement is dependent on how *Pakhtunwali* is interpreted by them.

The Neo-Taliban Frame

The Taliban underwent a major reorganizational period following their retreat from Kabul in 2001. The U.S. military intervention had forced Taliban leaders into hiding throughout Pakhtun territories where they remained disconnected until roughly 2005 (Williams, 2008, p. 54; Giustozzi, 2019, p. 44). While in hiding, the Taliban were aided in their reconstruction by Pakistan, who supported them with freedom of movement, recruitment and fundraising (Williams, p. 54; Giustozzi, pp. 34, 59). The Taliban eventually transformed into a series of autonomous fronts described by Giustozzi (2019) as a "polycentric…networks of networks" (Giustozzi, pp. 43). Any changes to the Taliban's ideological doctrine are difficult to identify as a result of this decentralized organizational structure.

Some reoccurring trends can be identified connecting the old Taliban's "modus operandi" with the neo-Taliban (Tarzi, 2008, p. 276). For example, it appears a sizeable portion of Taliban militants were victims of circumstance and likely driven to the organization based on limited political or social opportunity (Ruttig, 2012, p. 121). This complements Coburn's (2011) observations that Taliban framing efforts were aided by government corruption as well as indiscriminate violence (Tarzi, p. 288). In this scenario, the Taliban were not so much responsible for indoctrination, but rather the only faction intentionally framing their opposition against the western-backed government (Coghlan, p. 133 in Giustozzi, 2009). In the absence of any counter-framing strategy, radicalization went unabated and appears to have been heavily reliant on framing *jihad* to indoctrinate followers (Giustozzi, 2019, pp. 24-25).

Even so, the type of individuals joining the Taliban differed substantially between autonomous fronts. Some individuals cited an inability to reintegrate back into society after having fought for the Taliban, while others were more ideologically inspired (Tarzi, 2008, pp. 287-288; Giustozzi, pp. 24-25, 53-54). Of the latter category, those most susceptible to indoctrination framed widespread violation of Pakhtun cultural and religious norms by western forces as justifying participation in *jihad* (Coghlan, pp. 132-133 in Giustozzi, 2009). It is unclear how much individual choice someone has in joining an autonomous front, though such decisions are likely influenced by circumstance or geographical proximity as much as ideological symmetry.[65]

If an individual is not solely inspired by ideology to join a Taliban front, this calls into question what implications can be found looking at the neo-Taliban's ideological doctrine? The answer is understanding the neo-Taliban frame still provides insight into long-term stability the organization as a governing regime in Kabul. After all, the neo-Taliban's strategy was successful because the coalition government was unable to align its own political framework. If the neo-Taliban are likewise unable to achieve frame alignment, this would suggest its regime is vulnerable to destabilizing by other strategically framed political narratives.

It seems the neo-Taliban is heavily reliant on militia commanders as a secondary institution for their wartime strategy. Recalling social capital theory from Chapter III, this secondary institution is heavily reliant on the acceptability of violence as an institutional legitimizer. The neo-Taliban's framing strategy was successful in part due to the prior coalition government's inability at legitimizing its own use of violence (Coburn, 2011, p.

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[65] Giustozzi (2019) notes recruits were oftentimes sent to *Madrassas* for indoctrination (p. 175).

109). If the neo-Taliban regime were to legitimize violence – unlike the previous government – this would potentially dissolve the institutional role of militia commanders who would seek out ideological associations. Militia commanders who are more ideologically focused than others are poised to benefit from this potential instability. Haqqani is one such example and maintains ongoing connections with the global *jihad* movement, as evidenced by his continuing use of foreign volunteers from outside *Pakhtunistan* (Ruttig, 2009, p. 75).

A key consideration for the neo-Taliban frame is how the organization will internally reconcile the ethno-nationalism and global *jihad* aspects of its current frame. Specifically, the neo-Taliban benefited from applying *jihad* as a binary logic in defense of traditional Pakhtun institutions (Ruttig, 2012, p. 123). A main feature of ethno-nationalist framing was its portrayal of tribal institutions as belonging to ethnic Pakhtuns. Applying the global *jihad* frame in a culturally specific context threatens long term instability, though. The binary logic of *jihad* in this context demands continuous expansion of Islamic territory beyond the Pakhtun borders of Afghanistan.

