



Libraries and Learning Services

University of Auckland Research Repository, ResearchSpace

Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognize the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

General copyright and disclaimer

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the [Library Thesis Consent Form](#) and [Deposit Licence](#).

The Policy Reassembly of Afghanistan's Higher Education Sector

Daniel James Couch

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Education, the University of Auckland, 2019.

Abstract

This is an account of a study undertaken into higher education strategic planning in Afghanistan. The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between conflict, higher education, and state building through an investigation of a country that is seeking to develop its higher education sector within a context of historical and contemporary conflict. To this end, during the course of this study I critically analysed higher education strategic planning, and interviewed a policymakers, consultants, donors, and Ministry of Higher Education officials, in order to better understand the policy purpose of Afghan higher education. This process led me to a 2-part thesis which I advance in this study:

- 1) When the institution of higher education has been disassembled through violent conflict, a dominant ideology can (re)assemble the institution with little contestation.
- 2) The manner in which higher education is (re)assembled has a mediating effect upon its institutional function within an ongoing state building project.

Throughout the chapters below, I argue from a Critical Realist ontology that Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning is anchored by a dominant ideology of neoliberalism, which orients the primary purpose of higher education towards economic growth (thesis part 1). Whilst important, I argue that the dominance of this orientation has limiting implications for higher education's potential to positively contribute towards greater social cohesion and political sustainability (thesis part 2). In seeking to explain the dominance of neoliberalism within Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning, I draw on a Gramscian notion of wars of manoeuvre and position to better understand the wide range of actors vying for influence within Afghanistan's higher education sector.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was made possible by the considerable intellectual and material support of several gracious people. To begin, I thank the study's participants. They are not named in this thesis, however they have all, in their way, done what they believe is best for the development of an integral sector in Afghanistan. Their participation in this study was voluntary, and I am grateful for the words they have entrusted to me. Responsibility for the conclusions I draw from their words is, of course, mine alone.

I have been fortunate to receive excellent supervision throughout this study. Unfortunately this means I cannot blame any errors in this work on my supervisors, and I take full responsibility for the ideas herein.

Professor Elizabeth Rata has guided me for many years with an almost singular intent to see the development of my thought. At all times she has remembered that my mind is attached to the rest of me, and has been genuine in considering my wellbeing, has rejoiced as my family grew, and has calmed my worries about my future. She has been gracious and stern in the right moments, and has applied her considerable intellect to the development of mine – her students all know that a pencilled tick in the margins is high praise indeed. To undertake this study with you has been a privilege of a rare kind, and I have loved it with all of my mind. There is no full way to thank you, so I'll just pop by from time to time for a cup of tea.

Dr Ritesh Shah has pushed my thinking forward relentlessly. He has selflessly shared his extensive wisdom and knowledge of conflict-affected contexts, the writing process, the teaching process, and the job hunt with me. Perhaps more importantly, he has been a firm supporter of my independent thought from our first meeting. Dr Shah's mentoring has seen me develop in a wide range of areas. His feedback on my work, and his constant challenge to position my ideas within the larger context, have been invaluable throughout. I will be responding to his challenges for years to come.

Colleagues and friends in the STUCK group have helped me when I've been, well, stuck, but also have been amazing support when I've been down, and friends when it's time to celebrate achievements. Thank you (in alphabetical order) Ana Maria, Linlin, Lisa, Neera, and Yulida! Associate Professor Barbara Grant has taught me more about writing than I knew there was to know, and if there is clarity in the writing below, much of it is owed to these lessons. Thank you. Several friends in the doctoral hub have been welcome support as we talked about knowledge, development, the

state, and the state of our developing knowledge. I shall (and do) miss conversations with Zulfa and Temi and Wendy and Yagya especially. Dr Donella Cobb has been a champion supporter of my work, and when things got tough and I thought about pitching it all in and starting a Kayak rental so I could just sit on the beach, she has encouraged me along. Thank you.

This study is because of my parents Jim and Lois Couch. They believed in something firmly enough to take their family with them in its pursuit. They have dedicated themselves to others, and to the pursuit of peace, in their lives and through their work, and they have done it without a fuss. (I probably only make a fuss because I'm second-born, and had it harder). I love you both deeply.

My little Yasmine and then my little Airini have kept me on the ground lest I lose myself in my head. There is no greater joy in my life than being called father.

And to my love. Susie. I have been an imperfect husband, but in my imperfection you have been my perfect wife. You are quite literally indescribable, so I won't try. You are an amazing Mother, Leader, Wife, and Best Friend, and now that this is done I'll unpack the dishwasher.

I dedicate this work to my daughters

Yasmine Pia-Louise Couch

Airini Whina Elise Couch

I loved you before I knew you, and now that I know
you my God how I love you. May you bring peace in
your worlds.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Dedication	5
Table of Contents.....	6
Chapter 1 – A Thesis on Afghan Higher Education Policy	12
Introduction	12
Why policy? And why higher education?	13
Policy Data: Strategic Planning in Afghanistan’s Higher Education Sector	16
Study Participants	17
Study Ethics and Limitations	19
Framing key findings	21
Economic Growth Discourse	21
Human Rights Discourse	26
National Identity Discourse.....	27
Thesis Outline.....	28
Chapter 2 - Conceptual Methodologies: Critical Realism, Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education, and Critical Policy Analysis	32
Introduction	32
Critical Realism: The Water Table and the Well	34
A Critical Realist Ontology.....	34
Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education.....	39
CCPEE and Conflict-Affected Contexts.....	41
Critical Policy Analysis: A look at the methods	43
Methods: Document Analysis and Semi-Structured Interviews	47
Ideology and Discourse	49
Chapter 3 – Afghanistan and Early Questions of Statehood.....	54
Ahmad Shah Durrani and the First Kingdom of the Afghans	55
The First Anglo-Afghan War: 1839-1842	60
The Second Anglo-Afghan War: 1878-1880, and Afghanistan as Buffer State	63
The (myth of the) Great Game and the Centralised Afghan State by 1901.....	65
Conclusion.....	69
Chapter 4 – Globalisation, and the Emergence of Afghan Higher Education	71
Higher Education and the Evolution of the Afghan State	71

On Globalisation.....	71
Assemblage, Assembly and Disassembly.....	75
Early 20 th Century Statehood, and the Rise of Modern and Higher Education	77
Higher Education and Geopolitics.....	80
The Communist Coup d'état of 1978, and Soviet Occupation.....	87
The Disassembly of Higher Education: 1992-2001	90
Conclusion.....	92
Chapter 5 – The Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan.....	93
Introduction	93
The Fall of the Taliban and The Bonn Agreement	94
The Early (re)Assembly of Higher Education.....	96
The Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan	98
Dominant Discourses	100
National Identity Discourse in the Strategic Action Plan	100
Economic Growth Discourse in the Strategic Action Plan	110
Human Rights Discourse in the Strategic Action Plan.....	116
Conclusion.....	122
Chapter 6 – National Higher Education Strategic Planning: 2010-2016.....	125
Introduction	125
Higher Education After the SAP	125
The National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014.....	127
Economic Growth Discourse in the NHESP I.....	131
Human Rights Discourse in the NHESP I	143
National Identity Discourse in the NHESP I.....	147
Conclusion.....	149
Chapter 7 – National Higher Education Strategic Planning: 2016-2020.....	152
Introduction	152
The National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2016-2020.....	152
Economic Growth Discourse in the NHESP II.....	157
Human Rights Discourse in the NHESP II	167
National Identity Discourse in the NHESP II.....	173
Conclusion.....	174
Chapter 8 – Sovereignty, legitimacy, statehood, and Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning	177
Introduction	177

Part 1 – The neoliberal policy imaginary of Afghanistan’s higher education system: In service of the (war) economy	178
Part 2: “A million dollars is heavier than you think”: Afghanistan and a Gramscian War of Position	182
Crowding In or Crowding Out? Legitimacy, Sovereignty, and Ownership.....	189
Part 3: <i>Der lange Marsch durch die Institutionen</i>	195
Conclusion.....	198
Chapter 9 – Concluding remarks.....	200
Introduction	200
A two-part thesis.....	200
Contributions to knowledge	202
Substantive	202
Theoretical	204
Methodological	204
Looking ahead	205
A (personal) conclusion.....	206
Appendix A: A Postlegomenon Towards a Theory of Conflict Capital	208
Introduction	208
Towards a Theory of Conflict Capital	209
Ideology and the Reproduction of the Relations of Production	210
Conflict and Accumulation Through Reproduction and Expansion	216
Conflict and the Structuration of Social Relations	219
War Economies	221
Conflict Capital and Afghanistan’s Higher Education Strategic Planning	224
Appendix B: <i>Buzkashi (see Chapter 8 Part 2)</i>	228
Appendix C: Sample of Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form	230
References	234

The Policy Reassembly of Afghanistan's Higher Education Sector

Daniel James Couch

* * * *

they want to kill me.

No.
Not they, Them.
Not me, Us.

No.
Not Us, an Idea, and not kill, Contest.
Them want to Contest an Idea.

How does one Contest an Idea?

I suppose that is why
they want to kill me.

* * * *

They come shortly after morning tea. All four pull AK-47s from their bags and fire together into the guard and the community elder both sitting at the front gate, a cacophony of murder and the air presses against my ears with the violence of each percussive report and I say to my classmates get under the desks as I turn the lights off. Now they're directly outside the window firing on the guard tower parallel to our classroom and they don't turn and see us and the air presses harder on my ears with each shot. They move past. The reports from their rifles move past. Towards the junior school.

We huddle under desks in the relative dark and wait. Tamara is crying and I tell her we'll be ok and to shhhh. shhhh.

Help me. Juliet's hand comes through the window to show that she is shot, I'm hit help me she says, and the spray from her wound and the panic in her throat arc across the room. Go to the front we say. The front doors. I can't get the window open wide enough because there are bars. She pulls her hand from the window. I get back under the desk and wonder what the bullets will feel like. Will it be quick? Will it hurt? I imagine the path the spew of bullets will take across my chest and for months when I wake in the night that is where I hurt. Still, sometimes; though less. I make peace with death. My God here I come I whisper. Receive me.

The classroom door opens. The school director looks into my face under the desk and walks through the room to look through the window, then hurries out without a word.

Let's barricade the door I say, and the passive acceptance of what is happening falls from us like clothes discarded. Josh and I push desks and chairs into a tangle in front of the door and then we all knot in the furthest corner. Tamara curls in my lap and clings to my arm and cries and I shush her. We'll be ok. we'll. be. ok. I have nothing to fight with. I grip a pencil tight in case I must use it as a weapon, and wish it were a knife. A gun. I could kill them with a gun. But it's a pencil and it's all I have. There are fewer percussions. Then there is silence.

* * * *

Dear Reader,

I'm sorry for starting this way. I hope that, by putting it here, it can be behind me now.

I'm about to step into the academic nature of this study, but it wasn't born out of an academic interest in peace, or in Afghanistan. It was born out of my experiences growing up in Mazar-i-Sharif during the civil war of the 1990s, and of living through a terrorist attack against my school when I was seventeen.

I was only seven in 1993 when my family moved to Afghanistan. I mostly remember the bullet pockmarks in the airport walls after we landed in Kabul. Great gaping scars across the plaster. I remember the pockmarks and the rusting hulks on the runway that we had taxied past. We lived in Mazar-i-Sharif, in the North of the country, where my parents worked for an NGO during the subsequent five years. In 1997, we evacuated to Pakistan with an hour's notice as the Taliban retook the city with the intensity and violence of genocidal mass murder.

In 2002, at the beginning of my final year of high school, the Christian boarding school that I attended in Murree was attacked by Al Qaeda gunmen. They killed 6, a mixture of local staff, guards, and a community elder, and wounded 3 others. The definition of *miracle* is this: that they did not kill more, or children.

In 2013, in the relative paradise of New Zealand's Coromandel, I saw a news bulletin depicting some of the massive war damage in Syria. I wept, overcome with emotion. I couldn't help but think of the children that were victims of that conflict, and the experiences they shared with the children on the dusty streets of my childhood. I reckon that was where I began to think of this project.

Why Afghanistan? I have been asked this consistently throughout my PhD. Nobody asks about the higher education part. I swallow hot frustration, or indignant impatience, or my urge to challenge the well-meaning questioner to name a country more exploited in the geo-politics of this millennia – why do you take your shoes off in airport security? etc etc – and I say that I lived there as a child. That my parents, from America and from New Zealand, met in Kabul in the 70s. That I suppose, in that sense, I have a lot to thank the country for. This apparently makes sense to them, and of course is true. My study into Afghanistan *is* driven and sustained by my personal connection with the place, by my memories of it.

It is fair to say that my experiences in Afghanistan since that first impression of Kabul airport – its rawness and hope and beauty and heartbreak – and the contest of ideas that I experienced so vividly in Pakistan, have had a profound impact on me. In some ways I believe that I will spend the rest of my life thinking about where, and how, we contest ideas. This thesis is my start.

Sincerely,

Daniel Couch

Chapter 1 – A Thesis on Afghan Higher Education Policy

Whenever I was with Moheb I appreciated anew that the future history of Afghanistan, if left to Afghans, would be determined by the struggle between the many bearded mullahs from the hills and the few young experts like Moheb, with degrees from Oxford or the Sorbonne or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I was not at all sure how the contest would eventuate, but it was clear that not only I but also all the people of all the embassies prayed that Moheb Khan and his young associates might win.

(Caravans: A novel of Afghanistan, by Michener, 1963, p. 22)

...attention to connections between socially distinct groups of economic actors and the markets they form [contributes to] conceptual reorientation for all those who engage Afghanistan and its inhabitants' alleged remoteness using exoticism, militarism, racism, and romanticism as intellectual tools.

(Hanifi, 2011, p. 174)

Introduction

This is an account of a study undertaken into higher education strategic planning in Afghanistan. The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between conflict, higher education, and state building through an investigation of a country that is seeking to develop its higher education sector within a context of historical and contemporary conflict. This led me to a 2-part thesis which I advance in this study:

- 1) When the institution of higher education has been disassembled through violent conflict, a dominant ideology can (re)assemble the institution with little contestation.
- 2) The manner in which higher education is (re)assembled has a mediating influence upon its institutional function within an ongoing state building project.

I argue that Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning is anchored by a dominant ideology of neoliberalism, which orients the primary purpose of higher education towards economic growth (thesis part 1). Whilst important, this has possibly limiting implications for higher education's potential to positively contribute towards greater social cohesion and political sustainability (thesis part 2).

After initially exploring the historical context of Afghanistan more broadly, three periods of particular significance in Afghanistan's higher education development are examined in this study. First, the period of Soviet invasion and occupation and subsequent civil war (1979-2001) is interrogated (Chapter 4) in order to demonstrate how state institutions, with specific attention to higher education, underwent sectoral redrawing and eventual collapse as a result of extended

violent conflict. I argue that this institutional disassembly set in place the necessary conditions for an ideologically-informed reconstruction of the Afghan higher education sector. The second period is that of Afghanistan's interim government following the US-led invasion, and its transition to a representative government (2001-2008). This period is examined (Chapter 5) to demonstrate the manner in which ideologies of both neoliberalism and humanism were introduced in strategic planning for higher education development, but failed to become national policy. I consider contributing factors to this failure, such as the commodification of higher education, to illustrate the establishment of neoliberalism as higher education's foundational ideology. Third, the period of national higher education strategic planning (2009-present) is considered in depth (Chapters 6 and 7). In order to demonstrate that the dominant ideology of neoliberalism became reified in/through strategic planning policies, I explore factors which contributed to the success of this ideology in the reconstruction and expansion of higher education, before considering problematic implications neoliberal higher education might have for the ongoing state building project within Afghanistan's conflict affected context (Chapter 8).

This introductory chapter serves several important purposes. I begin by engaging with two important questions: why higher education? And, why policy? I then introduce the three policy documents which form the primary object of study, and ten participants whose participation has lent insight, perspective, and nuance unavailable from documents alone. As with any study, there are ethical considerations and limitations within my project, and I outline those following an introduction to the participants. I then frame the three dominant discourses which emerged from my examination of Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning documents. These are; Economic Growth Discourse, Human Rights Discourse, and National Identity Discourse. I conclude with an outline of the remaining chapters.

Why policy? And why higher education?

To argue the importance of policy studies, it makes sense to begin by considering policy's function. As Codd succinctly stated, policy is "any course of action (or inaction) relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources. Fundamentally, policy is about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process" (1988, p. 235). Those of us with experience of working in larger institutions will have, no doubt, encountered policies in various forms which materially determine the courses of action we take. As a school teacher I arrived on school grounds by a particular time in keeping with policy. In my new office, my window can only open about 15 centimetres before it is stopped by policy in the shape of a recently-fitted bung. (The rebels amongst us have undone this policy with a Philips head screw driver).

Stepping back from the micro-policies we encounter in a day's work, the importance of policy has increased in society as globalisation sees formerly rigid boundaries become increasingly permeable (Cobb & Couch, 2018; Ginsburg, 2012a; Robertson, 2009, 2012). According to Shore and Wright, "policy has become a major institution of Western and *international governance*, on a par with other key organizing concepts such as 'family' and 'society'" (1997, p. 5, emphasis added). And here we arrive at the heart of the matter. Policy is, at its core, about governance. Policy documents fix, for a time, the ideology of governance that is material to their construction. Policy structures social relations, and is concerned with enabling the reproduction of a particular regime of governance (Ginsburg & Lindsay, 1995; Verger, Novelli, & Altinyelken, 2018). In this way, "an approach to the analysis of policy documents could be construed as a form of textual deconstruction in which ideological effects can be critically examined" (Codd, 1988, p. 236).

Education policy within conflict-affected settings presents multiple complexities (Bengtsson & Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Burde & Khan, 2016; Kirk, 2007; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016a; Spink, 2005). Whilst all policyscapes embody a range of agendas, actors, and interests (Carney, 2009), conflict-affected contexts present a particular breadth. Referring to education in post-Yugoslavia, Baćević writes that the "period of transition and, specifically, of post-conflict development, was (and still is) characterized by the growing influence of international and transnational actors and networks on policymaking" (2014a, p. 124). Mirroring Codd's outline of the function of policy above, Robertson argues that the question "for education policy analysis ought to be; whose values are allocated, how, and with what outcomes for education as a sector, teachers and learners" (2012, p. 39). Where policies within conflict-affected contexts are co-authored by local and global actors, as seen in Afghanistan, the need for critical policy-based research is arguably heightened. Such policies can be highly problematic as they often start "from the perspective of the needs and demands of international donors and agencies and [are] largely uncritical of the North's responsibility and complicity in generating conflicts in the South" (Novelli, 2012, p. 24). For Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, therefore, such contexts require "careful analysis of 'who' and with 'what' intentions policy is being developed and its underlying rationales" (2008, p. 481).

This study takes Novelli and Lopes Cardozo's challenge to the policy analyst seriously. Seeking to identify the dominant anchoring ideology of a strategic approach to the re-establishment and development of Afghanistan's higher education sector presents an important opportunity for analysis of the policy purpose of higher education within Afghanistan's ongoing state building project. Such a task *should* form the object of critical academic inquiry. As Burde highlights,

“[h]umanitarians, policymakers, and academics have a significant role to play in improving the quality of foreign aid to education” (2014, p. 168). I outline my methodological approach in Chapter 2. In doing so, I demonstrate that a central consideration for this study has been to position my analysis within a contextually and historically informed framework. Indeed, Novelli’s approach to address the shortcomings of North-centric policy analysis in conflict-affected education is to “de-centre this approach...[by employing an] historicised global political economy approach that can better grasp the complex inter-relationships between local conflicts and global processes” (2012, p. 24). These authors stress the importance of critically examining policy, particularly when education sectors have been affected by violent conflict.

Why higher education? There is a large body of research around the importance of primary education within development work (cf. Baiza, 2013b; Barakat, Connolly, Hardman, & Sundaram, 2013; INEE, 2010; Robertson et al., 2007; UNICEF, 2013). However the importance of higher education in development work has a much shorter history (Robertson, 2009). A report by the World Bank in 2000 signalled a shifting institutional understanding of higher education’s role in the global South. It concludes that “strengthening higher education is a rational and feasible way for countries to mitigate or avert further deterioration in their relative incomes, while positioning themselves on a higher and more sharply rising development trajectory” (World Bank, 2000, p. 97). Amidst a changing culture within global funders of education, higher education is increasingly being perceived as crucial for development (MacGregor, 2015; Milton, 2018; World Bank, 2002). Below, where I frame the Economic Growth Discourse which emerged from my analysis of Afghan higher education strategic planning, I consider the human capitalist rationale behind this approach further. Whilst higher education should feature as an important economic tool in post-conflict development, it can also be crucial in setting and developing additional agendas which can promote peace (cf. Milton & Barakat, 2016). I refer to these potentials of higher education as its *non-economic* dividends throughout this study. In Afghanistan, with almost one million young people estimated to be enrolled in the higher education sector by the year 2025 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2016), few institutions are so pivotally positioned to affect Afghanistan’s national development. The chapters below expand both of these questions – why policy, and why higher education – as I undertake my analysis of the various discourses evident within Afghanistan’s strategic planning for the sector, and the ideology they communicate. It is now time to introduce the policies themselves, before I introduce the study’s participants.

Policy Data: Strategic Planning in Afghanistan's Higher Education Sector

Three documents published by the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education (hereafter MoHE) make up the primary data for this study. The first is entitled the *Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan*. It was jointly authored by the MoHE and UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Throughout the thesis, it is referenced as MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004. Examined in depth in Chapter 5, this plan was completed toward the end of Afghanistan's interim Government (2001-2004) which had been established by the Bonn process following the fall of the Taliban and US-led invasion (Rubin & Hamidzada, 2007). As the elected government took office, and a new Minister of Higher Education was appointed, the Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan (which I abbreviate to SAP) was never formally implemented as MoHE policy. However, as I demonstrate later, it was highly influential in shaping the higher education sector's expansion in a number of ways. For instance, the SAP lay foundations for the introduction of private higher education into Afghanistan. Interestingly, the SAP presents a form of balance between Economic Growth Discourse, Human Rights Discourse, and National Identity Discourse. It pays particular attention to the historical structure of Afghan higher education, and the potential function of the University in promoting social cohesion and an acceptance of pluralism.

In 2009, the *National Higher Education Strategic Plan: 2010-2014* was written. Throughout the study I refer to this as the NHESP I, and reference it as MoHE, 2009. An examination of the NHESP I forms the basis of Chapter 6. Its lead author was an international consultant who worked jointly with a Deputy Minister of Higher Education. The NHESP I is considerably shorter than the SAP, and primarily focuses on the potential function of the University in promoting economic growth. Here, the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse comes to the fore. The NHESP I was implemented as the MoHE's strategic plan for the five year period from 2010 to 2014. During this time, enrolments in higher education grew at a massive rate, more than doubling in five years.

The *National Higher Education Strategic Plan: 2016-2020* began life around 2012-13, but was delayed considerably by a range of politics. It has yet to be signed off as the 'official' policy to replace the NHESP I, however participants assured me that it operates as the de facto policy in the interim. I explore this context further in Chapter 7. Throughout the study, I refer to this as the NHESP II, and reference it as MoHE, 2016. The version of the policy that I analyse was provided by the lead author, who informed me that it would not materially change before being ratified. Within the NHESP II, the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse is maintained.

Study Participants

In addition to the three policies outlining higher education's strategic direction, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of people involved with Afghan higher education. I outline the methods used for the study in Chapter 2. However, below I introduce the study's participants. I wish to reiterate at this point my gratitude for their time, as their participation in this research has offered considerable richness to the data and, it is hoped, to the conclusions which I draw.

Consistent with the ethical approval for this study from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (reference number 015083), I do not identify my participants by name. Rather, I include a brief outline of their position. Participants were aware that whilst I do not disclose their identity, due to the public nature of their positions it is possible that some, with knowledge of the context, might infer who they are. Study participants include:

Former Minister of Higher Education: This participant is an Afghan national and holds the academic rank of Professor. He has had a long-standing relationship with higher education in Afghanistan and abroad. He has been influential in the re-establishment and development of higher education nationally since the fall of the Taliban. Additionally, he was instrumental in the development of the SAP. My interview with him was conducted via Skype whilst he was in Kabul, on 17 April, 2016. As there have been multiple Former Ministers of Higher Education, I reference this interview as a Former Minister of Higher Education, 17 April, 2016.

Former Deputy Minister of Higher Education: This participant is an Afghan national, and holds the academic rank of Professor. He served a comparatively long term in the MoHE. He was influential in the development of the NHESP I and NHESP II, and oversaw several key developments in the higher education sector during his tenure. I conducted an interview with him in Kabul via Skype on 17 February, 2016. The interview was interrupted by a power cut, however we reconnected moments later to complete the interview. As there have been multiple Former Deputy Ministers of Higher Education, I reference this interview as a Former Deputy Minister of Higher Education, February 17, 2016.

Lead Policy Author and Academic Consultant: This participant is an international consultant, and holds the academic rank of Professor. He has considerable experience in the development of institutional and national level strategic plans in the United States, and a wide range of low- to middle-income countries. He has published widely on the subject. He was one of the lead authors on

the NHESP I, and involved in the same capacity at a later stage of the NHESP II, and has a longstanding engagement with Afghan higher education. I conducted an interview with him in the US via Skype on 14 April, 2016. Referring to his position within a team of lead policy authors, I reference this interview as a Lead policy author, April 14, 2016.

Academic Consultant A: This participant is an international consultant, and holds the academic rank of Professor. He has been a Principal Investigator (PI) on projects involving higher education in Afghanistan since 2002. Many of these projects are funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Academic Consultant A has visited projects in Afghanistan regularly during his time as PI. I conducted an interview with him in person in the US on 28 February, 2017. I reference this interview as Academic Consultant A, February 28a, 2017.

Academic Consultant B: This participant is an international consultant, and holds the academic rank of Professor. Academic Consultant B has been involved in higher education in Afghanistan since approximately 2005. He has actively steered many projects funded by USAID, and regularly travelled to Afghanistan for this work. I conducted an interview with him in person in the US on 28 February, 2017. I reference this interview as Academic Consultant B, February 28b, 2017.

Academic Consultant C: This participant is an international consultant, and holds the academic rank of Associate Professor. She is highly experienced in evaluating, monitoring, establishing, and implementing internationally-funded aid to education. She conducted evaluation studies of a national aid organisation's engagement with higher education in Afghanistan, and spent time meeting with the MoHE in Kabul, and in a regional University. I conducted an interview with her in person in her home country on 18 February, 2016. I reference her interview as Academic Consultant C, February 18, 2016.

Lead Education Policy Author: This participant is an Afghan national, and holds the academic rank of Research Associate at a higher education institution in the United Kingdom. He was a lead policy author for an early education strategic plan in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Education is separate from the Ministry of Higher Education, and the plan which he oversaw directed the development of primary and secondary education. His published research about Afghanistan education is comprehensive, and his insights into the education policy development process in Afghanistan lent particular richness to my study. I conducted an interview with him in the UK via Skype on 1 December, 2015. I reference this interview as Lead Education Policy Author, December 1, 2015.

Former Vice-Chancellor: This participant is an Afghan national, and was one of three vice-chancellors appointed by the chancellor of his rural University in Afghanistan. At the time of interview, he was completing a PhD at a university in America. During his tenure serving as Vice-Chancellor, he had much to do with implementing elements of policy from the MoHE in Kabul, and was one of the people within his institution with knowledge of the NHESPs. His insight is particularly valuable, providing the only voice from within a higher education institution¹. I conducted an interview with him in person in the US on 27 February, 2017, which I reference as Former Vice-Chancellor, February 27, 2017.

USAID Education Specialist: I communicated with this participant through USAID's Washington DC Communications Officer. I initially approached USAID in Washington and had no response for some time. I then approached the US Ambassador in Kabul, who graciously introduced me to one of his colleagues and appeared to open access to further participants in Kabul. However, I was then referred to the Communications Officer in Washington DC thirty minutes later, and access to Kabul-based USAID officers closed. I interviewed the USAID Education Specialist by email, and received their response on 28 June, 2016. I reference this interview as USAID Education Specialist, June 28, 2016.

World Bank Higher Education Specialist: This participant is an international specialist employed by the World Bank. He has been instrumental in developing an early version of the NHESP II, which was later heavily amended. I conducted an interview with him via email, and received his response on 14 April, 2016. I reference this interview as World Bank Higher Education Specialist, April 14, 2016.

Study Ethics and Limitations

As mentioned above, this study secured ethical approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee. Participants were approached directly, as they all hold public positions. Dari-speaking participants were invited to speak in Dari or English, however all participants chose to be interviewed in English. Participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet, and in order to ensure that their consent to be interviewed was informed, I also asked that they sign a Consent Form. (A copy of these two forms is included in Appendix 1). For those interviews conducted via Skype, participants gave this consent verbally at the beginning of the

¹ I explain the reason for this further in Chapter 2.

recording. Each participant was sent a copy of the interview transcript and given the opportunity to clarify any part of it. A few took the opportunity to do this, and my use of interview data is consistent with their clarification comments.

In addition to complying with a University ethics committee, my study was guided by Goodhand's (2000) twin response to ethical challenges presented by conflict zones: 'do no harm', and 'do some good'. Whilst many of the specific steps to this end listed by Goodhand relate to fieldwork conducted within a conflict zone specifically, I believe that one of the ways to mitigate harm in this research is to, as Novelli states above, centre the research within the Afghan context. I have taken time, and dedicated significant space in this study, to ensure that my research is historically informed. Additionally, the Afghanistan of today is vastly different and remarkably the same as the Afghanistan that I grew up in. I have been cautious to check my assumptions throughout the study. In terms of Goodhand's second step, 'do some good', I can only hope that the findings from my study can contribute in some positive way to the broader policy debates about Afghan higher education. Indeed, as I foregrounded when thinking about 'why policy?' above, *critical* engagement with policy is in fact an ethical imperative. These ethical considerations informed the decisions I made throughout the study.

As with any research, there are limitations to this study. I set out reasons further in Chapter 2, however I was unable to visit Afghanistan for this research. Whilst the implications of this have been mitigated somewhat by maintaining focus on a policy, there remains much important work to do to understand how these policies are realised into individual institutions, and how they materially affect the learning experiences of university students. Additionally, whilst I have spoken to several key people involved in the development of strategic plans, further interviews with a wider range of participants will always add complexity to an analysis. Another limitation of this study is its geographic specificity. This is not a grand narrative for higher education policy in conflict settings. Rather, it is a particular and in-depth qualitative analysis of three higher education policies in Afghanistan. Whilst some elements of this study may be generalisable to other contexts, this should be undertaken with caution, and empirically and theoretically tested ahead of any claims of relevance for settings outside of Afghanistan. I note this particularly in Chapter 9. Key ethical considerations and study limitations thus acknowledged, I now take the opportunity to frame the three main discourses which emerged during my research into Afghan higher education strategic planning – Economic Growth Discourse, Human Rights Discourse, and National Identity Discourse.

Framing key findings

Below I frame the three dominant discourses which emerged through my analysis of Afghanistan's strategic planning documents for higher education. In referring to these as discourses, I draw from an Althusserian understanding of ideology and discourse, set out fully in Chapter 2, and use 'discourse' to indicate the materiality of the meaning systems – quite literally the language that presents a particular view, or ideology, communicated through policy. This is necessarily only a brief introduction to each discourse. They are developed and justified with explicit reference to the policy documents in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Below, I frame them in uneven length. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, Economic Growth Discourse requires a consideration of human capital theory, and of neoliberalism, whilst Human Rights Discourse and National Identity Discourse can be framed more succinctly. Secondly, this thesis argues that Economic Growth Discourse is dominant within these strategic plans. I therefore consider this discourse more fully here, before concluding this introductory chapter by outlining the remaining chapters of the thesis.

Economic Growth Discourse

The discourse of Economic Growth found within Afghan higher education strategic policies emphasises the role of higher education in contributing towards economic development. It is constructed through a human capital approach to the purpose of education, and anchored within a neoliberal ideological frame for the state, the market, and the individual. Within human capital theory, education performs a central economic function by developing “a highly skilled and flexible workforce [essential] to national success within the new global knowledge economy” (Henry, Lingard, Rizvi, & Taylor, 2001, p. 30). Originally advanced by economists such as Schultz and Becker during the early 1960s, human capital theory was initially developed as a means of promoting the development of Gross Domestic Product (McCowan, 2015; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Its function in education has shifted over time. Human capital theory initially supported state-based economic development, and became popular for modernisation theorists based upon the presumption that disparities between state wealth corresponded to the level of its educated population (Robertson et al., 2007). As a neoliberal mode of capitalist regulation (outlined further below) became dominant through the 1980s, human capital theory's rigid instrumentalist view of education became increasingly dominant (Robeyns, 2006). Analyses of rates of return on investment became integral within development assistance to education, and were used to justify “the view that the proportion of public investment in education should decline as an individual proceeded up the education ladder” (Robertson, 2009, p. 118).

The global emergence of a knowledge economy², built upon the “economics of ideas” (Romer, 1993, p. 65), was significant in reifying human capital theory into global education agendas (Cobb & Couch, 2018). The commodification of education within this knowledge economy was propelled by a theoretical relationship between education, productivity and income, which saw human capital become the “powerful driving force which guided decision-making in education policy” (Bonai, 2016, pp. 98–99). The knowledge economy positions education systems “as the policy key to the future prosperity of nations” (Henry et al., 2001, p. 30), and this has been a key justification for the incursion of global economic bodies, such as the World Bank, OECD, and IMF, into education policy (Robertson, 2016b).

It is important here to note that human capital theory continues to evolve. A growing body of recent work steps away from a rigidly economic instrumentalist approach to education within human capital theory. For instance, Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach values education for both its intrinsic and instrumentalist value (Robeyns, 2005, 2006; Sen, 1999). Further, and in a rare engagement with *higher* education, Schendel, McCowan, and Oketch (2014)’s review of research on higher education’s impact within low-income countries demonstrated that economic instrumentalism sat alongside social justice concerns with comparative ease. The authors identified that “economic arguments were also supported by social justice concerns that emphasized the ways in which university admissions processes disadvantaged marginalized groups” (Schendel et al., 2014, p. 7). Whilst noneconomic benefits were evident within their literature review, this was however comparatively small against the body of evidence relating to economic benefits.

Human capital theory occupies a dominant space within current development paradigms (McCowan, 2015; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). International Financial Institutions are now significant education funders following majority world conflict (Tarabini, 2010). Novelli et al. write that the “relationship between education and growth plays an important role in justifying much of the activity of the World Bank...and the OECD...in the education sector” (2014, p. 13). This has not always been the case, particularly during the 1980s in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. During this time policies of ‘cost sharing’ embodied in structural adjustments required to secure IMF and World Bank loans saw much of national education systems financially gutted, particularly anything beyond primary education. This led to significant reductions in enrolments, quality, and participation, as well as drastic increases in inequalities (Cossa, 2008; Reimers, 1997; Robertson et al., 2007). As both relations of production and modes of production became more closely related to knowledge, and

² See Chapters 6 and 7 for a discussion of Afghanistan joining the global knowledge economy.

the globalisation of a knowledge economy emphasised higher education as a means of production, funders of education in development contexts have begun to extend human capital theory towards a justification for investment in higher education (Novelli, 2016; Robertson, 2009, 2016a; World Bank, 2000, 2002). In the process, teachers themselves have become “human capital, a human resource input, rather than...human beings” (Ginsburg, 2017, p. 21).

As I argue in the following chapters, Afghan higher education policy is anchored in a neoliberal ideology. Neoliberalism is currently the dominant regulatory mechanism of capitalism within a global market economy (Bacevic, 2019). As a regulatory mechanism, neoliberal ideology encompasses the pursuit of a total and frictionless market, unfettered by what is considered *counterproductive* state interference (Peck, 2010, 2013). The state, however, is not evacuated from neoliberal ideas or practice but rather performs a central function. The implementation of neoliberalism initially requires the state to reduce social or public interventions into the marketplace, and then seeks state support to impose conditions favourable to a free market (D. Harvey, 2005). In this way, neoliberalism is a process rather than static, indicating a possible relationship between the individual, the market, and the state rather than a set of steps towards a free-market state (Peck, 2010, p. 10). Looking purely *within* state borders is inadequate, however, as “production and labour markets have become increasingly globalised” (Robertson, 2016a, p. 824). Supranational organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the IMF have driven neoliberal reforms at national levels through “three trademark demands – privatization, government deregulation and deep cuts to social spending” (Klein, 2007, p. 9). This is not to say that neoliberal policy is a purely top-down imposition, or a purely homogenising project. Whilst neoliberal policy tends to retain common market-friendly characteristics, it also tends to form hybrid amalgamations of global and local characteristics³. As Peck (2013, p. 140) illustrates, such an understanding is necessary for critiques based in neoliberalism, as the “evocation of ‘hybridity’ in this context is more than a poststructuralist tic, but an indicator of the inescapably impure forms in which neoliberalizing tendencies are found”. Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 consider the hybrid amalgams operating within the Afghan higher education policyscape.

Nevertheless, in extreme – but not infrequent – instances, various forms of violence and destruction are necessary prerequisites for implementation. The hybrid forms which neoliberalism takes propagate a constant state of flux, negotiation, and refinement within institutions (S. J. Collier & Ong, 2005). For instance, when access to international markets or terms for the delivery of aid fail to

³ See Chapter 4 for a fuller consideration of globalisation.

generate an uptake of neoliberal ideologies, “the same ideological program [is] imposed via the most baldly coercive means possible: under foreign military occupation after an invasion, or immediately following a cataclysmic natural disaster” (Klein, 2007, p. 9). The exploitation of violence and destruction to instigate neoliberalism illustrates the manner in which the ideology constantly renegotiates boundaries between the public and private sphere of the state. Where once neoliberal ideology required the state to retain full control of Repressive State Apparatuses, such as the police force and military (D. Harvey, 2005), war fighting and policing is increasingly being outsourced to private enterprises (Klein, 2007; Loewenstein, 2015). Initially identified by Klein (2007) as ‘disaster capitalism’, the privatisation of war fighting and security services in particular have led to significant markets emerging in conflict settings around the world⁴ (Singer, 2008). In Afghanistan, protracted violence which led to the disassembly of the institution of higher education, outlined in Chapter 4, has also offered context-specific economic opportunities to the global marketplace. For instance, this includes opportunities for the proliferation of private military companies after 2001 (Klein 2007; Loewenstein 2015), as well as for a huge range of humanitarian actors from governments and non-governmental organisations (Goodhand, 2006, 2013; Polman, 2010). Neoliberalism clearly takes a global form, and continues to demonstrate a remarkable ability to be decontextualised and recontextualised.

As the deregulation of markets and the privatisation of civil services are negotiated across national boundaries, neoliberalism is realised in a variety of forms which are context-dependant (Peck, 2010, 2013). Broad forms of neoliberalism have influenced a full range of reconstruction efforts specifically within Afghanistan, where international interventions were “shaped by a distinctly neoliberal approach to peacebuilding [with] the goal of reforming the relationship between the individual, the market, and the state” (Dodge, 2013). Global forms of neoliberalism appear more generally in both higher education (cf. Ginsburg, Espinoza, Popa, & Terano, 2005; Marginson, 2016; Muhr & Verger, 2009; Naidoo, 2011; Robertson & Komljenović, 2016; Welch, 2011) and Overseas Development Assistance to education (cf. Brock 2011; Brock-Utne 2007; Girdwood 2007; Tarabini 2010; Robertson et al. 2007), before being recontextualised into local contexts around the world.

Justifying an emphasis on neoliberalism within the thesis is, clearly, important. As Peck argued, it can be too easy to position neoliberalism as a “political-economic zeitgeist” (2010, p. 141), overlooking questions of power or domination. How do I avoid such a charge in the pages that follow? Bacevic (2019) considers the case of higher education explicitly when exploring the usefulness of designating

⁴ See the postlegomenon in Appendix A for further engagement with these ideas as they relate to education.

something 'neoliberal'. She argues that "neoliberalism as a diagnostic term offers a coherent, overarching narrative for a number of seemingly unconnected trends in higher education and research...it also places their origin firmly in the spheres of politics and economics" (Bacevic, 2019, p. 385). Importantly, this understanding of the cultural's articulation with(in) the political and economic is central to the conceptual methodologies laid out in Chapter 2 and employed in this study. A key charge, then, is to take a neoliberal ideological regulation of capitalism *contextually*. As Peck (2013, p. 140) argues:

Statistically, there may be a good chance that 'neoliberalism did it', where this historically specific mode of market rule is hegemonic or dominant, but the contextual circumstances of such acts are more than background scenery, since neoliberalism is never found alone and it never acts alone.

The justification for my emphasis on neoliberalism within the thesis, then, is in response to these arguments and in keeping with my conceptual methodologies. Neoliberalism is not conjured up as political-economic zeitgeist within this thesis, but rather a designation which enables a contextualised understanding of the dominant regulatory mechanism of capitalism operating in/through Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning. For higher education's policy authors, economic growth in Afghanistan is conceived within a neoliberal capitalist, internationalised(ing), form of free-market. The broader political economy within which Afghanistan's higher education system has been reassembled since 2001 is built upon the neoliberal framing which underpins the Liberal Statebuilding Project (Dodge, 2013; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013), and is discussed further in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

How is human capital theory conceived within Afghanistan's higher education policies? As will be seen in later chapters, the answer is 'inconsistently'. In a 2004 policy, the form of human capital theory instrumentalises education beyond economism, and responds effectively to human capital theory's progression towards serving social, individual, and economic ends. Policy in 2009 and 2016 more explicitly demonstrate an economism for human capital – an emphasis on economic growth, and a neoliberal capitalist enlisting of the 'extra-economic' into the economic sphere (Sum & Jessop, 2013a). Where there has been an academic shift on the instrumental values of education through recent human capital theory work (cf. McMahon & Oketch, 2013; Oketch, McCowan, & Schendel, 2014), these are not reflected in the more recent policies examined in this study. Therefore, a neoliberalised human capital, or the economism through which it is promoted in later policies, justified the development of my definition of Economic Growth Discourse.

For this study, Economic Growth Discourse is constructed through policy and interview data in the following chapters, to indicate an economic instrumentalist human capital frame for the form and function of higher education, and its neoliberal ideological foundation.

Human Rights Discourse

Global discourse around education as a human right sees education as a right, rather than as instrumental in achieving a particular outcome (McCowan, 2011; Robeyns, 2006; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Bajaj and Kidwai highlight that discussions of human rights and education fall into three main categories: “(a) education *as a* human right; (b) education *with* human rights and dignity; and (c) education *for* human rights” (2016, p. 208, emphasis in original). However, there are tensions between a rights based approach to education and human capital theory. As McCowan illustrates, approaching education “as a right – rather than simply as an instrumentally valuable good – is important primarily because access to education is then unconditional and valued independently of whether the individuals in question will subsequently prove to be productive in the economy” (2011, p. 285). Importantly, this global rights-based discourse around education *does not include higher education*. In fact, in the NHESP II the authors explicitly state that “[n]ot all high school graduates belong in higher education” (MoHE, 2016, p. 41). In the case of Afghan higher education policies, therefore, Human Rights Discourse draws on a broader rights-based emphasis on equitable access to education (McCowan, 2015). Whilst *higher* education itself is not considered from a human rights perspective, the pursuit of more equitable forms of access to higher education for traditionally underserved communities forms the centre of the policies’ Human Rights Discourse. Access is a key policy goal across all three strategic plans. This includes access for students from traditionally underserved regions, regions affected disproportionately by conflict, and for women.

However, that a notion of ‘rights’ is not problem-free (Robeyns, 2006). Finding rights which are ‘universal’ can be equally problematic. As Russell (2018) demonstrates when exploring human rights education, it was common for teachers to shy away from controversial components of human rights which carried costly political implications, such as an acceptance of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity. Additionally, rights are a contestable notion with implicit implications for power and accountability. For example, D’Souza illustrates that when it came to being held accountable to ‘rights’ after a debt crises in Niger in 2002, multiple groups competed “with each other to establish the rights that best suited their interests” (2018, p. 28). A fundamental concern with rights-based approaches, according to D’Souza, centres around the *function* of rights. She argues that an “answer to the question *what do rights do in this world* must be located in the specific stage of capitalism” (D’Souza, 2018, p. 47). As a notion of rights emerged with mercantile capitalism, D’Souza (2018)

argues that rights evolve *as capitalism evolves*. In this sense, and having established the current neoliberal regulation of capitalism in the paragraphs above, a corresponding evolution of a notion of rights shifts from collective rights, and implications of collective responsibilities, and towards individual rights. Interestingly, we see the relationship between rights and the current stage of (neoliberal) capitalism at play in Chapter 7 particularly, as women's access to higher education is framed comprehensively through an economic instrumentalism.

It is also useful to observe different organisations mandates within the dominant rights-based approach to education. The two organisations which have been involved in the development of Afghan higher education strategies are UNESCO-IIEP, and World Bank. The former takes its mandate from an educative imperative, the latter tasked with the eradication of world poverty. Such an observation is particularly interesting when considering the dominant discourses which emerge in each policy – outlined further in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. However, as I highlight above, rights-based education discourses do not extend to higher education, and this study considers rights largely through discourses around access to higher education.

For this study, Human Rights Discourse is constructed by the explicit policy attention to promoting access for traditionally underserved populations, and explicit considerations to infrastructure which might promote a more equitable form of access to higher education.

National Identity Discourse

National Identity within Afghanistan is a contested concept. Roy (1990) provocatively remarks that Afghanistan may struggle to be a state, but has never been a nation. Rubin's (2002) *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, originally published in 1995, illustrates that:

social relations established by kinship, production, and religion define and distribute such resources as ownership of land, flocks, and cash; seniority; family connections; relations with outside forces (political and economic); and Islamic knowledge, piety, and charisma. These are the resources out of which people fashion their strategies for living. Leaders deploy the same resources for social control or collective action. (Rubin, 2002, p. 41)

Afghanistan, then, is a highly diverse state with a highly decentralised form of social relations. I look at this further in Chapter 3, and again when examining the policies themselves. However, according to Starr (2006), Afghans have long held that their current international boundaries are sovereign, and are not interested in carving out new states based on ethnic, or religious, or linguistic, or kinship, or geographic fissures. The discourse of National Identity found in higher education strategic planning, therefore, holds a highly normative intent. It considers ways of teaching and embracing pluralism, or developing a quality in higher education that can serve the social needs of the country.

For this study, National Identity Discourse is constructed by policy phrases which support the vision of a unified Afghanistan, and which position higher education as a tool of national service.

Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 lays important theoretical foundations for the study. It begins by positioning this research within a critical realist ontology. I use a metaphor of the water table and the well to illustrate the relationship between critical realism's building blocks of reality – the *real*, the *actual*, and the *empirical* – before examining critical realism's relationship with Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education. I then justify my ontological position by considering the utility of critical realism for research into education within conflict-affected contexts. As a critical examination of policy documents, this study draws heavily from Critical Policy Analysis, a methodology which insists that policy research is historically and contextually informed. I then set out the methods of document analysis and semi-structured interviews which I employed to gather and analyse the study's data. I conclude the chapter by exploring two key concepts which are employed in the analysis of Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning during this study. These are ideology, and discourse, and here I relate them to the central claim of this thesis; that when the institution of higher education has been disassembled through violent conflict, a dominant ideology can (re)assemble the institution with little contestation.

Chapter 3 lays the historical groundwork from which to construct the remainder of my argument. The struggle to identify an historical point of entry into Afghanistan's higher education system can lead to paralysis if I'm not careful. Fortunately, several historiographies exist which explore the origins of intellectual exchange, social structures, and local and global forces which have carved actual, if arbitrary, state borders in Central Asia. From these accounts, it is possible to develop an historically informed understanding of not only the origins of Afghan higher education, but also the cultural, political, and economic conditions which enabled a national system of higher education in the first place. To this end, this chapter explores the evolution of the Afghan state, from its origins as a tribal confederation in 1747, to its centralised semi-aristocratic form by 1901. I do this in order to better understand discussions in later chapters of the relationship between organised education and the Afghan state, as well as to position key points of fissure and fusion within contemporary Afghanistan.

Chapter 4 serves two purposes. First, it sets down the concepts of globalisation and localisation as important theoretical tools when examining Afghanistan's higher education sector. I use assembly

and disassembly to explain the conditions of Afghanistan's higher education at the turn of the 21st century. Clearly, disassembly is pivotal to the first part of my thesis; that when institutions have been disassembled through violent conflict, the institution of higher education can be (re)assembled upon a relatively narrow ideology with little contestation. Secondly, I pick up the historiographical thread from the end of Chapter 3, beginning at the turn of the 20th century with the rise of 'modern' education, and end a century later with the fall of the Taliban. At the conclusion of this chapter, I make the case that Afghanistan's higher education sector during the 1980s and 1990s experienced a profound disassembly, and produced a set of conditions which enabled the neoliberal reconstruction of higher education.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 serve an important function in illustrating the first part of my thesis in full; that when institutions have been disassembled through violent conflict, *higher education can be (re)assembled along narrow ideological lines*. Each follows a very similar pattern. Through these chapters, I make the case that three dominant discourses are constructed within Afghanistan's higher education strategic plans – Economic Growth, National Identity, and Human Rights – and that by examining the interplay between these *discourses*, a dominant *ideology* can be identified within the strategic direction of Afghan higher education. These discourses, framed above, are used as analytical categories through which to approach each higher education policy. **Chapter 5** explores the context surrounding the early reassembly of higher education, and explicitly examines the MoHE's 2004 *Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan* (SAP). **Chapter 6** examines the MoHE's *National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014* (NHESP I). It begins by outlining the policy's development and context, before again considering how the policy and interview data specific to the NHESP I construct each of the three discourses. **Chapter 7** examines the *National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2016-2020* (NHESP II). Once again, it begins by outlining the context and development of the policy document, paying particular attention to the political actions which delayed its development and have left it functioning as a *de facto* policy. This final chapter concludes by considering the interplay between the three discourses across all three strategic plans, and concludes that Economic Growth Discourse is dominant within these plans, illustrating a neoliberal ideological anchor.

Chapter 8 addresses the second part of my thesis argument, namely that the manner in which higher education is (re)assembled has a mediating influence upon its institutional function within an ongoing state building project. In order to examine this proposition, this chapter examines the form, function, and purpose of higher education that Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning

projects; and asks, for whose state? This chapter brings my conclusions from the preceding three chapters into conversation with a broader body of literature around the institutional role of higher education in contexts affected by armed conflict. Preceding chapters illustrate that each higher education policy has been heavily influenced by extra-state actors. Additionally, I identify the ideology of neoliberalism as dominant within the NHESPs I and II. Chapter 8 argues that these factors have played pivotal roles in the (re)assembly of higher education in Afghanistan, and have limited the manner in which the institution of higher education can fulfil a stabilising role within Afghanistan's conflict-affected state building project. I argue that a primary policy purpose for higher education as an engine of economic growth within a war economy weakens its institutional potential to *interrupt* conflict, and argue for an increased emphasis on higher education's *non-economic* dividends within future higher education strategies in Afghanistan.

Chapter 9 offers concluding remarks as it brings the overall thesis to a close. It does so by reflecting on the key argument being made throughout, considering the contributions to knowledge that are made by this study, and finishes by tentatively looking to future possible research directions. It highlights the postlegomenon in Appendix A as one such possibility for future research. For this reason, I also include a brief summary of the writing in Appendix A here.

Appendix A houses a postlegomenon, and sets out ideas towards a theory of Conflict Capital. I argue, from an Althusserian New Marxist position, that conflict serves as a means of accumulation in the economic sphere, and a mechanism of structuration and reproduction of social relations within the sphere of regulation. To this end, I propose two fundamental principles of conflict: 1) conflict reproduces and expands itself; and 2) conflict requires and structures social relations for this reproduction and expansion. I examine how these two fundamental principles of conflict mirror principles of capital, and propose that conflict can be understood as a form of capital through its functions as a means of accumulation, and a mechanism of structuration. In the case of Afghanistan's higher education policy, the social relations which have been thus structured by conflict become fixed, for a time, within policy documents. Using this chapter as a postlegomenon to my account of Afghan higher education policy, I advance ideas for a theory of conflict as a form of capital which has been uniquely leveraged in Afghanistan by local and international actors. I do not present this theory as a Grand Narrative, or suggest that it is a full and complete theory to explain the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within Afghan higher education policy. Rather, as I have engaged with these policies and the broader political economy within which they are operating, the notion of conflict functioning as capital is presented here as one way to understand

the primacy of Economic Growth Discourse within Afghanistan's national higher education strategic planning.

This chapter has begun by laying down my personal pathway into this study. It has then set out the 2-part thesis which I advance in the chapters below: that 1) when the institution of higher education has been disassembled through violent conflict, a dominant ideology can (re)assemble the institution with little contestation; and 2) the manner in which higher education is (re)assembled has a mediating influence upon its institutional function within an ongoing state building project. I then outlined the importance of policy studies within contexts affected by conflict, before outlining the three policy documents and 10 participants which contributed data for this study. After setting out guiding ethical considerations, and key limitations for this study, I framed the three dominant discourses that emerged from my analysis of Afghan higher education strategic plans – Economic Growth Discourse, Human Rights Discourse, and National Identity Discourse. As the thesis outline indicates above, it is time now to turn to the theoretical foundations for the study.

Chapter 2 - Conceptual Methodologies: Critical Realism, Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education, and Critical Policy Analysis

Knowledge of and/or about the real world is never theoretically innocent.

(Sum & Jessop, 2013b, p. 9)

...science is not an epiphenomenon of nature, nor is nature a product of man.

(Bhaskar, 2008, p. 25)

Introduction

This chapter lays important theoretical foundations for the study, and is written in three main sections. Section 1 begins by positioning this research within a critical realist ontology. I use a metaphor of the water table and the well to illustrate the relationship between critical realism's building blocks of reality – the *real*, the *actual*, and the *empirical* – before examining critical realism's relationship with Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education. I then justify my ontological position by considering the utility of critical realism for research into education within conflict-affected contexts. Section 2 outlines the study's methodology. As a critical examination of policy documents, this study draws heavily from Critical Policy Analysis. Section 2 considers the importance of conducting policy research which is historically and contextually informed. I then set out the methods of document analysis and semi-structured interviews which I employed to gather and analyse the study's data. Section 3 considers two key concepts which are employed in the analysis of Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning during this study. These are ideology, and discourse, and here I relate them to the central claim of this thesis; that when the institution of higher education has been dissolved through violent conflict, a dominant ideology can (re)establish the institution with little contestation. Taking the space below to lay these theoretical foundations is important for the study as a whole.

* * *

It was a deep well at our new house. So deep that we needed a special electric pump to make sure that the water would reach the water tank on the roof. One of the engineers on the team said that because it was so deep, and the ground was a mixture of limestone and sand, that perhaps it was even safe to drink without being boiled first. We never risked it. During lengthy stretches without electricity, we would borrow a generator to refill the water tank. When electricity outages coincided with fighting in the city streets, water was only to be found in the recycled-tyre bucket at the end of a long rope at the bottom of the well. Not all of the rope was needed to get to the water table – but because the water table would rise and fall during the year there were perhaps 10 meters of extra rope that stayed wrapped around the barrel across the top of the well. Winching a full bucket of water to the top was always a considerable task, and because the winch didn't have a catch mechanism to stop the bucket's descent we always had to be careful. When dropping the empty bucket down into the water table, the winch and bucket would stop fairly easily once the bucket hit the water's surface. But when the bucket was full of water, we had to be cautious not to let it slip from our hands. The added weight of the full bucket would drive the rope downwards, the barrel would spin uncontrollably, and we would have to jump back to avoid being struck by the winch's handle. The real problem was that a full bucket would sink until the entire rope was unspooled, and those extra meters compounded the feeling of despair at having dropped the bucket in the first place.

During one particular conflict over control of the city, Russian-made MiG fighter jets were carrying out occasional bombing runs. Only a few armed groups had access to MiG jets, an airport, and trained pilots. Dostum's group was one of them. Currently Afghanistan's exiled Deputy Prime Minister, former warlord, and war crimes accused, he controlled territory in the North throughout much of my time living in Mazar-i-Sharif. During annual military parades, his fighter pilots would fly from the airport on the outskirts of the city, violent and low and fast, over our house and towards the city centre where they performed aerial acrobatics above the procession of tanks and SCUD missiles. I would watch from our roof as they brushed past just overhead: an impossible blur of silent light, and then the deep boom and roar of their wake, rattling windows and bending the large pine across the street under a fury of air and noise. But when a MiG was high overhead, it was time to get into the basement.

Several houses in our neighbourhood had been demolished that week from the bombing. But there was a lull, and mum asked me to get some water from the well. Anything to get out of the basement. Drop the bucket. Let it sink slowly, and just a little. Feel the weight come on. Start to wind. And wind. And wind. A glint from the dark of the well – the bucket coming into sight. Here comes a MiG. The anti-aircraft guns start to fling exploding shells into the sky, small-arms fire joins in, but the MiG is still out over the desert. I have time. I can get the bucket over the lip of the well. Mum at the door, calling me in. The bucket's just there, I can see it I yell. Get inside now she yells. I drop the bucket.

* * *

Critical Realism: The Water Table and the Well

My study of Afghan higher education policy is grounded in a critical realist ontology. In the section below I outline five understandings of critical realism: 1) its break from what Bhaskar (2008) refers to as empirical realism (Popper, 1978); 2) its incorporation of the social construction of knowledge and institutions into its realist understanding of the mind-independent nature of the world (Moore, 2007); 3) its treatment of knowledge as fallible within an open system (Popper, 1978); 4) its three building blocks for a scientific inquiry into reality, namely the *real*, the *actual*, and the *empirical* (Bhaskar, 2008); and 5) its purpose to identify causal inferences regarding the mechanisms which turn the potential of the *real* into the empirically observable of the *actual* (Bhaskar, 2008). Adopting a critical realist meta-physical position for this study holds implications for the methods used to gather and analyse its data. Therefore I follow this exploration of critical realism with a justification for its use within a study of education policy in a conflict-affected context. In doing so, I explore the relationship between critical realism's three building blocks of reality – the *real*, the *actual*, and the *empirical* – by employing a metaphor of the water table and the well reminiscent of my childhood experiences in northern Afghanistan.

A Critical Realist Ontology

Critical realism sits within a broader family of ontologies known as realism (Sayer, 2000). As a perspective which acknowledges the mind-independent and real nature of the world (Nola, 2010), realism contends that people can investigate the world using ideas that are real, and which exist independently of the knower (Popper, 1978). In this way, people are able to investigate the world:

because the particular things and events in the world of which [they] can be perceptually aware are of kinds and are subject to laws, so that [they] can sometimes categorize things into real kinds, and discern their inner constitutions, and discover laws of nature. (Haack, 2004, p. 428)

A key task of realist scientific inquiry is the pursuit of such 'laws of nature'. The traditional starting point of realist ontology, also referred to as empirical realism, or positivism, seeks to identify causal relationships which enable a fuller understanding of the world (Bhaskar, 2008; Lawson, 1997; Sayer, 2000). Such realist work is preoccupied with uncovering regularities. Here, as Lawson (1997, p. 19) explains, the identification of regularities lead to a definitive constant conjunction of events, or a positivist pattern of causation, wherein "whenever event x then event y". Empirical realism, therefore, relies upon Humean counterfactuals (Sobel, 2005), namely that without x, there could be no y. For instance, to cook an egg one must add heat. Without heat, the egg remains raw. In this way, causal mechanisms operate within a closed system (Bhaskar, 2008; Dean, Joseph, Roberts, & Wight, 2006). However, what of the complexity of social experience? Can peoples' existences and travels in this world be determined and explained by the same positivism, or a constant conjunction

of events? And within the complexity of the lived experience, how could one reasonably surmise *the* causal factor for each event?

Several critiques of realism have centred upon the positivist rigidity of its accounts of reality (Dean et al., 2006). As Andrew Sayer outlines, a common theoretical counter to positivism led some to move towards social constructionism, comprised of both ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ positions. In its weak form, constructionism:

merely emphasizes the socially constructed nature of knowledge and institutions, and the way in which knowledge often bears the marks of its social origins. In its strong form, it also claims that objects or referents of knowledge are nothing more than social constructions. (Sayer, 2000, p. 90)

This shift away from the rigidity of empirical realism demonstrated an attempt to account for human agency and contingent causality within reality, and in its strong form, led to the notion of reality-as-social-construction. Others, such as Bhaskar, working within a realist ontology also came to reject the rigidity and apparent reductionism that accompanied empirical realism, however wished to retain core elements of the realist ontology (Bhaskar, 2008; Sayer, 2000). Rob Moore’s (2007, 2014) work on developing ‘social realism’, for instance, was one such development. Bhaskar’s transcendental realism, which later became known more widely as critical realism, was another (Lawson, 1997).

Bhaskar’s (2008) consideration of realism categorically rejects its rigid empiricism. Rather, *transcendental* realism:

regards the *objects of knowledge* as the structures and mechanisms that generate phenomena; and the knowledge *as produced in* the social activity of science. These objects are neither phenomena (empiricism) nor human constructs imposed upon the phenomena (idealism), but real structures which endure and operate independently of our knowledge, our experience and the conditions which allow us access to them...according to this view, both knowledge and the world *are structured*, both are *differentiated and changing*... (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 25, emphasis added)

In this way, transcendental realism accepts the ‘weak’ form of social constructionism – that knowledge and institutions are socially constructed, and therefore bear the marks of their social origins – and rejects ‘strong’ social constructionism by arguing that knowledge and reality endure, operate, and continue to exist independently of the knower (Sayer, 2000). As Bourdieu states, a “twenty-year-old mathematician can have twenty centuries of mathematics in his mind” (2004, p. 40, as quoted in Rata, 2013, p. 337). Transcendental realism, then, rejected the rigid empiricism of realism whilst accepting the mind-independent nature of knowledge from realism. It accepted the social construction of knowledge and institutions from social constructionism, whilst rejecting its

complete subjectivity of knowledge. The objectivity of knowledge independent from the knower is captured in Poppers (1978, p. 161) conception of thoughts as products, or “products of the human mind”. Bhaskar’s engagement with realism led to a transcendence of what had become binary theoretical positions (Lawson, 1997). Rather than debating a positivist and hermeneutic dualism, Bhaskar’s (2008) critical realism draws on the importance of empiricism and method from positivism, and the moderating influence of the “necessarily meaningful and historico-culturally specific nature of human life” (Dean et al., 2006, p. 6) of hermeneutics, in order to move beyond this dualism towards a *critical hermeneutics* (Bhaskar, 2008, 2015; Dean et al., 2006; Lawson, 1997; Sayer, 2000).

The fallibility of knowledge (Popper, 1978) is central to a critical realist ontology (Bhaskar, 2008; Dean et al., 2006). Knowledge fallibility supports the critical realist rejection of both rigid empirical realism, and strong constructionism. In effect, it is the “evident fallibility of our knowledge – the experience of getting things wrong, of having our expectations confounded, and of crashing into things – that justifies us in believing that the world exists regardless of what we happen to think about it” (Sayer, 2000, p. 2). For critical realism, the emergence of new knowledge which moves a concept forward, or replaces existing knowledge, is always possible within an understanding of the world as an open system (Bhaskar, 2008; Lawson, 1997). This directly opposes empirical realism’s positivistic claims to causal regularity and, therefore, predictability, or a closed system (Lawson, 1997). Rather, an open system, in accepting the fallibility of knowledge, relegates the importance of the empirical to a *contributing* role rather than being *the* single contributor to the production of knowledge, and draws on a critical hermeneutical understanding of the socially constructed and interpreted nature of knowledge to examine reality (Dean et al., 2006).

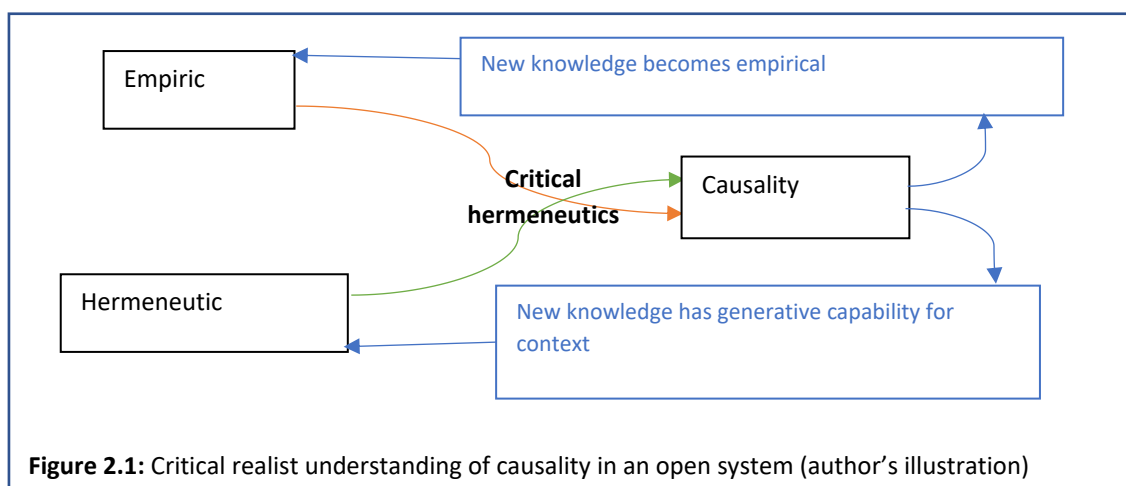
In pursuit of an understanding of the world which is grounded in critical hermeneutics within an open system, critical realism identifies three domains of reality. As Bhaskar (2008, p. 56, emphasis in original) argues:

[s]tructures and mechanisms then are real and distinct from the patterns of events that they generate; just as events are real and distinct from the experiences in which they are apprehended. Mechanisms, events and experiences thus constitute three overlapping domains of reality, viz. the domains of the *real*, the *actual* and the *empirical*.

The *real* is made up of “real but often latent causal mechanisms that may be contingently actualized in specific conjunctures but may also, thanks to diverse factors and actors, remain latent” (Sum & Jessop, 2013b, p. 9). Citing Pawson and colleagues, Lopes Cardozo and Shah outline how the *real* constitutes “structures, mechanisms and powers that exist by virtue of an object’s nature but that

may or may not be activated” (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016a, p. 523). In this way, the *real* holds limitless potentials, which exist whether or not we know about them. The *actual* is when those inherent potentials are actualised (Bhaskar, 2008; Sum & Jessop, 2013b). The *empirical* is made up of the experiences and observations that present evidence of the *actual*. Put succinctly, Dean et al., (2006, p. 6) explain “the real [as]... a realm of causal powers, generative mechanisms or tendencies. The actual is the level of events which are generated by the real. It lies between the real and the empirical, the latter being what is experienced”.

A primary purpose of knowledge production within critical realism is in making visible the existing structures, forces and generative mechanisms which operate between the *real* and the *actual* (Sayer, 2000). These mechanisms are operating all the time, whether or not we are aware of them, and at each operation they are generative (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016a). As Bhaskar states, “[t]he world consists of mechanisms not events” (2008, p. 47). In investigating causality, my critical realist research has aimed to illuminate the “structures and mechanisms, powers and tendencies, that govern or facilitate the course of events. The scientific objective is to identify relatively enduring structures and to understand their characteristic ways of acting” (Lawson, 1997, p. 23). A critical realist investigation into causality in an open system informed by knowledge fallibility is illustrated in Figure 2.1. As highlighted above, the rejection of empirical realism, in conjunction with an understanding of fallible knowledge, enables a critical realist exploration into causation to look for probabilistic causation, or causal inferences, rather than determine counterfactual regularities. These causal inferences stress the importance of the socio-historical, cultural, political, and economic contexts, within and into which phenomena occur.



The relationship between critical realism’s three domains of reality can be likened to the wells in the yards of my childhood houses in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. The water table represents the *real* –

ever present, and there whether I accessed it or not. Various generative mechanisms transformed the water table's potential into actuality – handpumps, buckets, electric pumps, wells in different locations and the like, all took the potential of the water table and realised it into the *actual*. The glint of water in the bucket as it came into view, or the freezing water I washed in, poured over myself crouched on the bathroom floor, functioned as the *empirical* – the evidence I needed to know that there was in fact the water table beneath my feet. Whilst a somewhat simplistic metaphor, in this instance we can understand the importance of critical realism's domains by their relationship to one another, much as we can understand the relationships between various components that kept water in our cups in Afghanistan.

In keeping with a critical realist ontology, my study was retroductive, as it sought to open up, examine, and explain Afghan higher education strategic planning's origins and influences.

Retroductive research begins “from a description of some phenomenon to a description of something which produces it or is a condition for it” (Baskhar, 1989, p. 11 as quoted in Collier, 1994, p. 22). This is further explained by Danermark et al. (1997, p. 96) as “a mode of inference by which we try to arrive at what is basically characteristic and constitutive of...[a phenomenon's] structures”. Bhaskar (2015, pp. 11, 12) is clear in outlining the need for retroduction:

There is an ontological gap between causal laws and their empirical ground...Thus, just as a rule can be broken without being changed, so a natural mechanism may continue to endure, and the law it grounds be both applicable and true (that is, not falsified), though its effect (i.e. the consequent) be unrealized...[T]he construction of an explanation for...some identified phenomenon will involve the building of a model...of a mechanism, which *if* it were to exist and act in the postulated way would account for the phenomenon in question (a movement of thought which may be styled 'retroduction').

As the following chapters argue, a variety of mechanisms anchored in, and justified by, a neoliberal ideology account for the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within Afghan higher education strategic planning.

So far, this section has established that critical realism is an ontological view which takes seriously: the social construction of both knowledge and institutions; the fallibility of knowledge; and the mind-independent nature of reality which is constructed of the *real*, the *actual*, and the *empirical* domains. I have likened these domains to the relationship between the water table and the well. So, how is a critical realist ontology useful for an examination into conflict-affected education policy? The following section introduces Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education in search of a critical realist-informed approach to researching educational contexts affected by armed conflict.

Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education

Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE) is a methodological approach recently advanced by Robertson and Dale (2015). Within CCPEE, the 'education ensemble' is "opened up, examined and explained...[it takes] the 'education ensemble' as the topic of enquiry, whose shifting authoritative, allocative, ideational and feeling structures, properties and practices emerge from and frame global economic, political and cultural processes" (Robertson & Dale, 2015, pp. 149–150). Two key features of CCPEE are important for my application of the device within this study. Firstly, CCPEE's ontology is "informed by critical realist assumptions about the social world" (Robertson & Dale, 2015, p. 151). As a device to open up, examine, and explain education, concepts of the critical, cultural, political, and economic are employed to interrogate the education ensemble at the level of the *actual* and *empirical* in order to infer an understanding of the nature of the *real* (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016a; Novelli, 2016; Robertson & Dale, 2015).

Secondly, the approach builds upon the Cultural Political Economy work of the likes of Sayer, Sum, Jessop and others (Robertson & Dale, 2015). Sayer (2001, p. 688) cites several authors when stating that Cultural Political Economy came out of the cultural turn, or the shift from "the politics of redistribution to the politics of recognition". Citing Habermas's work on lifeworld and system, Sayer points to the cultural turn's resultant focus of academic inquiry to lifeworld, and away from systems. He argues for a *critical* Cultural Political Economy, stating:

if the new cultural political economy is to be a worthwhile enterprise, it needs to be more critical of contemporary economy, culture and society than it has been thus far. In particular, it needs to retain a distinction between system and lifeworld, and avoid reducing the former to the latter...It also needs to couple its interests in the social and cultural embedding of economic processes with a focus on the powerful *disembedding* forces of economic systems and the problems these cause...(Sayer, 2001, p. 688, emphasis in original)

Robertson and Dale acknowledge that Cultural Political Economy has faced critique, namely a tendency to reduce the economic and the political to contexts for education, and seeing the cultural as discourse. By way of response, and in taking Sayer's challenge for a worthwhile and critical cultural political economy seriously, CCPEE attempts to examine the complexity within an education ensemble without reducing it to a constituent part:

A robust conceptual framework for the analysis of education must not be reducible to a particular form of economic development (such as capitalism), cultural form (such as Western Modernity) or political organisation (such as Westphalian state systems) but rather must contain the possibility for diversity, even if capitalism, modernity and national states continue to be hegemonic. (Robertson & Dale, 2015, p. 151)

In this way, CCPEE maintains a distinction between lifeworld and system and, by building upon a *critical* cultural political economy, responds "to the cultural turn in social theory...without

abandoning the potential of Marxist and critical theory inspired thinking to assist in explaining social reality” (Novelli, 2016, p. 850).

For this study, the ontological alignment between critical realism and CCPEE is particularly important. My study engages with the *actual* by drawing on the *empirical* data of policy texts, and interviews conducted with a range of actors involved in higher education in Afghanistan. Introduced in Chapter 1, my observations from participant and policy document data enable a knowledge of the *actual*, and therefore enable an inferred understanding of the *real* as it actualised within Afghan higher education strategic planning. To this end, the critical engagement between Cultural Political Economy and the education ensemble offers important conceptual avenues into the varied mechanisms responsible for actualising the *real* within Afghanistan’s higher education policy assembly. I explore this policy assembly by drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s (2008) notion of assemblage in Chapter 4 – the nature of a phenomenon as a sum of its constituent parts which are each, in turn, irreducible to a singularity. Whilst I don’t employ explicitly a theory of assemblage in the thesis, and rather speak of *assembly* and *disassembly* within the Afghan higher education policyscape in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, the ‘enssembled’ nature of education bears striking conceptual similarity to assemblage whilst retaining a Marxist determinism of the economic sphere in the final instance (see paragraph below). In sum, a critical realist ontology, coupled with a Critical Cultural Political Economy approach to the education ensemble, enabled this study to examine the case of higher education strategic planning in Afghanistan from a historically, culturally, politically, and economically informed perspective. It also created space to acknowledge multiple causal mechanisms, which were generative in different forms and at different moments of policy assembly. Indeed, for an inquiry into higher education policy within the Afghan context, I suggest it would be impossible to reduce the complexity of such a policyscape to a simple cause-effect analysis.

The Althusserian notion of overdetermination is particularly useful in theorising the multiple mechanisms at play within a critical realist view of reality. It is also useful in retaining the notion of economic determinism in the final instance. I examine these principles in considerably more depth in my postlegomenon (Appendix A), where I set down ideas towards a theory of Conflict Capital. However, overdetermination is important for the pages that follow. Throughout this study, I adhere to the Althusserian New Marxist assumption that the Superstructure, which constitutes the politico-economic, legal, cultural, and ideological spheres of the social whole (Althusser, 2008), has a relative determinism upon the economic Base. This was an important break from orthodox Marxism, in which the economic base was all-determining. Rather, for neo-Marxists such as Althusser, the

Superstructure held a position of relative autonomy from the economic Base. Whilst the Base maintains its determinism in the final instance, Althusserian New Marxism enables an examination into the manner in which the Superstructure regulates the Base, e.g. the historico-cultural, ideological, or politico-economic structures which enable or alter the accumulation function of the economic sphere (Althusser, 2005, 2008; Bourdieu, 2011; Sum & Jessop, 2013b). Thus, the Superstructure exerts a degree of determinism upon the Base, whilst the Base retains its primacy, in the final instance, of determinism upon the Superstructure⁵. *Overdetermination* is the term used by Althusser to indicate the articulations amongst and between the legal-political, and ideological elements of the Marxist Superstructure, and the material economics of the Marxist Base (see Althusser, 2005). These articulations are irreducible to a single constituent part, and are determining in the same movement in which they are determined (Althusser, 2005, 2008). In light of this, I suggest that overdeterminism theoretically complements the multiple mechanisms operating within a critical realist view of reality.

As the final section of Chapter 7, and Chapters 8 and 9 later demonstrate, the relative autonomy of the Superstructure from the economic Base within an overdetermined social whole (or a social whole which is constructed by, and constructs, multiple mechanisms which actualise the *real*) enables a critical examination of Afghanistan's higher education policy with an understanding that these policies effect, materially, the regime of accumulation within higher education's broader context. In sections below, I explore education's role as what Althusser (2008) terms an Ideological State Apparatus, or an instrument employed by the state to maintain its conditions of existence. For now, we can see that critical realism forms an ontological foundation for Critical Cultural Political Economies of Education, and that within this methodological approach the education ensemble is opened up by conceptual tools that afford importance to both the Marxist Superstructure *and* Base in order to infer a better understanding of the *real*. Below, I consider the utility of CCPEE for studies within conflict-affected contexts, before laying out the tenets of Critical Policy Analysis which I employed for this study.

CCPEE and Conflict-Affected Contexts

Whilst Robertson and Dale's proposition of a Critical Cultural Political Economy which explicitly takes education as its focus is relatively recent, two academic studies consider its relevance within contexts affected by conflict. Mieke Lopes Cardozo and Ritesh Shah (2016a) set out a framework through which to analyse education for peacebuilding. After affirming the importance of critical

⁵ See the postlegomenon in Appendix A for a full examination.

realism as an ontology when examining education within conflict-affected contexts, the authors explore CCPEE's utility as a conceptual methodology within such contexts. I quote from them here at length. They find that:

- a CCPEE analysis provides a clear and comprehensive roadmap for exploring how:
- (1) The relationship between education and peacebuilding is articulated discursively and materially through social relations, experiences and practices (the cultural).
 - (2) The ways in which education and peacebuilding fit into relations of production, distribution and exchange in society (the economic).
 - (3) The fashion in which an agenda promoting education's links to peacebuilding has been determined and subsequently governed (the political).

Doing so helps us to locate education in [conflict-affected contexts] within cultural scripts in which it is constructed and mediated, as well as to understand the relationships it holds (political, economic and social) with actors and institutions on the supranational, national and sub-national scales. (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016a, p. 529, emphasis added)

Here, not only do Lopes Cardozo and Shah outline the core features of the various conceptual avenues into the education ensemble, but their work advocates for such theoretical underpinning to empirical examinations of education in conflict-affected contexts. As the chapters which follow will demonstrate, the utility of CCPEE for my study mirrors their finding above.

Mario Novelli, also writing in 2016, considered inequality as it relates to conflict-affected contexts. Novelli applies a conceptual framework of CCPEE to his writing, again highlighting its Critical Cultural Political Economy roots which aim:

to analyse the complex relationships between discourse/agency and structure and to go beyond simplistic structure/agency debates, avoiding the false binaries of Marxist/poststructuralist thinking and allowing research that brings a range of different theories into dialogue. (Novelli, 2016, p. 850)

For his particular purposes, Novelli (2016) employs CCPEE to consider inequality as they relate to the production of violence, and shares the end point of a larger project (see Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, & Smith, 2015) which advanced education's potential for peacebuilding within contexts affected by violent conflict. Through an application of CCPEE to inequality within conflict-affected contexts, Novelli (2016) reaffirms the larger project's findings of a '4Rs approach' to building sustainable peace through education. Again, I quote from him at length. Drawing on Nancy Fraser's:

theory of social justice, exploring educational inequalities in terms of redistribution, recognition and representation...In our work these were linked to economic inequalities relating to the funding and management of education (redistribution), to inequalities and injustices related to cultural representation and misrecognition (recognition) and, finally, to inequalities linked to participation and democratic deficits in the governance and management of education (representation). These '3 Rs' helped us to explore different dimensions of educational inequalities (economic, cultural and political) as drivers of conflict in education. We also added a fourth 'R' – reconciliation – which allowed us to explore not only the potential drivers of conflict, but also the legacies of conflict and how in and through education we might bring communities together through processes of healing and psycho-

social interventions and transitional justice (truth, justice and reparations). The '4 R' approach then allowed us to develop a theoretically informed heuristic device to explore the multi-dimensional ways *in which education systems might produce or reduce educational and societal inequalities, and in so doing undermine or promote sustainable peace and development in and through education*. (Novelli, 2016, p. 856, emphasis added)

Whilst I have quoted these two studies at length, I believe it is important to hear of CCPEE's utility for examining conflict-affected education by academics experienced in the task and in their own words. From these two studies we see: 1) CCPEE's utility within such multi-complex and dynamic conflict-affected contexts, and the importance of taking the complexity of such contexts seriously in our analyses; 2) that such contexts cannot be reduced to a single determining factor, whether economic, cultural, or political; 3) the importance of complex analyses in the pursuit of complex peace; and 4) how contexts are constituted by their histories (cf. Bhambra, 2014) – a key justification for my historical exploration of the Afghan state in Chapters 3 and 4.

This section has begun by charting the building blocks of critical realism, before turning to its theoretical resonance with an Althusserian notion of overdeterminism. This has laid the ontological foundation for a key methodological device, Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education, in its pursuit of opening up, examining, and understanding the education ensemble. The ideas discussed above presented important conceptual and theoretical anchors for this study. They have been at the heart of my intent to take seriously Novelli and Lopes Cardozo's (2008) challenge to the education policy analyst set out in Chapter 1, and have not only informed the decisions I made during data gathering and analysis, but also in determining an appropriate method through which to address my thesis question. I now turn my attention to Critical Policy Analysis, and the variation of this approach which I employed.

Critical Policy Analysis: A look at the methods

Critical Policy Analysis, also known as Critical Policy Sociology, took shape during the 1980s and 1990s (Gale, 2001; Rata, 2014). Early proponents called for an increased attention to theoretical research into education policy, and much of their work was pitched as a response to what they felt were ahistorical, highly descriptive, poorly theorised, and wholly unsatisfactory analyses of education policies (cf. Codd, 1988; Dale, 1994, 1999; Gale, 1994, 1999; Ozga, 1987, 1990; Taylor, 1997). Ozga (1987) noted an increased use of case study for education policy analysis, however found it generally to be lacking theoretical depth, or conceptual insight. The descriptive phenomena had, according to these authors, been occurring for some time. Ribbons and Brown (1979, as quoted in Ozga, 1987, p. 139) clearly highlighted the implications of atheoretical case study, writing in 1979 that "without the use of theoretical perspectives such [case] studies provide at best an interesting

contribution to historical scholarship, at worst an uninteresting episodic narrative". One of the concerns these authors expressed was the disappearance of the state from analyses of education policy. Dale illustrates the dangers of leaving the state out of critical research into education policies:

The more we confine ourselves to the level of education politics - that is, to policies and practices that are clearly of direct and immediate relevance to education policy or practice - the greater the risk that we will neglect the level at which the agenda for education politics is set, that of the politics of education. (Dale, 1999, p. 8)

These scholars proposed Critical Policy Analysis (CPA) as a counter to the phenomena they were observing, demanding a critical research into education policy "rooted in the social science tradition, historically informed and drawing on qualitative and illuminative techniques" (Ozga, 1987, p. 144).

CPA involves three distinct but overlapping phases. These three phases are: conceptualising and theorising the policy context under study; analysing the policy itself; and finally undertaking empirical research using "case studies, narratives, ethnographies, and vignettes [to] show how policy operates in people's lives" (Rata, 2014, p. 354). The historical and contextual significance for critical policy analysis has its roots in "theoretical explanations of complex patterns of causation from a political economy approach" (Rata, 2014, p. 348). Rather than Pawson's realist synthesis in response to the question of "what works for whom in what circumstances" (2006, p. 25), critical policy analysis interrogates the '*what*' that is expected to work and who the '*for whom*' is (O'Connor & Netting, 2011; Rata, 2014). This explicitly deals with Novelli and Lopes Cardozo's (2008) central concern for policy analysis set out in Chapter 1, and responds to CCPEE's demands that analyses of education are critical in their examination of the education ensemble. For conflict-affected contexts, this is particularly important, given that "education has multiple faces and dynamics in relation to conflict and reconstruction, and does not exist devoid of the broader (political, economic, and religious) structures and institutions within society" (Shah & Lopes Cardozo, 2014, p. 3).

Key to the first phase of CPA is to theorise historical conditions which shaped, and experiences which moulded, the policy in question. Positioning "policy and practice in its historical context is essential to the sociological imagination. It is certainly essential to the theoretical stage of critical policy analysis" (Rata, 2014, p. 356). As Durkheim (2013, p. 78) states, to "demonstrate the utility of a fact is not to explain its origins, nor why it is what it is. The uses which it serves presume the specific properties characteristic of it, but do not create it". For this study, I begin with a historical examination into notions of the 'state' in Afghanistan in Chapter 3, and then chart the introduction and growth of higher education in Chapter 4. These chapters lay crucial cultural, political, and economic contexts for current higher education policy. They are also informed by a fundamental

component of the CPA approach, an appreciation for the significance of context, or “time, space, activity, and concept” (Dean et al., 2006, p. 10), from which a policy is derived and into which it intends to intervene (O’Connor & Netting, 2011; Pawson, 2006; Sayer, 2000). This does not presuppose that policy is itself devoid of context, but rather that policy itself *is* a bounded context. For Heck (2004, p. 161), “[p]olicy is inherently value laden because the language used to construct policies include certain ideas, concepts, and processes”. The policy analyst is in fact examining the intersection of two complex contexts, or as Pawson (2006, p. 35, emphasis in original) illustrates, the interventions of policy in society “are always *complex systems thrust amidst complex systems*”. Therefore, in seeking to understand why a policy is what it is, and in keeping with a CCPEE conceptual methodology, this study examined the historical, cultural, political, and economic context into which Afghan higher education policy is located, in order to create an informed platform from which to launch analysis and critique (Bhambra, 2014; Gale, 1994, 1999; R. Heck, 2004; Novelli, 2012; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Rata, 2014).

CPA’s second phase requires analysing the policy itself, and making explicit connections to the theorised policy context from phase one. This provides the opportunity to locate Afghan higher education strategic planning “within the larger context of political and economic forces and policies” (Rata, 2014, p. 347). To this end, I employ the methods of document analysis to examine the policies for dominant discourses which emerge. This is supported by semi-structured interviews with the participants introduced in Chapter 1. (I outline these two methods further in the section below.) As I demonstrate in Chapter 5, the historical context which I established through phase one was reflected more fully in the Strategic Action Plan for Reconstruction of Higher Education in Afghanistan, written in 2004 by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in conjunction with UNESCO’s International Institute of Education Planning (UNESCO IIEP). Subsequent strategic plans, written in 2009 and 2016 respectively, have failed to capture this context with the same breadth of understanding, as I argue in Chapters 6 and 7. My analysis during the second phase of my Critical Policy Analysis highlighted three dominant discourses apparent within Afghan higher education strategic planning, and framed in Chapter 1: Economic Growth Discourse, Human Rights Discourse, and National Identity Discourse.

CPA’s third phase involves undertaking an empirical study to understand how a policy is realised in peoples’ lives (Rata, 2014). Undertaking an empirical study of this sort which examines the policy’s implementation is not only a huge undertaking, but would be exceedingly difficult to do from outside of Afghanistan. I was unable to complete this phase of CPA, which presents clear limitations

for the study⁶. Country visits weren't conducted due to security concerns held by the University of Auckland. Ethical approval for my study was obtained from that University, however I was unable to obtain permission to visit Afghanistan for the purposes of the study. I determined that it would be too difficult to accurately understand the lived experience of policy from my desk in Auckland, and have therefore maintained a focus on the development of higher education policies, and an analysis of their content (CPA's phases one and two). It is hoped that I will be able to conduct this third phase of CPA in future research projects.

As I prepared to undertake this study, I found that many forms of policy analysis relied upon a westo-centric variant of policy formation (cf. R. Heck, 2004; O'Connor & Netting, 2011; Pawson, 2006). As will become apparent in later chapters, to analyse policy in Afghanistan I could not pop down to the local courts and collect papers detailing policy debates, or attend town hall meetings to hear public servants outline policy initiatives. I became intrigued by Giddens's notion of 'fateful moments' in a person's life history. Fateful moments "are those when individuals are called on to take decisions that are particularly consequential for their ambitions, or more generally for their future lives. Fateful moments are highly consequential for a person's destiny" (Giddens, 1991, p. 112). When considering the idea of 'fateful moments' alongside Trevor Gale's outline of policy archaeology – a form of policy analysis within a CPA methodology – a particular resonance emerges. According to Gale (2001, p. 387), policy archaeology asks four questions, the most relevant for this study being "what are the conditions that make the emergence of a particular policy agenda possible?" I suggest that incorporating Giddens's notion of fateful moments into Gale's first question for policy archaeologists within Afghanistan's context has presented a solution to the particular issue of finding policy analysis methods which do not rely upon westo-centric forms of policy formation. As a result, I incorporate fateful moments throughout this study to highlight generative mechanisms which were particularly consequential to Afghanistan's higher education destiny, and incorporate occasional personal reflections of fateful moments which have led me to this study.

Conceptual methodologies thus set out above, I now turn to outline the methods used for obtaining and analysing data for this study. This is, primarily, an account of my examination of higher education strategic planning. Therefore, document analysis plays a fundamental role in obtaining and analysing data. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with several key actors involved in Afghan higher education enabled a deeper insight into the policy formation of Afghanistan's higher education strategic plans, and offered perspectives and information unobtainable from document

⁶ See sections on limitations in Chapter 1.

analysis alone. I begin with an outline of each method, before detailing how I analysed the data collected by these methods.

Methods: Document Analysis and Semi-Structured Interviews

Document analysis, as a method of research in the social sciences, consists of considerably more than simply the reading of documents. The term *document* itself can denote a huge, almost limitless, range of data (Bryman, 2004). For this study, documents are considerably more important for their inherent meanings and perspectives than simply whether they are a letter, photograph, or official report. Considered by some as “the sedimentations of social practices” (May, 2011, p. 191), documents play an integral part of knowledge construction and meaning making (Bowen, 2009). As Bryman (2004) illustrates through his purposeful avoidance of the word ‘text’ when explaining document analysis, documents are deeper than a sum of their physical elements⁷. Rather, their creation embodies purpose, theory, ideal, space (both temporal and physical), and a whole range of other realities which we distil into the word ‘context’ (Bowen, 2009; Bryman, 2004; May, 2011). The document analyst, therefore, is preoccupied with extracting, contextualising, and analysing meaning from the varied data sources which constitute a document.

The use of document analysis as a method was justified for my study, importantly, due to its coherence with critical realism, CCPEE, and CPA. Document analysts examine documents “located within a wider social and political context. Researchers next examine the factors surrounding the *process* of its production, as well as the social *context*” (May, 2011, p. 199, emphasis in original). Additionally, as I utilised CCPEE inspired CPA, document analysis provided an opportunity to deepen historical, political, and economic understandings of the context (Bryman, 2004; Bowen, 2009; May, 2011). The selection of document analysis is further justified when considering their representation of events (or Bhaskar’s mechanisms), in which a “critical-analytical stance would consider how the document represents the *events* which it describes and closes off potential contrary interpretations and possibilities through a particular construction of reality as self-evident” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 97, as quoted in May, 2011, p. 213, emphasis added). As I demonstrate in later chapters, the self-evident reality of a neoliberal higher education sector is firmly presented within the NHESP I and NHESP II (see Chapters 6, 7, and 8).

⁷ Contrastingly, Scott (1990) identifies a document as that where text is “the primary purpose of the physical medium” (p. 13, as quoted in May, 2011, p. 195). However, the accepted definition of documents has since grown to include a broader group of medium which embody representations and/or communications (May, 2011).

The use of interview has long been a fundamental component of qualitative research (Bryman, 2004; May, 2011; Oates, 2015). There are several accepted methods of interview. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Through the use of prepared questions as an “interview guide” (Bryman, 2004, p. 321), my use of semi-structured interviews allowed “people to answer more on their own terms than the standardized interview permits, but still provide a greater structure for comparability over that of the focused or unstructured interview” (May, 2011, p. 135).

Face-to-face interviews provide the advantage of enabling the interviewer to gather contextual data in addition to verbal responses, such as body language and non-verbal cues (Burkard, Knox, & Hill, 2012; Oates, 2015; Sullivan, 2012). However, as the majority of the interviewees in this study were spread far and wide, and as I was unable to visit Afghanistan for the research, I employed technology-based options for conducting these semi-structured interviews. Clearly, these “free researchers from geographic limitations” (Burkard et al., 2012, p. 88). This includes the use of Skype, and email interviews in which questions were sent by email and participants responded by way of email reply. The use of Skype, as a video communication medium, afforded me a degree of the benefits of face-to-face research combined with the freedom of geographic limitations, flexibility in terms of interview location, and convenience for the interviewee (Burkard et al., 2012; Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Oates, 2015). Further, Sullivan (2012) suggests that videoconferencing interviews in fact mirror face-to-face interviews and, as such, there is little to lose and much to gain by undertaking interviews by Skype. This view is reiterated by Oates (2015, p. 17), who concludes that not only is Skype a “viable means of conducting semi-structured interviews” but that there “are some advantages”. As I indicated in the introduction to each participant in Chapter 1, a total of four interviews were conducted in person, four interviews were conducted via Skype, and two interviews were conducted through email.

In keeping with the retroductive nature of this study, policy documents were initially read through in succession. As I conducted my first reading, I developed broad categories to indicate the dominant themes emerging through each policy consistent with thematic analysis of documents (Bryman, 2004). As McKee states with beautiful clarity, “[w]hen we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text” (2003, p. 1). These initial thematic categories were Economic Growth, Progressivism, and Human Rights. Subsequently, I read through the documents and pulled out quotations from each that supported the construction of each theme. These readings informed the development of questions that I asked participants, and interview transcripts were subjected to the same process. Through this

process, I adjusted the final thematic titles, and also came to consider them as dominant discourses within the policies, rather than merely categories. The discourses which I argue are dominant within Afghan higher education strategic planning are: Economic Growth Discourse, Human Rights Discourse, and National Identity Discourse. I defend the identification of these discourses in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 as my educated guess at what some of the most likely interpretations of Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning might be. As I argue in later chapters, each dominant discourse is constructed by various ideas and sentences within policy documents, and through participant answers. What do I mean by discourse? The term 'discourse' is used in multiple ways, but rarely far from its bedfellow of 'ideology'. Thus, the final section of Chapter 2 begins by laying out an examination into ideology, and its relationship with discourse, before looking ahead to Chapter 3.

Ideology and Discourse

THESIS I: Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence...

THESIS II: Ideology has a material existence.

(Althusser, 2008, pp. 36, 38)

Althusser's *On Ideology* (2008) responds explicitly to notions of ideology posited by Marx. For Althusser, Marx's use of the term refers to "the system of ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (2008, p. 32). In this way, ideology operates as a mechanism which enables a particular system of ideas to go on, or to gain popular acceptance within a social whole. Van Dijk (2009, p. 380) offers a particularly useful definition of ideology as a system of "basic ideas shared by the members of a social group, ideas that will influence their interpretation of social events and situations and control their discourse and other social practices as group members". Two elements to this definition are important: first, that it is a belief structure, not to be confused with the actions that are taken as a result of that set of beliefs; and second, that an ideology is "a form of *social cognition*, that is, beliefs *shared* by and *distributed* over (the minds of) group members" (van Dijk, 2009, p. 382, emphasis in original). A primary function of ideology, then, is the construction of a false consciousness, or a "distorted and limited form of experience in society that could be applied to all social groups and classes" (Eyerman, 1981, p. 43).

This study is particularly concerned with ideology. As Sum and Jessop (2013b, p. 170) argue, the “‘raw material’ of ideology is found in meaning systems, social imaginaries and lived experience”. An examination of the most likely interpretations that might be made from a policy document, then, is an examination into the founding ideologies which structure that policy imaginary of an institution. And these ideologies perform a particular function, through false consciousness, in securing a hegemonic order. As Gramsci illustrates, “ideologies for the governed are mere illusions, a deception to which they are subject, while for the governing they constitute a willed and a knowing deception” (2000, p. 196). Such a function of ideology is considered further in Chapter 8, where I examine a Gramscian ‘war of position’ (2000) – or the securing of ideological dominance of strategic positions in order that a particular governance structure may go on – as well as in Appendix A’s postlegomenon, where the ideological function of education is expressly considered as an Althusserian (2008) instrument to mask contradictions in the capital relation, in order to secure the reproduction of the relations of production.

Here it is time to introduce Althusser’s interrelated notions of the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). Within an overdetermined social whole, Althusser took the Marxist state apparatus, constituting the police, military, and the like, and grouped these into what he termed the Repressive State Apparatus. He then deemed other social institutions, such as the school, family, legal and political structures, to perform an ideological function and thus termed them Ideological State Apparatuses. Both repressive and ideological apparatuses are not pure expressions, rather they are known by their primary function. The RSA:

functions massively and primarily *by repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology...In the same way, but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (Althusser, 2008, p. 19, emphasis in original)

Schooling holds a particular importance amongst the various ISAs. For Althusser (2008), the educational ISA is the primary method by which a ruling class establishes and maintains a dominant ideology. Various ISAs work in tandem to this end – it is “by the installation of the ISAs in which [the ideology of the ruling class] is realized and realizes itself that it becomes the ruling ideology” (Althusser, 2008, p. 59). Identifying the underlying ideology of an education system is, therefore, particularly important in pursuit of understanding a particular regime of governance. ISAs and RSA are considered at various points throughout the thesis Chapters, and are explored further explicitly in Chapters 8 and 9.

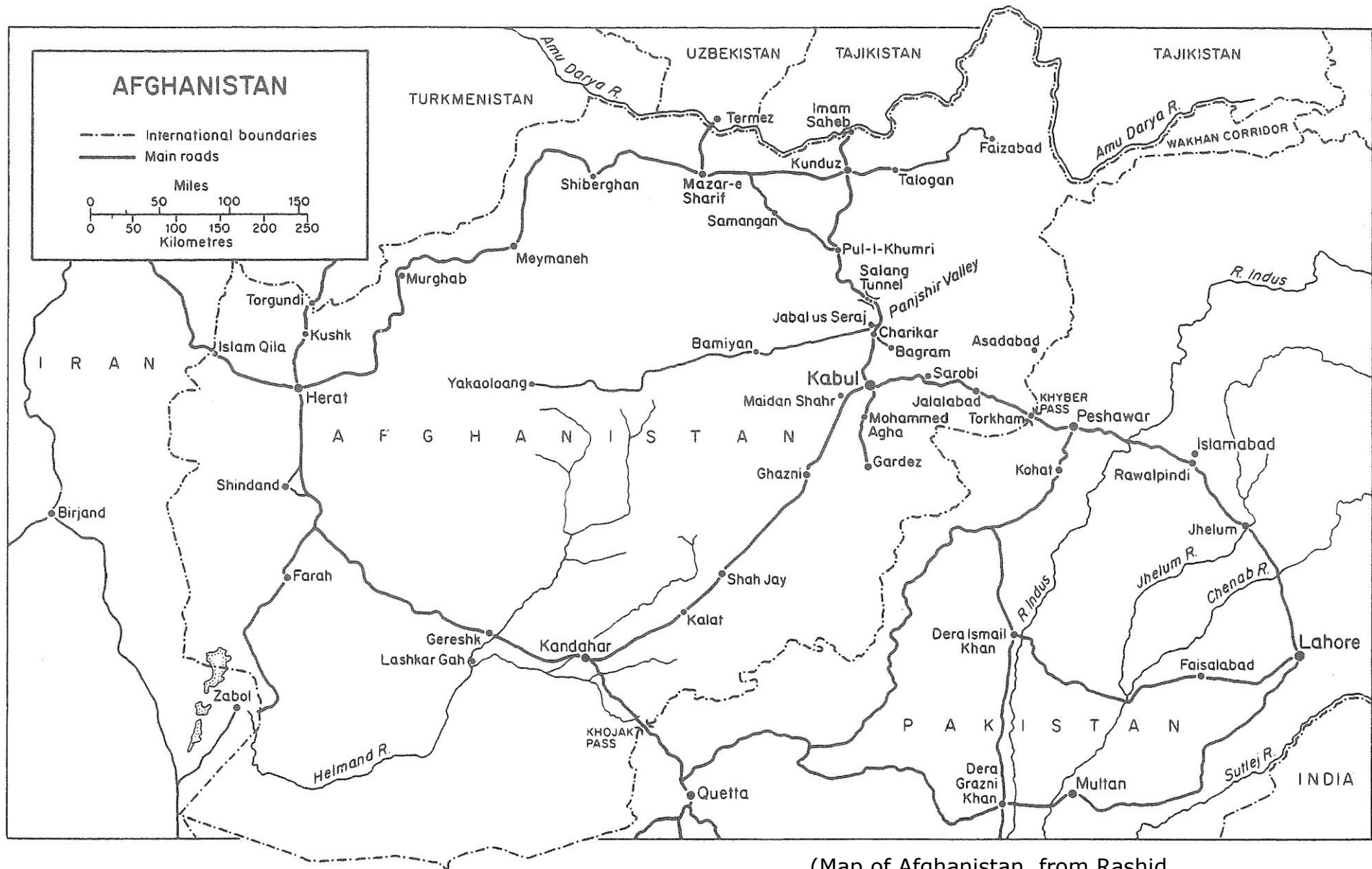
And discourse? Discourse is defined by Meutzenfeldt as “the complex of... notions, categories, ways of thinking and ways of communicating that constitutes a power-infused system of knowledge” (1992, p. 4, as quoted in Taylor, 1997, p. 25). Considering discourse relative to power-infused systems presents strong coherence with CPA, as it is:

particularly useful for critical policy analysis because it can take account of policy making at all levels, allows for conceptualisation of the state, and highlights the political nature of policy making. In addition, it is a dynamic framework which emphasises culture as well as practice. (Taylor, 1997, p. 25)

For my purposes, I use the term ‘discourse’ to indicate the materiality of the meaning systems – quite literally the language, the lines of data which, when assembled in policy form, cumulatively cohere around and present a particular view, or ideology, communicated through policy. As Sum and Jessop (2013b, p. 152) illustrate, discourse “can be usefully deployed to designate and differentiate particular sets of semiotic practices that produce and communicate sense and meaning”. Further, as van Dijk argues, few “data are better to study ideologies than text and talk, because it is largely through discourse and other semiotic messages, rather than by other ideological practices, that the contents of ideologies can be explicitly *articulated, justified or explained*” (2009, p. 387, emphasis in original). In this way, it can be said that discourse provides a form of the materiality of ideology proposed by Althusser’s ‘Thesis II’ in this section’s opening quotes. As my analysis demonstrates in Chapters 5-7, the dominant discourses within Afghanistan’s higher education strategic planning are constructed through lines of data to develop a particular view informing the function and purpose of higher education. In effect, discourse here is ideology’s mouthpiece, communicating an ideology which can be firstly understood, and secondly critiqued.