By transforming the *mujahideen* into the Taliban, it seems that Pakistan unknowingly inherited the discordant nature of insurgency politics that plagued Afghan resistance in the 1980s. Inter-organizational framing competition was further encouraged by the separation of power between two distinct leadership councils (Bijlert, 2009, pp. 167-168). The Peshawar and Quetta *shuras* provide a platform for militia commanders to contest authority and advance their own framing interests (Giustozzi, 2019, p. 94-99). These *shuras* are independently structured to attract foreign financiers and are influenced by the interests of various state sponsors (Giustozzi, pp. 62-64). This reduces the

potential for cross-cutting cleavages and the ideological bridging of frames because it is

not in the interest of foreign backers to have their dedicated *shuras* dissolved (Giustozzi,

2019, p. 91). It is possible the most powerful *shuras* could evolve into a dual-party

political system – on the basis of ethno-nationalism and pan-Islam – representing popular

political trends within the Taliban. Expecting peaceful contestations for power is unlikely

though, as both *shuras* are comprised of institutionalized positions of power predicated

on the political acceptability of violence.

Chapter V.

Frame Comparison and Implications

Although core values were identified in Chapter II as constituting an overall Pakhtun "ideology", these values were never extrapolated into a binary logic sequence or framed into a narrative. Other competing frames have attempted to do so by accentuating the ethnic features of Pakhtun identity and through bridging religious beliefs with the pan-Islamic movement. For comparative purposes, it is beneficial – if not outright necessary – to suggest an alternative political logic to represent "traditionalist" framing of Pakhtun society. This traditionalist frame would likely interpret historic interference by the international system as a threat to Pakhtun tribalized sovereignty. As a result, alternative frames like ethno-nationalism and pan-Islam would be rejected in the interest of preserving tribal institutions.[66]

To display these framing interactions, an experimental comparative model has been modified that reflects the findings of this case study.[67] One additional frame is still absent, however. The Taliban have evolved from their origins in the case study into a "neo-Taliban" movement currently governing Afghanistan. This newer frame represents a hybridization of pan-Islamic interests alongside ethno-nationalism. With the Taliban's

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[66] The notion of "tribalized sovereignty" is proposed as a means of protecting tribal institutions from external manipulation as witnessed throughout the Soviet Afghan War.

[67] The comparative framing model was first submitted in a dissertation to the University of St. Andrews under the title of "Competitive Framing: Visualizing Ideological Interactions Throughout Chechen Conflict History". Its reproduction has been approved by my previous dissertation advisor and current thesis director.

rise to power in Kabul, a new neo-Taliban frame should be considered independently from the pan-Islamic, ethno-nationalist and Taliban frames identified in the case study.

Comparing Frames

The historical case study presents five frames for comparative purposes. Ethno-nationalism is considered an artificial construction sponsored by the international system and is not fully representative of Pakhtun tribal society. Pan-Islam is interpreted as a master frame since it houses numerous sub-interpretations that differ based on how to politically achieve the global spread of Islam. The global *jihad* movement is one such frame within pan-Islam that was likewise divided by doctrinal adherence – like aversion to *Sufism* – that resulted in tension with the Pakhtuns. The Taliban is presented as a hybrid of the ethno-nationalist and global *jihad* frame since it comprises autonomous fronts instilled with both political narratives. A final neo-Taliban frame is distinguished from older doctrine with the apparent loss of important international sponsors, as well as the attempted bridging of ethno-national and pan-Islamic interests.

It remains unclear whether a coherent *Pakhtunwali* traditionalist frame exists anywhere in the Pakhtun territories. It is possible the ethno-nationalist frame has fully subsumed *Pakhtunwali's* traditionalist components. This might be the best possible outcome for political representation of tribal interests absent pan-Islamic objectives. However, given the historical influence of the international system on the Pakhtun ethno-nationalist frame, this thesis considers a potential third framing option. A *Pakhtunwali* traditionalist frame that is not personified by ethno-nationalism or restricted to Islamic religious capital could offer the best outcome for frame bridging with other social groups.

For example, emphasizing institutional similarity reduces emphasis on ethnic identity and allows for coalition building with other ethnic groups. The Tajiks, for example, demonstrate similar tribal structures as noted by Coburn (2011) and other academics (Coburn, 2011, pp. 24-27; Barfield, 2010, pp. 20-22). A traditionalist interpretation would offer the most direct representation of *Pakhtunwali* ideology as a system of governance through legitimizing institutions using more culturally traditional forms of capital. This targets the weakest connection exhibited between the ethno-national and global *jihad* frame; the political conception of *jihad* as a point of symmetry with latent Pakhtun cultural values. Without relying on efforts to bridge the *Pakhtunwali* to foreign political narratives or theories, the Pakhtuns and other non-extremist factions would likewise be strengthened against external interference.