Identifying a national higher education’s ideological anchor is an important step towards exploring its role within society. Althusser (2008) positions the function of higher education within any society as an ideological apparatus, and Castells (1994, p. 26) argues that higher education operates as a mechanism “of selection of dominant elites, including...the socialization process of these elites, the formation of networks for their cohesion, and the establishment of codes of distinction between these elites and the rest of society”. The role of higher education within conflict-affected contexts, where the education sector can become an explicit tool to further ideological and political goals (Burde, 2014; Milton, 2019; Tsvetkova, 2017), underscores the need for a critical exploration of education’s dominant ideological base within these contexts (Shanks, 2016; Tierney, 2011). As the dominant ideology of Afghanistan’s higher education sector becomes clearer, so too does a broader notion of its institutional role within Afghan society.

This chapter has laid the theoretical foundations for my study into Afghan higher education. It began by outlining how my study is located within a critical realist ontology, informed by a Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education approach, and utilised document analysis and semi-structured interviews to complete the first and second phase of Critical Policy Analysis. It is time now to turn to the context of Afghanistan itself. Chapter 3 engages with early questions of state and governance in the region known today as Afghanistan, and lays important historico-cultural and political building blocks for my examination into national higher education policies which follows.



(Map of Afghanistan, from Rashid, 2008, p. xxiii)

Chapter 3 – Afghanistan and Early Questions of Statehood

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.
(Marx, 1972, p. 10)

Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come...to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world.
(Rushdie, 1995, p. 382)

Introduction

It is difficult to identify a point at which to begin a historiography of Afghanistan's higher education. While 'at the beginning' might be offered as a reasonable suggestion, just which 'beginning' is precisely what makes a historiographic point of entry to Afghan higher education so problematic. For instance, I could begin at the recent collapse of the Taliban ahead of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. I might justify this point of entry by identifying 2001 as the beginning of higher education's trajectory toward massification. This trajectory saw both the number of physical sites of higher education institutions and student enrolments dramatically increase beyond anything previously experienced in the country. Such an account, however, would be wholly inadequate by ignoring a significant social, cultural, political, and economic set of mechanisms which *enabled* such a trajectory of massification. Perhaps then I should begin in December of 1979, when Soviet military forces were drawn into action in Kabul. They removed the flailing communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's (PDPA) leader, Hafizullah Amin, and installed Babrak Karmal as President in his stead. This could be a justifiable point of entry considering the emphasis on education generally, and higher education particularly, during the following decade of Soviet occupation. Once again, however, this would artificially truncate higher education's small yet important origins of the early 20th century. Similarly, to begin at the establishment of the first higher education institution, a Faculty of Medicine in Kabul in 1932, would require acknowledgement of the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions which led to its installation. And so I begin further back with a brief yet, I feel, necessary exploration of the establishment of the Kingdom of Afghanistan.

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the historical groundwork from which to construct the remainder of my argument. As the opening paragraph indicates, the struggle to identify an historical point of entry into Afghanistan's higher education system can lead to paralysis if I'm not careful.

Fortunately, several historiographies exist which explore the origins of intellectual exchange, social structures, and local and global forces which have carved actual, if arbitrary, state borders in Central Asia. From these accounts, it is possible to develop an historically informed understanding of not only the origins of Afghan higher education, but also the cultural, political, and economic conditions which enabled a national system of higher education in the first place. To this end, here I explore the evolution of the Afghan state, from its origins as a tribal confederation in 1747, to its centralised semi-aristocratic form by 1901. I do this in order to better understand discussions in later chapters of the relationship between organised education and the Afghan state.

Notable historiographies of the region today known as Afghanistan include S. Fredrick Starr's (2013) *The Lost Enlightenment*, Louis Dupree's (1980) *Afghanistan*, and Thomas Barfield's (2010) *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. Both Starr and Dupree take a literal response to starting 'at the beginning'. Starr (2013) draws on earliest known sources to chronicle the development of Central Asia in defence of the thesis that an enlightenment swept the region almost 1000 years before a similar period of intellectual and rational exchange took place in Europe. Dupree (1980) dedicates a significant portion of his book to the historical development of peoples, cultures, and leaders of the region that became Afghanistan. These insights are largely informed by archaeological excavations conducted around Afghanistan by Dupree and other archaeologists between the end of World War II and Soviet occupation. Barfield (2010) details, as the title of his book suggests, the cultural and political developments which have shaped modern Afghanistan. Barfield's account pays particular attention to global events and processes, such as the expansion of British and Russian empires, and local responses by Afghanistan's ruling elite, before moving into an excellent account of Afghanistan's modern history. Rather than attempt to recreate what these authors have achieved, below I lightly skip through the period from 1747, the year in which Afghanistan was founded as a kingdom, through to 1901, when organised education in Afghanistan began to look outward to Turkey, India, and Europe for ideas and influences. This is done in order to understand the cultural political economy from which higher education in Afghanistan first emerged in 1932.

[Ahmad Shah Durrani and the First Kingdom of the Afghans](#)

The Kingdom of Afghanistan was formed in 1747, established by Ahmad Shah Durrani. It began as "a tribal confederation [before it] developed into a dynastic state" (Roy, 1990, p. 13) by the 20th century. Ahmad Shah Durrani was formerly named Ahmad Khan Abdali, and had been one of the strongest commanders in Nadir Shah's army (Barfield, 2010; Singh, 1959). Nadir Shah was the ruler of the Safavid Empire, whose seat of power was in modern-day Iran (Dupree, 1980). Toward the last days of his rule Nadir Shah became highly temperamental, growing concerned at whispers of

uprisings and revolt, and was an increasingly harsh and punitive ruler (Singh, 1959). Nadir summoned Ahmad Khan and asked the Pashtun commander to become a leader of his personal bodyguard. Nadir had become suspicious of his top Persian officers, which included his relatives, and made plans for Ahmad Khan to kill them. These plans were overheard by a spy, and Nadir Shah was assassinated by his relatives in 1747 before Ahmad Khan could carry out the massacre (Dupree, 1980; Singh, 1959). Ahmad Khan found Nadir Shah's body, and was forced to flee. He took the Shah's signet ring and the legendary Koh-i-Noor diamond (now the jewel in the crown of the British Crown Jewels, see Jasanoff, 2017), and led his 4000 cavalry back to the safety of his tribal home in Kandahar (Singh, 1959).

A first order of business by tribal leaders in Kandahar was to establish a new ruler of their region. This was undertaken in a manner dictated by cultural practices amongst Pashtun tribes. Members of Pashtun tribes "define themselves by their adherence to a code of conduct, the *Pashtunwali*, and their ability to speak Pashto" (Barfield, 2010, p. 25). In accordance with *Pashtunwali*, there were several meetings amongst leaders of the various tribes, known as *loya jirga*, to establish a new leader for this empire (Roy, 1990). Other tribal leaders were unable to contest the religious lineage of Ahmad Khan Abdali, nor his military power, and duly agreed to his nomination (Barfield, 2010; Singh, 1959). They named Ahmad Khan as *Badshah Durr-i-Dauran*, meaning 'King, the Pearl of the Age'. Ahmad changed the title to *Durr-i-Durran*, meaning 'Pearl of pearls', and changed the name of his tribe from Abdali to Durrani, or 'Of the Pearls' (Singh, 1959). This ceremony amongst Pashtun tribal leaders in Kandahar marked the coronation of the first King of Afghanistan, or the 'land of the Afghans'⁸.

The success of Ahmad Shah Durrani's reign over the new Kingdom of Afghanistan came from his judicious application of politics and force. Chapter 2's discussion of Althusserian (2008) notions of Repressive State Apparatus, which predominantly employ force, and Ideological State Apparatus, which predominantly employ ideology are useful here. Ahmad Shah Durrani's rule illustrates a clear instance of the use of both Repressive and Ideological apparatuses in the pursuit of centralising control over his empire. Barfield (2010, p. 99) refers to Durrani's empire as a "coat worn inside out". Most empires had a core made up of wealthy and populated cities, which tapered towards less-productive and less-populated villages and desolate areas. Durrani's empire had the relatively smaller Pashtun cities of Kandahar, Kabul, and Peshawar at its core, with wealthy regions such as

⁸ At that time, 'Afghan' was often used synonymously with 'Pashtun'. This is still commonplace today (Hakala, 2012; Rubin, 1992). As shall be seen in later chapters, this rule of the region by a member of the Pashtun tribal elite has been a point of contention for Afghanistan from its establishment in 1747 to today.

Sind, Turkestan, Khorasan, and Kashmir at its fringe (Barfield, 2010). In order to retain authority over this empire (see Figure 3.1), Ahmad Shah Durrani “ruled wisely in consultation with the [leaders] of the nine major sections of the Durrani tribe. Paramount chieftain among equals, he listened to his supra-council, his loose parliament” (Dupree, 1980, p. 340).

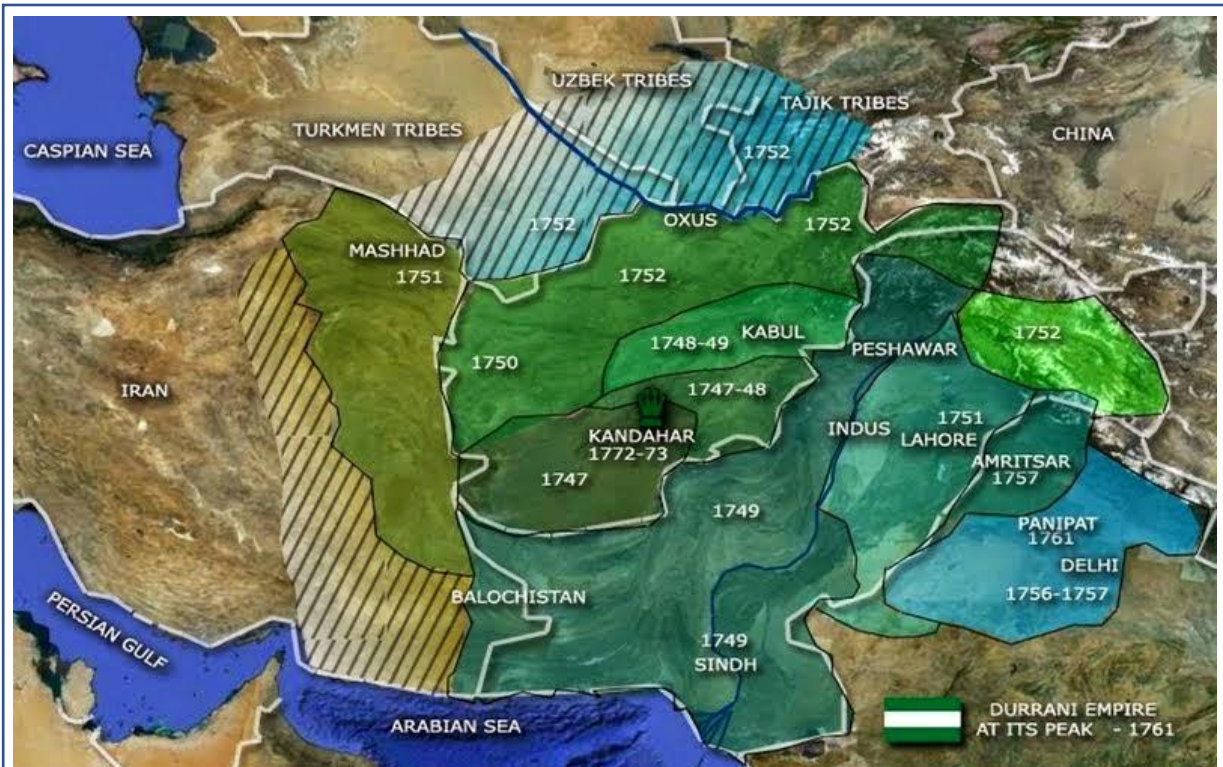


Figure 3.1: Durrani Empire at its peak – the ‘coat worn inside out’. Retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/history-maps.htm>

The rise of Ahmad Shah Durrani and his subsequent rule of Afghanistan has been highlighted here as more than a footnote to the following account of Afghanistan’s higher education. As will be seen in later chapters, the foundational political and cultural importance of Afghanistan’s origin, built as it was on *Pashtunwali*, has been enduring. Ahmad Shah and the Durrani tribe “form an integral part of the Pashtun tribal world, and are looked upon as its cradle” (Roy, 1990, p. 12). Ahmad Shah Durrani “rose to greatness in the tradition of Afghan warrior-poets, a charismatic leader who fused but left fission in his wake” (Dupree 1980 p. 340). A key fusion was his ability to centralise power over the region within himself and Pashtun tribes (Roy, 1990). Yet this was also part of the fissions he left behind, largely due to the violent subjection of other ethnic groups within the Pashtun kingdom. Throughout his rule, Ahmad Shah stayed true to traditional Pashtun power structures which, according to *Pashtunwali*, are fiercely equitable and flat. Whilst tribal leaders exist, when they meet together these leaders sit in a circle, so as to avoid even the semblance of hierarchical authority (Barfield, 2010). However several smaller ethnic groups also made up this kingdom, including the

ancestors to the Hazara, Uzbek, Tajik, Baloch, and Nuristan ethnic groups (among others) of today's Afghanistan (Clifford, 1989; Rubin, 2002).

The diversity of ethnic groups within both early and modern Afghanistan is significant. As seen in the next section, particularly during the conflict of the 1980s and 1990s, fissures within Afghanistan's borders were drawn largely along ethnic lines (Rubin, 2002). Diversity in this region is not a new phenomenon however. Due to its historic role as a 'crossroad of civilisations', Afghanistan had long been an important trading route for both goods and intellectual thought⁹, not to mention being central to imperial expansion from East to West, or West to East (Starr, 2013). In addition to being "a 'crossroads of civilizations,' it was, even more, a *crossroads civilization*, with its own distinctive features as such. From the earliest days this was evident in many areas, but in none more than in language and religion" (Starr, 2013, p. 69, emphasis in original). This language had traditionally been of Persian stock (Schiffman & Spooner, 2012), and prior to the arrival of Islam in the region, "the most conspicuous feature of the spiritual life of Central Asia's crossroads civilization was its pluralism and diversity" (Starr, 2013, p. 99). The 7th and 8th century Arab conquests of the region lay the groundwork for a subsequent hegemony of Islam which dramatically reduced Afghanistan's religious diversity (Roy, 1990). However, language diversity continues today. According to a leading linguistic scholar, Afghanistan is "linguistically one of the most interesting countries on earth" with 32 known languages recorded in the 1970s (Schiffman & Spooner, 2012, p. 2). The 1964 Afghan constitution lists Pashtu as the national language, and Dari as the official language. This had been the case in Afghanistan since the time of Ahmad Shah Durrani, who used Dari as his official language of administration (Nawid, 2012). As will be seen in later chapters, disagreements over the use of these languages in draft higher education legislation has stalled its passing into law.

Barfield (2010) recounts a further element of diversity, classified by ibn Khaldun as 'desert civilisations' and 'sedentary civilisations'. A desert civilisation was formed through "strong group solidarity based on kinship and descent" (Barfield, 2010, p. 58). Whilst achievements reflected well on the entire group, so shame could ruin a group's reputation, and could often only be removed through acts perceived to be restorative¹⁰. In such groups, however, overall leadership "was structurally weak. It lacked the right of command and so depended on the ability to persuade others

⁹ Starr (2013) writes of the well-known trade of goods along the famous Silk Road, and points to the lesser known function that the route served in facilitating intellectual exchange. He cites Bloom (2001) who suggests that the Silk Road could equally be called the 'Paper Road' such was the volume of this exchange, although the Paper Road began in Central Asia rather than China (Starr, 2013, p. 71).

¹⁰ This is the social foundation upon which such horrific acts as 'honour killings' are conducted.

to follow” (Barfield, 2010, p. 59). It is in such civilisations that *Pashtunwali* finds its base, and it is Pashtuns in Afghanistan that best exemplify a desert civilisation (Barfield, 2010). Sedentary civilisations, on the other hand, are formed “by residence (not kinship) and hierarchical divisions based on class” (Barfield, 2010, p. 61). For these groups, and in line with social divisions based upon class, social status is linked to control of wealth rather than ancestors, and individual interests supersede those of the group.

Unlike desert chieftains, rulers here were not consensus builders or redistributors of wealth but rather acquisitive autocrats. They secured their power by accumulating wealth for themselves and the state on a grand scale, through various forms of taxation, control of trade or markets, and the large-scale ownership of productive land. Such wealth was necessary because it undergirded centralized authority. (Barfield, 2010, p. 62)

This classification is most accurately applied to groups in Afghanistan’s North and its city centres.

Men from the many non-Pashtun ethnic groups that made up the first Afghanistan were welcomed into Ahmad Shah Durrani’s armed forces. However these populations were subjected to taxation and not part of the consultative practices extended to various Pashtun tribal leaders (Barfield, 2010; Roy, 1990). Many of these non-Pashtun groups operated within clearly hierarchical social structures which were quite distinct from *Pashtunwali*. While these social structures are often identified as being based on kinship and tribal networks, David Sneath (2007) joins Barfield in problematising this claim. Sneath’s research into Steppe cultures, from which many of the Northern Afghan ethnic groups descended, makes a compelling case for an understanding of social organisation along aristocratic and class lines, or ibn Khaldun’s ‘sedentary civilisations’. He argues that aristocratic social structures did not fit the dominant narrative of Steppe cultures during much of the anthropological work of the 20th century. As a result, and because “kinship stood opposed to class...[it] directed anthropologists away from the terminology of class and aristocracy” (Sneath, 2007, p. 13) when examining social structures amongst these ethnic groups.

Diverse forms of social structuring, from the non-hierarchical desert civilisation of *Pashtunwali* to the aristocratic and class-based sedentary civilisation of Steppe and nomadic cultures in Afghanistan’s Northern areas (Barfield, 2010; Sneath, 2007), intensified fissures within the kingdom. As Roy (1990, p. 12) observes, “there has never been such a thing as an Afghan nation [although] there is certainly an Afghan state”. It is important here to note that fissures should not be understood purely along the lines of linguistic differences, ethnicity, or desert/sedentary binaries. Rather, an acknowledgement of complexity is required. To suggest that all divisions in Afghanistan are based on region or ethnicity “is deceptive and even false” (Barfield, 2010, p. 65). These different forms of social structuration, compounded by external interventionism, *do* continue to be a source

of fissure in the modern Afghan political economy. However, the Pashtun in Kabul has far more in common with the Hazara neighbour than the rural cousins. Fissures run, then, along ethnic, regional, and class lines. As interactions between these various forms of social structuration increased in early Afghanistan, the Durrani period necessarily saw a shift in social structures within the broader Afghan state. There became a hybridity of state aristocracy and kinship, in which a “kind of aristocracy [developed] reinforced by gifts of land made by the monarchy” (Roy, 1990, p. 12).

This initial Kingdom of Afghanistan, thus constructed by Pashtun tribes and ruled through hybrid *Pashtunwali* and aristocratic structures, was the first and important step in Afghanistan’s state-making (Barfield, 2010; Clifford, 1989; Dupree, 1980; Singh, 1959). Ahmad Shah Durrani’s 25-year reign, through courting and coercion, subjected non-Pashtun ethnic groups and favoured Pashtun tribes. From 1747 until 1973, when Afghanistan became a republic, the Kingdom of Afghanistan was ruled by prominent members of the Pashtun ethnic group.

These Pushtun rulers were largely preoccupied on the one hand with wooing or subjecting both the rival Pushtun tribes and the many other ethnic groups that were gathered in their kingdom and, on the other hand, with countering the encroachment of two great powers, Great Britain and Russia, against their borderlands. (Clifford, 1989, p.70)

And it is to this period, known as The Great Game, that I now briefly turn my attention.

The First Anglo-Afghan War: 1839-1842

With the formidable power of hindsight, and what turned out to be an unnerving degree of foresight, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan once said, “Rule number one in politics – Never Invade Afghanistan” (Lamb, 2015, p. 17). When he said this in 1963 he was referencing the Anglo-Afghan wars of the 19th century. After Ahmad Shah Durrani died in 1772, his son and heir designate took over the empire. However, Timur Shah Durrani was not as adept as his father at navigating the demanding requirements of ruling the anti-hierarchical Pashtun tribes and subjugated non-Pashtun groups. Under his reign the empire began to shrink, and upon his death in 1793 several Pashtun tribal leaders battled over the top seat (Clifford, 1989; Dupree, 1980; Singh, 1959). None of the subsequent leaders maintained their seat for long, until Dost Mohammed in 1826. By this time, the Kingdom of Afghanistan occupied a considerably smaller area, and its key sources of wealth, the fringes of the coat worn inside out, had been lost to India and Iran. This included losing the Koh-i-Noor diamond to a Sikh commander (Jasanoff, 2017). Left with “few other sources of income, Dost Muhammad’s policies were therefore heavily extractive” (Barfield, 2010, p. 113). Growing unhappiness with the heavy taxes coincided with considerable developments beyond Afghanistan’s

borders. For the first time the Kingdom, created through conquest and contract, was facing a genuine *external* threat to its existence.

Afghanistan's 19th century was punctuated by two wars with Britain. The colonial expansionism of world powers began to encroach upon Afghanistan during Dost Mohammad's first reign. Russia and Great Britain competed for influence in the Afghan region during a period of history which became referred to as 'The Great Game' (Baiza, 2013b; Clifford, 1989; Dupree, 1980). Dost Mohammad was initially courted by political envoys from both countries. Whilst he showed "a 'neutral' preference for the British, whom he hoped would help in his efforts to recover Peshawar from the Sikhs" (Dupree, 1980, p. 370), the British envoy, Alexander Burnes, was becoming increasingly nervous that Russia would win out. In 1838 he presented Dost Mohammad with an ultimatum.

You must desist from all correspondence with Persia and Russia; you must never receive agents from them or have aught to do with him without our sanction; you must dismiss Captain Vickovitch [the Russian envoy] with courtesy; you must surrender all claims to Peshawar on your own account, as that chiefship belongs to Maharaja Runjeet Sing. (Parliamentary Papers, 1859, 177, as quoted in Dupree, 1980, p. 371)

Realising that he would receive no support for recapturing Peshawar, Dost Mohammad then turned his attention from Burnes to Vickovitch. Keen to ensure a ruler in Afghanistan sympathetic to British interests (predominantly those of the East India Company), British forces invaded Afghanistan in 1839 and installed their proxy in the form of Shah Shuja to the throne as Amir (Clifford, 1989; Dupree, 1980).

Rumblings with the arrangement between the British and Shah Shuja began to emerge. Convinced it was safe, the British command in Kabul brought their wives from India, who in turn brought their servants. Then the regular soldiers brought their wives. Kabul was confronted with thousands of British and Indian soldiers, their families, and camp followers (Dupree, 1980; Fraser-Tytler, 1953). It was indeed Shah Shuja, an Afghan, on the throne, and his

tax-collectors actively collected taxes; his executioners actively executed his enemies, both real and potential. The British, however, held the purse strings and the guns, so many Afghans came to [the British commander] and his representatives for decisions which should normally have been in the province of the Amir. (Dupree, 1980, p. 380)

Ibn Khaldun's theory of the weak leadership of desert civilisations, outlined above, had also considered a workable solution. In an egalitarian male social structure, in which each man has an equitable claim to authority, "religious leaders were often more successful than tribal ones in uniting large groups. Coming from outside the system and calling on God's authority, they could better circumvent tribal rivalries" (Barfield, 2010, p. 60). In the case of Afghanistan, Islam had been

politicised to this end at a few points previously, for instance to repel polytheist Indian forces (Barfield, 2010). The case of Shah Shuja presented a new frontier for calls to *jihad* in Afghanistan.

Dost Mohammad's son, Mohammad Akbar Khan, began to stir up a popular dissatisfaction with the political arrangement in Kabul, pointing to the foreign non-Muslim occupiers as *kafir* (non-believers). The British encampment came under increasing pressure as a result, and a riot led to the killing of Sir Alexander Burnes in 1842. Shah Shuja realised that he must distance himself from the *kafir* British if he was to retain power, and asked the British to leave. The British agreed, however en route to the safety of India all but one of the 16,500 members of the procession were killed. 12,000 of those murdered were families and camp-followers to the 4,500 soldiers (Barfield, 2010; Dupree, 1980). The one surviving soldier, Dr Brydon, was immortalised by Lady Butler's 1879 painting entitled *Remnants of an Army* (Figure 3.2). The massacre became immortalised in both British and Afghan military histories (Lamb, 2015; Rubin, 2002). Although the British had left Kabul, Shah Shuja retained the throne initially due to his public support for the *jihad* which had so violently expelled the British. Privately he wrote to the British and asked them to return to support him. However, Mohammad Akbar Khan continued his military campaign, and reinstated his father, Dost Mohammad, to the throne in 1843.



Figure 3.2: *The remnants of an army, Jellalabad, January 13, 1842*, by Lady Butler. It depicts the sole survivor of the massacre of British families, camp followers, and troops which had left Kabul in the winter of 1842. Retrieved from <https://bharathgyanblog.wordpress.com/2014/08/>

Prior to Shah Shuja's time as Amir, battles over the throne had been fought by members of the elite (Barfield, 2010). Dost Mohammad's son, Mohammad Akbar Khan, had successfully mobilised a popular uprising against a foreign occupying force under the unifying banner of Islam. Barfield writes that mobilising popular military support in "'defense of Islam' to justify resisting a regime in Kabul or its policies would henceforth become a sword that was rarely sheathed in Afghan politics, regardless of whether foreigners were actually present on Afghan soil" (Barfield, 2010, p. 123). While British forces returned on a destructive military manoeuvre later in 1842 that saw them rapidly reach Kabul, sack areas of the city, and burn large parts of the bazaar, they left as quickly as they came. It was purely retribution for the massacre. The political ramifications of the first Anglo-Afghan war were significant. A non-state, non-elite fighting force, under the unifying banner of *jihad* and Islam, had defeated the British. This meant that the ruling elite in Kabul could no longer dismiss internal dissatisfaction with its rule, reorienting the "equations of power...[T]his required a new and more complex strategy of government" (Barfield, 2010, p. 132), meaning a more centralised military and the need to retain popular support within state borders.

Dost Mohammad attempted both during his second reign from 1843-1863. He placed his sons as governors of each region, and each son developed their own networks, oversaw taxation and a military force. In-so-doing, his sons became political actors in their own right, and for the first time "success or failure at the national level now had immediate repercussions at the local level" (Barfield, 2010, p. 135). Dost Mohammad's time as Amir was marked by his "great dream of Afghan unity" (Dupree, 1980, p. 401). His death brought with it five years of civil war, largely amongst his 27 sons, before Sher Ali claimed the throne as Amir in 1868. Over the next ten years, Sher Ali focused efforts on strengthening the military and establishing an administrative structure in order to support it. In addition, he visited India, and returned to Afghanistan intent on modernising the country. Barfield refers to him as "the first of [Afghanistan's] state builders" (Barfield, 2010, p. 137). However, his time as Amir was cut short as tensions between the Russian and British Empires once again flared.

The Second Anglo-Afghan War: 1878-1880, and Afghanistan as Buffer State

Friction between expansionist Russian and British interests at various parts of their empires increased after the failure of the first Anglo-Afghan war. Russia encroached right to Afghanistan's current northern border, the Amu Darya (Oxus River), which had been Afghanistan's northern border by contract since the time of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Russian and British envoys 'decided' that this natural boundary was an appropriate border for Afghanistan in 1873.

In this way Afghanistan became a buffer state between two empires. While this agreement was made without Afghanistan's cooperation, it served [Amir Sher Ali's] interests by setting a limit on Russian expansion without forcing him to make new concessions to the British. (Barfield, 2010, p. 139)

This did not, however, see an end to tensions between the Russian commander in Tashkent, just north of the Amu Darya, and the British viceroy in India. British troops moved on Quetta, and demanded that Sher Ali accept a British political agent in Kabul. Knowing what had happened to Shah Shuja, Sher Ali refused. When the Russians sent an envoy to Kabul in 1878, the British demanded that Sher Ali receive their own envoy. Afghanistan refused, and British forces once again invaded Afghanistan.

Initial British conquest was quick. From Kabul, the commander of British forces spoke clearly of his intent in Afghanistan.

We wish one thing from you, and that is friendship, but whether we get this or not, we will have your obedience, you may chafe as much as you please, but we will be your masters, and you will find that the only escape from our heavy hand will be your entire submission. (MacGregor, 1985, p. 111, as quoted in Barfield, 2010, p. 142)

This speech was ill-received, and sparked several uprisings amongst a wide range of different tribes. One of Afghanistan's most famous battles – the Battle of Maiwand – was fought during this time. As a battle raged between Pashtun tribes, and British forces in Maiwand, near Kandahar, the tide appeared to favour the British. A woman named Malalai took off her veil and waved it as a flag to encourage the Pashtun men forward, shouting the couplet:

Young love, if you do not fall in the battle of Maiwand,
By God, someone is saving you as a token of shame¹¹.

This turned the battle, and the British were soundly defeated. Malalai of Maiwand had spurred her countrymen to victory in the face of a foreign occupying power. In the process, she had been martyred, and her battle cry became immortalised in the Afghan psyche.

With no end in sight to the tribal uprisings rejecting their rule, British forces were soon on the lookout for an exit strategy. Arms were being provided to various tribes en masse during this period by both Britain and Russia (Dupree, 1980; Rubin, 2002). There have been rare periods since in which Afghanistan has not been provided military arms by foreign governments. The British required an Amir that would be sympathetic to their cause. Abdur Rahman was a military leader who had been gathering support in Afghanistan's north, and the British entered into a treaty with him. Abdur

¹¹ (Shpoon, 1968, p. 48, as quoted in Dupree, 1980, p. 411)

Rahman became the Amir of the north of Afghanistan upon Britain's departure, and while he was in charge of internal affairs, his treaty with the British abdicated responsibility for foreign affairs to their representative in India (Barfield, 2010; Clifford, 1989; Dupree, 1980; Fraser-Tytler, 1953). From 1880-1901, Abdur Rahman increased his influence from Kabul to much of modern Afghanistan with finance and weapons provided by Britain.

The two-year conflict of the second Anglo-Afghan war shared several similarities with the first. It began well and ended rather tragically for the British. It was horrifically violent, and became enshrined in legend, military history, and national consciousness for both countries. It was fought between largely non-state non-elite fighters on the Afghan side, who were mobilised by a call to jihad and unified under a common banner of Islam despite internal differences. A defining difference was the provision of arms by Russia and Britain to various groups, most likely assisted by the increasing availability of cheap gunpowder weapons. There were once again lessons for Afghanistan's new Amir, Abdur Rahman. The state required a strong centralised military, and a sense of national cohesion. During his reign, Abdur Rahman waged what Dupree (1980) refers to as internal imperialism. He violently established control over the lands within Afghanistan's ever-more-rigid borders, earning him the name of Iron Amir (Rasanayagam, 2003). Looking to British models of colonialism, Abdur Rahman embarked on a project of Pashtunisation. This was a defining policy of his period, which forcibly resettled Pashtun families into non-Pashtun areas in order to increase the dominance of Pashtun tribes over the country. He died in 1901 of natural causes, and for the first time in Afghan history his son, Habibullah, assumed the throne in a peaceful transition of power (Rubin, 2002).

The (myth of the) Great Game and the Centralised Afghan State by 1901

While this period in Afghanistan's history is referred to as 'The Great Game', hard questions have been asked of the manner in which this period of history has been treated by some scholars.

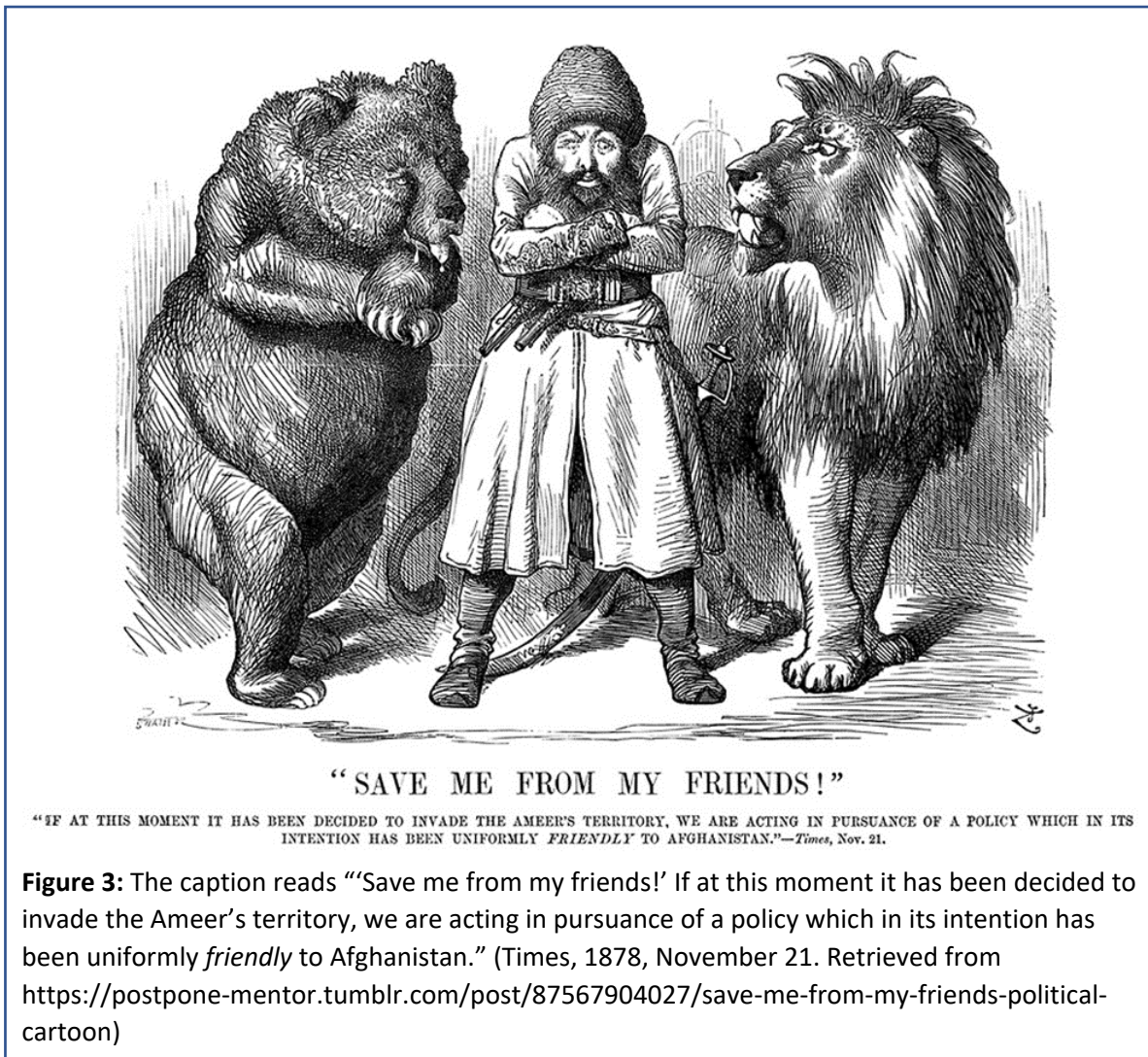
Works on the so-called Great Game between Britain and Russia in Central Asia abound, but these invariably examine the conquest as part of the wider geopolitical competition between the two powers, or as a series of anecdotes of adventure and derring-do by British (and occasionally Russian) soldiers and explorers. Central Asian rulers, states and peoples are marginalized or ignored completely in this narrative, which (consciously or unconsciously) reproduces the nineteenth-century European assumption that they were savage, backward, barbarous, and unamenable to any form of diplomacy or negotiation. (Morrison, 2014, p. 132)

Such tales of derring-do were fed by popular culture at the time. Books such as the volumes by Sir Alexander Burnes, entitled *Tales from Bokhara*, recounted his exploits as "the first European of modern times" to gather "every information regarding a frontier so important to Britain as that of

northwestern India” (Burnes, 1973). The painting by Lady Butler of the ‘sole survivor’ of the massacre in 1842, and the works of author Rudyard Kipling (Kipling, 1989) all contributed to the image of savagery and barbarity of the Afghan.

When you’re wounded and left on Afghanistan’s plains,
And the women come out to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An’ go to your Gawd like a soldier.

Morrison’s observations around the external focus on decision-making have been similarly reified through popular culture and key scholarly works. A cartoon was published in the British press in 1878 (Figure 3) which famously depicted the Afghan as helpless between the Russian bear and British lion. Abdur Rahman himself asked how “a small Power like Afghanistan, which is like...a grain of wheat between two strong millstones of the grinding mill, stand in the midway of the stones without being ground to dust?” (1900, p. 280, as quoted in Dupree, 1980, p. 415). The tone of Great



Game literature are exemplified by several authors who consider the period as definitive about Afghanistan's very existence.

[I]t seems doubtful whether the Afghan Kingdom would have long endured had it not become of political importance to the great western powers that it should do so. And so as a buffer state, a political no-man's-land, Afghanistan survived the nineteenth century. (Fraser-Tytler, 1953, p. 51)

Some authors, however, debate the actual significance of this period, arguing that the events which took place were inconsequential in the longer term trajectories of both Russia and Britain (Hopkins, 2008; Morrison, 2014; Yapp, 2001) What is undeniable is that the tensions between Russia and Britain had positioned Afghanistan to act as a 'buffer state'. In 1897, Britain and Russia forced Amir Abdur Rahman to accept the addition of the Wakhan corridor into his realm in order that British India and Russia would not share a border (Baiza, 2013b; Rubin, 2002). The Wakhan corridor is a thin, mountainous strip of land that makes up Afghanistan's North-Eastern corner demarcated by the Durand Line, drawn by a British Officer of that name (Baiza, 2013b). This signified Afghanistan's entry into the modern state system in 1880 (Rubin, 1992). Great Game romanticism or not, Barfield (2010) writes that the Afghans in fact had little, if any, say over the acceptance of the Durand Line.

Amir Abdur Rahman was a pivotal figure in the history of Afghanistan. While 'forced' into the role of ruling a buffer state between Russia and British India, he retained loyalty to the British due to their support of his Pashtunisation policy for Afghanistan. The centralisation of Afghanistan under a single autocratic ruler was crucial to provide stability for British interests in India. Abdul Rahman purposefully positioned nomadic Pashtun people throughout areas to the North and North-Western regions of Afghanistan that were traditionally Hazara, Aimaq, Uzbek and Turkmen lands (Baiza, 2013b). He systematically continued to position Pashtun's into positions of economic and military power, and was the first Afghan ruler to unite the majority of the different tribes within Afghanistan under their sole commonality, Islam. The majority of tribal uprisings during his reign "occurred under the combined leadership of religious and tribal aristocracies" (Ghani, 1978, p. 273). Abdur Rahman was a quick learner, and as the religious establishment derived the majority of its power from the state, for instance through the allocation of land, exemption from taxation, and so on, he set about restructuring the relationship between religious leaders and the state (Ghani, 1978). He signed formal agreements with many sections of his society in which they recognized him as *imam*, leader of the Islamic community (Baiza, 2013b). He institutionalized the claim of Islamic sovereignty by establishing in all the provinces official sharia courts operating by procedures laid down by the state. The Amir claimed that because he was waging *jihad* by strengthening the defenses of Afghanistan against non-Muslim powers, it was the duty of all Muslims in the territory of Afghanistan to support

and pay taxes¹² to him (Ghani, 1978; Rubin, 2002). Abdur Rahman thus legitimated his centralised rule with a new doctrine of divine sanction (Roy, 1990).

A key institution which Abdur Rahman implemented was a Supreme Council. This council could only advise, however it consisted of a range of secretaries, commanders, accountants and the like. Beneath this was a *loya jirga*, which consisted of “three groups of Afghan citizens: certain Sardars (princes) of the royal family; important khans...in the rural power elite, from different parts of the country; the religious leaders, from whom, however, he brooked no opposition” (Dupree, 1980, p. 421). Echoing a strategy employed by Durrani, now all the more important due to the proven potential for non-elites to meddle in national-level politics, Abdur Rahman was in this way consultative at the same time as extremely violent (Barfield, 2010) in his rule. After all, “the ultimate source of the Amir’s power, his institution for control and implementation, was the army” (Dupree, 1980, p. 421). He applied these institutions with the goal of putting “in order all those hundreds of petty chiefs, plunderers, robbers and cutthroats...This necessitated breaking down the feudal and tribal system and substituting one grand community under one law and one rule” (Wilber, 1962, p. 19, as quoted in Dupree, 1980, p. 419). His application of these institutions, and the fact that he had little need to pay attention to foreign affairs, meant that Afghanistan was a largely centralised aristocratic state by the time of the Amir’s death in 1901.

The transition of power from Abdur Rahman to his eldest son Habibullah in 1901 was unique in Afghanistan’s history, as Abdur Rahman died from natural causes and his son peacefully assumed his place on the throne (Rubin, 2002). Habibullah was therefore able to build upon his father’s successes rather than have to wrestle allegiance by force. Not needing to be as ruthless as his father, Habibullah embarked on a project towards modernisation. Whilst his father had been predominantly inward-focused, Habibullah looked outward for the first time in more than 20 years. He introduced Western medicine, abolished slavery, and founded a secondary school based upon European education between 1901 and his assassination in 1919 (Clifford, 1989). Amir Habibullah’s purposeful interest in supporting modern education and creating an intelligentsia for the first time in Afghanistan’s history separates his governance of the country significantly from his father’s (Baiza, 2013b; Rubin, 2002), and in examining the following century of Afghanistan’s development, it is

¹² Several authors, including Rubin (Rubin, 1999, 2002), Roy (1990) and Barfield (2010), highlight the tension between Afghan leaders claiming taxation and fealty from the population based on the Islamic requirement to *jihad*, whilst at the same time being propped up by external non-Islamic governments. This is a situation that remains controversial to this day.

prudent to now do so primarily from an understanding of educational developments during that time.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out the historical foundations for the arguments I make in the following chapters. Afghanistan began in 1747 as a tribal confederation with Ahmad Shah Durrani. Durrani transcended *Pashtunwali* in generating a hybrid aristocracy/tribalism, and used force and finesse to solidify power amongst fellow Pashtun elites, and put down any challenger – Pashtun and non-Pashtun alike. This tribal confederacy teetered into a dynastic statehood in the early 1800s, before it became solidified as a result of two wars with Britain. Rather than being the mechanisms, I consider both of these wars to be catalysts to Afghanistan's evolution of statehood. Dost Mohammad's desire to see a unified Afghan state was given direction after the British expulsion in 1842. For the first time, tribal members of Afghanistan had participated in political events at a *national* level. This required a new form of relationship with the state. The game of thrones and politics of state, hitherto expensive and exclusive (Barfield, 2010), was rent violently out of the realm of the elites and into the broader realm of the population. It was, however, a lesson better put to use under the Iron Amir's twenty years of internal imperialism.

Abdur Rahman's reign as Amir was also marked by the significant financial and material support of a foreign power, leading him down the path towards rentier statehood (Rubin, 1992). This was convenient for Abdur Rahman, as it meant that he didn't have to provoke the newfound national potential for discord by employing the same degree of extractive taxation which had afflicted Dost Mohammad's first reign. This period also saw Islam and ethnicity both become tools of government, through a policy of Pashtunisation, and appointing himself as an *imam* (Baiza, 2013a; Barfield, 2010; Ghani, 1978; Roy, 1990; Rubin, 2002). This had lasting ramifications, for when "religion is armed with coercive political power, the range of answers is limited; the prudent thinker is forced to claim either that reason and faith harmonize, or if they do not, that faith is superior" (Collins, 1998). Abdur Rahman, thus wrapped in military and religious authority, further centralised the state and lay the groundwork from which his son would launch an agenda of modernity.

As I stated at the outset, it has not been my intention to reproduce the works from which I've drawn here. Additionally, in such a short space, there is considerable nuance and complexity that simply cannot be included, and I refer the reader to the works cited as being deserving of your attention. However, I have drawn on secondary sources throughout the historiography thus far in order to trace the *origins* and *nature* of the Afghan state prior to the implementation of organised education

outside of the clergy. This is important for the pages that follow, as without at least an introduction to the various fissures and fusions which accompanied Afghanistan into the 20th century, it would be too easy to present an incomplete analysis of the education sector, and its relationship with the state, that has developed since.

Chapter 4 – Globalisation, and the Emergence of Afghan Higher Education

The modern or postmodern world is not absent or weak in places like Afghanistan, but it exerts itself in ugly ways we prefer to deny. The fragmentation of postcolonial and post-Cold War states is the other side of the postmodern. The decline of border controls in a consolidating Europe has eased the way for Turkish syndicates to smuggle Afghan heroin from Pakistan in Panamanian-registered ships.

The developed country does not, as Marx thought, show the backward country its future; the fragmenting countries show the integrating ones the dark side of their common present. The violence and decay of Afghanistan is the reflection in the mirror of that society of the violence that created and maintains our security.

(Rubin, 2002, p. 5)

Higher Education and the Evolution of the Afghan State

Here I must break from the historiography of the last chapter in order to address some conceptual elements that are becoming increasingly important for this account. This chapter serves two purposes. Firstly, it sets down the concepts of globalisation and localisation as important theoretical tools when examining Afghanistan's higher education sector. I then use notions of assembly and disassembly to explain the conditions of Afghanistan's higher education at the turn of the 21st century, and will later use it to explain what those conditions enabled. Clearly, disassembly is pivotal to the first part of my thesis; that when institutions have been disassembled through violent conflict, the institution of higher education can be (re)assembled upon a relatively narrow ideology with little contestation. Secondly, I pick up the historiographical thread from the end of Chapter 3, beginning at the turn of the 20th century with the rise of 'modern' education, and end a century later with the fall of the Taliban. At the conclusion of this chapter, I make the case that Afghanistan's higher education sector during the 1980s and 1990s experienced a profound disassembly, and produced a set of enabling conditions for the neoliberal reassembly of higher education which followed.

On Globalisation

An analysis of Afghan phenomena must clearly be informed by concepts as globalisation, regionalisation, and localisation. Here I proceed on the thesis that through a predominant exploration of one of these terms, namely globalisation, we can come to know the other two. Acknowledging these concepts, however, is very different from arriving at an understanding or working definition of them as discursive signifiers. For example, when looking at globalisation in the Afghan context, does this mean citing that the first factory built following the fall of the Taliban was a Coca-Cola bottling plant (Garwood, 2006), and looking for a subsequent list of other multi-national corporations and their involvement in Afghanistan? Or does this mean an exploration into the diasporic spread of millions of Afghan refugees throughout the world (Özerdem & Sofizada, 2006),

and an investigation into how this has shaped processes and policies far beyond Afghanistan's borders? Or perhaps tracing foreign aid, or rent, that has propped up Afghan governments for decades (Kühn, 2008; Rubin, 1992), and querying the influence such rent buys, and for whom? All of these questions, it would seem, could legitimately claim to investigate globalisation relative to Afghanistan. Kamola (2013), however, urges caution when engaging with questions such as these. Asking *Why global*, he argues that the term globalisation is "fraught with profound ambiguity and conceptual confusion" (p. 41), and that the use of the term as both a descriptor of the phenomenon, as well as an attempt to theorise this same phenomenon, is at its problematic foundation.

Not only is the term itself regularly called into question, "many authors recently have introduced their interest in globalization studies with an apologetic note for amassing scholarship in this over-studied subject" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, p. 3). Held et al. (1999) suggest that intellectual engagement with globalisation is undertaken by three groups; the hyperglobalists, the sceptics, and the transformationalists. Hyperglobalist subscribers believe that "economic globalization is bringing about a 'denationalization' of economies through the establishment of transnational networks of production, trade and finance" (Held et al., 1999, p. 3). Harvey (2003, p. 91) is quick to point out that there is little merit to this argument of 'denationalization' however, highlighting that

the preferred condition for capitalist activity is a bourgeois state in which market institutions and rules of contract...are legally guaranteed, and where frameworks of regulation are constructed to contain class conflicts and to arbitrate between the claims of different factions of capital...

On the other hand sceptics take an economistic perspective on globalization, and view it "as a primarily ideological social construction that has limited explanatory value" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 23). Further, sceptics suggest that what we see today is not a new phenomenon but rather an intensification of historic economic relationships.

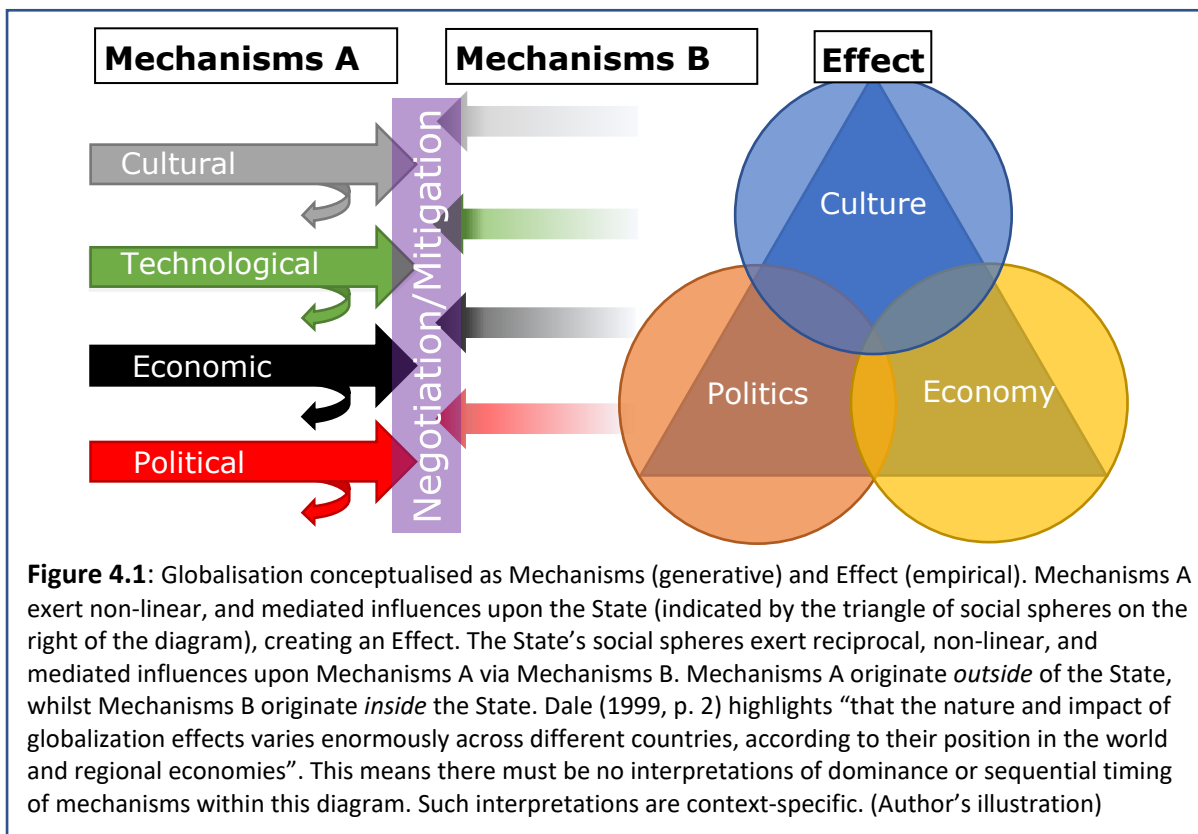
The transformationalist thesis transcends the hyperglobalist-sceptic dualism. Instead it relies on the belief that "globalization is a central driving force behind the rapid social, political and economic changes that are reshaping modern societies and world order" (Held et al., 1999, p. 7). In-so-doing, the call is made for an acknowledgement that the current levels of supranational interrelations are significantly more nuanced than at any point previously. These relationships are leading to changes in the real world of all parties concerned and have powerful implications and ramifications for their daily lives (Apple, 2007; Dale, 1999; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Turner & Khondker, 2010). Additionally, several authors make distinctions within their use of the term globalisation, some in response to criticisms from the sceptics, and some in response to overexcitement from the hyperglobalists. For

transformationalists, globalisation is a distinct phenomenon in itself, and mustn't be conflated with Americanisation, Westernisation, internationalisation, homogenisation, McDonaldisation, or any other -ism or -ation that might try to glom onto globalisation discourses (Dale, 1999; Held et al., 1999; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Turner & Khondker, 2010).

Indeed, the term globalisation has become so widely used that debates around definitions, meanings, connotations and the like have generated a significant amount of publications (Dale, 1999; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014). Many definitions centre on the phenomenon in which traditionally impermeable borders of the state increase permeability in order to facilitate an increase in supranational interconnectedness, economic interactions, and capital flow (Dale, 1999; David, 2007; Devetak, 2008; Ginsburg et al., 2005; Marginson, 2008; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Tarabini, 2010; Trotman & Robertson, 1992; Waters, 2001). Consequences of this increased permeability of the nation state membrane have been cited as both economic benefit and exploitation (Apple, 2007; Ginsburg, 2010; D. Harvey, 2003, 2014), both increased and decreased stability (Devetak, 2008; Friedman, 2003; Rubin, 2002), and as inconsistent and contested (Kamola, 2013; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Robertson et al., 2007; Turner & Khondker, 2010). Globalisation, it would seem, is a mixed bag. And yet, as Robertson et al. (2007, p. 6) highlight, "our knowledge of globalisation is substantially a function of how this concept is defined". Therefore, arriving at a definition of globalisation is a critical first step in understanding the concept's utility for this study.

Turner and Khondker (2010, p. 12) "simplify this discussion by suggesting that globalization has four major dimensions: economic, cultural, technological and political". This analysis is strengthened by Robertson et al. (2007, p. 6) who state that "[w]riters generally agree that globalisation takes different forms and operates on and through different spheres of social life: political, economic, cultural and technological". This is further supported by Rizvi and Lingard (2010, p. 24), who cite Glenn (2007) when they assert that globalisation "is an outcome of various structural processes that manifest in different ways in the economy, politics and culture". In synthesising globalisation literature, these three groups of authors have identified two important components to the term's meaning. Firstly, it is active. Secondly, as a phenomenon it manifests in economic, political, cultural, and technological social spheres. It can, therefore, be known by its *effects*.

I suggest that this conceptualisation of globalisation, as being a composite of ‘globalisation mechanisms’ and ‘globalisation effects’, can be deepened by exploring it through Bhaskar’s (2008) critical realist ontology¹³, in which the construct of globalisation exists within the ‘real’. As authors above have demonstrated, globalisation mechanisms are generative along cultural, economic, political, and technological avenues, and are therefore responsible for the actual. This becomes globalisation’s effect – the empirical – and becomes observable and experiential in the cultural, political, and economic social spheres within, for instance, a nation state. This is reflected in Turner and Khondker’s (2010, p. 17) definition, when they write that globalisation “is a historical process or a set of intertwined processes with certain structural properties”. And so we can arrive at an understanding of the *mechanisms of globalisation* as being economic, cultural, political, and technological, and the *effects of globalisation* as impacting economic, cultural, and political social spheres¹⁴ (see Figure 4.1).



Collier and Ong (2005) propose the concept of ‘global forms’, which are particularly useful here, and cohere with my framing of Economic Growth Discourse within a neoliberal ideology in Chapter 1. An

¹³ See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of critical realism

¹⁴ A fuller discussion of these impacts appears in later chapters, drawing on the analytic and ‘conceptual ensemble’ of Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE) (Robertson & Dale, 2015). This was also central to methodological considerations in Chapter 2.

object or institution obtains a global form when it becomes abstracted from its point of conception. When phenomena “have a distinctive capacity for decontextualization and recontextualization, abstractability and movement, across diverse social and cultural situations and spheres of life” (S. J. Collier & Ong, 2005, p. 11), they assume a global form. These are distinct from localised phenomena, such as kinship systems, which can be limited or delimited through a social or cultural field. Rather, global forms are only able to be “limited or delimited by specific technical infrastructures, administrative apparatuses, or value regimes” (S. J. Collier & Ong, 2005, p. 11) which exercise beyond localised and specific contexts. It can be seen how neoliberalism assumes a global and local form, demonstrating its remarkable ability to be decontextualised and recontextualised across state boundaries.

Assemblage, Assembly and Disassembly

The notion of an *assemblage* is a conceptual response to grand narratives found in some globalisation literature. Originating in art theory in the 1950s to refer to the manner in which artistic compositions are “made from putting together various different kinds of objects and ideas” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011, p. 6), it has been developed by Deleuze and Guattari as an analytic which moves beyond a structure-agency binary. They write that

in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an *assemblage*. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, pp. 3–4, italics in original)

The energy within this definition illustrates the point that assemblages are never static; rather they infer an always-emergent present. As Rizvi and Lingard highlight, “the analytic of assemblages shows...[how] formations that appear stable, potentially even complete, are never so settled” (2011, p. 8). Assemblages are particularly useful when exploring the contestations by which global forms become local realities.

Operating as “a distinctive type of experimental matrix of heterogeneous elements, techniques, and concepts” (Rabinow, 2003), a key function of assemblages as a conceptual tool is to provide “analytical and critical insight into global forms” (S. J. Collier & Ong, 2005, p. 14) and their localised incarnations. For my purposes here, as I outlined in my examination of the ‘education ensemble’ in Chapter 2, I do not explicitly draw on a theory of *assemblage* but rather use the term *assembly*. Here I draw on the complexity and always-emergent nature of the higher education assembly which is irreducible to its constituent parts from *assemblage*, however retain the economic determinism in the final instance found in CCPEE. In the event of Afghanistan’s higher education sector, I argue in

later chapters that policy assembly has drawn on almost entirely new elements (and their global forms), since 2001. The reasons for the reliance upon primarily global forms are also considered in more depth in later chapters. This chapter establishes the conceptual starting point for later arguments concerning policy assembly.

Below, I make the case that later assemblies were made possible primarily through the local conditions left by the *disassembly* of higher education. I use the notion of ‘disassembly’ to mean the violent unmaking of elements which previously formed an assembly *without the intent to reassemble them*. In this way, disassembly differs from mechanisms of reform, or even revolution. Through reform or revolution, various actors necessarily unbundle and reconstitute elements in order to create institutions in a new form. In these instances, what is occurring is a reassembly. Rather, an instance of disassembly occurs when the unmaking of an assembly is so violent or absolute, that the elements formerly employed within the assembly are unable to be used at all in future assemblies. This violent unmaking with disregard for future remaking may be intentional, or may be an unintended consequence of protracted conflict and/or institutional neglect. Regardless, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s energetic and elegant notion of assemblages encountered above, disassembly should be understood as energetic (violent) and regressive rates of flow along their same lines of ‘flight’ and ‘articulation’, which amount to *unmaking*, absent the intent of *remaking*.

There is, necessarily, an element of degree by which disassembly takes place. Absolute disassemblies do have historic precedent. For instance, the historic and expansive cities of Ghazni were razed to the ground by Genghis Khan’s troops, and the “population was devastated. The great cities were reduced to vast expanses of rubble. The desert winds blew sand over them and over the once-plowed fields, filling in the irrigation ditches and wells” (Clifford, 1989, p. 60). While it is difficult to conceive that an absolute disassembly should occur in the modern world, the case of Afghanistan’s higher education sector represents a near complete disassembly. As shall be seen throughout the remainder of this chapter, the loss of academics was significant, infrastructure was damaged or destroyed, institutions that had infrastructure lacked significant teaching and produced no research, and access to learning materials was almost non-existent (Hayward, 2015; MoHE 2009). Together, these factors posed some of the largest challenges facing higher education after 2001 (Babury & Hayward, 2014). Chapters 5, 6, and 7 illustrate how the current policy assembly of higher education has drawn from a wide range of agents and actors since 2001, as individual institutions, governance structures, and policies were fashioned into a national sector.

The story of the rise, fall, and rise again of Afghan higher education must begin in 1901 with the introduction of modern education. First, however, a quick word on the use of the term ‘modern’ in ‘modern education’. This is used fairly liberally within scholarship on Afghanistan’s education system (cf. Baiza, 2013a, 2014; Majrooh, 1987; Welch & Wahidyar, 2013). Yahia Baiza’s (2013b) book, entitled *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, influences and legacies since 1901*, is perhaps currently the most detailed English-language book focusing specifically on education developments within Afghanistan. Whilst he offers no explicit definition of ‘modern’ in ‘modern education’, his use of the term from the first page implicitly distinguishes an educational structure from Islamic education traditionally administered in *madrassa*. This is also the manner in which other authors employ the term. It was not used to denote modernisation theory, but rather as a name for this new form of education which differed from *madrassa*. There is an inherent tension with the use of the term, which might imply a binary where Islamic or traditional education is bad, and modern education is good. This is not the case in my use of the term ‘modern education’, which is used as a noun, and not a value statement.

Early 20th Century Statehood, and the Rise of Modern and Higher Education

Amir Habibullah inherited a peaceful and centralised state upon the death of his father Abdur Rahman in 1901. Because of this, he didn’t face the same challenges as previous rulers of Afghanistan had (Baiza, 2013b; Ghani, 1978). This created an environment in which he could be more moderate in his approach to domestic policies. Backed by an emerging modernist movement, Habibullah’s support for education structured along European ideas and models went ahead (Welch & Wahidyar, 2013). His desire to see education expand led him to import teachers to support the establishment of the first modern secondary school in Afghanistan, Habiba College, in 1904. Habiba College proved to be highly important for Afghanistan’s educational landscape, “and it was effectively the foundation stone of what later became Kabul University” (Welch & Wahidyar, 2013, p. 156). The few primary schools and Habiba College borrowed curriculum subjects from European, Turkish, and Indian models of schooling. There was instruction in “language, literature, religion, Arabic language and grammar, mathematical sciences, etc” (Baiza, 2013b, p. 44). This breadth of subjects differed from existing *madrasa* education in which religious instruction was the foundation of the curriculum, and the range of subjects taught was not as expansive.

Madrassa curriculum had indeed previously included Persian literature and “traditional mathematical, medical, and other sciences of the Islamic world” (Rubin, 2002, p. 53), however

madrassa were privately financed by *mullahs* and *ulama*¹⁵ and didn't include curriculum which was non-indigenous. Teachers for modern education schools were trained either in new state schools or abroad in preparation for their service.

Indeed, no one in Afghanistan could teach these subjects, which had not been developed indigenously. But Afghans had to learn them because their state was now compelled to find its place in the state system imposed on the world by colonial powers. (Rubin, 2002, p. 53)

Abdur Rahman's strict domestic policies had been designed to isolate Afghanistan, and the lack of modern education under his rule was indicative of his dilemma. To expand the curriculum would require importing teachers, or sending his subjects abroad, so he chose to do neither. While certainly more moderate, Habibullah was still very selective about which foreigners he allowed to enter the country. For instance, teachers at Habiba College were mainly Muslims from India (Rubin, 2002).

Modern schools met with opposition from *ulama*, who were publicly concerned with the secular and Western influences the schools presented (Baiza, 2013b). Privately, many *ulama* were concerned at what the introduction of modern education might mean for their own standing in the community, as modern education "created a class of intellectuals separate from the clergy for the first time. These intellectuals were trained for state service in new state schools or abroad" (Rubin, 2002, p. 53). Habibullah's modernist agenda created enemies amongst conservative and religious groups, and he was assassinated in 1919. His son, Amanullah claimed power. Amanullah's grandfather's policy of Pashtunisation continued right throughout his reign. Pashtunisation, aimed at increasing Pashtun tribal and cultural hegemony throughout the country, continued and created or deepened internal fissures. In addition to internal policies, Amanullah took decisive steps over Afghan foreign policy. Since 1880 and Abdur Rahman's reign, the British had controlled Afghanistan's foreign affairs. Amanullah's first major change to national politics was to declare independence from British control over Afghanistan's foreign affairs. Russia was quick to acknowledge Afghanistan as a state, however Britain refused. A brief third Anglo-Afghan war took place along the Durand Line, mostly by Pashtun tribal warriors (Baiza, 2013b; Dupree, 1980). However, exhausted from the heavy demands of World War One, and with no further appetite for war from the home front, Britain soon acknowledged Afghanistan as a sovereign state. Afghanistan became the only Muslim member of the League of Nations (Baiza, 2013b; Rubin, 2002).

¹⁵ *Ulama* is the term given to elite Muslim scholars and religious leaders.

Amanullah's consolidation of Afghanistan's burgeoning modern education system was equally radical. He established three high schools during the 1920s which dominated Kabul secondary education right through the 1970s. This was accomplished with funding from France, Germany and India as financial aid from Great Britain had ceased with independence (Baiza, 2013b). In 1921 he founded the French Malalai secondary school, named for Malalai of Maiwand, which was the first secondary school for girls in the country. Female education under Habibullah had been pointedly undeveloped in an attempt to placate conservative elements. As we shall see in later chapters, female education remains highly politicised in Afghanistan. Elite students were sent abroad for higher education (Samady, 2001), and Amanullah "shocked many Afghans by sending girls to study in Turkey and Switzerland" (Rubin, 2002, p. 56). Primary schools were established in each province, and Amanullah even experimented with sending teachers to accompany nomads during their migrations (Baiza, 2013b).

The Amir's policies around developing girls' education were highly contentious. Similar to his father's modernisation plans, Amanullah's "plans for the emancipation of women, a minimum age for marriage, and compulsory education for all" (Welch & Wahidyar, 2013, p. 157) met with little favour from many of the conservative religious elements in the country. During his decade of leadership, girls' education underwent a "fluctuating process of development (1919-1924) and suspension (1925-8), and regression and destruction (1928-9)" (Baiza, 2013b, p. 75). Amanullah's progressivism and view towards modernisation across the board had alienated powerful Pashtuns. As backlash mounted, even conceding significant and regressive changes to his education policies in 1928 was not enough to keep Amanullah in power, and he was overthrown in January 1929. Following a ten-month civil war, Nadir Shah led a group of 12,000 men to take Kabul, and hanged those responsible for deposing Amanullah.

Nadir Shah was elected to the top seat through a *loya jirga*. He was a Pashtun tribal leader and had been instrumental in forcing the British to acknowledge Afghan sovereignty. Nadir Shah's use of a *loya jirga* to assume legitimacy was in fact quite mythical, although he presented it as "Afghanistan's 'time honored way' of choosing its rulers. In reality it was an invented tradition that had little historical basis. The last jirga to play such a role was the one in 1747 that chose Ahmad Shah Durrani" (Barfield, 2010, p. 196). The international community has done much to reify the myth of the *loya jirga* as a manner of legitimising current Afghan rulers. During his brief reign, Nadir Shah rolled back much of the modernisation policies of Amanullah. This included the widespread suppression of pro-Amanullah intellectuals, and calling on Pashtun tribes to put down revolts from

non-Pashtun ethnic groups which had initially helped him to power (Barfield, 2010). Several prominent intellectual and political figures were executed, which led many others sympathetic to the modernist movement to seek safety in exile. However, “[r]epressive state policies could not eliminate forces fighting for social justice and democracy” (Emadi, 2001, p. 429). Nadir Shah was assassinated by a high school student from the minority Hazara ethnic group in 1933. Nadir Shah’s nineteen-year-old son, Muhammad Zahir, took the throne (Clifford, 1989; Rubin, 2002). Due to his youth Zahir’s uncle, Mohammad Hashim, initially controlled the country as Prime Minister.

Hashim supervised the immediate retribution over Nadir Shah’s assassination. The Hazara high school assassin was tortured extensively before being bayoneted to death in front of his father and friends (Emadi, 2001). Several Hazara tribal leaders “became subjects of state-sponsored witch-hunts and influential Hazara tribal [leaders]...were sentenced to several years in jail” (Emadi, 2001, p. 429). Despite Hashim’s continued use of repressive state apparatuses to put down opposition to the monarchy, and to target political opponents from all ethnic groups,

liberal, democratic and patriotic forces gradually reorganized their rank and file members in the fight for reform and democracy. Growing public dismay at Mohammad Hashim’s draconian administrative policies convinced several members of the King’s family to take measures to sustain the monarchy. They decided it was in their best interest to allow civil and political liberties but on a limited scale. Under this situation, Hashim was forced to resign in 1946 and the king appointed his uncle, Shah Mahmood, as Prime Minister to form a new cabinet. To project a benign image for the monarchy, the Prime Minister initiated reforms and released political prisoners, allowing free parliamentary elections, freedom of the press and of political parties. (Emadi, 2001, p. 430)

Zahir thus solidified Afghanistan’s monarchy, established a civil pathway to limited power through Parliament, and reigned as King for the following forty years. Rubin (2002) refers to this period as the New Democracy, although highlighting that any power-sharing between the monarchy and citizens was purely a façade during Zahir’s reign. Just prior to Zahir’s accession to the throne, the first higher education institution had been established, and a small, elite higher education sector begun.

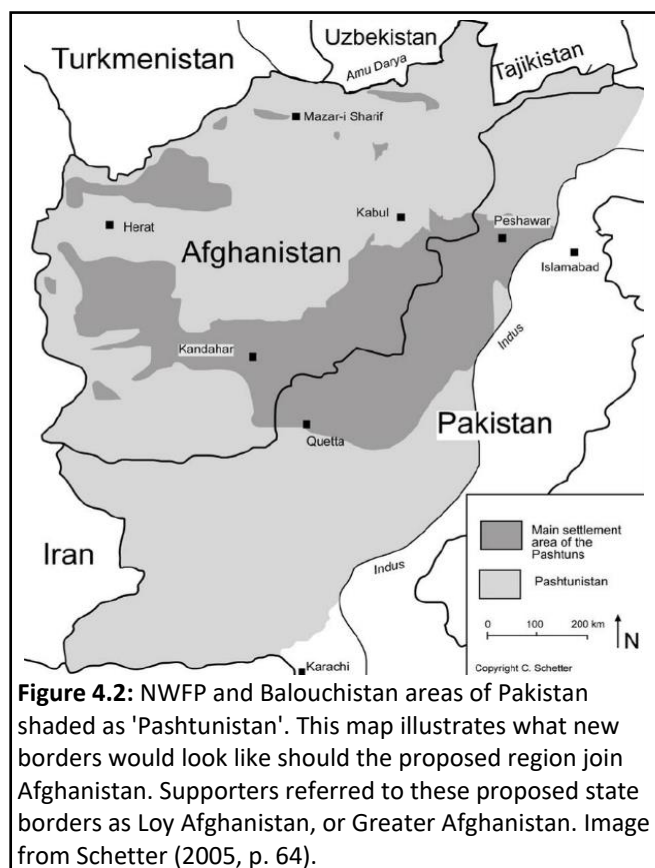
Higher Education and Geopolitics

The first higher education institution, the Faculty of Medicine, was established in 1932 in Kabul. Several additional faculties were established under a range of foreign sponsorships over the following 15 years (Rubin, 2002). In 1947 Kabul University was established by absorbing these various faculties. During the next three decades additional faculties and higher education institutions were established with international funding and support, although Kabul University remained the sector’s pinnacle institution (Baiza, 2013b; Samady, 2001; Welch & Wahidyar, 2013). In 1960 Kabul

University became coeducational, and female students were no longer required to be veiled. This followed significant educational developments for girls across the country, and the implementation of a literacy programme for adults, both men and women. Women were securing work in government administration, and being elected to parliament following graduation from Kabul University (Majrooh, 1987). An increasing number of rural students, both male and female, were boarding in Kabul for secondary and tertiary education.

From 1947, Afghanistan had a new neighbour in the creation of Pakistan. This dramatically reoriented economic, political, and cultural relationships in the entire region. The Durand Line had remained a contested issue between Afghan elites and British officials in India since it was drawn on a map. A chief problem with the line was the fact that it cleaved the Pashtun tribal areas which straddled Afghanistan and India in two. Prior to the partition of India, Pashtun intelligentsia within India had successfully created a high degree of autonomy within the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). In the build-up to India's partition, leaders of the NWFP had worked closely with the Hindu government in India. Pashtuns within the NWFP originally wished to remain within India. However, when "Pakistan's birth could not be aborted...[the Pashtun tribes] and their leaders opted for either independence or at least autonomy within Pakistan" (Dupree, 1980, p. 488). This presented Afghanistan's ruling Pashtun elites with an opportunity to contest the authority of the Durand Line.

By promoting an "independent 'Pashtunistan,' which may or may not have joined Afghanistan later" (Dupree, 1980, p. 489), Afghan leaders hoped to greatly strengthen the national Pashtun identity (see Figure 4.2). Pakistan, however, effectively granted NWFP autonomy within the Pakistani state, and rather than becoming an independent Pashtunistan, NWFP leaders determined to stay with Pakistan (Dupree, 1980). This issue was not easily put to bed, and tensions between the new neighbours continued. For instance, when Pakistan applied for admission into the United Nations, Afghanistan was the only country to cast a negative vote,



“stating that as long as the ‘Pashtunistan’ problem remained unsolved, Pakistan should not join the brotherhood of peaceful nations in the United Nations” (Dupree, 1980, p. 491). This vote was later withdrawn, with Afghanistan expressing its desire to pursue the issue of Pashtunistan through formal diplomatic avenues.

Of its early Prime Ministers, perhaps none shaped Afghanistan and set it on its current trajectory as firmly as Mohammad Daoud Khan (1953-1963). The introduction of civil governance, and of political parties, created a “liberal environment [which] provided opportunities for the establishment of several political groups with differing politics” (Emadi, 2001, p. 430). At Kabul University and other higher education institutions a Students Union was formed, and began to contest the monarchy’s monopoly of power. This included several figures who would later take offices in government during the 1960s and 1970s. Police intervened in 1951, arresting several reformists and liberals, and forcing others into Pakistani exile. Whilst in Pakistan, those exiled “continued their anti-Kabul activities and the government of Pakistan supported them” (Emadi, 2001, p. 431). Pakistan supported these activists due to tensions over Pashtunistan rather than any political affinity with their message.

Prime Minister Daoud Khan and the notion of Pashtunistan played a considerable role in alienating Afghanistan from foreign interests on the one hand, and opening Afghanistan to foreign manipulation on the other, during his first period in office (1953-1963). His first period in power was marked by a ‘big gamble’. Daoud had been receiving Soviet aid since 1955, and as “usual, increased U.S. aid followed Russian aid” (Dupree, 1980, p. 509). Daoud’s government was delicately balancing favour by receiving aid from both superpowers. This played out in a competitive to-ing and fro-ing. The US would build an airport in Kandahar, Russia would pave streets in Kabul (Dupree, 1980). Prior to his appointment as Prime Minister, Daoud had founded a political organisation called *Itihadiya-e-Azadi-e-Pashtunistan*, or Union for Freedom of Pashtunistan (Emadi, 2001). Daoud’s intent to claim Pashtun provinces of the newly created Pakistan ended up severing diplomatic ties between the countries (Clifford, 1989), and led to the closing of the border with Pakistan from 1961 to 1963. US aid became trapped in Pakistan, raising concerns in the US that Afghanistan might begin leaning closer to Russia. Daoud built up a strong military, and was seldom challenged as a leader. During the late 1950s he purchased a significant amount of military hardware, including tanks and fighter jets, from Russia (Dupree, 1980). However, the issue of Pashtunistan finally came to a head in 1963 (Nawid, 2012), and “[c]ontradictions within the ruling elites...forced Daoud to resign in 1963” (Emadi, 2001, p. 432). Zahir Shah appointed a new Prime Minister and commissioned Afghanistan’s first Constitution in 1964.

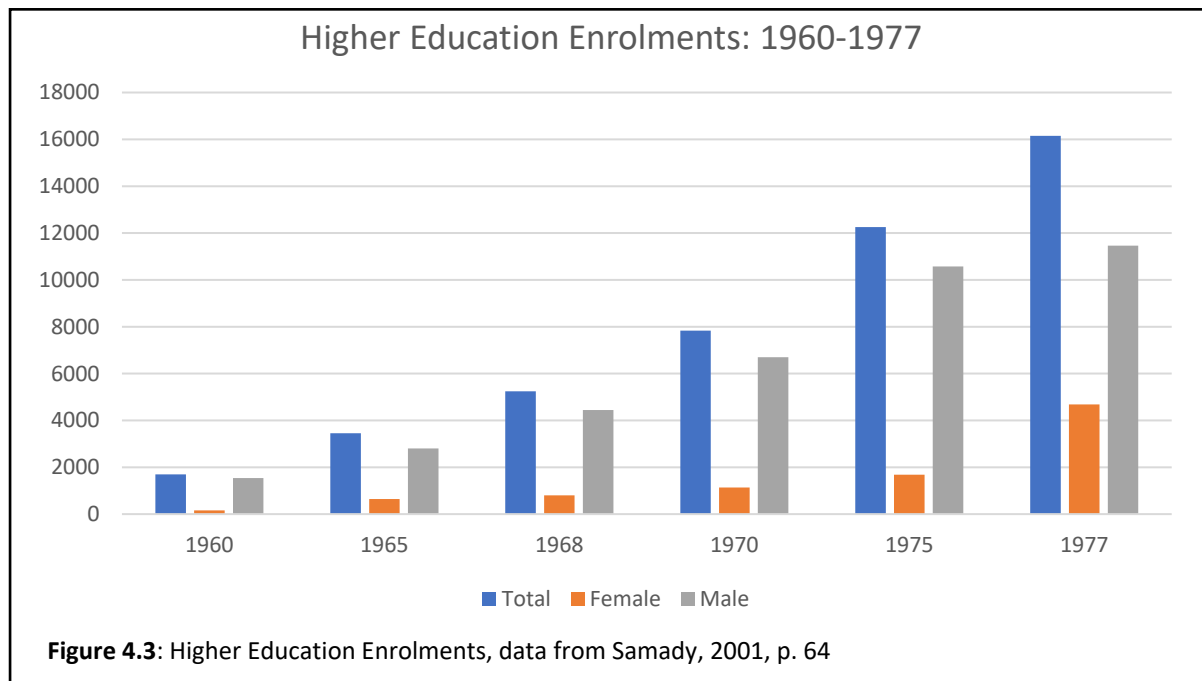
As is often the case in Afghan politics, Daoud's reign was multifaceted. Whilst furthering policies which alienated Afghanistan on the one hand, thus echoing practices of Abdur Rahman half a century prior, on the other hand there was also a meaningful expansion amongst modern education and a general modernist agenda nationally. Additionally, that a figure with so much military power should voluntarily step down from office was highly notable. In fact, Louis Dupree's book *Afghanistan* was first published in 1973. Obviously unaware that Daoud would make a dramatic return to the Afghan political scene in the same year, Dupree was impressed by Daoud's modernisation policies, progressive outlook, and the fact that he positioned the good of Afghanistan above personal gain:

In my opinion...Daoud stepped down for the good of the nation, a most remarkable feat for a strong man in a developing society...I feel he will be remembered as one of the truly great figures in modern Afghan history, along with Amir Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901), who began the consolidation of Afghanistan into a nation-state...Daoud brought Afghanistan quickly, and at times brutally, in a program of modernization. In the short period of a decade, Afghanistan moved from relative inaction to relative action. The modernization cannot be stopped; only the direction and rate of the changes he instituted can be affected by subsequent governments. (Dupree, 1980, pp. 556–557)

Shortly after these words were printed in 1973, Daoud mobilised the army and launched a coup d'état. He declared Afghanistan a Republic, ended the constitutional monarchy, forced Zahir and the royal family into exile in Italy, and reintroduced the concept of overthrowing an existing government outside of legal methods to a new generation of Afghans. In the mid 1970's he reduced Afghan dependence upon Russia, raising concern in the Kremlin. Ultimately the state came to bear the cost of this alienation with the Soviet invasion on December 24, 1979.

The 1960s and 1970s also saw significant developments for higher education. With considerable international backing and partnerships, a host of new faculties sprung up (Baiza, 2013b; Samady, 2001). Some of these became absorbed into Kabul University whilst others, such as the Faculty of Medicine in Nangarhar, later became a university in its own right. Apart from enshrining the role of the *loya jirga* in Afghan governance, the Constitution of 1964 stipulated that education "is the right of every Afghan and shall be provided free of charge by the State and the citizens of Afghanistan" (Constitution of Afghanistan, 1964, Article 34). The Constitution of Universities was enacted a few years later in 1968, setting down that the purposes of the university are "the preservation, dissemination and advancement of knowledge; strengthening personal and social responsibility in youth; and training youth to realize Islamic, national, legal and political values in order to serve Afghan society and mankind" (Samady, 2001, p. 59). The number of faculties expanded, and while

the only higher education institution outside of Kabul was Nangarhar University, enrolments increased gradually (see Figure 4.3).



From the beginning of higher education in 1932 to the Communist party’s coup d’état of 1978, foreign governments were interested in establishing influence in Afghanistan. This often involved sponsoring higher education faculties or universities. In the post-World War II era, two countries in particular, the US and Russia, were involved in this pursuit. In fact, the earliest diplomatic ties between Afghanistan and the United States “opened Kabul University to American assistance, professors and influence” (Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 349). These events within higher education mirrored, or were closely tied to, broader political developments. Russia was to come out on top in the bid for influence by the late 1970s. As Poullada (1987, p. 38) states, to “understand Soviet manoeuvres and successes in Afghanistan, we must consider simultaneously the failures of American diplomacy there because the two are inversely related: the successes of one were the failures of the other”. Tsvetkova (2017) considers this overt interest in higher education as part of a ‘cultural cold war’ between the US and Russia. It is useful here to introduce the notion of soft power¹⁶, or the conception that by non-military mechanisms (or other mechanisms which may be deemed to be coercive) a nation might *entice* another nation to align interests. As Nye (Nye, 2008, p. 94) demonstrates, soft power “is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through

¹⁶ Soft power is considered further in Chapter 8, where it supports a neo-imperialist understanding of recent policy developments in Afghan higher education.

attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies."

During the cultural cold war, both the US and Russia attempted to exert ideological influence, or soft power, by targeting reforms at the universities of foreign governments. In the case of Afghanistan, she considers the period from the 1950s to the 1980s through the lenses of 'Americanisation' and 'Sovietisation' of higher education. Her argument draws extensively from Russian and American archives, and presents a compelling narrative of the ideological instrumentalisation of higher education to further American or Russian interests in Afghanistan. The to-ing and fro-ing between superpowers penetrated agendas of higher education primarily through reform at Kabul University, and the establishment of Kabul Polytechnic Institute in 1960. The newly formed United States Agency for International Development (USAID) targeted funding at foreign education projects in 1962. Due to the cultural cold war, Afghanistan's "Kabul University took priority among other targets in American development policy" (Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 349).

An initial US team of advisors and professors arrived in Kabul in 1962. Funded by USAID, team members from Teachers College, Columbia University, and the University of Wyoming, were tasked with planning and implementing reforms at Kabul University. Foreshadowing a strikingly similar encounter by visitors to Kabul University in 2002:

what they saw at Kabul University stunned them. The Kabul University buildings were so structurally unsound as to be hazardous; toilet and washroom facilities were non-existent, the lighting was poor and there was no heat. This outmoded university required modernisation. The first plan of reforms was, therefore, aimed at constructing new buildings, dormitories, laboratories, toilets, etc., in order to make Kabul University look like a modern institution of higher education and research. (Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 350)

The advisors proposed a four-point reform agenda moving forward. This comprised of: introducing master's level education; developing the faculties of Engineering and Education; establishing English as the primary language of instruction; and "train and re-educate the Afghan teaching staff at American institutions" (Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 350).

Initial efforts at Kabul University were frustrated by what the US advisors perceived to be a lackadaisical approach to the reforms by Afghan counterparts. As it happens, however, this "passivity, apathy and ignorance of American suggestions, reforms, papers and plans demonstrated by the Afghan university community were manifestations of its *resistance*" (Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 350, emphasis added). The US group's focus on Kabul University's Faculty of Engineering was a direct response to the Soviet-funded and supported establishment of Kabul Polytechnic Institute, which

specialised in engineering. Initially, the US group were unconcerned by the Russian Polytechnic. One USAID grant paper in 1962 confidently stated that by “the time the first class graduates from the Polytechnic, the Faculty of Engineering will have been well established as the prime Afghan engineering school” (as quoted in Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 351). As they pursued their four-point reform agenda however, the advisors and professors began to realise the low qualification of Faculty of Engineering students and lecturers. They came to the decision that it was unfeasible to establish a master’s level programme in light of this. The Russian-backed Polytechnic, however, was quick to introduce master’s level education. This led the US programme director in Kabul to write a situation report in which he argued that because of “this U.S.S.R. venture into the previously exclusive U.S. sphere of activity in Afghanistan, the Mission considers that a successful programme at the University of Kabul Engineering Faculty is now even more in the U.S. national interest” (as quoted in Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 351).

Further setbacks continued to plague the US-led mission. Their attempts to introduce English as the language of instruction at Kabul University, although officially accepted as policy in 1971, failed to become a permanent fixture and was terminated after Daoud’s coup d’état in 1973. Key to its failure was the US insistence that high school teachers in the Faculty of Education be taught American History and American Civilisation studies. This was roundly rejected by Afghan lecturers, and the Ministry of Education “undermined all efforts by the United States to disseminate American textbooks and qualified teachers throughout Afghan schools” (Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 352). Additionally, after Daoud reclaimed power in 1973, the Rector of Kabul University was replaced. The new Rector blocked all engagement and negotiations with the American advisors and USAID. He turned his attention to “the development of Islamic education at the university. The Faculty of Islamic Law, which enrolled only five students in each preceding year, increased the number of students admitted and became enormously developed due to funds from Saudi Arabia” (Tsvetkova, 2017, p. 353). All American advisors and support to Kabul University left in 1976.

* * * *

Speaking with my father of my progress with the PhD, our conversation turns towards the Saur Revolution. He tells me that he was in town that day, and that he’d watched the fighter jets dive bomb the Arg Palace, how they flew almost straight down, so low that they disappeared from his view behind TV mountain to drop their deadly payload, before re-emerging almost straight up. He tells me that a few days after the coup d’état, the rumour was circulating that those fighter jets were piloted by

Russian soldiers. And he tells me that if you buy a calendar printed in Afghanistan today, the 27th of April is always blacked out. I ask him to flick through an email with his memories of it. He writes:

On that fateful Thursday morning, 27 April 1978, I had gone to the Indian Embassy in Kabul to pick-up my visa for India. I waited along with other foreign travellers who were passing through Afghanistan. Eventually a shuttered window was opened and a distressed diplomat began hurriedly distributing passports. He said the most remarkable thing. He claimed that a coup was in progress.

Exiting the embassy, I walked out onto the street wondering, "Who would want to take over Afghanistan?" But as I passed the Ministry of Interior building I noted that a phalanx of worried soldiers had appeared, standing an anxious guard, guns at the ready. Further down the road a tank, making uncertain progress, rounded the corner.

I had come with a friend from our suburban residence to the centre of the city that day. When we met up at a local restaurant I said, "I think we need to get home quickly. There seems to be a coup going on." Driving our VW van past the commercial centre of Kabul we could see smoke rising from the Ministry of Defence. We were joined by hundreds of vehicles escaping in only one direction, away from the fighting.

That afternoon we held up in our house. Our neighbour had pounded on the front gate calling out "Coup d'états, coup d'états," imploring us to stay inside while fighter planes flew sorties dropping bombs where I had just been that morning. In the evening we heard an announcement over Kabul Radio that the government of Afghanistan was now in the hands of the "people". Through the night, gunfire interrupted our fitful sleep as the first day of what became known as the Saur Revolution came to a close. (Jim Couch, personal communication, August 21, 2017)

* * * *

The Communist Coup d'état of 1978, and Soviet Occupation

The communist coup in 1978 and subsequent invasion by the USSR brought developments in Afghanistan to a crashing halt, setting "the modernisation movement in education back to its state of about 70 years ago [1910]" (Majrooh, 1987, p. 111) and dramatically redirecting higher education's path (Baiza, 2013b; Welch & Wahidyar, 2013). Soviet occupation, and the ensuing proxy-

war played out between the US-backed *mujahedeen*¹⁷ and the USSR that consumed the 1980s left no area of Afghan life untouched. During the 1980s, an estimated 6 million of the estimated 16 million Afghans sought refuge outside its borders (Samady, 2001). The existing higher education institutions and school buildings were often used by soldiers as bases of operation, and sustained massive damage. Higher education, and in fact education in general, held significant importance to the Soviet Union, and once again illustrate the Althusserian notions of both Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses at work. There was a sizeable push for gender equity during Soviet occupation, and during the 1980s estimated female university enrolments increased (Braithwaite, 2012; Samady, 2001). The reasons for this comparative percentage increase were certainly tied to the fact that young Afghan men were being conscripted into the armed forces right throughout this period, and during the late 1980s were even conscripted out of the upper levels of high school (Braithwaite, 2012).

A measured focus on education did not mean that universities were a place for freedom of thought. Between 1978 and 1986 42 percent of the pre-existing university faculty members fled the country, were jailed, or killed (Rubin, 2002). Soviet influence in education was deliberate and considered. Many students were sent to study in Russian high schools and universities, and spent years away from their families (Rubin, 2002). By 1990 approximately 7,800 higher education students were studying in Soviet universities and technical institutions (Samady, 2001).

This intentional and sustained attack on the nation's intelligentsia during the Soviet occupation led to a mass exodus of many university faculty members who were not imprisoned or murdered. However, academics and the country's comparatively few highly educated were not pursued purely by the Soviet forces. Many of the radical Islamist groups, serving as proxy soldiers to US interests in Pakistan and Afghanistan, were also responsible for targeting Afghanistan's intelligentsia (Baiza, 2013b). Quoting a woman they met during a visit to Afghanistan in 2005, Kolhatkar and Ingalls (2006, p. xiv) recount the tactics of rape, kidnapping, and murder that continue to be sanctioned by warlord-turned-politicians in Afghanistan. After breaking into the woman's house, beating her children and raping her teenaged daughter, a group of mujahedeen abducted and murdered her husband. The authors quote her as saying:

...my husband was educated, he was a political person – Hekmatyar¹⁸ did not want any political, educated people. My husband was not the only person they killed. They killed so

¹⁷ *Mujahedeen* is the term given to Afghan militia who fought against the occupying Soviet forces. They were made up of a variety of heavily armed groups divided primarily along ethnic lines (Rubin, 2002).

¹⁸ Hekmatyar has led a radically conservative and particularly cruel armed group named *Hizb-e Islami* (Islamic Party) since 1977 (Braithwaite, 2012), served briefly as President during the 1990s, at one point called for his

many educated and political people like him...He wanted to kill off all the educated and political people in Afghanistan.

After fleeing Kabul University to the supposed safety of Peshawar in 1982, Professor Majrooh wrote:

The intention of the Soviet system concerning Afghan culture and history is clear. The aim is to destroy the collective memory, to make the Afghans forget their socio-cultural ties with the past, a new man, able to be re-educated, will be created. Men of the older generations, having too strong a memory to be easily erased, are in the process of physical elimination. Attention is now focused on the younger generations, especially the children. (Hyman, 1988).

The violent battle of ideas followed some academics beyond Afghanistan's borders into exile.

Majrooh was shot to death in the doorway of his Peshawar home in 1988¹⁹ (Hyman, 1988).

It wasn't that the Soviet force or mujahedeen fighters were against education. Indeed they embraced it.

[During] the 1980s, education remained an attractive political tool in the hands of both the PDPA [People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan] and the resistance parties. The PDPA's factions, *Khalq and Parcham*, both had a tradition of propagating their ideologies through the educational institutions...they were particularly active in teacher training institutes and secondary and tertiary educational institutions long before emerging to power in 1978...the ruling authorities in Kabul viewed education as a mechanism for the achievement of the

party's political goals. (Baiza, 2013b, p. 147)

Political surveillance was intensive, particularly on teachers and university faculty.

Forty-two percent of the 750 full-time tenure-track faculty members who had served at [Kabul] university in 1978 had emigrated or had been killed or jailed by 1986. Others had stopped teaching. So many Eastern bloc professors filled the vacancies that by 1983 the regime claimed that 60 percent of the faculty were from socialist countries. (Rubin, 2002, pp. 140–1)

Resistance education was equally an important ideological tool, the primary

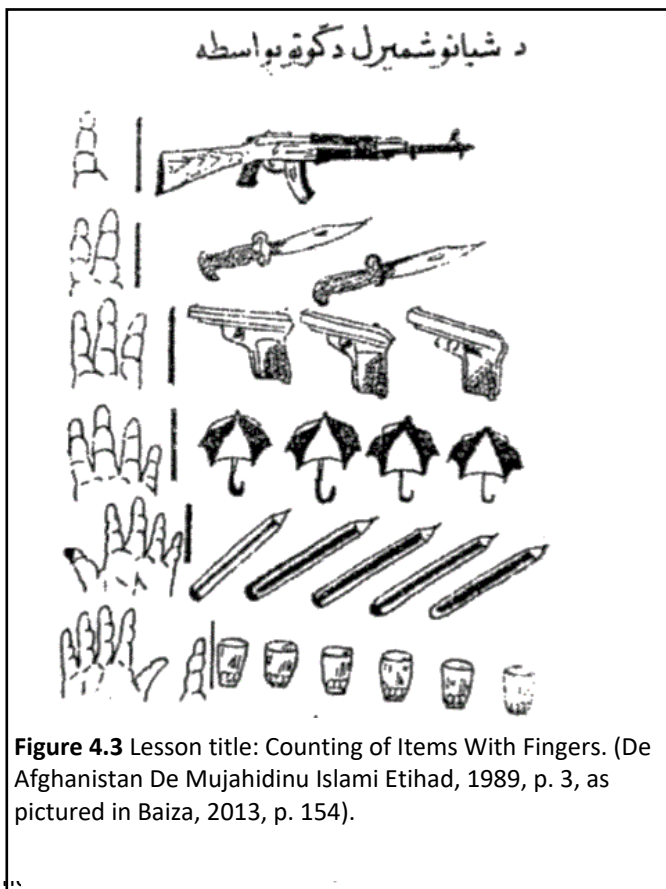


Figure 4.3 Lesson title: Counting of Items With Fingers. (De Afghanistan De Mujahidinu Islami Etihad, 1989, p. 3, as pictured in Baiza, 2013, p. 154).

July 6), and has returned to Afghanistan with a full pardon from the current administration to once more become involved in the political space.

¹⁹ This was presumably carried out by men loyal to Hekmatyar.

goal of which was to provide a continuous supply of mujahedeen fighters (Rashid, 2013). International interests in the Afghan educational landscape within both the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) programme and resistance education was clear, some of which had long-lasting consequences. “USAID funding, the University of Nebraska’s educational expertise, and the resistance parties’ cooperation set up an educational path for thousands of refugee children and young adults that ultimately shaped the future of many of them into Talibanism and religious radicalism” (Baiza, 2013, p. 160) (See figure 4.3). Many of these textbooks were redistributed into schools following 2001, however popular demand for textbooks which don’t include the jihadi curriculum is strong, and few of these remain in use today (Burde, 2014).

The Disassembly of Higher Education: 1992-2001

In 1992, the US and USSR agreed to end their conflict and Afghanistan, the physical site for this conflict, was left to its own devices. Rubin (2002, p. x) writes that “when the Soviet Union withdrew and then dissolved, and the United States disengaged, Afghanistan was left with no legitimate state, no national leadership, multiple armed groups in every locality, a devastated economy, and a people dispersed throughout the region”. Overnight the billions of dollars of aid to the country was stopped, and *mujahedeen* fighters armed with billions of dollars of weaponry began a bloody struggle for national domination. Baiza (2013b, p. 163) refers to the impact on education during this period in Afghan history as “educational fragmentation”, as the country devolved into all out civil war. Higher education institutions did not escape this devastation. “When the Taliban took power in



Figure 4.4: The library of Kabul University in 1995 (image from (Rahin, 1998, p. 2)

1996, there were fourteen [higher education institutions], but by the end of the Taliban era, in 2001, this had been reduced to seven” (Welch & Wahidyar, 2013, p. 163). This period of civil war following Soviet withdrawal was particularly violent for the few remaining academics. “In 1993, the gunmen of Shura-e Nezar, led by Ahmad Shah Masoud, piled books before setting them ablaze in Kabul University. Hundreds of thousands of books from Kabul University and other libraries were burned by jihadis” (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), 2004, p. 78, as quoted in Baiza, 2013, p. 174).

Education generally, and higher education particularly, suffered considerable setbacks during Taliban rule (Abdulbaqi, 2009; Alvi, 2003; Hayward, 2008; Rubin, 1999). These setbacks involved a complete ban on female access to education at any level (Hayward, 2008). “Government services including education and healthcare had collapsed...any role for women outside the household was denied...girls’ schools were virtually closed, boys’ schools were gradually transformed into *mardrasas*...and children’s education within mosques was handed over to the Ministry of Religious Affairs” (Baiza, 2013b, p. 176). As Alvi (2003, p. 13) demonstrates, the Taliban’s prohibitive attitude towards women undermined education for “both boys and girls, since most teachers were women”. Libraries were burned, and an already fragile infrastructure experienced further ruinous neglect and intentional damage (Abdulbaqi, 2009; Baiza, 2013b; Rubin, 2002).

The disassembly of higher education by 2001 was almost total. The NHESP II state that “during the internal conflicts, higher education, like the rest of the material and spiritual areas of the country, were immensely affected” (MoHE 2016, p. 6). Writing of his first visit to Kabul University in 2002 as Minister of Higher Education, Sharif Fayez details his utter disbelief at what he found.

Kabul University was in a horrifying physical state. The entire campus had been destroyed...Every single book was gone except for those in Russian...When we arrived at the dormitories, we found dead bodies in the dust of the basement in addition to the same physical devastation. (Fayez, 2014, chapter 15, paras. 3, 6)

A lead policy author was taken aback by the level of physical destruction across higher education campuses that the conflicts had left in its wake. “Almost every campus had been damaged in some way, and some had been very severely damaged. Some had been closed...almost all of them hadn’t had any maintenance for years, and just the *damage* to the building” (interview, April 14, 2016). The Lead Education Policy Author recalled his return to Afghanistan during the period immediately after the fall of the Taliban:

The country as a whole was very severely damaged. The institutions, the infrastructure was severely damaged in Afghanistan and I did observe many schools including Kabul University,

Institute of Polytechnic, and many other institutes of Higher Education, as well as secondary and primary institutions. So their level of destruction was beyond my personal imagination. (December 1, 2015)

In the words of a former Deputy Minister of Higher Education, the reality and consequences of this violent disassembly of the sector were profound. He stated that Afghanistan's higher education system, "unfortunately, has a very painful reality. The reality of the post-war situation, the reality of losing prominent faculty members, the reality of the collapse of the system. What we had left in 2002 was the *ruins* of higher education" (interview, February 17, 2016).

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the importance of Collier and Ong's notion of the global form for this study, which is considered in later chapters specifically in terms of its relationship with neoliberalism. It also charted the initial rise of higher education in Afghanistan, before outlining its disassembly by the end of the twentieth century. Indeed, higher education underwent significant developments during its first seventy years. These developments were the outcome of an interest in a form of education distinct from traditional educational practices begun in 1901, and illustrate the relationship between Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses which were employed during the twentieth century by Afghan elites, the USA, and the USSR (Tsvetkova, 2017). The following chapters look specifically at the policy reassembly of the higher education sector, and Chapter 5 deals explicitly with the Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan.

Chapter 5 – The Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan

The importance of knowledge and the need for a well-educated population has never been as strongly felt...more than anything else, Afghanistan's future will depend on its own ability to develop human capacity, transmit and develop knowledge and make humane and rational choice...investment in higher education in Afghanistan is not an end in itself but a means to the broad national objectives of social, cultural and economic development.