The following comparative model displays frame alignment potential by recognizing the importance of framing components in deciding ideological symmetry.
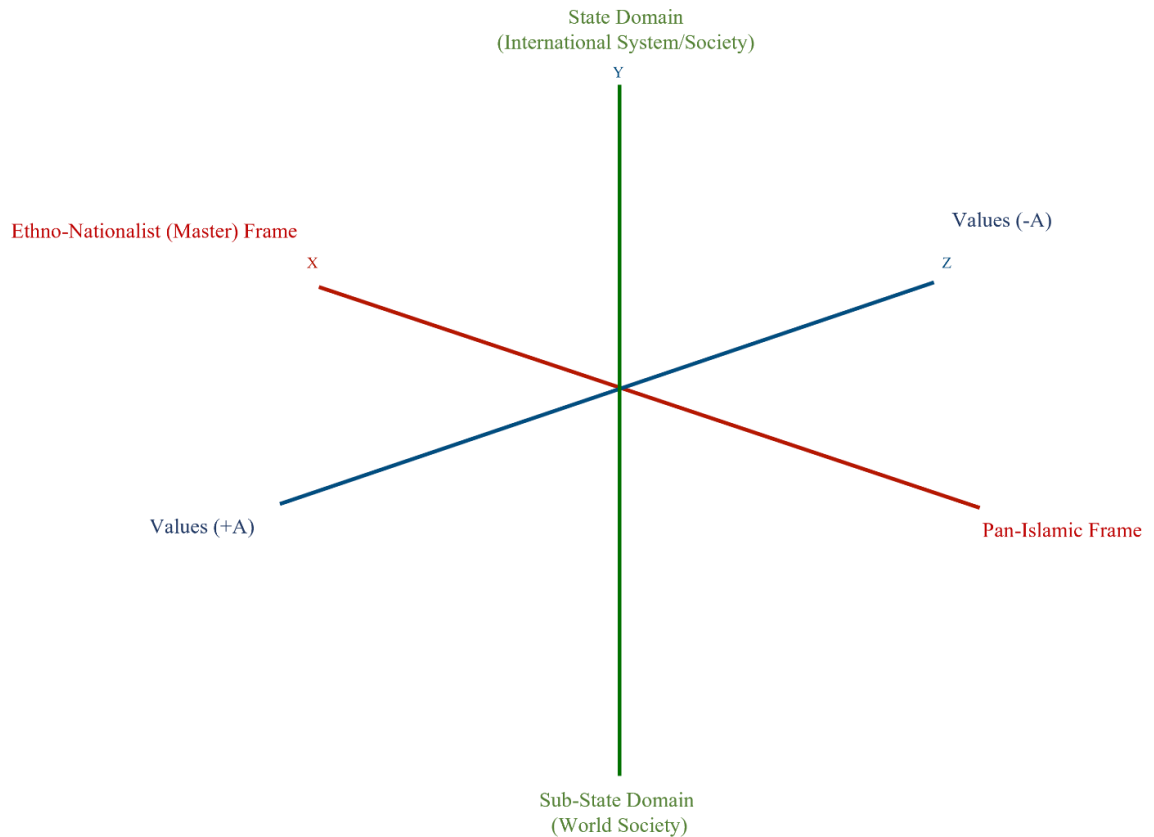
State Domain
(International System/Society)

Y

Ethno-Nationalist (Master) Frame

X

Values (-A)

Z

Values (+A)

Pan-Islamic Frame

Sub-State Domain
(World Society)

Figure 1.2. Model Conceptual Structure

The conceptual foundation for the comparative framing model begins with a vertical hierarchy separating state and sub-state domains (y-axis). A master frame provides a general narrative structure and content (x-axis). The core values these narratives appeal to must be in congruence for frame alignment to occur (z-axis).

The visual space depicted in Figure 1.2. presents a vertical hierarchy separating state and sub-state domains on the y-axis. These domains share conceptual labels with English School theory's three "pillars" of international system, society and world society. The state domain recognizes their influence as primary actors in the international system. The sub-state domain is comprised mostly of unofficial institutions, and individuals are

more likely to act as direct conduits for framing interactions. To clarify, the variations in societal layers are not dependent on the formality of institutions. Some institutions common in the sub-state domain can be integrated into the government and might even become recognized as part of a regional international society. Afghanistan, for example, has attempted to bridge its state legitimacy with the sub-state domain through legalizing the *jirga*. Likewise, individuals can leverage state resources for personal framing interests that do not coincide with official state policy. As a result, there is considerable flexibility in how these domains operate and it benefits the analysis to reflect this conceptual flexibility without enforcing strict theoretical adherence.

Pan-Islam was introduced as a counter frame against ethno-nationalism, thereby suggesting its narrative structure directly opposes such frames promoted by the Afghan state (Akhtar, 2008, p. 53; Bezhan, 2014b, p. 203, footnote 31). The most apparent difference in these frames is their fundamental reliance on ethnic and religious identities for mobilization. Pan-Islam elevates religion over other social groupings, whereas ethno-nationalism establishes certain cultural practices as indicative of ethnic "Pakhtunness" (Calvert, 2007, p. 90). While the case study did not address ethno-nationalism as a master frame, it has been labeled as such in Figure 1.2 for comparative purposes. Indications that ethno-nationalism has become a master frame would include the presence of other sub-frames interpreting its sociopolitical narrative in alternative ways. A hypothetical Pakhtun traditionalist frame would share more similarity with ethno-nationalism than the pan-Islamic movement. As such, the x-axis in Figure 1.2. is labeled with opposing master frames to represent their contrasting social mobilization narratives.