(Fayez and Hernes, introduction to MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 7)

Introduction

This chapter is the first of three which plot the policy reassembly of Afghanistan's higher education system after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Whilst Chapters 3 and 4 charted the historical developments of modern and higher education, and its disassembly, the following three chapters turn to higher education's reassembly. Through them, I interrogate three policy documents which, when cumulatively assembled, constitute the policy foundations for the reconstruction of the national higher education system. During the next three chapters, I explore how Afghan higher education was reassembled along a narrow and neoliberal foundation. I argue that neoliberalism has exploited violent conflict, or shock (Klein, 2007), to reorient the institution of higher education from serving functions of government, towards becoming an engine of economic growth built upon a neoliberal foundation. Peck (2010) refers to a two-stage process within the neoliberal project. First, 'roll-back neoliberalism', in which existing conditions are destroyed in order to make way for a new ideological base. Second, 'roll-out neoliberalism', which involves the "proactive institution-building in service of neoliberal goals" (Peck, 2010, p. 26). Klein (2007) outlines a process with an important distinction from Peck's intentional 'roll-back neoliberalism'. When the destruction of existing conditions occurs without the intent to roll-out neoliberalism, such as the shock of a natural disaster, Klein argues that the blank slate from which to rebuild provides the perfect opportunity for proponents of neoliberal reforms to implement roll-out neoliberalism.

Over the course of the next three chapters, I make the case that three dominant discourses are constructed within these policies. These are an Economic Growth Discourse, a National Identity Discourse, and a Human Rights Discourse. Additionally, I make the case that by examining the interplay between these *discourses*, a dominant *ideological* foundation can be identified which sets the strategic direction of Afghan higher education. These discourses, framed in Chapter 1, are used below as analytical tools with which to approach each higher education policy. The following three

chapters serve an important function in illustrating the first part of my thesis; that when institutions have been disassembled through violent conflict, higher education can be (re)assembled along narrow ideological lines. I begin this chapter by outlining key events which were important as higher education was initially re-established, and subsequently expanded, after the US-led invasion. I then turn my attention to the ideological anchors found within Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning.

The Fall of the Taliban and The Bonn Agreement

Western interests had deserted Afghanistan in 1992 following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Lamb, 2015). The violent civil war which consumed the 1990s played out largely out of view of the rest of the world, overshadowed by other significant international crises such as the break-up of Yugoslavia. At the time, Amnesty International referred to Afghanistan as "the world's largest forgotten tragedy" (Kolhatkar & Ingalls, 2006, p. 49). After the departure of Soviet and American interest, Afghanistan had "descended into civil war, even as the United States, the UN, and the entire 'international community' abandoned any effort to stabilize or rebuild it" (Rubin, 2013, pp. 2–3). Following the events of 9/11, "Afghanistan suddenly returned to the world stage" (Spink, 2005, p. 195). Due to its extended period of disengagement, however, the CIA was largely underprepared and out of touch with Afghanistan when formulating a strategic response to 9/11:

Apart from a handful of CIA officers, no U.S. officials had been inside Afghanistan for a decade. Few CIA officers spoke Persian or its Afghan dialect, Dari, and nobody spoke Pushtu, the language of the Pashtuns...The Dari-speaking CIA veteran Gary Schroen, fifty-nine, was pulled out of retirement to head the first ten-man Afghanistan Liaison Team...that landed in the Panjsher Valley just two weeks after 9/11. They brought with them \$3 million, which was immediately dished out to [Northern Alliance²⁰] leaders... (Rashid, 2009, p. 63)

Replicating diplomatic approaches of the 1960s and 1980s, cash made up a key component of America's reengagement with Afghanistan.

During the lead-up to the US-led invasion, CIA operatives had been attempting to buy influence with particular warlords. Meetings were set up and large amounts of cash handed over in duffle bags and backpacks. Rubin (2013, p. 19) writes, "[t]he total amount of cash given to commanders by the CIA...ultimately amounted to several hundred million dollars." Whilst such a vast influx of cash provided a massive boost to war chests, at the same time it undercut the Afghan economy. Commanders and those they paid "with the money, had to change the hundred-dollar bills into local currency rapidly in order to obtain usable denominations, and as they did so and more CIA dollars

²⁰ The United Front was made up of an alliance of Afghan military groups which united in a push to defeat the Taliban following 9/11, and were heavily resourced by the United States (Rashid, 2009).

flooded the money market, the value of dollars fell rapidly” (Rubin, 2013, p. 19). The US-led invasion of Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, began on 7th October 2001. 6 days later, coalition forces rolled in to Kabul. By December 7th the coalition took Kandahar, and ended Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

President Bush was uninterested in entering into a nation-building effort after the relatively swift collapse of the Taliban (Keane, 2016). Bush stated that Americans were “not into nation building, we are focused on justice, ...as late as September 26 [2001]” (Rashid, 2009, p. 74). However, shortly thereafter it was decided that the United Nations should be responsible for Afghanistan’s political transition, whilst “the United States and its allies pursued an agenda of ‘nation building lite’...The epithet, related more to beer than to nation building, stuck” (Rashid, 2009, p. 75). Informed by the liberal peace-building project (Paris, 2010), nation-building lite effectively entailed a minimalist international military footprint whilst supporting a local interim administration (Barfield, 2010; Rashid, 2009; Rubin, 2008, 2013; Sherman, 2008). Barfield (2010, p. 283) observes that the US-led invasion was the first instance that an Afghan leader was toppled by a Western power without having first chosen a replacement candidate. Prior to 2001, “all foreign invaders had at least selected a candidate for the job...before they commenced their wars. The United States was unique in launching a war in Afghanistan without having anyone in mind for the job”. To this end, the UN convened a conference in Bonn to determine the structure of an interim government. A small number of participants was present from a range of groups; however Taliban were pointedly excluded (Barfield, 2010). Members of United Front, Afghan delegates, members of various governments, and UN officials met in December 2001 in Germany to decide on an interim administration and way forward for Afghanistan (Rashid, 2009; Rubin, 2013; Sherman, 2008). This culminated in the Bonn Agreement, setting out procedures and timelines for the establishment of a constitution, provision of interim security forces, and a timeframe to establish democratic elections (Rubin, 2013; Sherman, 2008).

The talks at Bonn were highly contentious according to several observers, who highlight the rush to elect the US-backed Hamid Karzai in a timely fashion (Rashid, 2009; Rubin, 2008). After some to-ing and fro-ing, Karzai emerged from the talks at Bonn as leader of an interim government (2001-2004) charged with overseeing Afghanistan’s transition to a democratic state. Additionally, the “Bonn talks...had to prevent the victorious militias from looting, fighting with each other, and seizing power” (Rubin, 2008, p. 40). This was a particularly serious and immediate concern as the staggering “wealth of the warlords contrasted sharply with the interim government’s immediate poverty. Karzai

had no state income, and for the first four months, no cash from donors to pay the salaries of civil servants and police officers” (Rashid, 2009, p. 129). As Giustozzi and Ibrahim observed, the “intelligentsia, weakened by years of war and purges, received few political appointments and remained a marginal influence” (2013, p. 249). A former Minister of Higher Education confirmed this observation, telling me that “in the whole Cabinet, only three or four Ministers were partially academic. The rest of them were jihadi, and they really didn’t know what to do” (April 17, 2016).

The appointment of interim Ministers within this interim Government followed. The Minister of Higher Education, Sharif Fayeze, was one of the few with academic credentials. He learned of his appointment via the BBC from his home in Canada:

Checking their website I saw my name staring back at me on a copy of a declaration the Bonn Conference had submitted to the press. Sharif Fayeze, Minister of Higher Education. (Fayeze, 2014, chapter 13, para. 3).

Accepting the position and moving to Kabul, Fayeze worked quickly to bring the few regional universities under a centralised authority, and build up the MoHE.

The Early (re)Assembly of Higher Education

The disassembly of higher education which Fayeze encountered upon his return to Afghanistan was almost unfathomable for the new Minister. Higher education institutions which had escaped significant war damage were dilapidated and run-down. The preceding years of conflict had not only seen a systematic targeting of university faculty members (Braithwaite, 2012; Rubin, 2002), but readiness for higher education was severely compromised through the denial of basic education to an entire generation (Daxner, 2011). The sector faced significant challenges during the interim Government’s oversight. The disassembly of higher education by that point had been significant. The NHESP II states that “during the internal conflicts, higher education, like the rest of the material and spiritual areas of the country, were immensely affected” (MoHE 2016, p. 6).

This period of higher education’s disassembly presented significant challenges for those tasked with its reassembly. Not only had it left a higher education faculty nationwide, in the words of a Deputy Minister of Higher Education, ‘academically immature’ (February 17, 2016), and driven a key policy goal toward increasing the number of faculty with advanced degrees, but this period is also responsible for the low rates of female enrolments and female faculty. As highlighted in Chapter 4, the interrupted years of education for female students impacted on education for both sexes, however it particularly affected women. When considering the low percentages of female faculty members, Academic Consultant C shared that during her visit to a rural university:

8 of the students were female, 1 of the staff was. And so [you ask], 'Why is this?' And it's just like, "We haven't got women with the qualifications". You know, the [result of a] whole ten years of no women getting in to University.

She went on to say that she followed up with donors in Kabul regarding policies to increase female participation in rural higher education:

[I found that] the main donor documents did not mention women, and I did ask the World Bank person, who was a women, "This is incredible, why isn't it here? Why haven't you got gender indicators as part of your whole other indicators to work towards?" "Oh, that's an oversight" (!) And I thought, yeah, a major one! (18 February, 2016)

Early efforts to reconstruct the system required a clear focus. A former Minister of Higher Education outlined a few of the initial priorities:

Kabul was not in good shape. Higher education, in fact, was in terrible shape. My office was on the second floor of the Ministry, it was leaking all the time...Nothing was really working in Kabul. There was no running water, the toilets were not working. Renovation was really the first phase of [the] job, to renovate these buildings in Kabul and other provinces. It was not easy, really, particularly when you have visitors from Europe, from other countries, coming to the Ministry...even President Karzai once said that when Kofi Annan came to the palace to meet with him, Kofi Annan wanted to go the bathroom. He said to Kofi Annan, 'Just give me a couple of minutes and then I will come back.' He went to the bathroom to check if the water was ok, if everything was ok! It was extremely embarrassing...It didn't take too long to do the renovations of the buildings...other important things to do [included] developing a strategic plan for higher education, revising curriculum, and increasing the enrolment of women. (17 April, 2016)

One of Sharif Fayez's first moves as Minister was to arrive unannounced to meet with the president of Kabul University. He writes of his nervousness:

The president of Kabul University had been appointed by the same mujahideen commander who had invited Osama bin Laden to Afghanistan, whom the Taliban had left alone...Even though I was a government minister, theoretically with the full weight of an internationally backed government behind me, this man was a member of a powerful militia. In actuality, his group may have been stronger than the government in 2001. Dressed in a suit, I went to his office, where I found him clutching a wood stove and sitting on the ground. There was no desk in his office. There was no lightbulb in his office. There were no books in his office. He did not have any educational degrees, or any background that would allow him to run a university in any direction other than into the ground. (Fayez, 2014, chapter 15, paras. 8-9)

Subsequent visits to universities in other main cities led to similar reflections. Presidents of the universities held key positions within various warlords' networks. A former Minister of Higher Education perceived this initial task of reasserting government control over each institution in words akin to conquest:

Liberating universities and putting them under the control of the Ministry was a very successful process. In fact, I visited most of these universities and institutions in 2002 and lectured them about the benefits of letting the Ministry control the institutions. In fact, many of them agreed, including General Dostum in Mazar. That was really the first elections

in Afghanistan [because in many instances I asked students to vote on whether or not to have a new university president], democratic elections – among the campuses! (Former Minister of Higher Education, 17 April 2016, emphasis added)

Today's bustling hallways at the MoHE (Hayward, 2015) and the meteoric growth in enrolments and higher education institutions to date (MoHE, 2016) stand in stark contrast to Fayez's initial and confronting reality of what higher education had become by the turn of the 21st century. When reflecting on changes since the beginning of his involvement in Afghan higher education, Academic Consultant A said that:

[c]ompared to where we started twelve years ago there's enormous improvements and development. Twelve years ago the universities were empty shells. They were like these movie set Western towns. They were just a façade. They had almost nothing, and they were barely functioning. So [there's been] enormous changes and development. (February 28, 2017)

The scale of destruction across the higher education sector fits Klein's (2007) notion of a shock creating a 'blank slate'. The loss of academics was significant, infrastructure was damaged or destroyed, institutions that had infrastructure lacked significant teaching and produced no research, and access to learning materials was almost non-existent (Hayward, 2015; MoHE, 2009). Together, these posed some of the most significant challenges facing higher education after 2001 (Babury & Hayward, 2014). This blanking of the institutions (Klein, 2007), or systemic shock, swept away higher education's original conditions and left behind a system that was barely recognisable as such. This mimicked the tenor of the broader post-Taliban international intervention. Dodge's (2013) critiques of the international intervention into Afghanistan, and later Iraq, centre on what he outlines as liberal peacebuilding's core neoliberal assumptions. After the initial refusal to engage in a broader nation building project, the:

dramatic shift in US policy towards Afghanistan heralded the arrival of Liberal Peacebuilding in Kabul. Policy was reoriented around neoliberalism's four dominant units of analysis, the individual, the market, the state, and democracy *and aimed to completely transform a rebuilt Afghan state's relationship with its own society*. (Dodge, 2013, p. 1201, emphasis added)

To rebuild the 'ruins of higher education', the policy reassembly of higher education has drawn from a wide range of agents and actors, locally and globally, as individual institutions, governance structures, and policies were fashioned into a national sector.

[The Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan](#)

The Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan (hereafter SAP) was written between September 2003 and May 2004. It was authored jointly by the MoHE and

UNESCO's IIEP (International Institute for Education Planning), and written towards the end of the interim government (2001-2004) which had been established by the Bonn process in Germany in 2001. The "purpose of [the SAP] is to...help guide both the initiatives of the Afghan Government in the higher education sector and to provide clear priorities for the use of internal resources as well as for mobilizing external assistance funds" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 15). In this sense, the document functions as a set of *recommendations* for a Ministry of Higher Education policy document intended to steer the re-establishment of the national higher education system. The document, and draft higher education law which was developed concurrently during the MoHE/IIEP partnership, advocated for academic and institutional autonomy, the need to establish private higher education, and a raft of other significant ideas to direct the growing sector.

Whilst never formally being passed into policy, its inclusion as data is critical. The NHESP I acknowledges the SAP as informing subsequent policy developments, and for the years prior to the NHESP I it formed a de facto policy foundation for the MoHE. The first few sections of the SAP are dedicated to detailing the manner in which the document was developed. There was considerable knowledge amongst the 19 team members that drafted the document. For instance, Dr Askar Sayed Mousavi and Professor Zaher Wahab acted as advisers to the Minister of Higher Education. Both had extensive previous experience working in higher education in Afghanistan prior to, and during, the Soviet occupation. Dr Mousavi has authored a Dari-language history of Afghanistan's education system, and Professor Wahab was later to support Minister Fayez as he established the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF). Professor Michael Daxner represented DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), and had formerly been involved in conflict affected higher education contexts when he had headed the UN's Mission in Kosovo (Baćević, 2014a). Additionally, Daxner is a former president of the Magna Carta Observatory. The MoHE was represented by eight team members, IIEP by eight members, DAAD by one member, World Bank by one member, and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) by one member. In September of 2003, a team from UNESCO's IIEP arrived in Afghanistan on a two-week data gathering mission. During this time, team members visited tertiary institutions in Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif. Daily meetings were held, chaired by Dr Mousavi. Subsequent meetings between members of IIEP and representatives in the MoHE took place in Kabul and Paris in the early months of 2004, and the SAP was finalised in May. Before examining the outcome of this work in depth, I must make a quick note on the notion of dominant discourses.

Dominant Discourses

The three dominant discourses of Economic Growth, National Identity, and Human Rights are constructed through the content of the SAP, the NHESP I, and the NHESP II. I have made it clear in Chapters 1 and 2 that these discourses are inextricably interwoven, thus the conceptualisation of their form as an assembly. This means that the sum of these discourses cannot be reduced to constituent parts, and it may appear contradictory to outline these discourses as they are in the chapters below, separated out. The purpose for this is twofold however. First, this is in line with the thematic approach to my data analysis²¹. Second, as Jessop (2013) illustrates, the role of critical policy analysis is to understand how complexity has been reduced into policy form. Attempting to understand this complexity requires, as CCPEE demands, examining multiple components of an ensemble, therefore beginning with each discourse as a way in to the documents is helpful here. The interconnectedness of these discourses will become evident as the chapter progresses, as the same statement may invoke multiple discourses at the same time.

There are notable distinctions between the SAP and the NHESPs which came later. Perhaps the most significant distinction between this first strategic plan for Afghanistan's higher education sector and the later NHESPs is the fact that Economic Growth discourse does not hold the same dominant position as within the NHESPs I and II. Rather, the SAP team took a different approach to the *purpose*²² of the university:

The team was required to decide on a basic philosophy underlying the new system of higher education in Afghanistan. *Given the need to make higher education a strong tool for nation-building*, it was decided that the central authorities should be equipped with a strong steering capacity for the current and future shaping of the system. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, pp. 13–14, emphasis added)

With this in mind, I structure the data from the SAP below first around a National Identity Discourse, then an Economic Growth Discourse, followed by the policy's construction of a Human Rights Discourse.

National Identity Discourse in the Strategic Action Plan

As highlighted during Chapter 3, National Identity within Afghanistan is a contested concept. Roy's (1990) observation that Afghanistan may struggle to be a state, but has never been a nation, has echoes within current constructions of the Afghan nation state. The discourse of National Identity found in these policies therefore holds a highly normative intent about the kind of nation

²¹ See Chapter 2.

²² See Chapter 8 for a full examination on the form, function, and purpose of the university within these policies.

Afghanistan 'ought' to be. This is particularly prominent in the SAP. Throughout, it emphasises notions of participation, transparency, and inclusion. Prominent throughout the SAP, and less pronounced in the NHESPs I and II, is a focus on the manner in which a national higher education system can foster a sense of nationhood. This can be seen in three themes addressed throughout the document: sector centralisation and autonomy; the division of labour between institutions within the overall higher education sector; and quality.

Sector Centralisation and Institutional Autonomy

Governance of the higher education sector is consolidated in the central authority of the MoHE. This was an early recommendation of the SAP. Centralising authority over the sector was proposed in order to avoid a situation “whereby the competitive position of state institutions worsens by the same migration [of qualified teaching staff] that would improve the conditions of private institutions” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 20). The inclusion of private higher education within discussion and recommendations of the SAP is surprising, as at the time the SAP was being written private higher education was illegal in Afghanistan. In spite of this, a report had been commissioned by the World Bank exploring the feasibility of establishing private higher education within Afghanistan, and was being undertaken by Fred Hayward and Sara Amiryar at the same time that the SAP was being researched and developed. Hayward and Amiryar’s (2003) report was clearly influential, as the SAP refers to this study at various points, and laid important foundations for later MoHE policies.

Institutional autonomy held the discussion of centralisation in tension. The question of autonomy is an explicit focus in the SAP, and considers the power distribution between the Ministry and each institution. Those on the team with experience of Afghan higher education during the 1970s and 1980s were wary of returning to a system previously characterised by strong central control. This centralised control had been employed to manipulate the system on a variety of levels, including perpetuating oppression of women and minorities through the denial of access to higher education. As highlighted in Chapter 4, manipulation of the higher education system was considerable during Soviet occupation, and higher education institutions had been explicitly targeted by the USA and USSR during the cultural cold war (Tsvetkova, 2017). A former Minister of Higher Education illustrated the consequential challenge of this heritage that the MoHE faced during the interim government period as the SAP was being developed:

[D]uring the Soviet Union, their policy was to control these [higher education] institutions by fragmenting them, by changing them to smaller units so that they can control it. That mentality still existed... When I talked to Professors at Kabul University about academic freedom, institutional autonomy, accreditation – these terms, they didn’t know anything

about these terms! A university doesn't matter whether it's public or private, it has to have autonomy... I tried my best to turn the direction of higher education from ideology, and left and right, and from religion, and make it, rather, secular. (April 17, 2016)

The writing team addressed the power relationship between institution and Ministry through the normative frame of the sector's role in constructing a National Identity. National control of institutions, they argued, should remain with the MoHE, enabling it to determine degrees that can be awarded, the number and distribution of students, and the criteria for establishing academic institutions. However "[a]t the same time, the unequivocal experience is that for universities and other institutions of higher education to function effectively, academic freedom is imperative – anything else will stifle advanced training as well as the advancement of knowledge" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 29). Institutional autonomy is defined as "the freedom to study according to preference, to teach according to conviction and to conduct research according to interest" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 29), and advocated for for multiple reasons. There is a clear desire for higher education to promote the development of a progressive society, built on liberal education ideals. The authors write that although "higher education is clearly an instrument for national development, it is also necessary to protect the quest for knowledge without any particular immediate instrumental value" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 30). The resulting recommendation is for the State to retain and exercise a strong *steering* capacity through its Ministry, whilst respecting institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

These recommendations were firmly grounded in the Minister's philosophy about the relationship between State and Institution:

The Minister was sort of afraid, my replacement, that he would lose his power. I always wanted to lose *my* power! That was the difference between my philosophy of higher education and his. Afghanistan was under the control of the Communists, even before that, before the Communist era, the Government took control over these institutions. During the Monarchy, it was actually worse. So the tradition of Higher Education having autonomy did not exist in Afghanistan. And still sometimes when I raise my voice in conferences that we should move in that direction you see people reacting. I know that it's not that easy to change their mind-set. In this country, the government has always had too much control. (Former Minister of Higher Education, April 17, 2016)

As a policy response to this tension, the establishment of two para-statal governing bodies charged with overseeing institutional matters was proposed. A National Council on Higher Education would consist of "high level academic representation from renowned academics with managerial responsibilities" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 31). A second body would be made up of university leaders in the form of a Rector's Conference. These bodies were proposed as 'buffer bodies', and

were intended to serve as a “mechanism for regular contractual negotiation between the MoHE and the institutions of higher education” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 31).

One participant highlighted the fact that this tension between centralised authority and autonomy was not confined to the relationship between institution and Ministry. It extended to the relationship between Cabinet and the Ministry of Higher Education itself:

[There was] the mind-set that the government should be in control of all higher education institutions. This was a major conflict between the Ministry when I was there, and the government. There were arguments most of the time. In fact one time when the Cabinet wanted to include certain disciplines for the students in institutions of higher education, the Islamic Culture and all that in their own way, I said no, Cabinet should not interfere in academic affairs. Only in countries like communist countries, dictatorial countries, governments do impose their agenda on laws and these things. Universities are allowed autonomy and the government does not control it. This sounded very strange for some of them. I said please don't interfere in academic affairs and the Minister of Commerce, he was a good friend of mine, he was killed, said 'Dr, we're not going to interfere in your affairs, but you should not interfere in my affairs too!' (Former Minister of Higher Education, April 17, 2016)

At the institutional level, the SAP recommended a participatory leadership structure. This was to consist of a President, Board of Governors, a Senate, and relevant faculty level bodies such as deans and faculty councils. Once again the SAP team draws on Afghanistan's traditional higher education structure in advocating for a power-sharing form of leadership within institutions, noting that “Afghanistan has a tradition of collective decision-making bodies where academics used to have a strong say. It is recommended to maintain this tradition and thus maintain the principle of collective decision-making while strengthening the executive management bodies, which are the Board of Governors and the President” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 32). The tension between centralisation and autonomy continues to play out in policy. However, as shall be seen in later chapters, the NHESPs address the ideas around institutional autonomy primarily from the perspective of fiscal autonomy, and the correlating institutional role in driving Economic Growth. For the writing team of the SAP, the issues of centralisation and autonomy were explicitly considered from the institutional role of driving the development of National Identity, and was an important precursor to the subsequent themes discussed throughout the document.

The Division of Labour between Institutions

Closely tied to the recommendations regarding centralised authority, the SAP opens with a consideration of the division of labour between institutions. The SAP sets out this division of labour squarely within a National Identity frame. By strengthening the five main regional universities at that time, Balkh, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, and Nangahar, and allocating various fields of study to these

regional universities, the writing team intended that a sense of national unity would be developed by promoting mobility amongst the country's university-aged citizens. If "institutions specialize regionally, students will be encouraged to move to get the training they desire – and hence contribute to national integration" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 23). This would also contribute to additional benefits, such as reducing:

the tendency of students seeking admissions to the institutions in the capital Kabul, where 50 per cent of students are currently studying and hence lessen overcrowding. The regional universities would therefore help arrest internal migration and brain drain from the southern and eastern regions and rural areas. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 22)

By thus distributing the academic focus of tertiary institutions around the country, multiple benefits could be realised.

In addition to geographic distribution of academic disciplines, the distribution of responsibility between a vertically structured sector was also considered. The SAP suggested a:

four-tier structure of academic institutions be established in Afghanistan consisting of universities, technological and pedagogical institutions, colleges and community colleges.

1. Universities with the right to confer degrees at the bachelors, masters and doctoral level, based primarily on teaching through face-to-face interaction between faculty and students, but also making available distance education²³;
2. Technological and pedagogical institutions with the right to confer degrees at the same levels as universities in their fields of specialization;
3. Colleges with studies for the duration required to obtain a bachelors degree;
4. Community colleges with courses for a duration of up to 2 years for students having completed secondary education, leading to the award of a certificate or diploma. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 22)

This recommendation is supported by compelling arguments that such a structure effectively reflects a "horizontal and vertical division of labour between academic institutions" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 21). Additionally, and in line with the concerns raised by the former Minister of Higher Education above, the existing structure had been "developed by the dominant political and military authority and according to political ideology at different points in time" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 24). By assigning various functions to the institutions nationally from a central authority, this ideological/military patronage could be disrupted. This division of labour was perceived to support the effective organisation of the sector with clear central oversight, and the intention to build quality.

²³ Distance education was, and is still, illegal, although several powerful bilateral agencies are pressing to legalise and institute distance education.

Quality

Considerations of quality are fundamental to the establishment and development of any system of education. In the case of Afghanistan, notions of quality hold a central position in the SAP, the NHESP I, and the NHESP II. At a level above these Ministry plans, quality education is a central consideration for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. This central policy pillar, around which all ministry policies, plans, and reporting is structured, cites the importance and complexity of quality education:

Although the expansion of education has been impressive, there is an urgent need to improve the quality of education. This is one area where programs designed to meet benchmarks defined in terms of enrolment or coverage fail to give adequate consideration to the quality of the service being provided. (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2008, pp. 10–11)

An examination of the quality of higher education which doesn't factor in the quality of the primary and secondary education systems is, however, incomplete. As one participant stated:

[I]f you want to have competent students for higher education, you need to have competent general education system...If you don't have a quality general education system, you can't expect competent students at the higher education level. If you want to have competent students at general education level, you need to have well-trained and well-educated teachers. When teachers are not well educated in higher education institutions, you cannot expect quality education in classrooms. So this is a cycle. One is dependent on the other. (Lead Education Policy Author, December 1, 2015)

There are multiple structural factors which contribute to the quality of general education. Many of these concerns centre on an undertrained teaching workforce across the primary and secondary sector:

Very few teachers in the system are educated beyond the high school level and trained to teach classes higher than primary grades. Their low level of knowledge has barely been addressed over the past five years as most attention has been given to the improvement of primary school teaching skills. This has been addressed almost exclusively through short term in-service training for classroom teachers. (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 13)

Sigsgaard (2009, p. 14) reiterates Afghanistan's need for highly trained teachers, stating that qualitative "studies show that education in Afghanistan reflects the wider fragility, and access to education alone is not enough unless its quality is developed". Between the years of 2001 and 2008, the number of teachers rose seven-fold. However in 2005, when 200 teachers were asked to sit their own students' exams, only 10 passed (Sigsgaard, 2009). The Ministry of Education (2006) highlights this concern clearly, stating that in 2006 a mere 22 percent of current primary and secondary teachers nationally had completed high school.

Teacher training institutions offer two-year degrees, and therefore fall under the control of the Ministry of Education. This separation of responsibilities between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education continues to cause tensions, with several participants highlighting the fact that there has often been animosity between the two ministries as they vie for control over various parts of the education sector, and what they perceive to be a similar pool of funds. As one consultant put it, they act as though they:

are two parallel systems as if they share no joint interests. The way the Ministries of Education and Higher Education have grown over the past decade has created this sense of indignation, but sometimes also of competition and some kinds of rivalry. (Lead Education Policy Author, December 1, 2015)

As with other themes within these higher education policies, there is a marked distinction between the frames through which notions of quality are identified and discussed between the SAP and the NHESPs. Given the disparities of level of qualification between institutions and regions, and the significant percentage of academic staff nationally with only a bachelor degree, SAP authors emphasise quality based upon principles of national unity, reconstruction of the country, and the establishment of democracy:

The reconstruction of higher education in Afghanistan encompasses the development of a unified system of higher education as a key constituent and tool of a unified nation. If a national system of studies and degrees is in place, universities and colleges will produce candidates with equivalent skills and shared standards for the performance of important professions. They will have acquired shared modes of discourse, standards of argument and evidence-based practice, which is a strong impetus for democratic debate. In a unitary national system of higher education, scholars and practitioners will benefit from co-operation across institutions for their own professional development and for the development of their professions. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 53)

Rather than purely pitching an increase in quality as having an economic dividend for Afghanistan, quality increases within higher education are understood relative to a corresponding importance for a pluralist and democratic society.

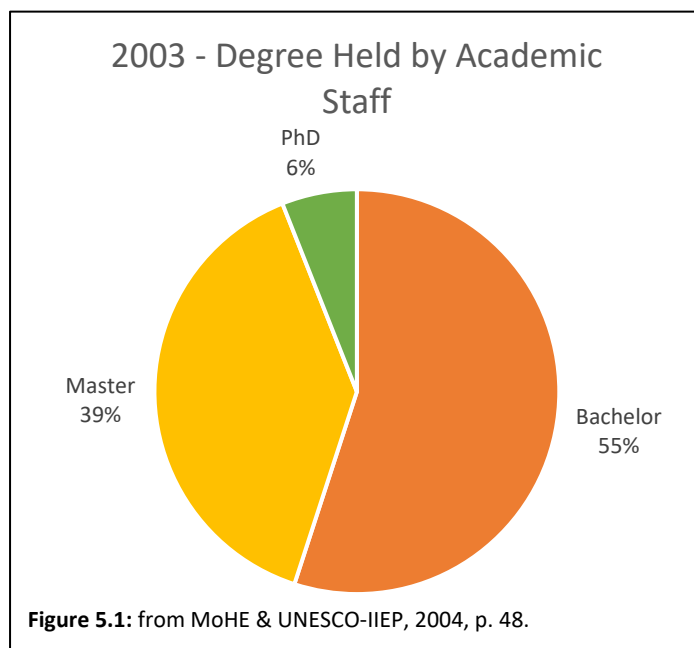
Research, and the teaching-research nexus, is given a foundational role in establishing quality. Indeed, the “defining criterion of higher education is that it is *based on research*” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 53, emphasis in original). This, coupled with a definition of teaching as “generally based on the transmission of *well-established knowledge*, often contained in textbooks which summarize and systematize the results of earlier research” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 53, emphasis in original), support the SAP team’s recommendation to return research duties from a national Academy of Science to various higher education institutions through integrating research and teaching into the role of academic staff. During Soviet occupation, research responsibilities had been

largely removed from higher education institutions and centred in a specific institution called the Academy of Science. In a recurring manner of connecting to a previous system of higher education and academic research when making recommendations for the system’s redevelopment, the SAP team were not only aware of the Academy of Science, but also its role to play in establishing a culture of research amongst institutions and the challenges that it might yet face:

The Academy of Science is at present a large organization carrying out research in the social and natural sciences as well as in Islamic studies. The Academy has more than 550 staff, half of whom are research staff. At present, half the positions remain vacant. Staff profiles indicate that only a few of them have doctoral degrees. It seems that of the total 180 staff, only 18 (10 percent) possess a doctoral degree and 73 (40 percent) possess a masters degree...The Head of the Academy is appointed directly by the President and currently does not have formal links with the universities or the Ministry of Higher Education. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 31)

The authors of the SAP were keen to re-establish responsibilities for research *within* higher education institutions, and made it clear that “each academic staff member should be considered a researcher as well as a teacher and hence provided with academic support and incentives to initiate and carry out research” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 32).

Multiple reasons are identified that research wasn’t being conducted. This ranged from significant teaching loads, to a lack of resources such as laboratories and research grants. Chief amongst them, however, is the fact that at the time the SAP was written there were very few faculty members nationally with advanced research-based degrees (see Figure 5.1). In 2003 a total of 1,015 academic staff held a Bachelor degree, 719 held a Master degree, and 112 held PhDs (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 100). There was also a significant geographical disparity amongst those with higher degrees. The SAP team again cite the Hayward and Amiryar (2003) study that located the majority of faculty



with advanced degrees in Kabul. With 79% of PhDs and 52% of Masters, institutions in Kabul held a significant percentage of the available pool of faculty members with advanced degrees. The same study found that the “provincial pedagogical institutions have the least qualified professors, with the majority holding a bachelors degree and no academic staff with a PhD” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, pp. 48–9). Expecting that advanced degrees would serve to

induct a new wave of faculty into academia, the recommendation is made that “students at masters and PhD levels become more directly engaged in active research as part of their professional training” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 54).

On the individual front, promoting faculty for advanced study was key. One immediate short-term solution was that a “scholarship programme could be created to provide opportunities for study abroad, mainly in good universities in neighbouring countries” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 49). Additionally, the SAP team recommended developing in-service training programmes that would upgrade existing English and ICT skills. A “twinning programme between Afghan and foreign universities be funded to enrol Afghan academics in the foreign universities’ masters programmes while they are supervised at a distance and through regular visits from academic staff of the partnering universities” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 50). Indicating the SAP team’s emphasis on the role that a professional community of academics might play on promoting competency and encouraging the pursuit of advanced degrees, steps were required to “mobilize academics from among the Afghan expatriates to return to teach in Afghan higher education institutions, either permanently or for a shorter time” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 50). In addition, the MoHE was encouraged to fill faculty positions by recruiting from regional neighbours on a temporary or permanent basis to “cope with the need to expand the higher education system” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 50).

Revising curriculum for higher education institutions was considered central to increasing quality across the sector. Many Afghan academics had acquired their degrees in Soviet states during the Soviet occupation, with little access to external developments within their disciplines since (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004). Curriculum revisions were considered imperative as part of a multi-dimensional approach to increasing quality nationally. Consisting of four components, the SAP team argued for the development of a national quality control body, “i.e. the Afghanistan Evaluation and Accreditation Agency...could define minimum requirements for each study programme thereby providing a framework of reference for the revision and modernization of existing study programmes” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 56). Secondly, as more faculty pursued advanced degrees the assumption was that there would be a corresponding improvement in course quality. Thirdly, improvements were anticipated through establishing a set of regional networks and collaborations, and finally a production centre “which could make training and teaching materials available to students and staff and thus directly lead to an upgrading of the content of teaching programmes” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 56) was suggested. Additionally, a compulsory

component of study within any programme across any degree nationally promoting an understanding of pluralism is proposed. When making the case, the writing team cites global expectations of higher education graduates rather than pointedly referring to a society with ethnic, religious, or gendered divisions:

In particular, globalization and technological development have led to an implicit expectation that higher education should confer basic computer skills and proficiency in an international language, frequently English. There will also be need to offer some space for reflection on values and ethics in study programmes which could be conducted in a course named *Education for Pluralism*. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 57, italics in original)

A system of formalised quality control is proposed which will develop an accreditation system. This would certify institutions to a minimum standard which was considered “necessary for international mobility” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 57). To maintain quality, an Afghanistan Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (AEAA) is proposed. The AEAA would either sit within the MoHE, or, as the team recommends, be an external and independent body, “set up as para-statal, placed under a higher education buffer body but equipped with administrative independence from the Ministry” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 58). Accreditation was to involve several steps, including self-evaluation and peer evaluation stages for each institution. The AEAA was intended to cover both public and private higher education institutes. At the time the SAP was being drafted, and indeed published, there were no legal grounds for the provision of private higher education in Afghanistan. That the SAP team included several references to potential private higher education indicates a degree of inevitability around the future inclusion of private higher education into Afghan law, and the necessity to include provisional control through the MoHE. This preoccupation with as-yet unconstitutional establishment and monitoring of private higher education institutions crops up again in another section of the SAP, which explores the criteria for licensing foreign higher education providers. When choosing to grant operating licenses for foreign post-secondary providers, considerations such as language of instruction, geographic location, fees, student facilities and services, and the academic degrees to be granted as well as those held by faculty members were all to influence a final decision. The team recommended that AEAA “develop criteria and procedures for the licensing of foreign providers” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 59).

Throughout this strategic plan, the discourse of National Identity is constructed through three significant themes. Sector centralisation and institutional autonomy are considered squarely within the frame of driving the development of a national identity. Horizontal and vertical divisions of institutional labour were intended to promote national integration as tertiary students travelled for various programmes of study, and would wrest institutional control from the influence of

regionalised warlordism. Promoting quality throughout the sector was recognised as a significant challenge, which would require the development of a research culture amongst academic staff, curriculum revision, and the establishment of an organisation dedicated to sectoral quality control. These issues, whilst also contributing to discourses of Economic Growth and Human Rights, are predominantly framed by a focus on developing a sense of National Identity. Below, I turn my attention to the SAP's construction of Economic Growth and Human Rights Discourses.

Economic Growth Discourse in the Strategic Action Plan

Economic Growth Discourse is a category which emphasises the role of higher education in contributing towards the development of the national economy. It is constructed primarily through a Human Capital approach to the purpose of education, and anchored within a neoliberal philosophical frame for the state, the market, and the individual (see Chapter 1). The discourse of Economic Growth found within the Strategic Action Plan is somewhat muted when compared to the later policies. In this way, we see a broader instrumentalism to human capital emerge within the SAP. This is more consistent conceptualisations of human capital within Sen's (1999) capabilities approach to education, and its eschewal of a narrow economism is notable for its distinctiveness to later policies. (As I outline in Chapter 1, this may be to do with the educational mandate for UNESCO's operations, and the poverty eradication mandate for the World Bank.) One way in which this is evident is the fact that economic imperatives are often tied closely to social benefits. For instance, then Minister of Higher Education Fayezi co-authored the SAP's introduction with Gudmund Hernes, IIEP's director. For them, what made higher education indispensable was its seat as knowledge producer in any nation. Whilst noting that "[m]odern economies are knowledge economies", the two go on to write:

This knowledge must be appropriated and disseminated if Afghanistan is to develop in line with other countries. Improving welfare depends on the domestic capacity to apply and gain knowledge. *There is a close connection between growth in knowledge and economic growth – how close it is depends on how the education system is organized.* The areas in which new knowledge is most effectively applied are also often the ones in which employment is growing most rapidly. *However it is not only the nation's future that depends on education in general and higher education in particular. Preservation of the nation's legacy, the heritage and history that is an integral part of forging a national identity as well as the rich diversity in culture and languages, also requires that education play a strong role.* Indeed, universities and colleges are the most important custodians of the past and its achievements. (Fayezi and Hernes, in the introduction to MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 6, emphasis added).

The instrumentalisation of economic growth for national social development, and the development of a national identity, is clear here. In this case how then can the claim be supported that Economic Growth Discourse exists within the SAP?

The section below argues that Economic Growth Discourse is constructed in two ways. First, I argue that an intentional rejection of an economic instrumentalist frame around various issues within the SAP is a significant mechanism which constructs Economic Growth Discourse. Secondly, I argue that the construction of Economic Growth Discourse in the SAP is framed predominantly from a capabilities approach. Sen presents capabilities as the potential that that people have to be able to “lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value” (1999, p. 19). When these potential capabilities are realised, he refers to the realised capability as a functioning²⁴. In other words, one’s ‘capability’ “refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (or, less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles)” (Sen, 1999, p. 75). In this way, whilst individual economic growth is important for an individual, it is only important as it presents further capabilities to enable the individual to live and do as they value. In a broader sense, this positions social goals as final ambitions, and positions economic growth as instrumental in their pursuit, rather than an end which must be achieved above all else (cf. Robeyns, 2005; Sen, 1993, 1999, 2009). Within the SAP, this is highly evident in the opening remarks of then Minister and the IIEP Director:

The importance of knowledge and the need for a well-educated population has never been as strongly felt...more than anything else, Afghanistan’s future will depend on its own ability to develop human capacity, transmit and develop knowledge and make humane and rational choice...*investment in higher education in Afghanistan is not an end in itself but a means to the broad national objectives of social, cultural and economic development.* (Fayez and Hernes, in the introduction to MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 7, emphasis added).

In this sense, economic instrumentalism within this discourse is in turn instrumentalised in order to achieve higher order functionings. Higher Education’s role in Afghanistan’s reconstruction was understood by the SAP’s authors as fundamental and holistic. As highlighted by the quote above, for them the sector held responsibility for economic, civic, and societal development nationally. An Economic Growth Discourse is constructed through two key themes within the SAP: financing higher education; and employment relations.

Financing Higher Education

Questions of finance underpin not only the entire existing system of higher education, but the MoHE’s philosophical foundations for the future of the sector. Education in conflict affected settings is prone to chronic underfunding (Burde, 2014). For higher education, this underfunding is particularly pronounced (Milton & Barakat, 2016; Tierney, 2011; World Bank, 2002). The case of

²⁴ This mimics the *real* and the *empirical* from critical realism, outlined in Chapter 2, and the two share important theoretical similarities in this way.

Afghanistan is no exception. As noted above, the separation of responsibilities between a Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education created a sense of competition for what was perceived to be the same insufficient pool of funds. During the early years of the interim government, funding for higher education was very difficult to secure. As a Lead Education Policy Author put it, “overall higher education has never been a priority for donor institutions. They were funding a lot of primary programmes, but really, beyond primary education, nothing much was a priority” (December 1, 2015). A former Minister of Higher Education recalls that finding “funding was not easy, because the major donor, the United States, was not interested in helping me. They said they had to rebuild the schools, build new schools, and higher education would be a priority later” (April 17, 2016).

The SAP team were acutely aware of the financial pressure on the higher education system. The 1964 Constitutional provision of free education hadn’t specified an end level, meaning the MoHE could not legally charge fees for tertiary education. However, as the SAP was being drafted, the Constitution of Afghanistan was also being redeveloped. The draft constitution which the SAP writing team referenced had revised this section on free education provision, stating that education would be free to the end of secondary school²⁵ (MoHE & IIEP 2004, p. 76). In the section explicitly addressing funding the higher education sector, the SAP authors eased their readers into the discussion. As well as exploring the sector’s financial needs, they clearly hoped to influence the Constitutional debate:

Afghanistan has not only been devastated by civil wars but has also suffered from significant changes in the psychology of its citizens who have had to adapt to significantly different ideologies among the warring factions over time. In the near future, those who run the institutions will not only have to deal with a political and institutional environment in flux, but also handle a host of international agencies who generally do not act in concert. Even in the best of times, under stable conditions and however excellent the facilities, the quality of teaching staff and students and other inputs to the system, lack of efficient management personnel and arrangements can weaken and even destroy the entire higher education system very rapidly...In the end, the discussion will return to the *need for and feasibility of charging tuition fees* to mobilize the additional resources needed for Afghanistan to make the progress needed for social and economic development. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 71, emphasis added)

Existing methods of financing higher education in 2003 were unsustainable. The SAP team sought to identify alternative methods to raise revenue. In doing so, they made clear that the existing funding model would become increasingly problematic over time. The writing team also highlight the fact that dormitory expenses account for more than 50 percent of the recurring budget, a figure that on

²⁵ This was being hotly debated, and in the end would not stay in the final ratified version of the Constitution. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

the face of it was severely unsustainable and difficult for the SAP authors to endorse. In light of this, it was recommended that funding streams be “diversified from government funding alone to include a small percentage of private contributions” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 75). Questions of funding clearly corresponded to the tensions between centralisation and autonomy. To deal with the rigidity of a centralised budget, the MoHE was encouraged to allocate funds to individual institutions “based on contractual negotiations between the MoHE and the higher education institutions as to strategic targets for several years including a corresponding global funding” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 76).

Implementing a cost recovery system was an important focus for this section of the SAP. The SAP authors drew on the World Bank’s study into the feasibility of private provision of higher education, which also surveyed the “willingness and ability of students and their parents to pay for tertiary education” (Hayward & Amiryar, 2003, p. 1). The first of its kind, the report would later be used as a reference point for discussions around including student and family fee payments in different aspects of public higher education, as well as pave the way for the constitutional provision of private fee-charging higher education institutions nationally. In addition to “measures related to cost recovery of student welfare (dormitory, meals, etc)”, the team suggested that specific services could require fees, such as library resources, whilst providing that “needy students be allowed to compensate such charges with service they provide to the university”. For the SAP’s authors, no escape can be made from the need to consider the introduction of tuition fees “in the medium term”, whilst also exploring “the feasibility and/or modalities of a student loan system” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 76). Finally, the team advocated for the introduction of legal provision to enable higher education institutions to contribute to part of their own budgets through income-generating activities such as renting unused land, rooms, and buildings, consulting, or undertaking technical contracts. In light of the potential for these activities to interrupt teaching and research duties, the team suggests that they should be carefully monitored. In fact, the SAP deals explicitly with considerations of employment relations in detail.

Employment Relations

A large section of the SAP is dedicated to the question of employment relations²⁶. Much of this focus pivots on the two issues of centralisation and autonomy, and quality. For the writing team, academic

²⁶ Interestingly, Ginsburg (2012b, 2017) argues from analyses of World Bank and USAID documents on teacher education that employment relations emphases are part of a construction of teachers as inputs for human capital, dehumanising them in the process. There is clear resonance between these ideas and Afghanistan’s strategic planning for higher education.

staff were considered “the most important resource of higher education institutions...The rebuilding of Afghan higher education imperatively entails as one of its most salient components the upgrading of its academic staff both in terms of quantity and quality” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 41).

The dominant tension within this discussion of academic staff lies between a recognition of their importance, and the reality of uncertain financial contexts and an as-yet-untested labour market for higher education graduates. For this reason, and from that early vantage point, the SAP argued that “it will be necessary to establish a system which can respond flexibly to an uncertain future” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 41).

As I argued at the introduction to this section, part of the construction of Economic Growth Discourse within the SAP is through an explicit rejection of economic instrumentalism. Where the document addresses how employment relations should be structured, there are multiple instances where market mechanisms are explicitly identified, *and rejected* as an appropriate mechanism due to unfavourable implications for the sector. This, for instance, can be found in a central discussion of the make-up of employment relations: should academic staff should be employees of individual institutions, or of the State? After a brief discussion, the SAP recommends that Afghanistan’s academic staff be employees of the state. The justification for this iterates a significant point of difference with the two later policy documents which embrace market mechanisms to a far higher degree. The SAP states that in “a country such as Afghanistan, where some university locations in the provinces are much less attractive than the capital city, the market *will not* lead to the most optimal allocation of staff” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 45, emphasis added). Given higher education’s entrenchment of nepotism appointment practices, a key underlying intention here was to centralise responsibility from institution to Ministry. While it is acknowledged that there are significant benefits to institutions assuming employer responsibility for its academic staff, such as being able to particularise working conditions and tasks to be performed, the fact that market mechanisms would create an unequal distribution of staff across the sector posed enough of a challenge for the SAP team to arrive at the decision that employment through the Ministry was preferable.

Centralisation of the employment of academic staff was a contentious decision. Not only were there ongoing concerns over the balance between centralised authority and institutional autonomy, outlined earlier, but this contention was also a result of Afghanistan’s heritage of state control over higher education. This had led to highly selective policies on admission and appointment as the Former Minister of Higher Education detailed above. As the Lead Education Policy Author stated,

“the higher education system in Afghanistan, until the fall of the Taliban, it was always the Government that would provide higher education and they could isolate people for their gender, for their ethnicity, and for their religion” (December 1, 2015). This had also led to the situation where individual faculties were controlled by various ethnic or religious groups, and positions were made based on affiliation rather than merit. By allocating the state as employer, such nepotism was to be mitigated to an extent. Appointments of academic staff were to be undertaken by an interview committee comprised of “subject experts and representatives of the Ministry and be chaired by the Dean of Faculty...It is suggested that the MoHE have the right to final approval for posts at the level of associate and full professorships” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 44).

Another point at which market mechanisms were rejected had to do with questions of tenure and salary. When considering whether or not to provide tenure or contract employment to academic staff, the SAP team reached the conclusion that tenure should be awarded to associate and full professors on the assumption that it offers an incentive for faculty to pursue advanced degrees. This recommendation is made by the SAP team in spite of highlighting the fact that tenure can impose constraints on institutions’ abilities to respond quickly to potential requirements of the market. This rejection of market mechanisms is carried through further when a uniform salary scale is proposed rather than a diversified scale. The SAP team acknowledges the negative potential of market mechanisms upon the development of the sector nationally, stating that if “institutions are given total freedom in determination of salaries, market mechanisms would strongly influence the allocation of academic staff. This would result in competitive behaviour among institutions which is not necessarily in the interests of the entire higher education system” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 46). This observation stands in stark contrast with later policies, as we shall see in the following chapters, where competition is seen as central to both quality and efficiency. The SAP states that any additional salary complements determined at the institutional level should be awarded based upon the performance of ‘clearly defined’ additional tasks, so as not to subvert the national salary scale.

Tenure and salary progression were not the only forms of incentive considered. The SAP team outlines both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within a higher education system. They note a global trend from the intrinsic towards extrinsic forms of motivation of “salary increases and accelerated career progression. However, in order to work well, such systems must be based on transparent systems in order to be able to distinguish different levels of performance” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 47). This leads the team into avenues for evaluating performance. Recommendations include; factoring in more rigorous standards for research and textbook production, evaluation of

teaching performance²⁷, and offering staff development as a form of incentive to well performing faculty. Given the forecasted expansion of the sector, and the pressing requirement that this presented to hire young faculty beyond the existing pool of local academics and the educated Afghan diaspora, “it will become necessary to identify promising students at the undergraduate level and offer them opportunities for postgraduate training” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 50). In order to meet both the need for faculty with higher degrees, and the pursuit of research capacity, it was recommended that degrees from the masters level onward should be research-based.

Throughout this strategic plan, the discourse of Economic Growth is constructed through two key themes. The question of how best to finance higher education led to the conclusion that some private contributions would become necessary, and the MoHE was encouraged to diversify its funding streams from an almost absolute reliance on donors by systems of cost recovery, or alternative revenue raising ventures that are common in other parts of the world including undertaking commercial services, or leveraging capital such as land. The theme of employment relations is particularly explicit in its construction of the Economic Growth Discourse through its intentional rejection of economic instrumentalism and many market mechanisms. Whilst a level of economic incentive is offered in setting out employment pathways, these are delivered alongside additional incentives such as tenure, and opportunities for advanced study. A centralised control over employment relations was intended to buffer the sector from market mechanisms, and to promote and grow a transparent set of relations which explicitly promotes the National Identity Discourse framing the entire document.

Human Rights Discourse in the Strategic Action Plan

Global discourse around education as a human right does not include higher education, and higher education itself is not considered from a human rights perspective within these policies. Rather, Human Rights discourse within the SAP emphasises *equitable access* for populations which have traditionally been underserved by higher education institutions. This is notable within a broader society which has vacillated between seeing a reasonable degree of freedom for some urban women during the 1970s, to being one of the most constrictive societies for women in the modern world. A baseline understanding of access is important for the MoHE, and the SAP explores issues of student enrolment and the national distribution of tertiary institutions by considering the “demographic and social factors [that] will make what is already a difficult task for higher education recovery and

²⁷ The SAP team acknowledge that student evaluations contravene a culture in which teachers are rarely questioned, however state that student evaluations present “the most important source of information for judging teaching performance” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 48).

reform even more demanding” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 35). While this discussion has close ties to the earlier theme of the division of labour between institutions, a discourse of Human Rights is constructed by a particular focus on access in various forms. This is largely due to the significant and increasing demand for higher education by 2003.

During this section of the SAP, readers encounter the first mention of Education for All (EFA). EFA was a core Millennium Development Goal (MDG) resulting from the World Education Forum meeting in Dakar in 2000. Affirming and reinvigorating international consensus on global education targets developed 10 years earlier in Jomtien, the “Dakar Framework for Action is based on the most extensive evaluation of education ever undertaken” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 3). The Forward of the Dakar Framework for Action sets out its global expectation:

States should strengthen or develop national plans by 2002 to achieve EFA goals and targets no later than 2015. Particular emphasis will be given to areas of concern identified at Dakar, such as HIV/AIDS, early childhood education, school health, education of girls and women, adult literacy and *education in situations of crisis* and emergency. (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 3, emphasis added)

EFA has been definitive for the entire Afghan education sector. Whilst MoHE leaders struggled to complete the NHESP I’s successor after the plan period ended in 2014²⁸, the National Education Strategic Planning (NESP) which covers primary and secondary education under the Ministry of Education (MoE) was finalising its third iteration – strategic national-level planning for education had begun a full five years earlier than at the MoHE. The MoE’s emphasis continues to be driven by the MDGs and EFA. Afghanistan’s “third National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III) is developed to provide direction for Afghan education for 2015-2020 and to help the country achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All objectives by 2020” (MoE, 2014). EFA’s Dakar Framework emphasis on *education in situations of crisis* presented a ready-made platform for a massive funding push to get Afghan girls and boys into basic education. Enrolments in Afghanistan’s primary education system multiplied at a staggering and exponential rate almost immediately after the fall of the Taliban (Baiza, 2013b), and the first “Back-to-School campaign, launched in cooperation with UNICEF in 2002, resulted in more than three million children, 60 per cent of the child population of Afghanistan, returning to the classrooms” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 35). Millions of students continued to be added to the education system year on year, leading to hundreds of thousands of high school graduates eager for further education (MoE, 2011, 2014). For

²⁸ This was due to a significant number of factors, discussed in further depth in Chapter 6. However it is notable that the plan coverage was allowed to lapse after the NHESP I, while no such fate befell the MoE’s strategic planning efforts.

the authors of the SAP, access to higher education from a Human Rights Discourse frame is constructed by two key themes: inclusive access; and infrastructure development.

Inclusive Access

The almost immediate success of EFA initiatives in Afghanistan created a significant amount of pressure on the fledgling higher education sector down the line. Already in 2004, the SAP team noted that “there exists a considerable level of unmet demand for higher education already now, and...it is likely to grow with the expansion of basic education” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 36). Foreshadowing the pressures that such unchecked growth might cause on the higher education sector, the team stressed the fact that the expansion of basic education was to “create major pressure first on upper secondary education and later on higher education” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 35). The team recommended that HE enrolments should be developed gradually at a rate commensurate with the sector’s growing capacity:

In the short and medium term, it can be expected that student demand for higher education will continue to exceed the physical capacity of higher education to meet that demand. As a result, it will be necessary to restrict access to higher education, at least in the near future. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 36)

Restricting access was not the only consideration in light of the country’s EFA success. Whilst EFA was justified on principles of education as a human right, that education enhances freedom, and that education yields important development benefits (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004), in the absence of a “comprehensive national system of primary and secondary education, admission to higher education cannot be equitable in the sense that students will not compete on an equal level or more importantly they will not be able to access higher education at all” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 35). Of significant concern were three categories of the emerging demographic at most risk of becoming further marginalised without support for entry to higher education: women, the poor, and citizens from rural areas or areas more directly affected by conflict.

Demand for higher education by women was proportionately significant in 2003. Female applicants made up 32 per cent of those that sat the university entrance examination that year (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004). As the SAP was being drafted, just over 19 per cent of the total enrolments across the higher education sector were female students. However, as the writing team pointed out, “the aggregate percentage of female students disguises the fact that female students are concentrated in a few institutions” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 36). While the SAP authors were intent on realising women’s full participation in higher education, there was a palpable awareness that in certain parts of the country and in particular communities female access to higher education would be contentious. Rather than proceed in a manner which alienated communities to policy

intent, the SAP writing team dealt explicitly with the importance of a sensitive and sensible way forward:

It is important to invest time and resources to sensitize the community to the importance of education for women. However, such sensitization must be accompanied by practical and/or concrete steps to facilitate female access to higher education such as offering female students who live on campus appropriate and secure housing. Furthermore, given the situation of young mothers in Afghanistan, solutions for women to study after motherhood are also very important. Finally, proper toilets and bathroom facilities are extremely important. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 37)

As the SAP team pointedly makes clear, the “right to higher education is not worth much unless it is translated into opportunities and the physical conditions are in place to ensure access for all groups” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 37). The teams’ recommendations include the term ‘affirmative action’. As shall be seen when exploring the NHESP I, the use of the term in this initial planning document is significant.

By 2003, the majority of Afghan higher education students had experienced an interrupted education through various internal conflicts, or periods of mobility through internal displacement or as refugees. The SAP’s policy response to this were recommendations for a nationally-determined foundation course in order that this large proportion of potential students might quickly and appropriately be inducted into their higher education journey (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004). In addition to the clear intention to quickly and efficiently upskill higher education students whose formal education had been interrupted, the inclusion of history, language, and Afghan and Islamic culture by SAP authors as a particular focus represents a strongly humanist, nation-building understanding of the role which higher education was intended to play nationally. In this way, once again we see the Human Rights Discourse being constructed whilst constructing the discourse of a National Identity.

There is a section of the SAP specifically aimed at ‘disadvantaged groups’, which includes those with physical disabilities, and those underserved by higher education institutions. Here the document deals solely with promoting ramp access to buildings for the physically disabled. In 2003 it was “estimated that there are one million handicapped people in Afghanistan in need of assistance ranging from prosthetic devices to training” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 38). As will be seen in discussions of the NHESP I and II, considerations for students with various additional needs almost disappears entirely in the NHESP I, before a marginally more sophisticated discussion of these populations emerges in the NHESP II. Pronounced geographic disparities existed in terms of access. The number of institutions of higher education had grown by 2003 to 17. However, their distribution

throughout the 32 provinces²⁹ of Afghanistan was far from even. For instance the Southern region, home to 17.5 per cent of the population, only had access to one higher education institution which contributed only 1.5 per cent of the total national enrolment (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004). SAP authors suggested that the MoHE consider reducing the disparate distribution of higher education enrolments through affirmative action and by establishing new institutions.

Access clearly needed to be limited, according to the SAP authors. However, this limited access should be provided in an equitable manner:

In other words, access to higher education should not be constrained by sex, race, marital status, colour, language, ethnicity, political or religious belief, so far as is reasonably practical. It should be based on merit in principle but with provision of affirmative action for females in particular. This principle should be anchored in the Law on Higher Education. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 39)

Where the team appears to include a caveat, by stating 'so far as is reasonably practical', the following lines illustrate that rather than providing an abdication of governmental policy responsibility for unbiased enrolment into higher education institutions, in fact merit-based access should be tempered only by a strong legal commitment to affirmative action. At the time the SAP was drafted, the team suggested that centralised control over the national admission to higher education institutions be maintained, although refined in order to better accommodate student choices and admission places. Considering the significant number of adults who had not been able to receive a high school education, one of the recommendations from this section was to allow adults who haven't previously accessed higher education to sit the national entry examination, which later became known as the Kankour. Whatever the MoHE intended for inclusive access, however, was possible only with the expansion of the existing infrastructure.

Physical infrastructure

The tangible need across the sector for appropriate buildings was a highly visible issue in 2003 as the SAP was being drafted. The disassembly of physical property during Soviet occupation and the subsequent civil war was certainly a contributing factor, as outlined in Chapter 4. However, enrolment increases were the primary driver of demand for investment in physical infrastructure. With just over thirty-two thousand students enrolled in 2003, there were already fifty percent more students across the higher education sector than had attended at any point previously in Afghanistan's history. Not only was significant infrastructure rebuilding required, but also a rethink about how to use existing spaces in a way that would facilitate both the existing increase and the

²⁹ There are now 34 provinces in Afghanistan.

growth that had been forecast to come. “With so many facilities reduced to minimal functional levels, the country has an opportunity to think boldly and to dramatically reshape the built environment to suit new educational needs” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 61). As seen in the opening section of this chapter, building facilities to the point of being minimally functional was an achievement in and of itself by 2003.

As part of the writing process, the SAP team had undertaken a building needs assessment. This assessment was critical not only in determining the MoHE’s ability to meet the immediate demands of the sector, but also in order to future-proof the physical structures of higher education institutions by considering the projected demand for higher education. It would have been difficult for the SAP team to comprehensively project the massive uptake of higher education in just 10 short years. However, the assessment and subsequent recommendations remained firmly grounded in the real challenges which the Afghan context presented, calling for the “prudent thinking...required in order to strike a balance between heavy investment in planning and renovation of existing buildings and highly focused investment in only the most urgently needed new constructions” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 61). This meant that, for instance, when setting a national system of standards for buildings from the MoHE, three fundamental questions should be considered: “What can Afghanistan’s economy afford at this time? How are the new facilities to be maintained? How can regional institutions be made more self-reliant?” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 61). Recognising that universities “rarely shrink in size and they almost always tend to grow” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 61), the team considered not only the space that should be secured when opening new universities but also advocated for existing lands held by existing universities to be retained. Additionally, the team recommended that the state maintain ownership of lands used for higher education institutions.

Once again demonstrating the team’s understanding of the pragmatic implications of policy decisions and recommendations, the SAP advocated for upgrading the resources of several main regional universities as they had become overcrowded. However, this work was to be phased, in order that the construction industry would not become overtaxed and artificially inflate prices at the concurrent expense of quality. Whilst developing a plan for the development of new universities nationally, the southern regions of Afghanistan were specifically mentioned as, at the time, only a single university existed in the entire south. Kandahar University had an enrolment of 474 men. This discussion ties in with the SAP authors’ earlier concerns at the highly disparate levels of access to higher education between regions. The team were concerned with good cause. As Burde (2014, p. 6)

highlights, “[w]hile low levels of governmental legitimacy and high levels of ‘horizontal inequality’ (inequality between groups) may not be sufficient to produce conflict, they increase the likelihood of violence”. Given the broader cultural political economy of Afghanistan at the time, such disparities required urgent attention.

As outlined earlier, the provision of student housing was a significant cost. Students living “more than 25 kilometres from the university have the right to boarding facilities. This includes lodging and meals...The consequence is that MoHE spends more money maintaining boarding students than it does in paying faculty salaries” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 66). Whilst a considerable expense, student housing was (and continues to be) a significant factor in ensuring provision of access for female students to higher education. Additionally, to address the geographic disparity in terms of availability of higher education institutions, “students from deprived regions [required] support allowing them to go to other regions to study before Institutions of Higher Education [became] more equally spread in Afghanistan” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 66). In breaking with a tradition of free meals, a hangover from Soviet era higher education, the team recommended that small, “decentralized dining spaces where the students pay for their meals should be introduced on all campuses” (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 66).

A discourse of Human Rights is constructed throughout the SAP by its focus on promoting access to higher education, with a specific emphasis on providing access to populations previously underserved. There were two key themes within the SAP which aided in the construction of this discourse. Firstly, the document contains a focus on inclusive access. This is aimed at addressing the needs of female learners in order to reduce barriers to their enrolment, providing opportunities for those in rural and underserved regions to attend higher education, and an emphasis on increasing opportunities for students from areas disproportionately affected by ongoing armed conflict. Secondly, the document explicitly focused on the physical infrastructure required in order to make access a reality. This included a pragmatic and phased approach to expanding and upgrading physical plants, the MoHE’s responsibilities for providing student accommodation and food, and considering options for library and digital resources. Once again, the construction of a Human Rights Discourse is interwoven with considerations of both Economic Growth and National Identity discourses.

Conclusion

As the first of three chapters with a policy focus, this chapter has explored the reconstruction of Afghanistan’s higher education sector immediately following the fall of the Taliban. Through it, I have examined the development and content of the Strategic Action Plan for the Development of

Higher Education in Afghanistan, and identified and outlined three dominant discourses which are constructed through its pages. Whilst attempting to isolate these various discourses from the policy assembly which they collaboratively construct can be problematic, as Jessop (2013) argues the policy analyst must attempt to reduce complexity. In separating these discourses out, I have attempted to reduce the complexity which their cumulative assemblage presents, and in the process identified a dominant framing for the policy. This dominant frame is the National Identity Discourse, which is expressly identified by the SAP authors as the founding purpose for the higher education sector in Afghanistan, and referenced consistently throughout the construction of additional discourses. A discourse of Economic Growth is present, and I have argued that its construction is largely through an explicit rejection of the economic instrumentalisation of higher education itself, and a rejection of market mechanisms to determine key components of the sector such as financing and employment relations. A Human Rights discourse underpins the National Identity and Economic Growth discourses within the SAP, and is centrally concerned with realising and managing inclusive access for the growing sector.

A strong framing of Sen's (1999) capabilities approach is evident throughout this document. As outlined earlier, capabilities breaks into a human capital model by seeing economic growth as a means towards achieving education's final ends, rather than the end itself. This reorients the relationship between the institution of higher education and the state, from being an engine of economic growth, to being an institution which holds the potential to significantly shift Afghanistan along a trajectory towards a nation state. As Sen writes, an "adequate conception of development must go much beyond the accumulation of wealth and the growth of gross national product and other income-related variables. Without ignoring the importance of economic growth, we must look well beyond it" (Sen, 1999, p. 14). The SAP's introduction by Fayeze and IIEP's director Hernes clearly positions higher education by looking well beyond economic growth: "If Afghanistan is to re-establish its position in the family of nations, higher education is a *sine qua non*" (in the introduction to MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 5). These non-economic dividends of higher education are what shore up and afford the opportunity for social and political sustainability, and the SAP writing team were well aware of the social importance of higher education for Afghanistan.

The SAP never became policy. Published in 2004 as the interim Government was coming to its end, a new set of elections redrew the ministerial make-up of the Afghan Government late in 2004. Fayeze left his position as Minister of Higher Education and established the American University of Afghanistan. The incoming Minister, Hasanyar, took over the position in December 2004 and went

about establishing his own agenda. The SAP operated in some sense as a de-facto policy for the sector, and certainly as a pitching document to attract donor support which, after all, was part of its purpose: “the Plan *should guide national policy action and be an important tool in negotiation with the donor community*. (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 14, emphasis added). Beyond the immediate politics of Afghan elites which meant that the SAP was never turned into policy, the influence of international actors was also significant. Academic Consultant C recalled a mid-2000s:

meeting with the person in charge of the DfID office...listening to him talk, he was saying that no aid support should ever be used in ways that made people ask too many questions. That we’re not about trying to create a new something, we’re just trying to do what’s necessary to stabilise. And he was more or less saying that there’s this thing in education that you’re opening people’s minds, and that can be unsettling. (February 18, 2016)

Whatever the cause, the first legitimate policy steering the higher education sector as a national strategic plan was only written several years later, and implemented in 2010. The following chapter explores this next period, in which the largely humanist, capabilities approach to the function and nature of higher education within the SAP is replaced by the largely instrumentalist and human capital approach of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014.

Chapter 6 – National Higher Education Strategic Planning: 2010-2016

There is consensus that improving the quality of the higher education system is central to the economic rejuvenation of Afghanistan... [I]nvesting in higher education “is hugely budget-friendly” providing one of the highest returns on investment. This is because, the wider economy is stimulated by skills innovation and hence is more productive with greater tax revenue and because graduates have higher incomes and pay higher taxes than non-graduates.
(MoHE, 2009, pp. 1-2)

Introduction

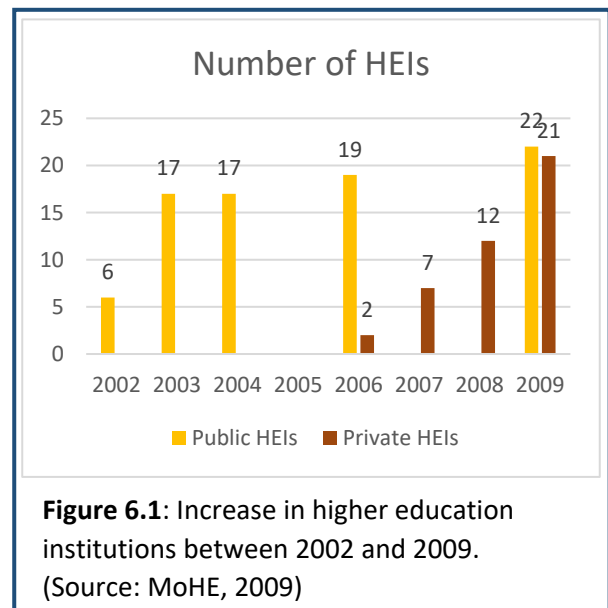
This chapter examines the first National Higher Education Strategic Plan for the Afghan higher education sector. It follows a similar structural pattern to Chapter 5, and is written in three main parts. Firstly, I set down key events within higher education between the publishing of the SAP in 2004 and the drafting of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP) in 2009. Secondly, I detail the development of the NHESP I. Here I rely heavily upon interviews with key actors involved in, or close to, the process. Thirdly, I examine the NHESP I for the manner in which it constructs the discourses of Economic Growth, National Identity, and Human Rights. During this final section I make the case that an analysis of the interplay between these three discourses uncovers a dominant discourse of Economic Growth, illustrating the dominant ideological foundation of neoliberalism within the NHESP I, and thus underscoring the growth and direction of the higher education sector nationally. Through this chapter we see that the liberal humanist ideological foundations of higher education found in the SAP are stripped down to an economic instrumentalism for the sector. This chapter makes the case that this is due to a neoliberal ideological anchor within the strategic planning for Afghanistan’s higher education sector, mimicking the neoliberal foundation of the peacebuilding project set out in Chapter 5. Both chapters 6 and 7 together illustrate the second part of my thesis; that the institution of higher education can be re-assembled along relatively narrow lines following its disassembly.

Higher Education After the SAP

Between 2001 and 2016 there have been six appointed Ministers of Higher Education, and one Acting Minister of Higher Education that have spanned various periods and had various degrees of impact. This has ranged from winning large amounts of funding for the Ministry and establishing lasting legacies such as the NHESP I, to spending much of their time teaching at private higher education institutions, providing favours for friends, and leaving the running of the Ministry to itself (Hayward, 2015). As Baiza (2013b, p. 225) illustrates, this “ministerial turmoil has had negative effects on the continuation of education policies, strategies and priorities as well as on cooperation between the ministers [of Education and Higher Education] and international organizations”.

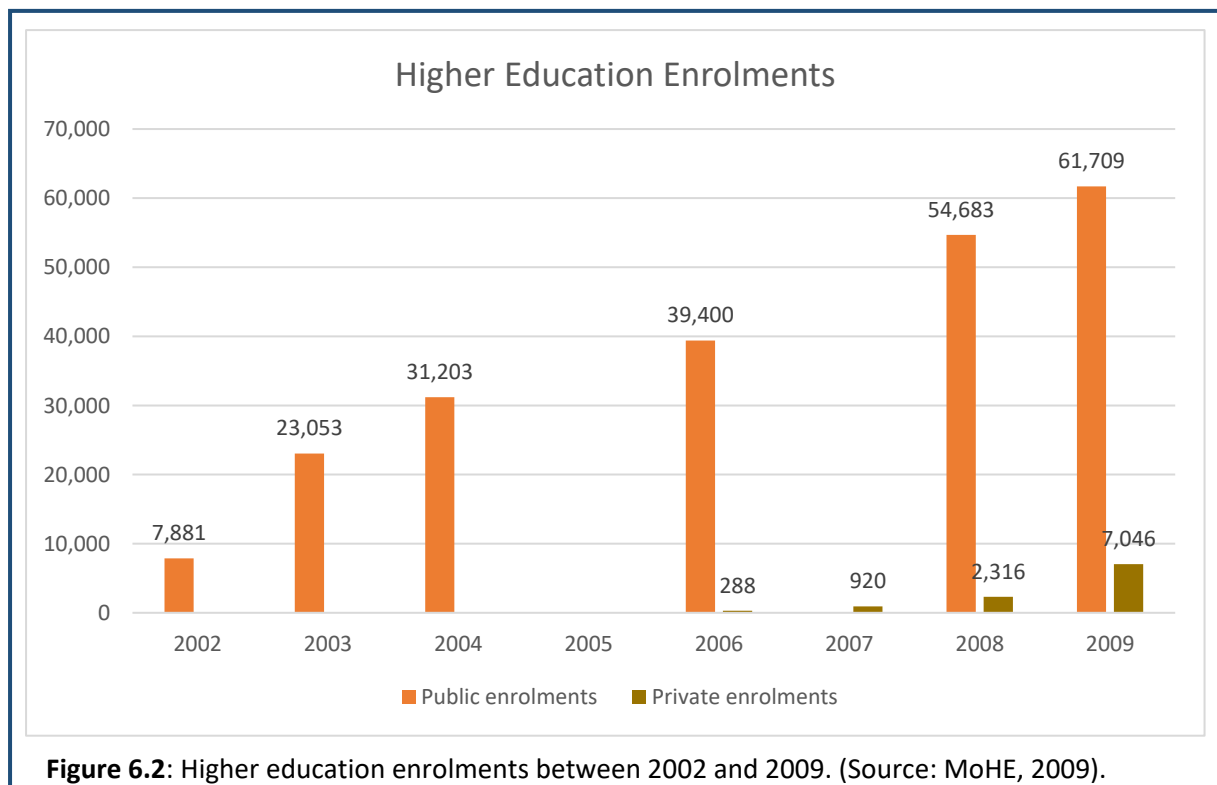
Further, Hayward recounts the challenges that the new Minister of Higher Education presented once the interim government finished its tenure in 2004. Writing of the developments made with the finalised SAP, and its accompanying legislature recommendations, he writes:

That work was interrupted when a new minister was appointed in December 2004, driven by President Karzai’s efforts to have ministers with large followings that he hoped would help him in the forthcoming presidential elections. Minister Fayez had been in the United States for a number of years and did not have followers he could call on. With the new minister, the MoHE seemed to drift for a time. (Hayward, 2015, chapter 4, section 10, para. 3)



Higher education in 2009 looked markedly different to 2003. The number of public universities had expanded from 17 to 22 (see

Figure 6.1). Enrolments had doubled from just below 31,203 in 2003 (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 19) to 61,792 in 2008 (MoHE, 2009, p. 28) (see Figure 6.2). In addition, the Higher Education Law which had been developed in tandem with the SAP passed through parliament, providing legal grounds for the introduction of private higher education provision. By 2009 there were 21 private higher education institutions catering to more than 7,000 students (MoHE, 2016). Additionally, there



was a looming bulge of prospective students approaching graduation from high school – a natural consequence of the massive success in Afghanistan of the Education for All movement (Baiza, 2013b). In addition, there was a profound groundswell of desire for higher education nationally (Burde, 2014). As a Lead Education Policy Author stated, “public support and public enthusiasm for education, and the way the public appreciates education and higher education, is absolutely impressive and amazing” (December 1, 2015). The NHESP I marked the first higher education policy to direct this growth.

The National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014

The NHESP I was the first instance of an accepted strategic plan for the MoHE. It exerted central administrative control over both public and emerging private higher education institutions. In the NHESP I’s preface, then Minister of Higher Education Mohammad Azam Dadfar acknowledged the policy’s heritage in the SAP:

discussions on the strategic plan started in 2003...Since 2001 many positive and significant changes have taken place affecting the higher education sector. It is with this in mind that the Ministry of Higher Education decided to incorporate many initiatives of the previous plans into one final Strategic Plan ensuring that it was also consistent with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the current needs of society. (MoHE, 2009, p. ii)

The policy was developed with USAID-funded support from the University of Massachusetts. The lead consultant was Professor Fred Hayward, who brought considerable expertise in higher education strategic planning which spanned both years and continents. As highlighted in Chapter 5, he had a working knowledge of the Afghan higher education context from his 2003 World Bank-funded report on the potential for private higher education in Afghanistan (Hayward & Amiryar, 2003), and his involvement with strategic planning for several individual higher education institutions during 2006 (Hayward, 2015). In fact, together with a colleague in South Africa he’d literally written the book on strategic planning in higher education, entitled *A Guide to Strategic Planning for African Higher Education Institutions* (Hayward & Ncayiyana, 2003).

The development of the NHESP I was spearheaded on the MoHE side by the former Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs, Professor Osman Babury (2007-2017). Babury was a key driver of the NHESP I and II, and fundamental to the daily workings of the sector. Academic Consultant B described Babury as a pivotal figure in higher education development:

[A]t first there was this whole series of folks that were Ministers of Higher Education, because it was a low-status Ministry. Most people were looking at it as a stepping stone to something else...Even when Dadfar was the Minister, I give him credit because he was the first one who came in as Minister and took it seriously. The problem was that he knew next to nothing about higher education. Now, he didn’t pretend he did either, and he had

integrity. Then Babury became Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs, which is in some ways the most important position in the Ministry. The Ministerial political appointments, they come and go. The Deputy Ministers are the ones who really get things done. The person who had been the Deputy Minister before, it turns out, had a fake degree [and had] some little corruption problems on the side. And then Babury comes in. He's a Professor of Pharmacy, and he and Dadfar were very anti-corruption. Babury *did* have a vision for the system. He was very selfless about it. He became a real champion. I mean, the fact that he just stepped down, or was forced out six weeks ago. That was a long run.

Daniel: Several Ministers during that time too, right?

Academic Consultant B: Several Ministers, right! All of them with their own agendas. And he was the one with the steady hand that kept things going, kept building things. I'll be honest, he did a lot of really great things and he was extremely effective, he worked himself really hard. I think that while there are still lots of problems, a lot of the progress that has been made he gets a ton of credit for. (February 28b, 2017)

Multiple participants echoed the importance of Babury. Academic Consultant A highlighted the importance of Babury in his own ongoing engagement in Higher Education in Afghanistan:

He was really our primary counterpart. He was a really good ally, supporter. We had our differences and so on, but he was a constructive, honest bureaucrat and leader in a context where those characteristics were scarce. He was kind of a bulwark against some of the worst of the corruption, and he was very supportive. He really was trying to grow the higher education system. (February 28a, 2017)

It is clear from the trajectory of higher education under his stewardship that Babury was a pivotal figure in the recent development of Afghanistan's higher education system. Hayward and Babury developed a strong working relationship. The two worked closely as colleagues, and published several important papers on Afghan higher education together (cf. Babury & Hayward, 2013, 2014, 2015). As will be outlined further in Chapter 7, Hayward was also brought in to work on a draft of the NHESP II.

During the development of the NHESP I, multiple groups were consulted. One participant, a lead policy author, was clear that a nine-month consultation process was wide-ranging and involved a broad and representative cross-section of stakeholders in the development of the plan:

A number of sub-committees were set up, some of them led by another colleague of mine. There were several hundred people involved at one stage or the other in the process. There was a steering committee which was made up primarily of a few of the administrators, but also some senior faculty members who were involved in other activities at the Ministry, or were Directors, and then the process involved large numbers of Vice-Chancellors, faculty members, deans, and a few students although not many. (April 14, 2016)

The direction and emphasis of the NHESP I was a result of this consultation. "[W]e had some help from a very good person from an NGO...[who] was excellent in saying 'look, you've got to focus on

two major goals” (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016). This directly influenced the development of the NHESP I, which a former Deputy Minister of Higher Education stressed needed to mirror the Afghan context as effectively as possible:

[T]he content, objectives, and programmes of the first National Higher Education Strategy Plan, and the second one which is the continuation of the first one, are all based on the reality of Afghanistan. And Afghanistan, unfortunately, has a very painful reality. The reality of the post-war situation, the reality of losing prominent faculty members, the reality of the collapse of the system...whatever we had left in 2002 were the ruins of Higher Education. So those were the two major goals of the first National Higher Education Strategic Plan; enhancement of the quality, and expansion of the access. (February 17, 2016)

The body of the NHESP I establishes these two programmes. The first is to “[e]ducate and train skilled graduates to meet the socio-economic development needs of Afghanistan; enhance teaching research and learning; and encourage service to the community and nation”. The second programme for the NHESP I is to “[l]ead and manage a coordinated system of higher education comprising universities, institutes and community colleges dedicated to providing high quality tertiary education” (MoHE, 2009, 9). With the two programmes of quality and access at its heart, the first draft of the NHESP I was returned to various groups for consultation.

The outcome of consultations during the NHESP I weren’t all positive however. Language targeting gender equity within an early draft of the policy became hotly contested:

Several of the NGOs had pushed the gender agenda, from my point of view, way too hard...I remember one of the meetings where [a representative] from the UN Women’s Office came and was chastising the Ministry, and everybody else who was involved for not having more on gender, and she took the draft and added a whole bunch of stuff on gender. In almost every other paragraph she stuck something in. That just infuriated people, and what it did was mobilise the conservatives...They insisted...that we not use the term gender equity. We did, but we took out a lot of them, and we had to eliminate all use of the term affirmative action. (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

In this instance, the original objection to the first draft of the NHESP I ended up being counterproductive to the issue of female access to higher education. As Academic Consultant A put it, the incident described by the lead policy author above wasn’t an isolated experience:

[US]AID has a big push on gender, which is a good thing, but it’s kind of ill-informed. It’s sort of like the western feminists telling the world how things should be, and not really paying attention to the realities on the ground in Afghanistan, and basically disrespecting Afghan culture and values – saying ‘you’re wrong and you have to change’. [US]AID is always pushing on that, and often in dysfunctional ways. I mean that’s not the way change happens. You can’t force it. You can encourage things, there are a lot of positive ways that you can go about doing it, but it’s going to be slow. You don’t change a millennia-old culture... [sighs in exasperation]. (April 28a, 2017)

The result here was a minimal mention of key words around gender equity in the NHESP I (see Figure 6.3). Authors in the NHESP II were able to make significant gains in terms of policy emphasis on gender equity, and I pick up the thread on gender within the strategic plans further in Chapter 7.

NHESP I		NHESP II	
Term	Frequency	Term	Frequency
Gender	4	Gender	16
Women	10	Women	73
Female	1	Female	100

Figure 6.3: Instances of the use of key gender-specific terms within the NHESP I and NHESP II. Terms in the NHESP II appear spread considerably more evenly throughout the document.

Participants from outside of the immediate NHESP I writing circle had a different view of consultation within the NHESP I. They felt that the document had been largely driven by only a few people at the very top of the tree. As I finished up an interview with Academic Consultant A he asked if I'd spoken to Hayward. "That wouldn't be just hearing about the National Higher Education Strategic Plans from the horse's mouth" he said. "It'd be like hearing it from the whole horse." According to a former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of a rural university, the drive for the NHESP I was entirely external, and consultation was limited:

USAID and the World Bank, UNESCO, you know, these were that actual push behind [developing the NHESP I]...I think that there was some interviews with key stake holders, but it was primarily one person writing this strategic plan...Are you familiar with Fred Hayward? He drove the strategic plan and it was because of him. There was support from the donors and the Deputy Minister had a key role to put those people together and proof it. (February 27, 2017)

Academic Consultant B also shared this perspective, and raised concerns about the relationship between Hayward and Babury:

NHESP I. Let's talk about that...I have concerns about how the World Bank drove that, because they sort of had an outline that had to be, I mean, if you look at NHESP I there's two programmes within it, I mean a lot of it is a little bit of 'fill in the numbers', or 'colour by number', in terms of the structure of it. Ok, now that's a little unfair because the World Bank brought in a lot of experts who had a lot of good ideas...There was too little Afghan participation in it though...[Fred Hayward] and the Deputy Minister are very close. In some ways the Deputy Minister relied almost too heavily on Fred because he trusted Fred. They genuinely liked each other. Fred took the time at least to really understand what was going on locally. *But they only bounced things off each other.* Fred and I used to talk about this, and I had a lot of inputs too, but they had a special relationship that may have been a little counterproductive. Fred would end up, at times, talking for the Ministry which may have

been inappropriate, and I think created some problems sometimes. (February 28b, 2017, emphasis added)

External agencies driving the development of policies and national strategic plans is not particular to Afghanistan, and the various implications that this can have are considered further in Chapter 8. However what these quotes demonstrate is that: 1) the process was driven largely by actors outside of Afghanistan; and 2) that whilst a degree of consultation was undertaken, this was either not transparent enough or expansive enough to mitigate concerns over ownership of the NHESP I.

The final NHESP I was completed in 2009 and implemented to steer the sector for the five years between 2010 and 2014. As the interviews above have set out, there were two programmes within the NHESP I: increase quality; and, manage access. The tensions which have been illustrated throughout this section, namely between international and local ownership of the policy, and concern about the depth and breadth of consultation, continue to play out in the remainder of the chapter. Below I examine the content of the NHESP I to illustrate the manner in which the document constructs the dominant discourses of Economic Growth, Human Rights, and National Identity. Here we find a sharp distinction from the discourses and ideological anchor of the SAP outlined in Chapter 5. Where the SAP emphasised National Identity Discourse from a liberal humanist ideological foundation, the dominant discourse in the NHESP I is Economic Growth. The two programmes of the policy, focusing on quality and access, are framed within a Human Capital understanding of the function of higher education. I argue that the economic instrumentalism of the sector is rooted in a neoliberal ideological anchor, and indicative of the broader ideology underpinning international intervention in Afghanistan.

Economic Growth Discourse in the NHESP I

Economic Growth Discourse frames the function of the university primarily through its utility in driving national economic development. Economic Growth Discourse is the dominant discourse throughout the NHESP I. For those developing the NHESP I, access and quality were intrinsically connected, and as shall be seen when exploring the NHESP II the importance of both of these goals has been enduring. Justification for these two goals, and higher education more broadly, was largely framed in terms of developing the national economy. Two themes help to construct the Economic Growth Discourse within the NHESP I. Firstly, the function of higher education is to serve the economy, and promote Afghanistan's induction into the global Knowledge Economy. Sum and Jessop (2013a, p. 30) observe that the emergence of the Knowledge Economy has created a "master narrative, which shapes economic strategies, state projects and societal visions". Secondly, and in order for higher education to serve a national economy effectively, *quality* graduates were

paramount. Here there is a particular emphasis on promoting competitiveness in order to ‘catch up’ with other national economies. Below I look at each of these themes in turn.

Inducting Afghanistan into a Global Knowledge Economy

The NHESP I frames the function of higher education within a human capital paradigm³⁰, and justifies this by promoting the inclusion of Afghanistan into a global knowledge-based economy. This theme is constructed through a two-step process: firstly, the importance of higher education is set out based on its returns to the economy; and secondly, the concept of a knowledge-based economy is used to anchor human capital theory within Afghanistan’s higher education sector. Human capital theory is promoted as an overarching justification for investment in the sector. The Ministry aggressively argues this point through the opening pages of the document. By first laying out the challenges facing the country, the NHESP I presents human capital, developed through higher education, as of pivotal importance for Afghanistan. The former Deputy Minister’s commitment to grounding the national strategic plan within its contextual reality meant spelling out the almost overwhelming and potentially unsurmountable political economy within which higher education was operating. The NHESP I then locates higher education as the necessary public institution pivotally positioned to begin addressing these hurdles:

[T]he development of a coordinated system of higher education institutions that will provide the high-level person power needs of the country lies at the heart of its national development strategy. There is consensus that improving the quality of the higher education system is *central to the economic rejuvenation of Afghanistan*. (MoHE, 2009, p. 1, emphasis added)

This second paragraph of the policy document lays the Ministry’s cards squarely on the table thus: if there is a genuine intention to begin addressing the myriad issues facing Afghanistan as a nation, only higher education can provide the person power needed to meet these demands and usher the country into a global knowledge economy.

The NHESP I’s authors support their opening statements by drawing on a few sources. An important citation that they make to support their claim of economic rejuvenation is a publication entitled *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* (World Bank, 2002). Particularly during the 1980s in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, policies of ‘cost sharing’ embodied in structural adjustments which were required to secure IMF and World Bank loans saw much of national education systems financially gutted, particularly anything beyond primary education. This led to significant reductions in enrolments, quality, and participation, and drastic

³⁰ The economism which informs the NHESP I and II’s conception of human capital theory is further justified within Chapter 1.

increases in inequalities in higher education throughout much of both regions (Cossa, 2008; Ghani & Lockhart, 2008; Reimers, 1997; Robertson et al., 2007).

The 2002 World Bank report was keen to break with this previous thought on the role that higher education played in national economic development. Its authors were intent to reshape the Bank's prior involvement in higher education:

[T]here is a perception that the Bank has not been fully responsive to the growing demand by clients for tertiary education interventions and that, especially in the poorest countries, lending for the subsector has not matched the importance of tertiary education systems for economic and social development. The Bank is commonly viewed as supporting only basic education; systematically advocating the reallocation of public expenditures from tertiary to basic education; promoting cost recovery and private sector expansion; and discouraging low-income countries from considering any investment in advanced human capital. Given these perceptions, the rapid changes taking place in the global environment, and the persistence of the traditional problems of tertiary education in developing and transition countries, re-examining the World Bank's policies and experiences in tertiary education has become a matter of urgency. (World Bank, 2002, p. xviii)

This 200-page report signified a considerable shift in World Bank policy around the role that higher education can play within national development in low-income nations. If:

[s]ocial and economic progress is achieved principally through the advancement and application of knowledge...[and low-income] and transition countries are at risk of being further marginalized in a highly competitive world economy because their tertiary education systems are not adequately prepared to capitalize on the creation and use of knowledge...[then the] state has a responsibility to put in place an enabling framework that encourages tertiary education institutions to be more innovative and more responsive to the needs of a globally competitive knowledge economy and to the changing labour market requirements for advanced human capital. (World Bank, 2002, p. xix).

This report champions higher education as the mechanism by which low-income countries can enter the knowledge economy. Unfortunately, as Milton (2018, p. 13) highlights, "international interventions to rebuild war-torn societies are increasingly framed as occurring in contexts of state fragility or failure in which the initial conditions to participate in the emerging global knowledge economy are weak or entirely absent".

The NHESP I leans heavily on the World Bank report, and others that demonstrate strong rates of return on national investment into higher education. The MoHE make the case that:

despite the severe global recession the return on investment in higher education is very significant...investing in higher education 'is hugely budget-friendly' providing one of the highest returns on investment. This is because, the wider economy is stimulated by skills innovation and hence is more productive with greater tax revenue and because graduates have higher incomes and pay higher taxes than non-graduates. (2009, pp. 1–2)

A key sub-goal for institutions was to provide "funding in a sustainable and equitable manner to ensure quality higher education through the principle of shared costs" (MoHE, 2009, p. 7) – an intent

for the sector which conflicted with the constitutional provisions for free education to the level of a Bachelor degree. A significant opportunity for cost-sharing was in the case of dormitories and food, as students' board and food was covered by the MoHE. The NHESP I states that this should be reconsidered, "since higher education has both public and private benefits, it is reasonable to expect that its costs in the future will be covered from multiple sources including private funding, tuition fees, entrepreneurial activities, donors, and other sources" (MoHE, 2009, p. 3).

The economic instrumentalism of higher education informs the plan's Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals. Initially, it appears that social goals sit alongside economic goals with relative ease in the NHESP I. The Vision calls for a quality higher education sector which "responds to Afghanistan's growth and development needs" (MoHE, 2009, p. 3). According to the MoHE's Mission statement, its institutions are to "produce graduates who are competitive in a global economy; contribute to economic growth, social development, nation building, and the stability of the country" (MoHE, 2009, p. 4). As the document progresses however, these social goals are largely justified or discussed as instrumental to achieving *economic growth* – quite the reverse of a capabilities approach. One of the NHESP I's seven core values, *Promote National Unity*, presents initial hope of introducing discourse related to Afghanistan's conflict-affected context. However, amidst outlining the importance of higher education for promoting unity, the description of this value also includes a surprising discussion of "infrastructure augmentation", justified in terms of providing "the quality education that will foster development and the creation of a knowledge economy in Afghanistan" (MoHE, 2009, p. 5). Intent to develop this knowledge economy, a familiar engagement with the question of centralisation versus institutional autonomy re-emerges within the NHESP I.

In 2009 the higher education sector was highly centralised. The SAP had addressed the question of institutional autonomy from the perspective of protecting institutional rights to "study according to preference, to teach according to conviction and to conduct research according to interest" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 29). The NHESP I wanted to explore this question further, and advocated for the decentralisation of institutional control in order to promote innovation and market response by individual institutions. The policy value of *Good Governance, Efficiency and Effectiveness* sets out the importance of innovation and efficiency by stating that modern "higher education institutions must be innovative, and responsive. This requires greater decentralization of authority from the MoHE to institutions in academic and financial matters" (MoHE, 2009, p. 6). When exploring the relationship between the Ministry and various institutions by asking *Control or Coordinating and Steering*, the authors set out that the:

modern tendency in the relations between the Ministries of Higher Education and universities is to move away from one of control to one of coordination and steering as well as decentralization of *academic and financial affairs*. This is in keeping with the notion of institutional autonomy and the findings that higher education quality and creativity are increased where institutions have the autonomy, flexibility, communication systems, and incentives to be innovative and responsive to opportunities in a rapidly changing environment. (MoHE, 2009, pp. 16-17, emphasis added)

Throughout the NHESP I, a primary purpose for the decentralisation of authority is linked to both academic *and* financial autonomy, and considered explicitly about halfway through the policy.

Under the heading of *Autonomy*, the policy authors pull together the various threads which have been dotted through the NHESP I and delineate the meanings for academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and accountability. Academic freedom is set down as “an internationally recognized and unambiguous privilege of university teachers and includes admission of students, appointment of staff, undertaking and publishing the results of research without interference, and control of academic programs” (MoHE, 2009, p. 18). The inclusion of key administrative functions of a university here is somewhat surprising, and may have more readily fit under the definition of institutional autonomy. Indeed, these administrative functions are repeated under this heading as well:

To be autonomous, a university must be free to select its students in the long run and its staff and to determine the conditions under which they remain in the university. It must be free to set its own standards and to decide to whom to award its degrees and it must be free to design its own curriculum. (MoHE, 2009, p. 18)

A sharp separation from the SAP emerges under this definition of the autonomous university, and provides a valuable insight into the neoliberal ideological foundations of the NHESP I. The SAP authors had explicitly argued the appointment of staff, and their conditions of employment (particularly salary) should be centrally determined. This was in order to promote transparency and meritocracy in the hiring process, and reduce the potential for internal ‘brain drain’ from particular institutions towards others. In other words, this was set out to reduce to potential for internal competition amongst the national institutions for qualified staff. The NHESP I ruptures that understanding, and by handing control over the determination of the conditions of employment to the institution intended to embed a free-market framework for the sector’s labour force.

The definition of academic autonomy in this section of the NHESP I is framed through its ability to promote the emergence of a knowledge economy, and the sector’s ability to diversify revenue streams. The authors write that “[a]cademic and financial autonomy of universities is essential to the development of knowledge and innovations in higher education giving institutions and their faculty

the freedom to be creative, original, and productive” (MoHE, 2009, p. 18). Financial autonomy is closely understood relative to academic autonomy, and the case is compelling. When considering observations made by several participants in Chapter 5 regarding the government’s exclusion of particular ethnic or religious populations, or women, from university, a centralised financial control presents a key mechanism for a government to return to politics of exclusion. However the emphasis on financial autonomy is balanced by the importance of accountability, which operates as a “constraint on the use of arbitrary power and the corruption of power” (MoHE, 2009, p. 18).

Building on the notion of financial autonomy was the ever-present question of funding. Whilst the system remained totally centralised, individual institutions were unable to undertake revenue-generating activities – a situation that the NHESP I aimed to address. For the authors of the policy, this was limiting for institutions on multiple fronts, and required amendments to the legal framework for higher education:

The degree of higher education autonomy existing under the present law will be clarified and the MoHE will see modifications where it limits institutional entrepreneurship and creativity. It is hoped that an amendment before Parliament granting higher education a measure of financial autonomy will be quickly ratified. This would provide both the legal means as well as incentives for the institutions to raise funds and expend them to improve teaching and learning as well as research. The principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy are important to the development of quality higher education and will be introduced gradually and incrementally. The law before Parliament *granting a measure of financial autonomy would be an appropriate first step*. (MoHE, 2009, pp. 18-19, emphasis added)

The relationship between institutional academic autonomy and financial autonomy is cemented, justified through discourses of incentives, innovations, and the ability for individual institutions to be responsive to market demands. Economic Growth discourse is created through the NHESP I’s human capital justification for investment in higher education, the urgency to establish a knowledge economy, and the longer-term intent to become regionally and globally competitive. I now turn my attention to the notion of competitiveness, and the NHESP I’s use of quality in its pursuit, to illustrate an additional theme which constructs the Economic Growth discourse throughout the Ministry’s first strategic plan.

Quality and Catch-up Competitiveness

The manner in which ‘quality’ is understood within the NHESP I is an important indicator of the neoliberal ideological anchor for the policy. Notions of quality construct a discourse of Economic Growth in two ways within the NHESP I. Firstly, quality is seen as fundamental to ensure that graduates are able to either secure jobs, or set up their own company, within Afghanistan. Secondly, quality is understood as important in order to promote international competitiveness of graduates.

This is closely tied to the notion of catch-up competitiveness. In this way quality in higher education is conceptualised as adhering primarily to an understanding of the institution's 'fitness for purpose', a category defined by Harvey and Green (1993) which relates *quality* to the *purpose* of higher education. As shall be seen below, the primary institutional purpose to drive economic growth illuminates an underlying conflation between quality and national economic growth, in effect indicating that higher education's *purpose* drives *quality* within the MoHE's first strategic plan. The MoHE had to balance the very real concern that unchecked enrolment increases might negatively influence quality in a young system. As one of the two main programmes established by the policy – quality and access – the Ministry was particularly concerned with improving overall quality whilst carefully managing access.

The NHESP I was concerned with quality well before it became a qualifier in the Education Goal of the Sustainable Development Goals. The reason was both simple, and reflected the complexity of the Afghan context:

Afghanistan faces an array of critical challenges to develop and move along a trajectory that will lead to sustainable development, overcome poverty and offer a better life for all its citizens. Among these challenges [is]: to restore high quality to its universities... (MoHE, 2009, p. 14)

Quality had been a significant focus in the SAP, and was an enduring policy issue for the NHESP I's authors. Writing of the NHESP I a few years after it had become national policy, Babury and Hayward (2014, p. 8) reflected that

[t]he most critical goal for the MoHE since 2009 has been quality improvement of the faculty, staff, and curriculum. In the context of the growing pressure to expand access, it has become even more critical to guard existing quality and push to improve it overall...It was the position of the MoHE that it did not make sense to increase enrollments without significantly increasing quality so that graduates would be able to find jobs or set up their own businesses.

For the Ministry a central emphasis across the higher education sector was to ensure that, in-so-far as practicable, expanding access did not come at the expense of quality, and a high quality system was integral to graduate employment and work opportunities.

The notion of a high quality tertiary education sector was set down as a cornerstone of the intent to develop a knowledge economy. The policy value *High Quality Tertiary Education* articulates this connection explicitly:

National development in Afghanistan is dependent on the success of efforts to transform higher education into an effective high quality system. Indeed, no nation moves into the realm of developing economies without a high quality higher education system. *The key to*

economic development is the quality of the higher education system. (MoHE, 2009, p. 4, emphasis added)

Here a high quality tertiary sector justified explicitly through human capital theory, and a narrow conceptualisation of national development is tied singularly to Afghanistan's capacity for economic growth. This emphasis informs the design of a key sub-programme for the NHESP I – Curriculum and Materials Revision and Development. Framing the purpose of higher education within the Economic Growth discourse, this was to begin with a:

National Needs Assessment involving both the public and private sectors with an emphasis on science and technology and special needs is an urgent priority...This assessment will coordinate with the private sector *on needs and market, labor, industry, technical and professional demands* as well as with the Ministries of Education and Labor. (MoHE, 2009, p. 11, emphasis added)

Such close engagement with the market clearly oriented the purpose of tertiary curriculum reform towards alignment with private sector needs.

For many, economic instrumentalism was a new institutional role for higher education. The emphasis on preparation for work through higher education was influenced by those outside of Afghanistan. As Academic Consultant A put it:

Now the push on workplace or workforce related education, linking it directly to employment, and pushing to have linkages within the private sector, that's all coming out of Washington. That's not on the Afghan agenda...it's not high on the Afghan's priority, not because they're against it necessarily, but because it's never been a part of their conceptualisation of higher education. Higher education is not employment generating, that's not what higher education is for. Higher education is academic, that's not how employment works. Employment works because you have a relative who has a job somewhere. Employment is kind of family and network based. There's no expectation on the part of employers or on the part of the universities – neither side sees universities as preparation for employment. *It's just not in the conceptual landscape until we started pushing it.* (February 28a, 2017, emphasis added)

The external pressure on aligning tertiary education to labour-market demands continues to be significant. In a conversation several months after our interview, one participant explained that without their push-back to include the importance of training graduates for government positions, the programmes his organisation provide on behalf of USAID would understand the purpose of higher education solely in terms of providing labour for Afghanistan's *private* sector.