The z-axis is defined by core values – such as those mentioned in Chapter II –
used for creating a binary logic within a frame. With multiple values constituting
Pakhtunwali's ideological half, it is possible to have more than one z-axis to
independently represent each value. The negative form of a value is represented by its
opposite interpretation. For example, honor or *tura* would have a negative interpretation
that encourages passivity to balance the base value. The word *aql* in Pakhtun in
conjunction with *tura* is suggested as providing an element of duality to the more
aggressive aspects of honor in Pakhtun culture. *Aql* represents "reason" and encourages
passive participation in social interactions (Glatzer, 1998a, p. 2). The goal for a frame is
to present a binary logic sequence that integrates these core, interpersonal values as part
of a larger sociopolitical narrative. Alignment potential between frames with a shared
ideological basis is therefore presumably higher. This also means recruitment is likely
catered to those instilled with the same intra-personal values. To clarify, the z-axis in
Figure 1.2. does not represent intra-personal alignment, but rather the presence of specific
values within a social movement frame.

To demonstrate the practicality of this comparative model, Figure 1.3. shows the
global *jihad* and Taliban frames in closer proximity to the pan-Islamic master frame,
rather than ethno-nationalism. Their placement is determined by shared reliance on
religious framing for social and political issues. Both frames encourage active forms of
resistance and are in congruence with *honor* or *tura* shown on the positive z-axis. One
might assume the global *jihad* and Taliban frame share alignment potential based on
these factors. However, the y-axis reveals notable differences in the societal layers these
frames operate in. This final point offers the most conceptual depth for discussing

shortcomings in the original Taliban's framing strategy, as it suggests attempting

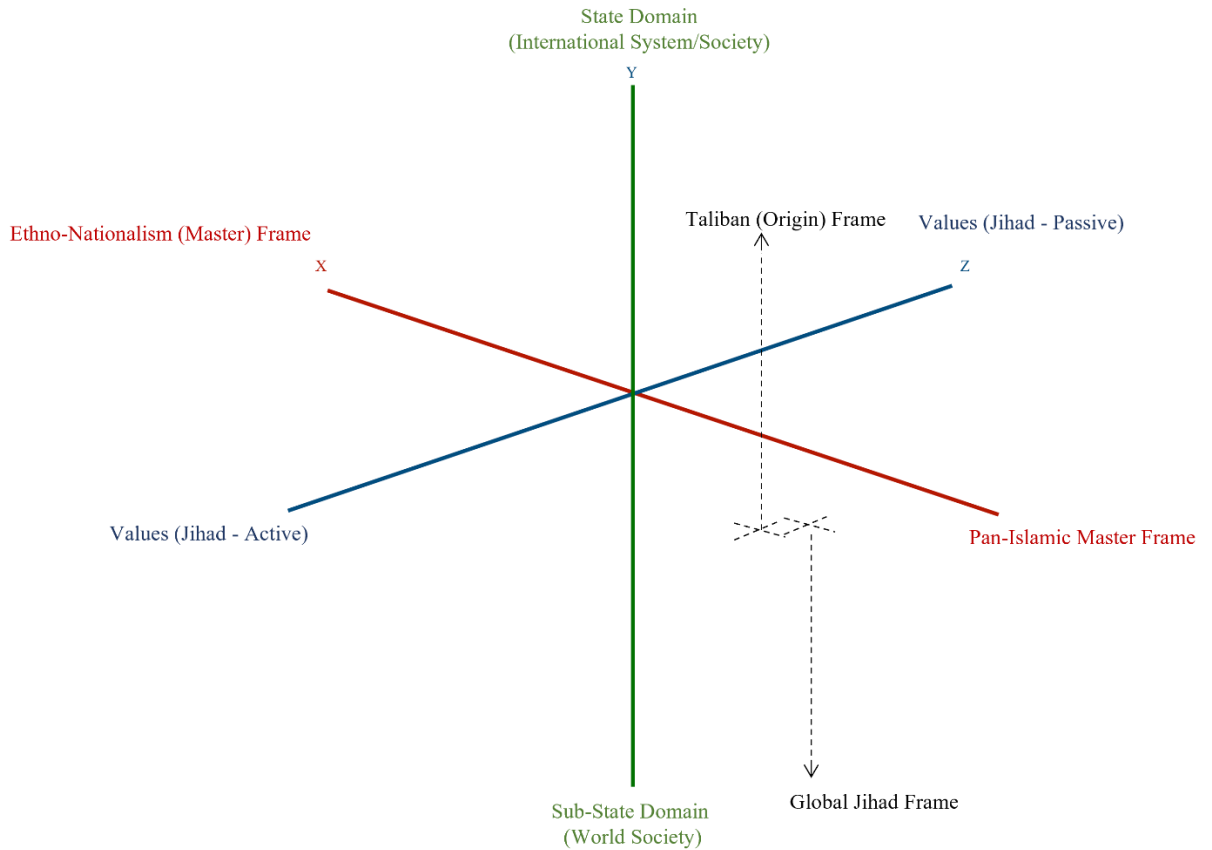alignment with the global *jihad* movement was an unsustainable goal.