The genuine requirement for private institutions to meet the increasing demand for higher education nationally presented a dilemma for those in the MoHE. The NHESP I encouraged "the development of *quality* private education – especially non-profit institutions", and the Ministry were working to "insure that permission to open private tertiary institutions includes evidence that

minimal quality standards are met...The quality provision and the protection of students from unscrupulous vendors will be paramount in this regard” (MoHE, 2009, p. 21, emphasis added). However, as a former Minister of Higher Education illustrated, there are still only two non-profit private higher education institutions in Afghanistan. He recounted the steps taken to ensure a legal framework for private higher education, but concern at the outcomes for the sector since its introduction. I quote our interview at length as it is highly illuminating on a) the process which saw legal provision for private higher education in Afghanistan, and b) what this provision has led to since its introduction in 2006. The Minister’s concerns centred on quality and corruption:

First of all, remember in the constitution of Afghanistan there was no mention of private higher education. In the past, when President Karzai assigned a committee to draft a new law for Afghanistan, I went there and I talked to members of the commission. I knew Salam Azimi³¹ quite well. I asked Salam Azimi that in the new constitution private education should be allowed. He asked me to talk to members of the commission. So I went there. Most of these guys, members of the commission, were from the provinces. Some of them had academic backgrounds, well-intentioned people, almost all of them. But they didn’t know anything about private higher education. Private education did not exist in our laws before. So I lectured them, and I remember some of them didn’t know what I was talking about and were sort of taking a nap...Most of them were supportive, and did not have any problem, because they really didn’t know that much. [So private higher education] was included in the draft of the constitution. Without that, [they] could not have established the American University of Afghanistan.

The reason I went to the commission twice, and talked to them, was actually to encourage them to include this in the draft, which they did. Then I was assured that everything was ok. I went to the United States to sign partnerships with some universities, and I got a call from Kabul that my plan was in big trouble, that the Loya Jirga had some objections about that article about private higher education. They asked me to come back to Kabul as soon as possible. But when I came back to Kabul, when the Loya Jirga was still going on, I was surprised that those who were against me for other reasons, like secular higher education, they supported this article because these guys later established their own private institutions, like Sayyaf. You’ve probably heard about him. And the big madrassa, Mohseni. *These guys, actually during the discussion, they supported the idea of private higher education because they had their own plans to establish private institutions, which most of them have.*

The number of private institutions in Afghanistan – which the Ministry has lost control of them – has reached 120. Can you believe it! 120 private institutions...The Ministry cannot control these institutions...These institutions, all of them, are for profit...No Ministry can control them. *They have become like shops. So there is no quality. The other day I said to Babury, this could be a disaster for private higher education. There is a lot of corruption...* Presidents of some of these universities are not academic people. They are like

³¹ Salam Azimi was legal advisor to Karzai, was involved in writing the Constitution in 2004, and went on to become the head of the Supreme Court in Afghanistan (Barker, 2007).

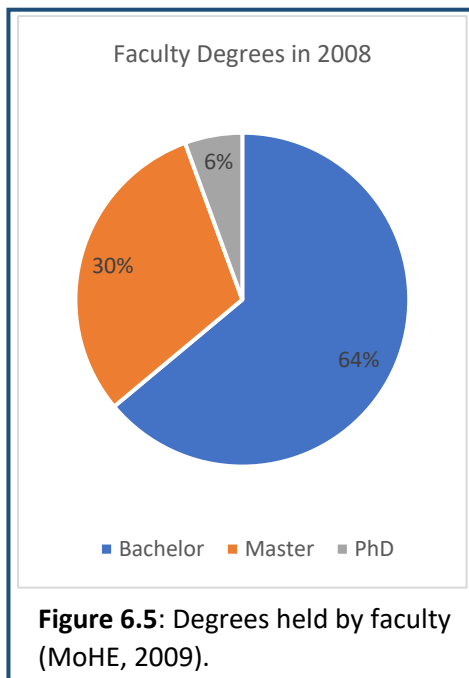
shop keepers. They have no academic experience, no administration experience. I'm not talking about all of them, but most of them. They don't have it. The Ministry has lost control, and it has caused a lot of corruption at the Ministry because some officials at the Ministry, particularly those handling private higher education, are on the payrolls of some of these universities...*They are called higher education institutions, but most of them have, through corruption, promoted themselves to universities.* So there is massive corruption because there is no way to control them. (Former Minister of Higher Education, April 17, 2016, emphasis added)

Two issues become apparent in this quote. Firstly, private higher education has become a significant source of revenue for several of the elites involved in drafting the constitution. Several of these elite were former warlords, and leveraged their positions to significant personal financial gain. For instance, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, mentioned in the interview above, was profiled by *The Economist* when he ran for president during the 2014 elections. He was described as "an MP, of the kind who rarely attends parliament. He also amassed considerable wealth, with a university, a TV channel and other businesses" (Paghman, 2014, para. 9). It is rumoured that Sayyaf invited Osama Bin Laden in to Afghanistan during the 1990s. Secondly, and perhaps most pertinent to the issue of quality, the corruption that has developed alongside the emergence of private for-profit tertiary institutions is undermining democratic governance of the sector, and also goes a long way towards undermining the *quality*.

The NHESP I outlined two key mechanisms to promote quality – establishing an agency to oversee quality and accreditation, and encouraging faculty members to obtain advanced degrees. A major sub-program is dedicated to the establishment of an accreditation and quality assurance programme for public and private higher education. At the time the NHESP I was written, the legal framework for establishing accreditation and quality assurance was yet to be approved. However, the authors made the relevance of a proposed agency to oversee accreditation explicit:

The accreditation agency will facilitate the development of standards for quality for higher education institutions, encourage quality improvements, monitor quality on an ongoing basis, insure that new tertiary institutions meet minimal standards of quality, insure that foreign providers meet the needs and quality requirements of Afghanistan, and insure that the public is not defrauded by diploma mills or substandard tertiary education providers. (MoHE, 2009, p. 23)

This agency, alongside a proposed "moratorium on establishing any new universities" (MoHE, 2009, p. 26) were considered crucial in order to manage the rapid expansion of the system. As roll numbers increased, and demand for higher education outstripped supply by several times over, the young sector underwent considerable strain.



Supporting faculty members to pursue advanced degrees was a particular focus in the NHESP I. As illustrated in Figure 6.5, 64 percent of faculty members in 2008 held only Bachelor degrees. As the policy authors point out, Afghanistan’s academic staff have:

been considerably weakened by the ongoing sequences of conflicts that has devastated the country for over thirty years and staff [have] had little opportunity for development. Thus, one of the most critical challenges faced by the higher education system and universities is to renew and revitalize their faculty and staff. (MoHE, 2009, p. 9)

In order to address this, the Ministry intended “to equip the vast majority of staff with an MA/MSc or PhD within as short a period as possible” (MoHE, 2009, p. 9). This meant

sending carefully selected faculty members to universities internationally. It was hoped that the majority of funding for this might be achieved through host-institution or host-government scholarships. Another way of developing quality was to introduce university partnerships, which might enable faculty to obtain an advanced degree from the comprehensive research universities in Afghanistan “which would provide the degree itself or do so jointly with a foreign counterpart” (MoHE, 2009, p. 9). There were some initial teething problems with this approach once it was established. A large number of faculty claimed asylum after being awarded scholarships to various countries, and the NHESP II advocated for careful screening of those being sent overseas.

As briefly encountered in the section directly above, a significant emphasis on competition appears in the NHESP I. Competition is promoted as an important driver of both quality and national economic growth within higher education. Its inclusion is akin to a Listian notion of catch-up competitiveness, or catch-up development. Senghaas (2012, p. 454) outlines that in “List’s time, England had attained a singular leading position in the world-economy. List’s ideas and plans were oriented toward the subordinate nations’ prospects for development.” In this way, a national-methodologist economic comparison was outlined during the first half of the 19th century – an early and large scale version of ‘keeping up with the Joneses’. In fact, Senghaas goes on to outline how List’s ideas have a particular relevance for the instrumentalism of a knowledge-based economy in this catch-up competitiveness:

If List did accord a certain priority to anything, it may be found in his high esteem for non-material intellectual forces as opposed to material goods. In ‘invisible capital,’ that is, in the

stimulation and promotion of intellectual activity and inventive spirit, of knowledge and skills, in short, of competence, he saw a source of energy and strength that would be very difficult to replace by natural resources. (2012, p. 456)

As Sum and Jessop observed at the outset of this section, the ‘master narrative’ of a knowledge economy offers a driving rationale for the economic instrumentalism of higher education.

Corresponding to:

the rise of the current neo-liberal transnational financial order and the theoretical and policy interest in the globalising knowledge-based economy, competition has refocused on innovation (including in finance and securitisation) and how best to link extra-economic factors to the ‘demands’ of economic competition. (Sum & Jessop, 2013a, p. 27)

Economic Growth discourse within the NHESP I sets human capital and knowledge economy at its core. The aim to establish a knowledge economy within Afghanistan, and then to become regionally and globally competitive, is evident throughout the NHESP I. The policy’s third sub-goal presents the MoHE’s explicit intent for the sector:

To address the development needs of the society and provide the labor market in a driven and knowledge dependent society, with the changing high level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy. (MoHE, 2009, p. 6)

Similarly sub-goals at the institutional level call for institutions to “provide relevant and quality academic programs that are responsive to national and regional needs and are globally competitive” (p. 7). This interest in being globally competitive was linked to raising quality across the sector by keeping “international standards as long-term benchmarks” (p. 7), and the quality assurance system set out by the policy intends to “ensure institutional and program quality, national and regional relevance, as well as international mobility and recognition” (p. 7). This drive for international benchmarks is carried through into the NHESP II, and informs the institutional division of labour. The policy authors write that for “Afghanistan to attain globally competitive status and produce quality graduates, a variety of tertiary institutions offering different types of high quality education is essential” (MoHE, 2009, p. 19). Implications of these efforts to be regionally and globally competitive, and the mechanism invoked, are considered further in Chapter 7.

A focus on becoming globally competitive was not supported by everyone involved in aspects of delivering the policy goals of the NHESP I. As Academic Consultant B stated:

You *did* have higher education functioning in Afghanistan. Kabul University at that time [1970s] was a decent university by regional standards, there wasn’t yet this press for ‘world class’ universities. One might argue that what Kabul University was providing in the mid-70s was more relevant to building a society in Afghanistan than a ‘world class’ university ever would be...One of my concerns is that too much of what’s in both strategic plans is this mimicry. It’s; what do other higher education systems have, and what do world class universities look like? The World Bank really pushes this concept. (February 28b, 2017)

This challenge to Afghanistan's institutional role, however, is drowned out by the powerful neoliberal purposing of higher education for economic growth.

On the one hand, the state is asserting the importance of education in the realisation of national economic interests, the realisation of which is not always best left to the selfish interests of private economic agents, especially where the world market rather than national economic space is the ultimate horizon of profit-oriented, market-mediated economic strategies, and, on the other hand, it is conceding greater autonomy to educational institutions in how they serve these interests *on the assumption that they share the same broad vision as the dominant economic and political forces* about future trends in economic development and competition. (Sum & Jessop, 2013a, p. 41, emphasis added)

This section has examined the construction of Economic Growth discourse in the NHESP I. It has unpacked themes of inducting Afghanistan into a global knowledge economy, and the conceptualisation of quality through the normative frame of developing human capital and promoting catch-up competitiveness with regional economies – all uncovering further the NHESP I's neoliberal ideological anchor. Economic Growth is not the only discourse to emerge within the NHESP I however. Both Human Rights discourse and National Identity discourse are present too. These are, at times, tempered through the economic instrumentalism of the higher education sector as set out above, however at other points in the policy the Ministry's social vision for the sector are illuminated.

Human Rights Discourse in the NHESP I

Human Rights discourse is prominent within the NHESP I. It is constructed by elements of the two policy goals of access and quality, each of which, on the surface at least, can be understood through a Human Rights perspective. As outlined in description of the development of the policy, the authors were restricted in their efforts to include a more overt emphasis on female enrolments and staff members due to a mobilised conservative element during the consultation period. This meant that the authors had to be measured in their inclusion of female-specific targets and affirmative action intent. However, understanding the policy goal of access purely through a Human Rights discourse is insufficient. As with each theme outlined in my analysis of Afghanistan's strategic planning, the construction of a Human Rights discourse concurrently works to construct discourses of National Identity, and Economic Growth, and much more besides. However, for the purposes of this study, the construction of Human Rights discourse within the NHESP I is predominantly understood through the theme of access.

Access and its Constraints

The NHESP I's mission statement for higher education (partially quoted earlier in this chapter) provides a particular insight into the purpose of the sector. For the MoHE, higher education in Afghanistan was to:

facilitate equitable access to higher education to all who are academically qualified, establish innovative institutions that provide high quality teaching, research, and service; produce graduates who are competitive in a global economy; contribute to economic growth, social development, nation building, and the stability of the country. (MoHE, 2009, p. 4, emphasis added)

Here it is highly evident that a programme of equitable access is central to the Ministry's strategic plan for the sector. Indeed, without it the Ministry would be unable to realise the valuable human capital required for the development of both MoHE and broader Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) goals.

Enrolment increases of female students was considerable for the sector. No women were in higher education institutions under Taliban rule. In 2009, 21 percent of the 62,000 enrolments were women. In order to continue this positive momentum, the authors of the NHESP I had to be cautious in their approach. Within the policy value of *Equity*, after a mention of promoting access for poor students, rural students, and those with physical disabilities, special:

attention needs to be given to increasing the number of students and women in higher education teachings positions, especially at the senior level where currently only two women hold ranks as high as associate professors and only one half of one percent of women have professional ranks. (MoHE, 2009, p. 5)

Given the genuine concerns around the university entrance (Kankour) examination limiting women's access to higher education, the Ministry indicated in the NHESP I that "measures of empowerment such as remedial tuition, financial aid and counselling services" (MoHE, 2009, p. 10) might be necessary. As a former Vice-Chancellor of a rural university outlined, this was an important issue to address by central government:

Daniel: The NHESP I made some mention of gender, in the NHESP II this seems to increase. What is your interpretation about the national feeling or institutional feeling about increasing access for female students?

Former Vice-Chancellor: I think it depends on the environment. We do not have provinces that have equal access for female students. There are provinces that have good opportunities and provinces that do not. There are provinces that have more females in schools, and more demand for that. I wouldn't think the NHESP will make any differences in those areas, unless you do positive discrimination, by lowering the scores for female placements. That happened for a year or two, or giving women more flexibility in terms of transferring from one institution to another. There is however problems with the conflict,

and problems with the fact that education is not a short term project. If you say that women can have access to higher education that means the prerequisite is that they have to master certain knowledge and skills to be able to pass the Kankour examination. They have 6 month programmes for women from conflict-zone provinces, but I don't think that makes much of a difference yet. In Kabul you will see sort of equal participation. But it depends on the culture. There is more favouritism for the men, and not the women. They pay private courses for the guys. You cannot change those because they are part of the culture, whether you accept it or not. In terms of access to higher education, unless positive discrimination is in place, there won't be much of a difference. They may not be allowed to do private courses. If they are, whether or not they have the money to afford it? If you invest in a guy, they will feed you back. For a female, they will get married and you'll never get that money back. There is that mind-set. And there are extremists who ban it, or who will not allow not just their own families but also women in their region. They cause trouble, or threaten people. These sorts of problems are created by conflict plus extremely conservative culture. I wouldn't say it's a problem of observing Islam, but it's observing a negative culture against women, that they are treated as second. (February 27, 2017, emphasis added)

This participant reiterated the concerns set out by the lead policy author and an academic consultant earlier in this chapter. Drawing on ibn Khaldun's distinction between desert civilisations and sedentary civilisations, Barfield (2010, p. 317) teases out the broader implications of this cultural context. He writes that:

[r]ural Afghans were also suspicious of attempts by a modernizing Kabul elite supported by international aid givers to engage in social engineering. To those in Kabul planning projects, there was a self-evident need to provide gender equality, better representation of the poor and minority groups in decision making, and access to secular education. This was not self-evident to rural Afghans, since the question of how and in what ways Afghanistan needed to change had generated political problems since the 1920s.

Barfield's observations support the concern (and a sense of scepticism) of Academic Consultant A on gender targets. His quote below is indicative of the feeling amongst a few participants that appeared to describe a sense of being caught between competing agendas or priorities. On the projects he oversees, he said:

we're asked to report on [gender-specific targets] all the time by [US]AID. Then they rush off to Washington with their figures on this because they have to demonstrate that they're doing this. We try to do it in sensitive ways and so on. There's been some real progress, so I'm not saying we shouldn't be doing it, I'm just saying that the tendency for the western values is to assume that they have all the answers...(February 28a, 2017)

Policy emphasis on access reflected the broader Afghan context. Increasing enrolments was not purely an administrative issue, but rather carried substantial public pressure for the Karzai government. There were significant pressures placed on the Ministry of Higher Education by other Ministers, and even the President's office, to increase the number of enrolments each year (Babury

& Hayward, 2014; Hayward, 2015), even though the system was struggling to meet existing demand. As outlined earlier, enrolments in Afghanistan's primary education system multiplied at a staggering and exponential rate following the fall of the Taliban, with millions of students being added year by year, leading to hundreds of thousands of high school graduates looking for further education (Guimbert, Miwa, & Thanh Nguyen, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2011, 2014). These factors collaboratively translated into dramatically higher education enrolments during the NHESP I's coverage. Enrolment projections for the NHESP I's final year of 2014 were exceeded by 2013, and the plan period finished with a total enrolment of 147% of what had been projected. This meant an additional 55,582 students enrolled across the public higher education system than had been planned for by 2014 (MoHE, 2016).

Furthering this pressure on access was the constitutional provision of free education to a Bachelor Degree for those capable (Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2004). As a former Deputy Minister of Higher Education stated, "you can imagine, if we are not able to generate money, and the treasury is also not able to finance us well according to our plans and our route maps, then you have your ideas, but what happens?" (February 17, 2016). This pressure linked directly to the development of the second goal for the NHESP I of quality assurance. A former Minister of Higher Education felt that the government is sacrificing the quality of higher education on the altar of access. "[I]f these students cannot write a paragraph in their own native language, it is actually better to offer only skill-oriented courses...Four year colleges are useless, [they have] no quality and it's very expensive for the government" (April 17, 2016).

The dominance of Economic Growth discourse tempers the construction of Human Rights discourse within the NHESP I. Whilst there are clear elements of the policy which construct a discourse centring on Human Rights, the grounding ideology of neoliberalism instrumentalises this discourse, and draws it in to the support of Economic Growth. Not completely. By degree. The normative neoliberal frame for the sector, as Sum and Jessop (2013) argued above, searches for ways to bring the extra-economic into the economic sphere. Themes around access readily avail themselves to an economic sphere built on the development of a knowledge economy, and university graduates as its labour. We shall see this become more pronounced in the NHESP II in Chapter 7. This section has set out the theme of access, and how its discussion and its barriers construct a discourse of Human Rights within the NHESP I.

National Identity Discourse in the NHESP I

The discourse of National Identity is constructed through the interaction between multiple themes within the NHESP I. As the two policy programmes unfold throughout the document, and in the spaces between Economic Growth discourse overpowering or underpinning Human Rights discourse, glimpses of a clear social institutional role peer through various parts of the NHESP I. These are strong in the policy's introduction, and much of the preceding themes in this chapter can be understood through their contribution towards a particular national identity. However, do they genuinely construct a National Identity discourse? Do they present a particular form of nationhood or statehood as a final endeavour for the tertiary education project? Or are they instrumentalised in pursuit of Economic Growth? In short, it's complicated, and again, the answer to both sets of questions yes; and by degree. Below I examine the interaction between themes outlined thus far.

The Interaction Between Access and Quality

To suggest that the discourse of National Identity is entirely instrumentalised in pursuit of Economic Growth would be a gross injustice to the NHESP I, and its authors. There is a clear and intentional component of the NHESP I which intends for the higher education sector to offer social cohesion and political stability towards Afghanistan's ongoing national development. The policy value *Ethics and Integrity* sets this down explicitly:

As educationists, the ministry and universities must uphold the values of ethics, integrity and trust, act as role models for students and make every effort to inculcate them into young emerging leaders, intellectuals and students. *Higher education teaching, research, and service are about the search for truth, problem solving, and unravelling complex problems and challenges that affect people's lives and well-being.* Without high ethical standards and integrity, such efforts are meaningless. Ultimately *these qualities together with skills and knowledge will shape the character of students as critical citizens contributing to sustainable development and a modern democratic Afghanistan.* (MoHE, 2009, p. 5, emphasis added)

Here we see the convergence of the policy goals working to construct a National Identity discourse. Through promoting access, students within Afghanistan's network of higher education institutions are afforded the opportunity to address 'complex problems and challenges that affect people's lives and well-being'. However this opportunity is afforded only when there is a degree of quality within these institutions, and when the institutions 'uphold the values of ethics, integrity and trust'. The potential outcome is significant, and clearly contributes towards the construction of a progressive and democratic National Identity discourse: critical citizens contributing towards a modern democratic nation.

The push towards a progressive and democratic society appears again within the policy value *Promoting National Unity*. Whilst this value appeared, rather oddly, in the earlier discussion of

Economic Growth discourse, it also presents a genuine desire for the sector to promote a particular kind of national unity. This is defined by the Ministry as being a balancing act, which “involves recognizing national diversity and...building tolerance, respect for differences and most importantly building a united, modern democratic Afghanistan which has the loyalty of all Afghans while preserving the uniqueness of Afghanistan, its history and culture” (MoHE, 2009, p. 5). The sentence might be a bit of a mouthful, but the intent it demonstrates is significantly larger. The tensions between values outlined by the former Vice-Chancellor above represent a division on the role of women in society. The former Minister of Higher Education earlier shared the tensions over whether or not education should be secular. For those tasked with steering higher education, the balancing act within this sentence is profound. It is a matter of life and death in many instances. Deeper than this, it is reaching to the heart of the broader development agenda within Afghanistan – the tension between the legitimacy of the institutions of national development, and the sovereignty of its people to determine the direction of this development. I explore this further in Chapter 8.

Many of the policy’s sub-goals support the construction of a National Identity discourse. At the national level, the policy authors intend that the sector “meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities throughout their lives” (MoHE, 2009, p. 6). Research capacity is to be enhanced “for the advancement of knowledge and for the application of research activities to technological improvements and social development” (MoHE, 2009, p. 7). This is further explicit within the sub-goals at the institutional level. Here, the institutions are intended to “contribute to the creation of enlightened, responsible and constructive critical citizens with a reflective capacity to review prevailing ideas based on the commitment to the common good, tolerance and respect”, and to “establish an academic climate where open debate, critical enquiry and constructive critique are the prevailing norm of institutions” (MoHE, 2009, p. 7). With such an explicit and programmatic approach to developing a progressive and liberal institutional culture and broader society, how can I make the claim that Economic Growth is the dominant discourse in the NHESP I?

The policy foundation of neoliberalism has been established in the sections above. This has been illustrated through several statements from the NHESP I, such as: the public and private benefits of higher education justifying the need to introduce cost-sharing; devolving conditions of employment to institutions and the heavy attention to competition driving quality; the intent for the institutions of higher education to establish a knowledge economy; and the consistent look towards regional and global benchmarks for the sector and its graduates. However a national system of higher

education is not mono-dimensional, and neither are its policies. There is, therefore, the opportunity for the discourses of Human Rights and National Identity to develop. In many instances, these are conscripted from the non-economic into the economic spheres, and this is largely due to the normative neoliberal frame from which the NHESP I is written. Jessop argues that the development of neoliberal framing for higher education has meant that higher education is far more likely to demonstrate “a subordination of information, knowledge, and learning to the demands of the expanded reproduction of the globalising knowledge economy, than...the widening and deepening of a democratic knowledge society” (2008, p. 14).

Jessop’s (2008) observation is insightful, and goes a long way towards explaining the dominance of Economic Growth within higher education discourses more broadly. Looking to the chapters ahead, I will ask if it sufficiently accounts for the dominance of Economic Growth within Afghanistan’s conflict-affected context. This final section of the chapter examining the NHESP I has outlined the policy’s explicit and hope-inducing focus on higher education’s institutional role in promoting a National Identity Discourse. This is primarily experienced in the interaction between the Economic Growth and Human Rights discourses, and throws a considerable challenge to the notion that Economic Growth is indeed the dominant discourse within the NHESP I. However, I have responded to this challenge by highlighting the normative neoliberal frame from which the policy approaches higher education. The National Identity Discourse makes an important contribution to the policy emphasis, and is the discourse which most clearly adds a broader dimension to the dominance of Economic Growth within Afghanistan’s first national strategic plan for higher education.

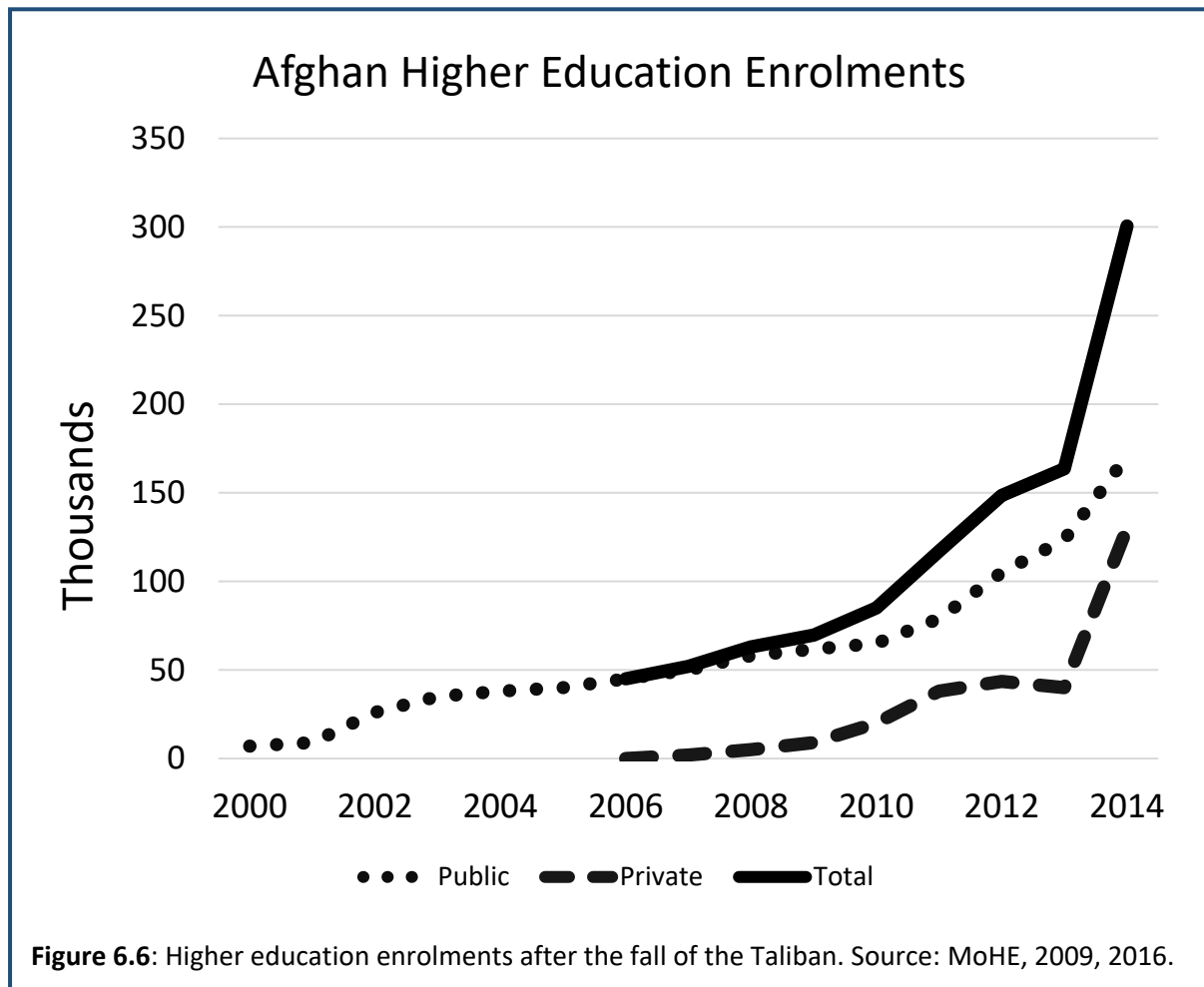
Conclusion

It is difficult to conceive of a more effective first strategic plan for Afghanistan’s higher education sector. The NHESP I is concise – “35 pages *including* the budget” (lead policy author, April 14, 2016) – clear with its programmatic focus on access and quality, and was successful in securing a reasonable portion of its operating budget over the 5 year period. Achievements across the higher education sector during the NHESP I’s coverage were considerable. When reflecting on these achievements, a lead policy author highlighted the importance of consensus in the planning stage.

[O]ne of the amazing things about that plan was that 72% of the goals were achieved during the five years, even though only about 60% of the money came through. I think that was a real tribute to the importance of consensus. Nobody was fighting against any of the things that the Ministry was trying to do...(April 14, 2016)

Hayward (2015) attributes many of these successes to the fact that the NHESP I was short, sharp, and to the point which made its content accessible, as well as the fact that it represented a broad-

based consensus. “[T]his plan actually became the basis for almost all decisions and actions of the MoHE, the focus of donor funding, and the basis for individual institutional strategic plans...it became part of the fabric of higher education planning and action for the next five years” (Hayward, 2015, section 11, para. 1). As Figure 6.6 illustrates, this period saw massive growth in the sector.



Through the NHESP I, an Economic Growth Discourse is constructed through the themes of developing a knowledge-based economy drawing on competitive graduates from quality higher education institutions. A Human Rights Discourse emerges through the policy emphasis on access to higher education, and factors which constrain it. A National Identity Discourse is constructed through a progressive democratic intent for Afghanistan, and the role of higher education in this pursuit is outlined largely in the policy’s national and institutional goals. There are tensions within these constructions, and at several points the Human Rights Discourse themes are instrumentalised in pursuit of economic growth. This occurs to a lesser degree with the National Identity Discourse, although the interacting themes which construct a National Identity Discourse within the NHESP I

are largely justified in pursuit of economic growth, and it is clear that the policy is written from a neoliberal ideological frame.

Academic Consultant B reflected on the NHESP I. His reflections illustrate the complexity of the context, of the policy, of the development and writing of the NHESP I, and of the illusive pursuit of legitimacy and sovereignty for its key authors:

To be honest, hindsight being what it is, I'm not sure how you would have gotten a better result for a first national higher education strategic plan. In some ways, even if it was a little contrived, it could have been a good blueprint for a starting point as long as everyone recognised that *it was a starting point*, not the end point. I think there was a lot of confusion as to what it was. While it was important that Babury was its champion, increasingly over time it got to be viewed as *his* plan in the higher education system in a lot of ways. That had pluses and minuses, it cut both ways. My bigger concern is how that led into NHESP II. (February 28b, 2017)

And it is to the NHESP II that I now turn.

Chapter 7 – National Higher Education Strategic Planning: 2016-2020

- *To create and develop public and private higher education systems in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan based on expanded financial and academic autonomy of higher education institutions to meet the current and future economic needs of the country.*

(the first objective of the NHESP II, MoHE, 2016, p. 12)

Introduction

This chapter extends the examination of the preceding chapters to a current draft of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (NHESP II). It follows a similar structure to chapters 5 and 6, and is written in two main parts. Firstly, I draw on interview data to set out the events surrounding the development of the NHESP II. These were markedly different to the events leading to the NHESP I, and have been instrumental in the current ambiguity surrounding the NHESP II. This ambiguity includes whether or not it is an official MoHE plan, or whether it is still being contested. Regardless, as interviews with key people highlight it is considered a de facto policy in the version which I examine in the second part of this chapter. When reflecting on my discussion of Giddens' 'fateful moments' in Chapter 2, there are several particularly fateful moments which occur in the development of the NHESP II, and these are outlined below. Secondly, I again analyse the NHESP II for its construction of Economic Growth Discourse, National Identity Discourse, and Human Rights Discourse. The NHESP II is considerably longer than the NHESP I, however as shall be seen in the pages below it retains the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse, even in its expanded form. Towards the end of this chapter I consider commonalities between the SAP, NHESP I, and NHESP II. As the final chapter focusing specifically on a policy document, Chapter 7 forms an important part of my thesis statement, namely to illustrate how a higher education sector can be reassembled upon a relatively narrow ideology following violent disassembly.

The National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The development of the NHESP II differed markedly from the development of the NHESP I. Below I recount the initial events largely through interview data. Whilst descriptive, it also illustrates the significant influence that external and supra-state actors can have on the development of education policy within conflict affected contexts, and contributes to a further discussion around legitimacy and sovereignty in Chapter 8. The authors of the NHESP I had begun to think about developing its successor by around 2013. However, through an incidental hallway encounter, they realised that the NHESP II was already being developed by a different part of the MoHE. As a lead policy author recounted:

The Deputy Minister and I had put together an outline for the next strategic plan, just as we thought about things. We met on an almost daily basis, and sometimes for long periods of time, you know, as people came in to do other business. There was still another year to go on the [first] strategic plan and we didn't think there would be any major things to do until sometime late in 2013, or maybe early 2014 when the plan was supposed to end. Sometime during 2013...I was on leave and I got an email from [my assistant] saying 'I ran into some guys who say their working on the strategic plan.' I said 'Oh, that's amazing. Have you talked to the Deputy Minister about that?' And he said 'No I wanted to talk to you first to see if you knew anything about it.'...[My assistant] had been in the building and these guys had come up to him, two or three of them, senior men. And they said 'We hear you worked on the last strategic plan', and he said 'Yeah'. They said 'Could we talk to you about this because we've been working on this for the last three months and quite frankly we don't really know too much about it.' So the first thing [my assistant] said was 'Have you talked to the Deputy Minister?' And they said 'No.' 'Have you read the strategic plan?' 'No.' And so [my assistant] said 'Boy, these guys are a bunch of turkeys!'...I mentioned it to the Deputy Minister, he hadn't heard a thing about it. (April 14, 2016)

The drafting of the NHESP II was underway. The initial writing group didn't include any members involved in developing the NHESP I. Academic Consultant B outlined how the development of the NHESP II began:

The World Bank created a team to work on it, and that team only parachuted in. It was based in Sri Lanka, not in Kabul. They collected a massive amount of data, and started to create a draft of the higher education strategic plan that nobody locally was a part of. Then they brought it to Babury and created a committee. (February 28b, 2017)

A lead policy author outlined how the exclusion of those involved in the NHESP I was a purposeful move by the then-Minister of Higher Education. According to the policy author, the process with the World Bank effectively side-lined the MoHE, and didn't engage with the NHESP I:

It turned out that the Minister had met with the World Bank. It was new people in the World Bank. They were awful, they did almost no consulting with the Ministry at all, and when they did they went to see the Minister, which is understandable but the Minister doesn't run higher education, it's basically the Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs plus the Minister of Finance, and others. But there had been quite a bit of tension between the Minister and the Deputy Minister, partly because the Minister wanted to do a lot of things that weren't legal, like admit the children of his friends and a variety of other things. I won't go in to some of the problems. He did other things. For example he approved a number of private higher education institutions for permission to operate even though they had been rejected by the committee which was run through the Deputy Minister's office, and included all the faculty members. One of them three times. He was always doing favours for MPs and so on. There was a tension there because the Deputy Minister would talk to MPs and he'd talk to anybody but he wouldn't do anything that wasn't legal. Even shady. I think that the Minister himself wanted to set up a committee to do the strategic plan, and probably had told them don't talk to Deputy Minister Babury. I don't know that for a fact, but I can't believe that they were dumb enough not to recognise or have found out [about Babury's experience with the NHESP I]...They had this expertise which had been not only involved in the preparation of the plan, but there were all these people in all these institutions that had

been involved in implementing it, and had been on the committee for accreditation and quality assurance, had been on the committee for improvement of the course work and had reviewed about a third of the programmes that had been revised and so on. It was such a waste. (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

As an experienced author on national strategic planning, the lead policy author expressed concern at the credentials of the committee formed by the World Bank and the Minister of Higher Education to write the NHESP II:

It was clear that none of them had every really done much in strategic planning. One of them had been on a strategic planning committee for some university outside of Afghanistan but that's a very different kettle of fish from writing a national strategic plan. [Babury] and I met with them a couple of times, gave them some suggestions on the kind of things that they might do. They were very wary of the Deputy Minister, and especially wary of me because I was an American. They wanted to visit a few universities but they didn't want to visit any of them outside of Kabul. They had a lot of ideas about what they wanted to do. I met with them two or three more times. The Deputy Minister got fed up and said 'I'm not going to meet with them anymore, if you can meet with them once or twice, fine.' Again, I found them not very receptive and pretty much a waste of time...Since most of these guys had been out of the country they weren't even really aware of what was going on. In an early period they didn't understand that accreditation already existed, for example. (April 14, 2016)

This lack of interest in engaging with those who had been involved with the NHESP I was also experienced by Academic Consultant B:

The World Bank just frustrated me greatly. I had some initial conversations with them in the early parts of NHESP II, and then they just were so not open to not following their process that it just drove me nuts. When they were creating it they did this presentation for the Ministry. It was this amazing PowerPoint that if I remember correctly was hundreds of slides. With data. They just overwhelmed folks, and a lot of it wasn't very relevant. (February 28b, 2017)

In 2014, the committee completed a first draft of the NHESP II. As Academic Consultant B highlighted, the first draft was highly problematic:

They created a committee and they got what was a mess, this huge – massive – I wouldn't call it a strategic plan – I don't know what you would call it. It was behind schedule, and the committee looking at it was all over the place. It was such a mess that there were a lot of debates about *what it should be*. (February 28b, 2017)

A lead policy author was brought into the loop again during 2014 by the Deputy Minister:

I received a document that was about 150 pages long. It was in English because the World Bank requires that the thing be in English. It was incomprehensible. Most of it was just a kind of series of essays, so if you're writing about quality assurance, you have a page of definitions of quality assurance, what accreditation looks like in these twenty five countries, and maybe a good undergraduate paper. But it was really hard to even figure out what they wanted to do...They had a budget plan which produced a budget which was I think eight or

nine, ten times the existing budget...When they're doing strategic plans, you've got to have a reasonable budget no matter how tremendous your needs are because no one will pay any attention to a proposal which calls for doubling your budget. And *ten times*, they won't take it seriously. Even 25% increase is a huge amount to ask for but it's got to be done carefully, which they hadn't done, and it was too long! (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

Perhaps to the surprise of the World Bank authors, the MoHE rejected the first draft. As Academic Consultant B said, "I think the World Bank was thinking that [the first draft of the NHESP II] would just be rubber stamped. To Babury's credit, he said this won't do" (February 28b, 2017). My email interview with a World Bank Higher Education Specialist initially involved in the development of this document was courteous, but brief. Where I asked if there was anything else that might be helpful for my study, he concluded the interview by writing, "If you have any ideas to help the government strengthen the benefits from their Strategic Plan, that could be helpful" (April 14, 2016). It was clear that his engagement with the NHESP II process was behind him.

The process of reshaping the draft NHESP II altered the make-up of the committee, and created space for Deputy Minister Babury and others that had been involved in the NHESP I:

There was a scaled down version of the committee that was largely, but not completely, picked by Babury, with some input from the Minister who was Obaid at that point. Some of them did just go through the motions, and there were a couple who were really involved in it. That created a more pared down version. It went through some stages. It got presented, the committee said ok. There were several compromises in there. Then there was a national conference where they invited a lot of leaders from the whole higher education system to get some feedback on what was the penultimate draft. This created a little bit more controversy. Babury spearheaded the final document...because the World Bank largely has to check boxes, and I'm not being too cynical here. To a certain extent the World Bank just wanted it done. (Academic Consultant B, February 28b, 2017)

Some involved in the NHESP I were also recruited to support the rewriting process. As a lead policy author remembered, when confronted with the initial 150-page draft of the NHESP II:

I cut it in half before I went to Afghanistan, but I didn't feel that I could cut it more than that, I mean these guys were authors of it, and they were very unhappy with me cutting it so much, because every word was precious. I know, my words are all precious too. I met with them and we worked together for two months on turning it into something viable...we did eventually get a plan that was not great, but it was ok. It was defensible. (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

The resulting draft was finalised in 2015, before becoming a victim to the high turnover of Ministers of Higher Education. During the second phase of writing on the NHESP II, Deputy Minister Babury had been Acting Minister of Higher Education, and the lack of a formal Minister, coupled with the 2015 elections, slowed the final release of the NHESP II:

Things got held up not only by the lack of a Minister, there was almost six months lost because of the elections. Nothing really happens during the elections. That's what's delayed the project, and so that's why, as I wrote you, it's now 2016 because even if it'd come out when it looked like it was going to come out in November, what's the point in having it start in 2015 when we've got one month left. I mean you'd just discourage people, 'Already we're a year behind,' so that's why the dates were changed. (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

The lead policy author went on to say that once a Minister was confirmed, and once she agreed with the content of the NHESP II, she made an unprecedented move in terms of sending the strategic plan to Cabinet to be ratified:

We did finally get a draft that the Ministry was happy with, but all of this kept getting delayed because there wasn't a Minister for some time. Although Babury was acting Minister, and we could have released it, he felt it was important that the new Minister see it. The first choices of Minister were turned down, and I think it was six or eight months before there was a Minister, and then it took a long time to get her approved. And they approved some, but not all, and so on. So there was a delay where nothing much could happen although the plan was basically finished. There was a Minister coming, and then she was named, and she wasn't able to be there for about three months, and then she didn't want to approve it right away. I don't blame her, I wouldn't if I'd been in her shoes either. She wanted to read it! And to get some feedback. She was positive, she was very pleased about some of the things including the gender stuff in there. But she was a very timid person, so she really thought it should be approved by Cabinet and the President, which hadn't been the case earlier, and hadn't been the case for the Ministry of Education either. But it wasn't a *bad* idea. It was sent to Cabinet, and it got lost, and various things, but anyway it took them a long time and it was only six weeks ago that feedback came from Cabinet. (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

This back-and-forth with the President's office continued for some time:

There's been essentially ongoing debate with the President's office about whether it's really acceptable as a strategic plan or not. Part of the problem is that there's not actually a clear mechanism that this one is, in fact, the plan. Whose authority is it to accept the plan? Was it the Ministry's authority or was it the President's office? I think right now, if you ask the Ministry, say Minister Momand, and Deputy Minister Babar Karzai³²...they have the final. NHESP II is done, final deal, this is their working document. I think if you ask Ghani and Qayoumi – NHESP II, Babury thinks it's completed, it goes to the President's office. Qayoumi had *just* become advisor, and [Ghani and Qayoumi] are old college friends. Qayoumi was the President of San Jose State. I mean he's got bona fides. They said, 'well wait, we have some issues with this.' There was quite a bit of back and forth. It got tense between Babury who thought they were meddling in the Strategic Plan as Johnny-come-latelys. But cooler heads prevailed. There were some pretty terse emails and discussions for a while. Cooler heads prevailed. I was involved in some of the brokering of getting people to have reasonable conversations. (Academic Consultant B, February 28b, 2017)

Not long after this interview in 2017 Minister Momand was sacked, and two more Ministers of Higher Education have been in place since then. Upcoming national elections may see a new

³² Deputy Minister Babar Karzai took over from Deputy Minister Osman Babury, who was forced out after a ten year run at the beginning of 2017.

Minister of Higher Education installed. In the meantime, those who continue to run the MoHE's daily activities, according to Academic Consultant B, continue to use the NHESP II as a de facto policy.

The narrative above, important in examining the NHESP II's policy development, outlines two particularly 'fateful moments' in the development of the Ministry's second strategic plan to guide the ongoing growth of higher education nationally. Firstly, the process was highly influenced by extra-state actors. The clearest example of this is the World Bank driving the policy development, however the international experience of consultants was also considerable in terms of mechanisms by which higher education policy ideas are transliterated across contexts. Secondly, the process was highly influenced by national actors. The significant turnover of Ministers and the uncertainty which then permeated the MoHE's legitimacy to ratify the policy in the final instance have led to a semi-official strategic plan. Some cite the policy as the NHESP 2016-2020, and indeed this draft of the policy is the current de facto manuscript. Others point to the fact that it hasn't been officially ratified to highlight the potential for ongoing contestation of its content, and to question the legitimacy of its implementation. This narrative also highlights the attempt by Afghanistan's elites to exercise sovereignty over a policy whose instigation and main development took place outside of Afghanistan's democratically elected government. I explore this further in Chapter 8.

Below I turn my attention explicitly to the content of the NHESP II to identify the dominant discourses which its various themes construct. Once again the dominant discourse within the NHESP II is an Economic Growth Discourse. I begin by exploring its construction through the second strategic plan before identifying the manner in which the policy continues to construct both a Human Rights Discourse, and a National Identity Discourse. Once again, the three discourses of Economic Growth, Human Rights, and National Identity emerge in multiple ways. In some instances, they are clearly distinct. In others, the discourses are only evident once a further examination of the policy's underlying framing of key words or actors is uncovered.

Economic Growth Discourse in the NHESP II

Economic Growth Discourse is again the dominant discourse within the NHESP II. The second strategic plan for Afghanistan's higher education sector follows a similar strategy to justify public expenditure, and to attract donor funding, for higher education employed in the NHESP I. This means positioning higher education primarily through a human capital frame, and making the argument for not only funding, but increases in quality, better governance, and a return to the question of centralisation vs institutional autonomy in order to promote better access to the labour market for graduates, and to meet the demands of employers and industry. As shall be seen below,

the discourse of Economic Growth is constructed primarily through three themes: access; quality; and governance.

Access for the Expansion of Human Capital

Access remains a top priority for the MoHE within the NHESP II, and demonstrates D'Souza's (2018) connection between a notion of rights and the current neoliberal stage of capitalism outlined in Chapter 1. Whilst access can certainly be understood through Human Rights Discourse within this study, the NHESP II draws the notion of access into the economic instrumentalist framing of Economic Growth Discourse. The policy's second goal is to "increase and manage access, especially for women students and people from conflict and underserved areas; to insure that increased access does not undermine quality improvement" (MoHE, 2016, p. 12). Here, the emphasis appears to construct a Human Rights Discourse, for instance its emphasis on female students, and on preserving higher education quality. Indeed, the NHESP II makes significant gains on its predecessor in considering issues related to women (see Figure 6.3 in the preceding chapter). Further, the NHESP II is concerned with consolidating some of the developments to do with quality that were made under the NHESP I. In fact, the NHESP II's first goal centres on quality, explored further in the following section. However, by exploring the NHESP II's framing of both women and quality, one can see that this policy goal is grounded in human capital theory, and thus constructs an Economic Growth Discourse.

Within the NHESP II, both Economic Growth Discourse and Human Rights Discourse (discussed further in the following section) appear when considering women in higher education. Women are first understood as an important social group whose exclusion from higher education has significant economic implications. In a 7-page section entitled *Gender Issue*, the opening paragraphs argue that:

[w]omen are potentially an enormous reservoir of human resources that can make a major contribution to the acceleration of national development...the labor force participation rate is only 47% and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$424 nationally for women is only one third that of men...Education is key to the full realization of women's human potential. It is a cornerstone for building women's human capital and a requirement for their meaningful participation, effective leadership and enjoyment of rights as citizens. (MoHE, 2016, pp. 55–56)

There are several startling statements within this opening quote. The framing of women's participation in higher education is explicitly through human capital theory. Only once women have had access to education are they capable of having *meaningful participation* in society, or able to *enjoy their rights as citizens*. Whilst these phrases may have more to do with clumsy wording than explicit intent, and with the overall purpose of the document to both guide the sector *and* attract donor funding, women's framing in the NHESP II ties in to a larger phenomenon within education

and international development communities in which educated women are instrumentalised. Within this broader discourse, women and girls are educated to increase GDP, reduce infant mortality rates, reduce child malnutrition, decrease instances of child marriage, slow the spread of HIV/AIDS, and to reduce the risk of trafficking for sexual, factory, or domestic slavery (cf. World Bank, 2018). Several scholars argue for going beyond such an instrumentalist approach to education and women in development (cf. Kirk, 2004; Unterhalter, 2007a, 2007b).

Policy authors were keen to promote a particular kind of access in the NHESP II. With a policy-goal emphasising access in conjunction with quality, emphasis is placed on two mechanisms in sorting access to publicly funded higher education. These are, the NHESP II's "National Priority Disciplines" (MoHE, 2016, p. 44), and the Kankour (university entrance examination). Whilst I address the Kankour in my analysis of Human Rights Discourse below, the NHESP II's introduction of National Priority Disciplines is instrumental in constructing the Economic Growth Discourse.

The NHESP II states that priority and non-priority disciplines are introduced in order to manage enrolment increases. Priority disciplines are "those disciplines that are labor oriented and are important for the future economic development of Afghanistan" (MoHE, 2016, p. 44). In 2013, according to the NHEPS II, only 39 percent of enrolments were in priority disciplines, and admissions during the NHESP II's coverage intended to alter this percentage. Drawing directly from a UNESCO document, cited as the source for these disciplines, nine broad areas are set out. These are:

1. Physical and Life Sciences – Natural Sciences (biology, chemistry and physics), Geology and Earth Science
2. Computing – Computer Science and computer programming
3. Engineering – Manufacturing, construction, electro-mechanics, chemical technology, and mining
4. Health – Pharmacy, Curative medicine, stomatology, public health, pharmacy, complimentary health sciences and nursing
5. Environmental Protection – Environment and environmental engineering
6. Agriculture – Agriculture, veterinary, forestry, crop and livestock production, agronomy, irrigation, animal husbandry and horticulture
7. Communication and information technologies
8. Management and policy administration
9. English language and English Literature. (MoHE, 2016, p. 44)

A moderately critical view concerning the relevance of this list for Afghanistan's broader cultural political economy uncovers some immediate questions: Is Computing necessarily a priority area for a country with irregular electricity supply in its main cities, and limited electrical coverage regionally? What is English language and English Literature doing on a priority list for Afghanistan's higher education system? More worryingly, the NHESP II aims to tie admission to higher education directly

to these areas. As the authors make clear, in “addition to these priorities, the MoHE will consider additional areas for its support such as Public Health, Mining and Math based on evidence of the need for growth, job possibilities, and their relationship to national development” (MoHE, 2016, p. 45).

When considering how to manage access, the economy is a primary consideration. This is seen in the justification for the priority disciplines, and by tying admission to these priority disciplines. It is also seen in the MoHE’s explicit statement on their parameters when considering expanding enrolments.