Figure 1.3. Comparative Model – Original Frames

*Four frames are presented in the comparative model. The two frames of ethno-
nationalism and pan-Islam serve as narrative anchors in the x-axis given their use of
ethnicity or religion to inspire social mobilization.*

Original Taliban Frame Comparison

      To begin, the original Taliban frame is shown at the height of the y-axis in closest

proximity to the state domain and the international system-society. The suggestion that

the Taliban were functioning as part of the international system would be sharply rejected by classical ES scholars and most political scientists. This is because the international system-society is commonly thought to be predicated on liberal norms as a guiding mechanism for state-to-state interactions. However, in this limited regional context, the Taliban were not necessarily competing for representation in a liberalized international system. Instead, their legitimation came from states comprising a more limited Islamic international system built upon religious norms.

This point is most clearly seen in who the international sponsors were assisting the Taliban both politically and militarily. Only Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates officially recognized the Taliban regime as the legitimate government of Afghanistan (Cristol, 2019, p. 31). While the United States provided financial incentive for the Taliban to discontinue opium production, the U.S. did not go as far as to sponsor their integration into the international system (Cristol, p. 77). In fact, it is believed the Taliban's inability to meet normative demands in U.S. foreign policy is why they failed to establish diplomatic recognition with the west.[68] Examples of when the Taliban failed to meet normative demands include their inability to enforce women's rights in Afghanistan and later refusal to extradite Osama Bin-Laden (Cristol, p. 6).

The Taliban's relationship with Osama Bin-Laden epitomized the regime's inability to bridge the gap in its framing strategy between societal layers. As Figure 1.3. shows, the global *jihad* frame exists at the bottom of the y-axis and operates strictly within the sub-state, civil society domain. This is due to the global *jihad* movement fundamentally lacking international recognition from any state in the international

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[68] The adaptation of international norms in legitimizing regimes is known as "norm diffusion". See Acharya (2004, p. 185) and Farrell (2001) for further details on this concept.

system. Whereas the original Taliban could claim diplomatic recognition from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, the whole premise of the global *jihad* movement is that such states are apostate regimes (Kamolnick, 2016, p. 806). This point is accentuated by claims that Saudi Arabia was also pressuring for the release of Osama Bin-Laden, since it would help the Taliban gain international recognition from the U.S. (Cristol, 2019, p. 57; Ruttig, 2023).

The Taliban's decision to align their frame with the global *jihad* movement kept them anchored to the sub-state domain. This prevented their full integration with the liberal international system, and it was largely unnecessary since they were already being recognized as the government of Afghanistan. The same ideological congruence that fostered alignment between the original Taliban and global *jihad* frame also provided a false sense of legitimation for the regime. Both frames relied upon religious capital for political legitimation. However, legitimation had likely been pre-arranged for the Taliban before they ever took control of Kabul. It was provided to them by states – like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates – who were recognized in the Islamic international system, as well as the larger international system embodied by secondary institutions such as the United Nations.

Alternatively, the global *jihad* frame rejects any legitimation that is not produced internally from within its own movement. This would only alienate the Taliban from potential international sponsors. It also did little to improve the Taliban's domestic appeal among Pakhtun traditionalists at the sub-state level. In terms of support in the sub-state domain, the most reliable source of political legitimacy would have come from the local tribes. The historically entrenched systems of social and cultural capital embodied by the

people of Afghanistan share almost nothing in common with the global *jihad* movement.

Therefore, alignment of the original Taliban frame with global *jihad* had little benefit for

the Taliban in either the state or sub-state domain. To demonstrate this point, Figure 1.4.

introduces the proposed *Pakhtunwali* traditionalist frame for comparison with the global
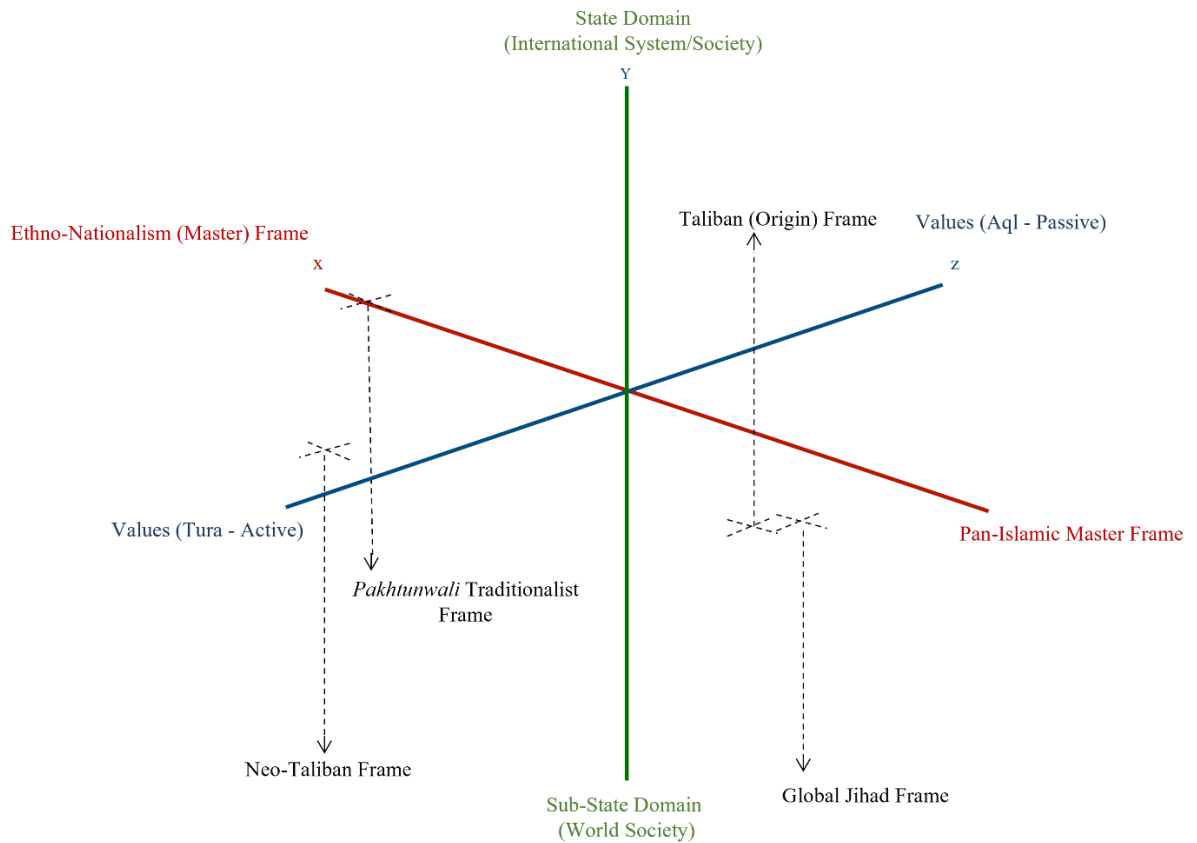
jihad frame.

State Domain
(International System/Society)

Y

Ethno-Nationalism (Master) Frame

X

Taliban (Origin) Frame

Values (Aql - Passive)

z

Values (Tura - Active)

Pan-Islamic Master Frame

Pakhtunwali Traditionalist
Frame

Neo-Taliban Frame

Sub-State Domain
(World Society)

Global Jihad Frame

Figure 1.4. Comparative Framing – Neo Taliban

The neo-Taliban frame attempting to shift its emphasis to appeal towards ethno-nationalism threatens to detach from its global jihad bridging. It is possible to draw away support with an additional Pakhtunwali traditionalist frame.

Pakhtunwali Traditionalist Frame Comparison

As stated earlier, the *Pakhtunwali* traditionalist frame is a hypothetical

construction that was not found in this case study. It represents what a potential frame

might look like if it were based on *Pakhtunwali* norms, values and institutions. This

frame would share more in common with the narrative foundations of the ethno-nationalist master frame as opposed to global *jihad* or pan-Islam. The Afghan state sought to align itself with the Pakhtuns through boundary activation. It established clear divisions between the Pakhtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and other social groups on the basis of ethnicity. Doing so required constructing a sociopolitical narrative built from norms and values from the *Pakhtunwali*. These cultural elements were affirmed as ethnically unique to the Pakhtuns, thus resulting in the tribes having a definable sociopolitical identity in congruence with the Afghan state.

The ethno-nationalist master frame artfully established a dynamic of co-dependency with Pakhtun social identity. With the master frame determining what it means to be "Pakhtun", deviating from the master frame equated to betrayal of Pakhtun social and cultural identity. Furthermore, dependency was strengthened with the Afghan state by positioning itself as official representative of the Pakhtuns within the international system. At a cursory glance, it would appear the ethno-nationalist master frame has achieved full alignment with the Pakhtun culture. Referring to the discussion of *Pakhtunwali* values in Chapter II suggests this might not be the case, however. Deviation between the *Pakhtunwali* ideal and Pakhtun reality in Chapter III reveals potential incongruence at the sub-state level. It is unlikely that political alignment was as successful among the tribal highlanders who view subservience to the state as antithetical to their cultural ideals. It is also possible that illiteracy and a lack of codification have shielded Pakhtun communities from ethno-national indoctrination. Without dedicated field research, it cannot be proven whether traditionalist frames exist, though it is likely

such frames would share alignment with ethno-nationalism as Pakhtun culture provided its cultural material.

Pakhtunwali traditionalism could be a socially balanced frame as exhibited with neutral alignment on the z-axis of Figure 1.4. To reiterate, positive values provoke social activism. Passive values alternatively discourage visible mobilization. Both values are portrayed in the *Pakhtunwali* through *tura* and *aql,* or aggression and restraint. The traditionalist frame has thus been placed in balance between the positive and negative z-axis. In contrast, the global *jihad's* intense emphasis on active and violent forms of political resistance places it firmly on the positive quadrant of the z-axis. This implies alignment is possible when *tura* is emphasized and presented as coterminous with *jihad.*

Since the *Pakhtunwali* traditionalist frame is considered a separate entity from ethno-nationalism, it is placed firmly at the bottom of the y-axis in the sub-state domain. This reflects its resistance to integration with the Afghan state and its origins within the Pakhtun tribal system. The implications of Figure 1.4. suggest *Pakhtunwali* traditionalism is resistant to ethno-nationalism and global *jihad* based on y-axis (domain) and z-axis (value) incongruence. The pan-Islamic master frame likewise fails to achieve congruence since not all Pakhtuns are historically Muslim (Ghani, 1947, pp. 3-5). Only those associated with politically active forms of Islam, like *Naqshbandi-Deobandism,* would be in alignment with the pan-Islamic master frame.

Neo-Taliban Frame Analysis and Implications

A neo-Taliban frame has been included in the next comparative model based on publications mostly preceding their rise to power in 2021. The neo-Taliban frame is very

subjective as political events continue to unfold in Afghanistan. Divisions within the neo-Taliban are expected along ethno-national and global *jihad* fault lines. To clarify, the Taliban's political origins are firmly rooted in the *Naqshbandi-Deobandi* political system detailed in Chapter IV's case study. The organization still lacks formal recognition as part of the international system, though. Whereas in 1996 the Taliban could rely on diplomatic recognition from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Pakistan, now only China has come closest to recognizing the IEA (Ruttig, December 2023). Even so, the neo-Taliban has not been officially recognized by any state actor, and it is unlikely to garner support given its inability to balance the expectation for globalized, liberal norms as part of its Islamic emirate.

The neo-Taliban frame is depicted towards the bottom of the y-axis that reflect its lack of formal international recognition. The neo-Taliban continue to embrace connections with the global *jihad* movement indicating ongoing congruence with the pan-Islamic master frame (Clark, August 2022). This is an alarming trend as it will make the regime vulnerable to re-integration by the global-*jihad* movement, especially if the neo-Taliban cannot adopt a more passive ideological stance as depicted in the Figure 1.4.'s x-axis. It seems militia commanders continue to serve as the basis for governmental legitimacy that relies on the monopolization of violence. The independent stance of these militia commanders will likely determine how the Taliban regime will split if it is unable to reconcile ethno-nationalist currents that likely remain in *Pakhtunistan*.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has created a fertile environment for competitive framing. The Islamic State (IS) at one time was most likely to challenge the IEA. To assess the likelihood for Islamic State victory in Afghanistan would require

analyzing their extra-regional frame. This thesis has been explicitly focused on developments in *Pakhtunistan* and is therefore unable to produce a frame for the IS. It is likely the IS would attract the members of the global *jihad* movement who are divided between *Wahhabi-Salafism* and *Naqshbandi-Deobandism.* If the Taliban remain dedicated to *Naqshbandi-Deobandism,* they will benefit from the prevalent *madrassa* political network that inhabits a majority of the Pakhtun territories. As living conditions continue to deteriorate, it is possible a traditionalist current will form that is receptable to cross-cutting cleavage among ethnic identities to counter religious extremism.

Chapter VI.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this thesis was to construct a visual model that depicts core values at the center of an ideology. The *Pakhtunwali* was selected as an appropriate example for this visualization process because its tribal "code" is identifiable through the presence of shared inter-personal values. Figure 1.1. depicts the hierarchy of values providing a basis for routine social norms. This visualization process helped to identify inconsistencies between the *Pakhtunwali* as it is portrayed in popular literature and first-hand accounts by western academics living among the tribes. At first, this inconsistency was attributed to disassociated hyper-idealization of the *Pakhtunwali.* However, the role of ethno-nationalist framing in the historical case study suggests it might be a related effect.

The case study sought to identify what frames were active in *Pakhtunistan* throughout the 20th century that led to the rise of the Taliban. Ethno-nationalist frames produced by the Afghan state sought to construct a political identity for the Pakhtun tribes. The Taliban, alternatively, represent an attempt by Pakistan to highlight the religious components of Pakhtun society to offset ethno-nationalist appeal. This led to an attempted bridging of global *jihad* with Pakhtun ideology that is pervasive among the neo-Taliban. Some additional points are suggested for ongoing research that relate to Pakhtun cultural studies and ideological visualization.

Points for Ongoing Research

It appears the *Pakhtunwali* is not so much a tribal code, but instead a repository for Pakhtun historical memory and culture (Gorp, 2007, p. 62). It provides them with social norms for structuring their tribal interactions. While this definition might appear similar enough to a tribal code at face value, there is an apparent lack of codification in the historical record that would be necessary for a tribal code to be considered a code. A possible argument is *Pakhtunwali's* primary institutions (i.e., conceptual institutions, or punishable norms) are common enough in Pakhtun society to justify it being labeled as a code. It is also possible the *narkh* is closer to a set of codifiable tribal laws as opposed to the *Pakhtunwali.* A suggestion for continued research is to investigate the role of the *narkh* in governing tribal interactions as opposed to focusing strictly on the *Pakhtunwali*.

As the case study has demonstrated, exposure to the international system encouraged the Afghan government to bridge its legitimacy with a Pakhtun ethno-national powerbase. These efforts likely influenced how the *Pakhtunwali* is presented in academic literature today. Unfortunately, Chapter II and III were written beforehand without knowledge of ethno-nationalist framing by the Afghan state. This factor holds significant implications for research relying upon pre-existing literature. This thesis is similarly limited as it has not been substantiated by its own independent field work. The findings of this case study, however, might otherwise have been missed if this thesis had been strictly reliant on endogenous field research.

Ethno-national framing influences were only perceived by looking at framing competition in Afghanistan from an outside perspective. Relying strictly on publications written in Pashto would not have benefited the analysis, because these publications were

likely the product of (or at least influenced) ethno-nationalist framing efforts. An example of this is Kushal Khan-Khattak's *Dastar-Nama*, whose translated works had seemingly little relevance for understanding how *Pakhtunwali* constitutes a universal social code despite its repeated mention throughout common literature. Furthermore, many Pakhtun works (translated into English) seemingly abide to Aryan evolutionary theory in explaining the origins of the Pakhtun tribes (Habibi, 1967, p. 9; Haroon, 2017, p. 159; Nawid, 2012, p. 34). Such theories are called into question as they were likely inspired by ethno-nationalist policy disseminated prior to the Second World War (Wahab & Youngerman, 2007, p. 114). This point, specifically, is suggested for further investigation by ethnographic specialists to clarify the true origins of the various Pakhtun tribes.

One final mention is how the visual model of Figure 1.1. illustrates core values that comprise a Pakhtun ideology. This model is not intended as an authoritative display of *Pakhtunwali* or ideology, but rather as another step for ongoing research on the topic. This visualization process was also influenced by the theoretical practices selected for this case study. As such, the models are restricted to their intended purpose. Figure 1.1 demonstrates the evolution of values into societal norms. However, it does not display Pakhtun ideology in a social vacuum. Whether societal context is necessary for this visualization process is left up to interpretation by the reader.

As previously stated, I originally developed the comparative framing diagram used in Figures 1.2-1.4. for another dissertation on framing analysis for the University of St. Andrews in 2022. These models were used for this thesis because it was the only known method to visually compare frames in a competitive environment. My intention is

to combine Figure 1.1. as part of the z-axis "values" in this comparative framing diagram to assess value intensity within a frame. A possible way of testing the veracity of these models is to conduct field research utilizing the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT) (Krishna & Shrader, 2002, p. 23). This tool has the potential to be modified with consideration for value ambivalence and inoculation by introducing related questions as part of its survey phase (Krishna & Shrader, p. 29). It also possible to utilize the SOCAT among the Pakhtun diaspora as opposed to risking the safety of field researchers embedded in Afghanistan.

   With a final review of the evidence, I do not believe Figure 1.1 should be used to illustrate values in the manner it does. A key tactic in the development of social movement frames, particularly in this case study, is the extrapolation of a "binary logic sequence" that is dependent on a single, key value. Future work will reflect this lesson learned by displaying a single, core value perceived through various "lenses" to demonstrate how one value can be interpreted multiple ways.

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