The first parameter positions access to higher education firmly within the Economic Growth Discourse:

The MoHE strategy is to expand university enrollments while making sure that expansion is controlled in order to take into account the following parameters: (i) the relevance of the degree programs for the labor market and for the future economic development of the country. (MoHE, 2016, p. 45)

Immediately following this statement we see the entangled nature of various discourses emerge.

The second point aims to promote access for those with financial barriers to enrolment, fitting more firmly across National Identity and Human Rights Discourses. The final point intends to promote access for women. As we have seen above, whilst this maintains elements of the Human Rights Discourse at face value, the underlying human capital theory used to justify women’s inclusion in higher education embeds the parameters to manage access firmly within an Economic Growth Discourse.

Keeping a careful eye on employability of its graduates was important for the MoHE. A former deputy-vice chancellor at a rural university highlighted the importance for this provision:

I would say that at the moment a lot of programmes that are established are duplicated, and they do not meet the need of the society. I mean in the relevance of the kind of degrees that they have. You will notice that if you see any private university, the majority of them have Faculties of Law. You will see that so many people graduate with law degrees, and you have limited positions for that. So there has to be a balance. Where the Higher Education Strategic Plan should focus, is to have projections of where we are and where we’re going to be, in terms of the labour force that we’re going to need for the country. I think that would be effective, how to have the data projection, because I see this as a disaster at the moment! You have so many people that cannot be employed in a relevant sector, and so you end up with unemployment, and they do not have relevant experience and skills to be able to work in other places. There is a gap between what you need and what you supply. (February 27, 2017)

Because the World Bank had taken over the process for developing the NHESP II there was money available, for instance to undertake an employer demand project. However, this wasn't something that the initial writing team were interested in and the opportunity was missed:

One of the things we had suggested that they do, because we hadn't had time to do it, nor money – and they had a whole bunch of money, they had \$400, 000 [USD] to work with – was to talk to employers. You know, 'How happy are you with the graduates in engineering?' 'No. No no.' There were so many things that they did have the money to do, and could have done, that would've been helpful. *You [need to] get some feedback!* (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

As the NHESP II cautions, "the MoHE must be careful not to allow increases in enrolment in higher education that produces a pool of graduates who cannot find jobs. Higher education training needs to be relevant to the job market" (MoHE, 2016, p. 48). As Baćević (2014) illustrates, large numbers of people who complete education but are unable to become employed can have significant implications for social cohesion and stability. However, the implications of the gap between 'demand and supply' are left at the economic level in the NHESP II.

Quality and Economic Growth

Improving quality retains a central position in the NHESP II, and the conceptualisation of quality is consistent with the connection to economic growth found in the NHESP I. However, an explicit definition of quality is absent from both the NHESP I and NHESP II. Within the NHESP II, an undefined notion of quality is presented as instrumental to meeting both economic and social needs nationally. Of these two, a dominant emphasis is placed upon meeting economic needs. The first goal for the NHESP II is "to continue to focus on quality improvement...to meet employer needs, and foster national development" (MoHE, 2016, p. 6). As with the NHESP I, a key justification for the explicit emphasis on quality improvement in the NHESP II is that more work is required "to bring quality up to the level at which graduates will be able to find good jobs, set up their own businesses, and [make] the contribution so badly needed to national development and the well-being of the citizens of Afghanistan" (MoHE, 2016, p. 11). Indeed, the NHESP II's mission statement aims to "provide and develop balanced, equitable and competitive access to quality higher education according to the needs of the labor market and country..." (MoHE, 2016, p. 11). The dominant conceptualisation of quality within Afghanistan's national higher education strategic planning is thus inextricably linked to higher education's primary purpose of driving economic growth.

To meet the purpose of driving economic growth, the NHESP II advocates a close partnership with businesses and employers. The policy authors set this out clearly, stating that a:

critical part of higher education is to insure that graduates are prepared for the job market, whether it is employment in the public or private sector, government, or establishing

businesses of their own. During NHESP: 2010-2014 the MoHE insisted that curriculum upgrading and revision include a needs assessment both in terms of employers and the needs of related higher education disciplines...During NHESP: 2016-2020, institutions must take the next steps in the process. That involves more detailed discussions with employers and graduates about the utility and appropriateness of their university training...Faculties will be encouraged to work with employers to insure that students have the specific skills needed for employment...The MoHE will also work with institutions and employers to identify a broad range of general soft skills needed...(MoHE, 2016, p. 32)

These relationships are to inform the development of curriculum, and shape the content and delivery of programmes delivered by higher education institutions. Thus, the economic instrumentalist purpose of higher education is explicitly intended to drive curriculum content development.

Internationalisation plays a specific role in the quest for quality within the NHESP II, and builds on the notions of catch-up competitiveness outlined in Chapter 6. Whilst the NHESP I set out to internationalise its curriculum, academic staff, and programmes in order to develop regional legitimacy, competitiveness, and quality, the term *internationalisation* was never used. However, in the NHESP II an entire section is dedicated to the internationalisation of Afghanistan's higher education system, and is an important thread in the construction of an Economic Growth Discourse. Internationalisation within the NHESP II continues the NHESP I's imperative to develop a competitive edge in a globalised market place, and takes a narrow definition of internationalisation in order to fit with the purpose of promoting economic growth:

The limited foreign language knowledge and inadequate awareness of other world affairs of students and faculty members in Afghanistan poses huge cost and losses to the country – whether in business, diplomacy, or trade...Afghanistan's ability to attract foreign investment, expand trade, promote tourism, and represent our nation abroad is badly hurt by our failure to internationalize – to learn about other countries, to study their cultures and policies, to understand their values and ideologies, and to speak their languages. (MoHE, 2016, p. 28)

Thus defined, internationalisation focuses primarily on the development of foreign language expertise and its crucial role in employment. Essentially, graduates “without a foreign language competence are not prepared for today's job market and not employable in many areas which require multilingualism (especially in English)” (MoHE, 2016, p 28). The Curriculum Commission is specifically asked to foster better internationalisation amongst higher education institutions nationally.

The section on internationalisation expands on the clear intention and objectives for Afghanistan's higher education sector to increasingly internationalise. A key part of the NHESP II's vision is to develop a system of higher education which is “internationally recognized and respected by the

community” (MoHE, 2016, p. 11), and a core policy objective is to “develop educational curricula, responsive to the national and *international* economic needs of the country” (MoHE, 2016, p. 12, emphasis added). Further to the outward view of quality found in the NHESP I, the NHESP II seeks to “improve the mechanisms for quality assurance of higher education institutions with international standards” (MoHE, 2016, p. 13), and proposes exchange programmes for students and academic staff between national and international universities to “promote and enhance academic capacity” (MoHE, 2016, p. 13). In these ways, internationalisation is seen as integral to developing economic growth nationally, and in driving quality – itself a theme which constructs the Economic Growth Discourse within Afghanistan’s higher education strategic planning.

Governance and Institutional Differentiation

The tensions between centralisation and institutional autonomy, first identified within the SAP and continued through the NHESP I, reappear within the NHESP II. When speaking of tensions within the NHESP II the lead policy author identified decentralisation as a clear area of friction:

I think there are some tensions in this document. One of them relates to decentralisation. The final version does not have the universities becoming a hundred percent autonomous even after five years, but it does, as the previous one did, talk about increased autonomy and certainly Minister Dadfar and the Deputy Minister believed strongly in that. The problem for decentralisation for most things was that the Ministry of Finance wouldn’t allow any decentralisation. It was only finally in November of 2013 that the Deputy Minister worked out a compromise that allowed the institutions to start keeping money that they’d raised. That was a terrible problem because [if you take the case of] Pharmacy, where over the years they had been testing all the drugs that came in to the country on behalf of the Ministry of Health, and had been paid for that with a little more. And they’d used the profit from that to build and furnish two laboratories. Part of the furnishing related to the kind of equipment they needed to do the testing, but that meant that the equipment was available for students, and faculty members. But suddenly, any money they gained had to be turned over to the treasury, and they couldn’t deduct from it the cost of the reagents, which are expensive, for replacement, or paying for the technicians who did this stuff overtime. You can multiply that times a lot of other places; agriculture, engineering, other places which had the ability to do things which generated money. Even evening courses...I think all the Chancellors understood, but everybody objects to the number of signatures you need if you’re going to buy something. If I’m a faculty member and I have to wait two months to get my pencils I’m going to be pissed. (April 14, 2016)

Within this most recent policy, the emphasis of the tension centres on notions of financial autonomy, and what the implications of that might be for the sector.

There was also this feeling, particularly at the bigger universities, that ‘We want to be a hundred percent autonomous.’ That’s what had driven the original proposal. But again, in the first place you have to amend the constitution to do that, but secondly, look at the University of California, or Wisconsin, anyplace, *somebody* has to make decisions. You can’t have every institution giving a PhD. You can’t have every institution offering high expense courses, or everybody doing business if there aren’t enough students...That’s an area of tension. There were a number of people who were disappointed when the thing came out

because, although it talks about it, it also talks, as you saw, about the fact that you do have to have some central coordinating body. Unfortunately the Ministry of Finance has made a decision that makes it very hard even for the financial decentralisation to work very well. They have said that you have to wait a year to get your money. Oh my God, absolutely ludicrous! As one of the Chancellors said to me, 'We were offered \$200, 000 by one of the banks to do something specific, but when I told them that we couldn't spend it for a year they said, forget it.' Their view is if you can't get it for a year, you'll probably never get it! (Lead policy author, April 14, 2016)

As the lead policy author highlighted, for the initial writing team there were some serious oversights regarding the potential for institutional autonomy in the first draft of the NHESP II:

They also had some suggestions of things that they wanted to do which just didn't make sense. One of them was that by the end of the second year of the plan period, all of the institutions would be autonomous. *And they meant completely autonomous!* There are 36 institutions now, you'd have 36 budgets submitted to parliament – you can imagine what that would be like. Just *one* little problem! And of course there was the legal problem, that the constitution says that the Ministry has authority over public and private education. (April 14, 2016)

The policy rewrite saw these suggestions dropped from the NHESP II, and a far more cautious and pragmatic approach to decentralising financial responsibilities to institutions.

The NHESP II aims to be clear about the distribution of responsibilities between the MoHE and individual institutions as it pursues a decentralisation agenda. The policy authors illustrate the fact that a certain degree of responsibility must necessarily be centralised within the MoHE, however that institutional autonomy for financial and academic affairs should increase:

The MoHE, for the system, is responsible to, donors and the citizens of Afghanistan for the financial and academic integrity of the system. The MoHE also has the responsibility to steer the collective efforts of its institutions to greater successes. Those overall responsibilities cannot be delegated. At the same time, the MoHE should delegate many of the functions it has traditionally overseen at both the academic and financial levels to the institutional level. The MoHE is committed to substantially increase both the financial and academic autonomy of those institutions *that demonstrate the capacity to operate effectively with that increased responsibility* during the operation of the NHESP: 2016-2020. At the same time, *the institutions must recognize the MoHE's responsibility to coordinate, monitor, and oversee the system as a whole*. Increased autonomy comes with increased accountability and responsibility. (MoHE, 2016, p. 64, emphasis added)

In addition to the delineation of responsibilities between central and institutional authorities, the quote above makes a striking admission about the two populations which the MoHE is accountable to: Afghanistan's citizens; and *donors*. Once again, this illustrates the ongoing tensions surrounding legitimacy and sovereignty within the NHESP II, and the wider government itself (see Chapter 8).

A key component of the MoHE's centralised responsibilities is focused on the division of institutional labour. This was identified explicitly by a lead policy author as an area of tension within the NHESP II:

You'll see there's talk about establishing distinctions between types of institutions, that only some would offer PhDs, and Masters, and that not all would offer Masters. Every single Chancellor thinks that their institution should eventually offer PhDs and Masters so even the limited number that we proposed – which I thought was bigger than it should be – was contentious in the revised committee, and there are a lot of people who think that every institution should. But the cost of particularly PhDs is at least ten times, and probably forty or fifty times, more than an undergraduate programme. It just doesn't make sense. Plus, you dilute the quality. (April 14, 2016)

The policy focus on what the MoHE terms *Institutional Differentiation* justifies the division of institutional labour primarily through an economic instrumentalist frame. The NHESP II defines a differentiated system as one “that is diversified by purposes, strengths, and missions to enable greater effectiveness, flexibility, and efficiency ...Diversified systems are more effective and efficient, encourage institutional innovation, better serve the needs of the labor market, and broaden student access” (MoHE, 2016, p. 29). Quite apart from using language familiar to critics of neoliberal university structures in the global North (cf. Brown, 2015), the outcomes for Afghanistan's system represent key themes that I have identified as constructing an Economic Growth Discourse in the last three chapters.

A significant source of tension within the NHESP II is the inclusion of community colleges within the system's institutional differentiation – a policy intention carried over from the NHESP I. The inclusion of community colleges was pointed to by Academic Consultant A as an instance of international agendas making their way in to Afghanistan's NHESPs and higher education's systemic structure. When asked about the alignment between his organisation's USAID-funded activities and the strategic plans, he made reference to the lead policy author's interest in community colleges:

We, meaning [US]AID, may not have had the same priorities and might have pushed one thing rather than another. And of course [the lead policy author] had his own biases. He wanted community colleges, which is in the plans from day one. What we're doing right now is a kind of compromise. We're not building community colleges, we're starting associate degrees within four year colleges. Which is actually, I think, fairly reasonable. It doesn't involve setting up a whole new physical plant. It builds on the use of the existing physical plant. (February 28a, 2017)

The inclusion of community colleges in the NHESPs has generated tension between the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, as well as between various consultants and the lead policy author.

A fundamental part of the tensions arising from the inclusion of community colleges is the fact that the MoE's responsibilities include tertiary education programmes which are 2 years or less. In this way, the MoE maintains responsibility for Initial Teacher Education, as well as a range of TVET programmes. Initially, community colleges were proposed as a 2 year programme to fill the gap between expensive 4 year degrees and the pressing need for an increased number of skilled workers

able to meet demand for middle management and skilled labour positions. However, this was introduced in the NHESP I in 2010, after a concerted effort to develop Associate Degrees had been underway in the preceding years to meet the same purpose. As the extended quote from Academic Consultant B below illustrates, the tensions between Ministries as well as key individual actors surfaced around community colleges for multiple reasons:

In NHESP I, back when they were trying to – a lot of it was trying to envision what they really wanted. There were some really unrealistic timelines. It introduces the idea of community colleges. I think at that point there wasn't even 20 public universities. There weren't enough *tashkeel*³³ positions for those universities. There was a growth plan. The politics – this is where there's a disconnect. The politics being what they are there is so much pressure from MPs, a couple of the Ministers were very glad to allow private institutions to grow that were owned by MPs and friends of MPs, but also this sort of – you can't say pork barrel in Afghanistan – but that's ok because in some ways they were what we would call here pork barrel projects for local MPs. All of a sudden we're up to 34 public universities. A lot of them are in people's living rooms in smaller provinces because the MPs wanted to say that they brought in a higher education institute into their province. I say all this because at the time when they put community colleges into the higher education strategic plan the thought was, this would be a good growth area...There's this idea of community colleges [in the strategic plans]. This is creating real problems at this point, because now we've been instrumental in starting associate degree programmes. Like, it's not going to work to have community colleges...And yet the Ministry of Education is saying, wait a minute – this always happens with policy in Afghanistan – depending on how they translate the notion of community college, the Ministry of Education says 'that's really under us'. The civil service commission says 'we're not going to create *tashkeel* positions for these because they're already needed in other areas'. The real focus should have been on the need for associate degrees. There was this disconnect. And so now there's a lot of policy, some of which I'm involved in, and how do you interpret that? How do you *implement* it? You want ownership and understanding. I finally had Babury to the point where he got the difference, and why they wanted associate degrees and not community colleges, because we couldn't create whole new administrative structures. So you create associate degrees *in* the universities. *If* you have a community college at some point it's because you create a unit *within* the universities, not separate from! Now there's this big legal battle over associate degrees because there's all these different understandings. In part, this is because the Ministry keeps talking about community colleges, not associate degrees. Here's where there's, again, a disconnect with what's in the plan, because folks like us come in and say 'community colleges' – which I might have warned against if I had been involved with that – without thinking through what are the consequences of that. That's just one example. There are many. (Academic consultant, February 28b, 2017)

Community colleges are the fourth category (and bottom tier) of tertiary institutions within the NHESP II's hierarchy of institutional differentiation, and according to policy authors "offer badly need[ed] university-level instruction in technical and professional areas that provide technical skills, career preparation, and training focused on employment" (MoHE, 2016, p. 51).

³³ *Tashkeel* is a Dari term used by the Afghan government which means a "Staffing establishment or list of sanctioned posts" (Carnahan, Manning, Bontjer, & Guimbert, 2004, p. xii).

Institutional differentiation is divided between four tiers, with a clear pyramid structure. Top-tier institutions are referred to as Flagship Universities, and run as a research-intensive institution. Only Flagship Universities can offer PhDs, and the number of these institutions is tightly restricted. Comprehensive Universities are to develop “[b]road comprehensive undergraduate programs” (MoHE, 2016, p. 31) and offer Master-level degrees. Higher Education Institutions are third-tier institutions, followed by the contentious community college category. A key justification for the tiered structure of higher education as set out by the NHESP II connects to themes of quality:

A nation like Afghanistan with aspirations for development must have several very high quality universities to provide the basis for knowledge development and creation of the conditions needed to meet the needs of its citizens. To compete in today’s world nations need high quality higher education institutions and that is nearly impossible without a diversified higher education system to produce the knowledge and innovation needed for development and effective competition in a highly competitive environment. (MoHE, 2016, p. 30)

This stratified system is justified through an Economic Growth Discourse, and as necessary to create and maintain Afghanistan’s competitiveness within a globalised knowledge economy.

The assembly of three main themes within the NHESP II cumulatively construct a discourse of Economic Growth within the policy. Considerations around managing access are firmly framed through economic growth and human capital theory. Priority disciplines are likewise understood through their potential to contribute to national economic development. A high quality system is seen as fundamental to promoting human capital, and emphasises international competitiveness in both faculty and graduates. Questions of governance again hold issues of centralisation and autonomy in tension, with a primary justification for greater devolution of responsibilities to institutions built on notions of efficiency, fiscal autonomy, flexibility, and enhanced capacity to meet the needs of the labour market. At various points, social goals for the sector are deeply entangled with goals of economic growth. As the section above has demonstrated, these entanglements may initially obfuscate an economic imperative, however the framing of each phenomenon through human capital theory and the explicit and consistent intent for higher education to drive economic growth illustrates the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within the NHESP II. I now turn to explore the policy construction of Human Rights and National Identity discourses below.

Human Rights Discourse in the NHESP II

The NHESP II continues the development of a Human Rights Discourse. As highlighted in Chapter 6, this does not construe higher education within the broader rights-based approach to education. Whilst Human Rights Discourse is constructed predominantly through themes related to access, the NHESP II makes it clear that:

[n]ot all high school graduates belong in higher education nor will they qualify for admission. Indeed, of those taking the admissions examination, only 25% on average get a high enough score for admission. At the same time, many of these students would be better off in terms of their skills, attending TVET, going to teacher training, or attending the new Community Colleges. (MoHE, 2016, p. 41)

The policy emphasis on access develops multiple components which construct the NHESP II's Human Rights Discourse, all centring on a policy push for inclusive access.

Inclusive Access

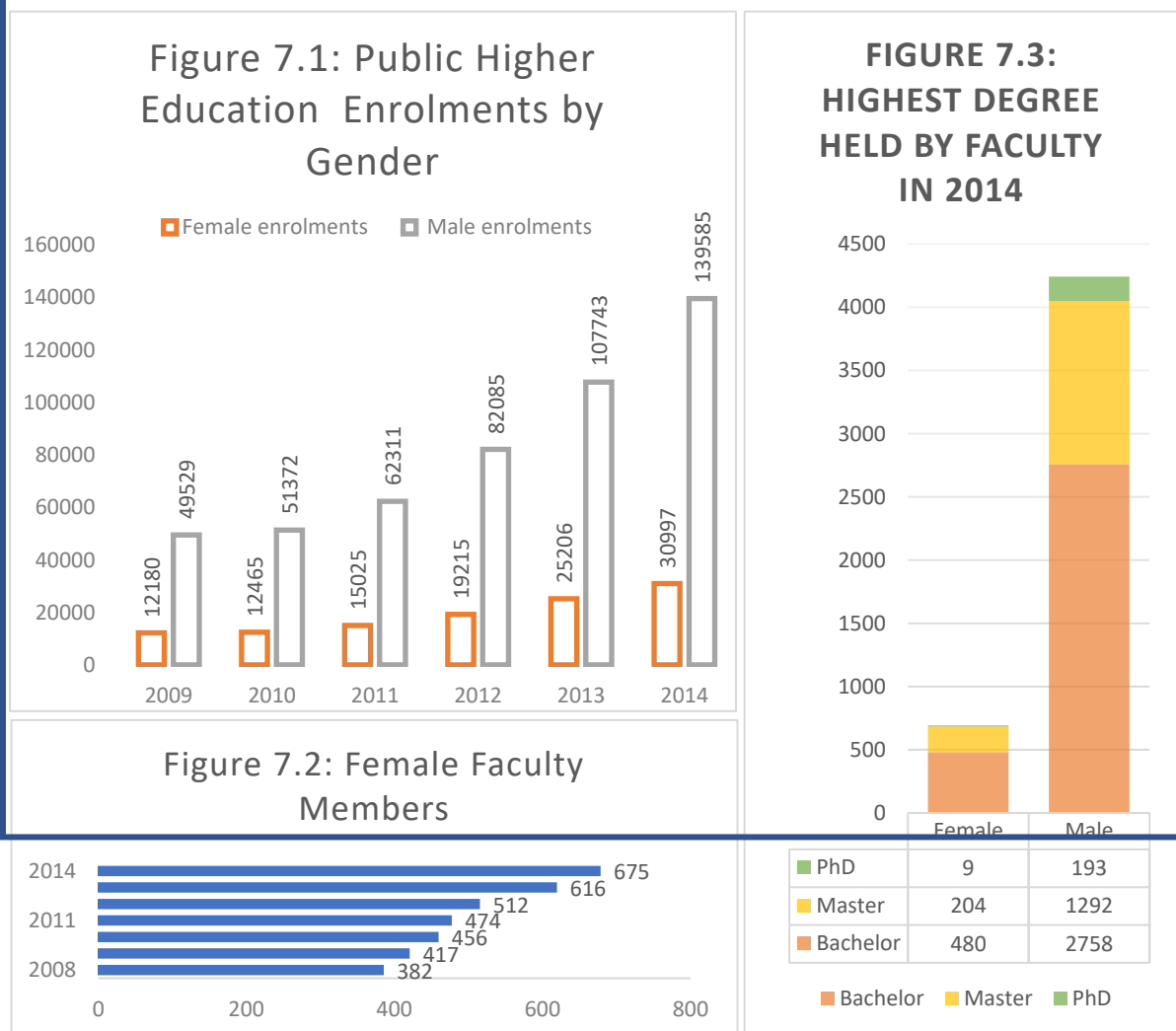
Female access to higher education is a highly complex issue in Afghanistan. As highlighted in previous chapters, policy initiatives have been well-intended, but found wanting in promoting systemic change. As multiple participants highlighted in Chapter 6, changing women's experiences in Afghanistan is a long-term project, and the NHESP II makes a reasonable step up in emphasis from the NHESP I. Perhaps in order to prevent a similar mobilisation of conservative forces seen in the development of the first strategic plan, the NHESP II structures its introduction to considering women in higher education carefully. After an opening justification for women's inclusion in higher education through a human capital frame (outlined above), the NHESP II goes on to remind its readers that Afghanistan is a signatory to two international agreements on gender equity, namely the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*, and the *Beijing Platform for Action*. Here, the MoHE makes clear that it is "committed to the equal treatment of all students, staff and faculty members regardless of gender" (MoHE, 2016, p. 56).

A specific concern for the MoHE is the falling *percentage* of female students in higher education. Whilst the real numbers of female students have increased significantly over time, the overall increases in enrolments has led to a percentage decrease in the female student population (See Figure 7.1). As illustrated in the table below, the total percentage of female students in the public higher education system peaked at 19.5% in 2010. Since then, whilst there has been a significant percentage increase of female students year on year, the rate at which male students have been admitted to higher education institutions has increased at a faster rate. Three drivers of this percentage-decline of female students are highlighted in the NHESP II. Firstly, the number of female faculty members; secondly, access to appropriate infrastructure during study; and thirdly, poorer performance on the Kankour examination compared to male students. The NHESP II offers potential solutions to each of these problems in turn.

As outlined in Chapter 6, a key part of low female faculty numbers is a result of systemic exclusion of female students which became particularly pronounced during the Taliban era. During the NHESP I's

coverage, gradual increases in the numbers of female faculty were made (see Figure 7.2). One of the difficulties with promoting further gender parity in terms of advanced degrees is the numbers of female faculty with advanced degrees able to supervise female students (see figure 7.3). Whilst the NHESP II sets out the importance of providing “incentives for the female faculties” (MoHE, 2016, p. 59), what these incentives might consist of is not defined. However, the MoHE perceived that the

increase of “in-country graduate programmes over the next five years...will allow more female faculty members to pursue their graduate studies” (MoHE, 2016, p. 59). This was to complement an increased emphasis on female faculty members to be awarded a larger number of scholarships for study abroad over the NHESP II’s coverage.



Access to appropriate infrastructure is a particular concern for female students. This includes adequate toilet facilities, but also adequate housing. According to the NHESP II, improving:

access for women is hindered by a number of factors. Foremost among them is the lack of suitable, safe housing for women with only 14% of women having dormitory and an additional 6% getting funding to find private housing on their own. This compares to 36% of men getting dorms or housing support” (MoHE, 2016, p. 59).

Of the available dorm rooms, only 11% are dedicated for female students. A particular emphasis of the NHESP II is to build dormitories for female students. These concerns around the infrastructure barriers to female access make up a significant emphasis of the NHESP II's third goal, which aims to "expand and improve the quality and size of the infrastructure" (MoHE, 2016, p. 12) in order to meet the massive demands placed on the physical system due to enrolment expansion. As this goal is set out in more detail, access for women is a fundamental consideration which underpins the first two of five priorities:

Priorities for infrastructure improvement and expansion are, in the following order, 1) additional dormitories to allow for the admission of more women students; 2) improved washrooms throughout the system, especially for women...(MoHE, 2016, p. 79).

As a USAID Education Specialist highlighted, promoting access to higher education was central to its involvement in the sector in Afghanistan. However, USAID's emphasis has been directed at promoting access to Afghanistan's first private institution – the American University of Afghanistan. When asked about USAID's role in increasing gender equity, they highlight that:

USAID integrates gender across its portfolio in Afghanistan. We work with universities and the Ministry of Higher Education to increase spaces for women students in higher education while helping women also gain the qualifications necessary to take on roles as faculty and administrators. For example, USAID played the leading role in the establishment of the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), providing start-up and operational funding. A pillar of our focus has been increasing the number of female students able to attend AUAF. USAID is constructing a dormitory as part of the Promote Project, the largest gender program at USAID, to directly address a fundamental barrier for women seeking to attend AUAF – the lack of secure housing. (June 28, 2016)

Through both private and public sectors, then, infrastructure requirements which promote female inclusion in higher education is outlined as a priority.

As part of infrastructure developments, a Women's University is proposed to address barriers to female access to higher education:

The MoHE proposes to establish a single women's university – an institution dedicated to the highest quality in a wide range of disciplines including the hard sciences, law, some areas of medicine, social sciences, perhaps engineering, and other areas critical to Afghan development and the needs of society...Major donor support is needed and expected. (MoHE, 2016, p. 60).

The institution is intended to be an elite university, and the whilst the NHESP II acknowledges that in future there may be additional women's universities, this institution would be the women's Flagship University. Interestingly, "only public higher education women's universities will be allowed in

Afghanistan. This is to ensure that this effort is of the highest quality and does not fall into the trap of for-profit motives” (MoHE, 2016, p. 61).

The introduction of this concept was roundly criticized during my interview with a former Minister of Higher Education, in which he argued that such steps undermine the potential for Afghan society to move towards a progressive set of ideals. In addition, he recounted his own experience with women only universities. I quote from our interview at length below:

In the 1970s, Kabul University campus was like any other university in the modern world. Girls and boys could talk together, walk together on the campus, drink tea, go to the different parts of the university campus, cafeterias, eat together – it was quite natural...When you have a mixed class, coeducation, you create more competition. You also create civility, because boys act much better with girls around them. Probably they want to impress them! You have a better atmosphere for learning. During the Taliban – when I came back these students, particularly the older students, who were not given the chance to continue their education, these guys were some of the ones involved in fighting the Taliban and the Soviets – when they came to the university they just wanted to bully girls and other people. It was not easy to handle to them. But things gradually changed. When I visit any classroom in a Kabul university or institution, I think of those years in the 70s, and in fact, it’s probably more advanced [now]. When Ashraf Ghani, a few months ago, wanted to establish the first women’s university, I thought this is not a great idea. He’s opening the door for other provinces to do the same, *and families may not allow their girls to go to coeducational universities*. He’s going to start a new trend which is not good for Afghanistan. On the other hand, Afghanistan cannot afford to have separate girls and boys universities.

In fact, [during my time as Minister] some of the fundamentalists brought their institutions from Pakistan to Kabul³⁴. One of them was a women’s university, and I talked with these girls. I told them that I could not afford to have a women’s university. We don’t have funding for it, we don’t have faculty, we don’t have facilities, and I told them there is only one way for you if you want to have a good education. I cannot establish another medical school, another Kabul University. You have the right to transfer to any institution you want. And they told me that Rabbani and Sayyaf³⁵, they would not allow them. I said ‘It’s not up to them, it’s up to me. I’m your Minister of Higher Education. You have every right to do that.’ And they liked the idea. They said it would be good for them to study with boys. I said ‘If it’s so good, why don’t you go and get the transfer slip and transfer. You don’t have to talk to your families!’ They laughed!

One day President Karzai called me and said I want to talk to you very seriously. I said ok. I went to his office, and Marshal Fahim was also sitting there...Karzai looked at me and he laughed and he said, why did you get rid of one university? And I said ‘Which university?’ He could not pronounce the name in Arabic. The name was *Ummahāt al-Mu’minīn*. That’s an Arabic term – *Mothers of Believers*. That was the name of the university. He asked Marshal Fahim to pronounce the term, and Fahim knew Arabic, and he said it’s a very strange long

³⁴ It is unclear how this university operated legitimately, as at that time private institutions were not legal.

³⁵ Rabbani and Sayyaf were conservative members of government, and the ‘fundamentalists’ which the former Minister is referring to here. Sayyaf was addressed in further detail in Chapter 6.

name. [Karzai] said, 'How did you do that?' I said 'Mr President, every student in higher education has the right to transfer from one institution to another institution. I used that rule!' And he said, 'Did you?!' So all of those girls transferred, most of them to Kabul University, and to other institutions. This was an effective way of getting rid of that so-called *Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn* University because this would have really caused a lot of problems for the whole system. Now Ashraf Ghani wants to establish a women's university. *For Afghanistan, I don't think it's a good idea, because we have had a tradition of coeducation in the country for a long time. Why should we change it? I don't understand it. I don't think we can provide equity in terms of education quality.* (April 17, 2016, emphasis added)

The points raised by the former Minister here are considerable, and it is unclear from the NHESP II how or whether these concerns are to be mitigated.

Finally, the percentage-decline of female enrolments in higher education is partially due to performance on the Kankour examination. As the NHESP II illustrates, "over the last three years women have had lower scores on the Kankour than men which poses another problem hindering the expansion of the number of female students in the higher education systems" (MoHE, 2016, p. 59). This decline is attributed to the significant number of male students who sit pre-Kankour courses nationally. As the interview with a former vice-chancellor of a rural university highlighted in Chapter 6, this is largely to do with cultural attitudes around women. The NHESP II only mentions the importance of increasing the number of female students in pre-Kankour coaching courses. Of these concerns and possible solutions, the most comprehensive consideration is given to increasing the number of female faculty members with advanced degrees and increasing the overall number of dormitories available for female students. Overall however, there are significant gains in attention to female participation in higher education in the NHESP II compared to the NHESP I.

Notions of inclusive access are extended to learners with disabilities for the first time, and the NHESP II also introduces a policy acknowledgement of mental health. Whilst the policy maintains a fairly basic understanding of disability, the NHESP II intends for a commission to be established which will consider "issues of access to classrooms, special services for the deaf and blind, developmentally delayed and other services for students who have learning disabilities" (MoHE, 2016, p. 55). Additionally, the introduction of mental health as a policy issue is a significant step towards inclusive access in the strategic plan. This is a crucial component to the broader cultural political economy within which higher education operates within, and the MoHE states that their "estimate is that post-traumatic stress disorder and related clinical levels of mental health problems affect more than 40% of students (with the incidence twice as high among young women)" (MoHE, 2016, p. 48). Early in the plan's period, mental health centres were to be introduced at several universities and gradually expanded carefully (not more than to two additional institutions per year)

during the NHESP II's coverage. The NHESP I's emphasis on provision for those disproportionately suffering the effects of ongoing conflict is carried on in the NHESP II.

Human Rights Discourse is constructed within the NHESP II by exploring avenues to promote access which is inclusive. This centres largely on issues related to increasing the percentage of female students and academic staff, and a specific focus on overcoming infrastructure-related barriers appears at multiple points throughout the current strategic plan. In addition to the mentions of provision for students in areas particularly affected by conflict, there is an introduction of two more underserved populations in the NHESP II. By acknowledging the importance of addressing the needs of learners with disabilities, and learners with mental health concerns, the NHESP II makes an important first step at the policy level towards promoting a broader notion of inclusive access to Afghanistan's institutions of higher education. Below, I turn my attention to the manner in which the NHESP II constructs a discourse of National Identity.

National Identity Discourse in the NHESP II

Once again it is the interactions between the Human Rights and Economic Growth Discourses which construct the discourse of National Identity within the NHESP II. As I set out in Chapter 5, to separate out these discourses as I have done has served an important function in terms of the analysis that has been presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. My attempt to untangle discourses which are inextricably interwoven and interconnected has been important in terms of identifying the elements and assemblies which construct these policies. However, the interaction between these discourses is also highly productive, and within the NHESP II the discourse of National Identity is constructed largely through the interactions between discourses of Human Rights and Economic Growth. A theme which is particularly active in this construction places an emphasis on ethics, coupled with the higher education system's responsibility for meeting the needs of Afghan citizens.

Ethics and the Service of Citizens

An emphasis on ethics appears at various points within the NHESP II. At times, this relates to the quality of the system, at others ethics relates to the employability of its graduates, and further still through an explicit discussion of ethics and corruption within the higher education sector. When addressing the development of research within the sector, the policy authors make it clear that the quality of research is an ethical matter, primarily through higher education's responsibility to its citizens. For the MoHE, a "high quality higher education system must carry out high quality research. That is essential for national development...Anything less would deprive the nation and its students" (MoHE, 2016, p. 26). This is further addressed later in the policy, when the relationship between a

quality system and national development is made explicit. The authors state that “if higher education is to produce the quality graduates required for national development, it must continue to increase the quality of higher education which is not yet at the level it should be to assist national development” (MoHE, 2016, p. 72). Where internationalisation is identified as important to drive economic growth, it also supports higher education institutions in “pushing the cutting edge of knowledge forward and examining critical issues of the day – war, peace, health, equality, pover[ty], human rights, justice” (MoHE, 2016, p. 28). Additionally, the emphasis on the employability of graduates can be seen as the MoHE delivering on a core promise of higher education. Whilst the emphasis in the NHESP II limits its concern for employability to economic factors, these have important implications on national stability, and indeed the legitimacy of the higher education system itself. This final point is explored further in Chapter 8.

Throughout the examination of both Economic Growth and Human Rights Discourses in the NHESP II above, there are several additional references to higher education’s service to the development of Afghan citizens. In the majority of these instances this has taken an economic frame, however it is important to acknowledge the fact that economic growth is a fundamental component to any education system, and necessary for the citizens who engage with public education. These economic imperatives, and the rights-based ideas around access which is inclusive, support notions of developing Afghanistan’s national identity in their assembly. Further, higher education’s *economic* dividends are clearly articulated within the NHESP I and II, and these contribute an important component to Afghanistan’s civil society, and the quality of life for many citizens. There are, as well, *non-economic* dividends of higher education which are also important. These are underdeveloped within the NHESP II, and I examine this notion of non-economic dividends of higher education further in Chapter 8.

Conclusion

The birth of the NHESP II was markedly different to the development of the NHESP I. In spite of this, and after navigating considerable political barriers and challenges, a ‘defensible’ policy operates as the de facto plan for the MoHE. Through the NHESP II, Economic Growth Discourse is constructed by the framing of access through human capital theory, the coupling of quality with higher education’s purpose to drive economic growth, and by the neoliberal justifications for institutional differentiation and the measured devolution of academic and financial responsibilities to institutions. A substantial increase in the policy focus on inclusive participation in higher education sits at the core of the NHESP II’s Human Rights Discourse, and the regular acknowledgement of

higher education's responsibility to Afghanistan's citizens as an ethical imperative extends the policy assembly of a National Identity Discourse.

* * *

These three chapters have critically examined the SAP, NHESP I, and NHESP II to identify the dominant discourses that emerge within these policy assemblies. What I have argued in the critical policy analysis presented here is that an initial attempt to balance economic and social programmes within the policy purpose of higher education was evident within the SAP. With the arrival of the NHESP I, social programmes are instrumentalised in the pursuit of economic goals, quite contrary to the capabilities approach evident in the SAP. The dominance of this Economic Growth Discourse is confirmed and extended in the NHESP II. Tracing the narrowing policy emphasis, and the corresponding narrowing of the sector's founding ideology towards its dominant neoliberal anchor, across these three policies has presented the data supporting the second part of my thesis statement: that a higher education sector can be reassembled upon a relatively narrow ideology following violent disassembly.

For all the significant moments within these policies, the deafening silence of Afghanistan's conflict-affected context, and any significant engagement around the role that institutions of higher education can play to address these conflicts, is profound. As a former deputy vice-chancellor illustrated, these policy silences must be addressed before higher education strategic planning can mitigate challenges over legitimacy and sovereignty, and before higher education itself can begin to realise the potential of its non-economic dividends for Afghanistan:

There is that feeling among the institutions that whoever develops [the NHESPs], based on the long term ethnic conflicts within the country, that certain provinces are favoured to others, and that will be reflected in the strategic plan. We did witness in practice those who create these plans and approve them control the power. Especially the majority of Northern provinces were disadvantaged because they didn't have representation in the NHESP I or in the MoHE level when they allocate resources and funding. You will see that provinces that were located in the East and South, they have more and more. It's probably safe to say that those ethnic preferences and biases still dominate. That's probably continuing. It will continue until the conflict is over. It's a product of the conflict. And the reality, whoever controls power, they control decisions. (Former deputy vice-chancellor, February 27, 2017)

As my thesis developed, the SAP, NHESP I, and NHESP II have laid out the form, function, and purpose of higher education which present particular ideological anchors for higher education strategic planning in Afghanistan. In the process, issues of sovereignty and legitimacy, and their diffusion across/between/in/through the critical policy analysis of Afghanistan's strategic plans for

higher education has become evident, and I explore this in depth in Chapter 8 as I explicitly consider the importance of higher education's non-economic dividends, before my postlegomenon sets out ideas towards a theory of Conflict Capital in order to critique the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within the Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning.

Chapter 8 – Sovereignty, legitimacy, statehood, and Afghanistan’s higher education strategic planning

In the aftermath of war, international actors often fret about the incoherence, tribalism, and division of war-torn countries. Those living in those countries, however, recognize that the divisions, rivalries, and fragmentation of authority of the ‘international community’ constitute just as big an obstacle to what the UN calls ‘peace building’.
(Rubin, 2005, p. 93)

Introduction

The preceding chapters have illustrated the first part of my thesis; that when higher education has been disassembled through violent conflict, it can be reassembled along narrow (and in this case neoliberal) lines. This chapter addresses the second part of my thesis; that higher education’s *neoliberal* reassembly has a mediating (and in this case limiting) effect upon the manner in which the institution can fulfil a stabilising role in Afghanistan’s state building project. In order to examine this proposition, throughout this chapter I ask: what institutional imaginary does Afghanistan’s higher education strategic planning project; and for whose state? In this way, this chapter explicitly considers the form, function, and purpose of the university in Afghanistan. Whilst the last three chapters have been heavily coupled to empirical evidence, this chapter brings my conclusions into conversation with a broader body of literature around the institutional role of higher education in contexts affected by armed conflict. Preceding chapters have illustrated that each higher education policy has been heavily influenced by extra-state actors. Additionally, the ideology of neoliberalism has been identified as dominant within the NHESPs I and II. Influence by extra-state actors, and the dominance of neoliberal ideology, have played pivotal roles in the policy reassembly of higher education in Afghanistan. As such, they each mediate the manner in which the institution of higher education can fulfil a stabilising role within Afghanistan’s conflict-affected state building project.

The chapter is written in three parts. Part one explores the implications of the neoliberal institutional imaginary which these most recent policies project upon the institutional role of higher education within Afghanistan’s ongoing state building project. This leads me to argue that the relatively narrow ideological foundation for higher education presents an insufficient institutional role for Afghanistan’s ongoing national development. The second part of this chapter considers whose state this institutional imaginary is for. Here, I introduce concepts of neo-imperialism and soft power as useful explanatory tools to understand the political position of higher education in Afghanistan for extra-state actors. Notions of policy ownership, legitimacy, and sovereignty which

have emerged during the preceding three chapters are considered explicitly through the Gramscian notion of war of position, or the efforts to control ideological state apparatuses. Necessarily, I engage with the merging of development and security agendas by international actors, and aim to respond to Novelli and Lopes Cardozo's (2008, p. 481) challenge for policy analysts first encountered in Chapter 1, as "the merging of security and development necessitates careful analysis of 'who' and with 'what' intentions policy is being developed and its underlying rationales". As Rubin (2008, p. 26) argues, the "interdependence of security, legitimacy, and economic development in the state-building process provides a framework for a comprehensive analysis that transcends the usual stovepiped discussions of peace keeping, security sector reform, reconstruction, and governance." In the second part of this chapter I argue that the policy purpose for Afghanistan's higher education sector to serve economic growth co-opts higher education's institutional role into serving rather than interrupting Afghanistan's broader war economy. The third part of this chapter explores the problems and possibilities of sovereignty and statehood that emerge within Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning. In this final section, I argue that whilst the relationship between the Afghan state and its institution of higher education is complex and problematic, and must consider extra-state actors and agendas, these same tensions might also present possibilities within Afghanistan's ongoing state building project.

Part 1 – The neoliberal policy imaginary of Afghanistan's higher education system: In service of the (war) economy

The primary policy-purpose for Afghan higher education is to promote economic growth. There is an evident contrast between the institutional imaginary during the early post-Taliban period and the years covered by the National Higher Education Strategic Plans. Where the Strategic Action Plan of 2004 emphasised higher education's importance as a "tool of nation building" (MoHE & UNESCO-IIEP, 2004, p. 13), the NHESPs I and II position higher education as "central to the economic rejuvenation of Afghanistan" (MoHE, 2009, p. 1), and prioritise "those disciplines that are labor oriented and are important for the future economic development of Afghanistan" (MoHE, 2016, p. 44). The policy imaginary of the institution in the SAP engaged with higher education's economic *and* non-economic dividends – economic growth *as well as* social cohesion and political sustainability. As Chapters 6 and 7 illustrate, the NHESPs I and II construct an institutional imaginary from an almost exclusively economic instrumentalist frame. What are the implications of this neoliberal imaginary for the institutional role of higher education within Afghanistan's ongoing development?

The answer, I suggest, presents both positive and negative potentials. The positive potential for such a strong focus on economic growth is clear. For Afghanistan, an emphasis on economic growth

mustn't be overlooked. According to the IMF's website presenting their most recent data, www.imf.org, Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries on Earth. For strategic planning to ignore the function of education generally, and higher education specifically, to promote economic growth would be grossly negligent. We can rest assured, however, that such a lapse simply won't happen. As Chapter 1 highlighted when introducing the three dominant discourses I identified through this study, an emphasis on Economic Growth Discourse is well-grounded and justified in development literature (cf. Aturupane, Gunatilake, Shojo, & Ebenezer, 2013; McMahon & Oketch, 2013; Oketch, McCowan, & Schendel, 2014; Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985; World Bank, 2002). There are, however, significant and negative implications of this neoliberal imaginary for higher education within a context affected by conflict. These begin with the neoliberal foundation for liberal peacebuilding in the first instance, and extend to implications for the institutional role of higher education within conflict-affected contexts.

The liberal peacebuilding approach has certainly encountered critiques. Many of these critiques centre on its neoliberal core assumptions (Dodge, 2013; Tierney, 2011). Within Afghanistan specifically, several authors have highlighted liberal peacebuilding's shortcomings. As Goodhand and Sedra (2013, p. 240) argue, there has been:

a constant divergence between proclaimed commitments to liberal principles and actual practices on the ground. This started with the Bonn agreement of December 2001, which, far from being a transmission mechanism for the liberal peace template, was the result of messy compromises between internal and external players and contained distinctly illiberal and non-democratic dimensions.

The authors go on to cite Mac Ginty (2010) as they observe that liberal peacebuilding has been both sufficiently specific and sufficiently vague to enable policymakers to "accommodate coercive-realist elements and emancipatory elements" (p. 240). Mac Ginty's critique of liberal peacebuilding in Afghanistan highlights the re-branding of warlords as political elites in the interim government (2001-2004). This is considered further in the postlegomenon, however I mention it here to make evident the 'distinctly illiberal and non-democratic' components built into the liberal peacebuilding process in Afghanistan from the beginning of the international intervention.

Liberal peacebuilding embodies an inherent and "paradoxical mission of helping others build sovereign states. They constitute the contemporary version of a long-standing security task: the stabilization of the periphery by great powers" (Rubin, 2005, p. 93). According to Pugh (2005, p. 25), the liberal peacebuilding project "not only ignores the socio-economic problems confronting war-torn societies, it aggravates the vulnerability of sectors of populations to poverty and does little either to alleviate people's engagement in shadow economies or to give them a say in economic

reconstruction". For Afghanistan's opium producers, and those wishing to control production, this has been a particular challenge. Chandrasekaran (2012) illustrates through his detailed exploration of the US approaches to the poppy growers in southern Afghanistan that an alternative crop of cotton was not only viable, but would take relatively little money to rebuild the gins required in its production. After several attempts were thwarted at higher levels without explanation, the main driver of the project realised that USAID support was never to be used to establish production of crops that would directly compete with US products. Cotton was used as one of the examples. Better to turn a blind eye to poppies than threaten US cotton producers' global competitive edge. As Pugh (2008, p. 142) observes, "peacebuilders have claimed superiority for neoliberalism on account of its subscription to supposedly objective economic laws. But what is uniformly expected of transition societies, such as deregulation, is not necessarily applicable to the interveners who protect themselves from competition". This was not the only problematic component of the liberal peacebuilding project, which required the fairly instantaneous implementation of democratic institutions, and a liberalised free market economy open to global investors. For many Afghans, this "sudden inversion of the 'old order' for a new one based on Western models of (neo)liberal democracies is marked by a schizophrenic state of un-certainty that has forced many Afghans to adapt and play roles in order to fit the dominant narrative of national reconstruction" (Billaud, 2015, p. 15).

The shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding have implications which can be extended to higher education. After all, Afghan higher education is operating within the broader and neoliberal context of the liberal peacebuilding project (Dodge, 2013; Goodhand & Sedra, 2013; Tadjbakhsh, 2009). Toby Dodge's questions over the troubled intervention in Afghanistan are particularly pertinent to higher education specifically. He states, the:

doctrine of conflict resolution through state transformation has cohered around a distinctly neoliberal approach to peacebuilding. If this dominant model cannot deliver stability or meaningful change in two of the most extended and generously funded interventions of the twenty-first century [Afghanistan and Iraq], then its central position in shaping policy must be placed in question. (Dodge, 2013, p. 1192)

Billaud's (2015) observation of the challenges for Afghans to adapt to liberal institutions based on western understandings of the state resonates with the reassembly of higher education.

Reassembling higher education upon neoliberal foundations holds the potential to alter existing function of the sector, as participants highlighted in preceding chapters. More directly, the implications of a neoliberal approach to peacebuilding for higher education cuts right to the heart of democratic governance itself. Brown (2015) highlights the fact that human capital has no concern for acquiring the knowledge and experience necessary for an educated democratic citizenry.

Subsequently, as the higher education sector “devotes itself to enhancing the value of human capital, it...abjures the project of producing a public readied for participation in popular sovereignty” (Brown, 2015, p. 184). She argues that a false promise of neoliberalism is often trumpeted. In this view, neoliberalism aims “to liberate the citizen from the state, from politics, and even from concern with the social...[in practice neoliberalism] integrates both state and citizenship *into serving the economy*” (Brown, 2015, p. 212, emphasis added). Brown’s (2015) notion of serving the economy connects to Sum and Jessop’s (2013) discussion of linking the extra-economic into the economic sphere set out in Chapter 6, and poses an important question for Afghan higher education built upon economic instrumentalist lines: what kind of economy is higher education being built to serve?

The NHESP I and II clearly set out the intention for higher education to serve national and international economies. Afghanistan’s economy is widely acknowledged as a war economy (cf. Chandrasekaran, 2012; Giustozzi, 2007; Goodhand, 2004; Kühn, 2009; Rubin, 2000). Driven by both the internal demands of warlordism and survival during the 1990s (Giustozzi, 2009; Rubin, 2002), and the massive international military expenditure during the US-led invasion and subsequent years of occupation (Klein, 2007; Loewenstein, 2015; Rashid, 2009), the war economy within Afghanistan is both local and global in scale. This presents a particular challenge for Afghanistan’s higher education sector: *an institution which promotes growth within a war economy can only reproduce the instabilities and fissures which formulate the structuring instability of the war economy in the first instance.*

As an institutional role within Afghanistan’s ongoing state building project, the reproduction of a war economy undermines higher education’s broader potential for peace building. In this way, the primary pursuit of economic growth is a wholly insufficient institutional role. It ignores the considerable and non-economic potential dividends that higher education can offer a country emerging from armed conflict, such as developing social cohesion, and political sustainability – key dividends of Human Rights and National Identity Discourses. As Milton (2018, p. 12) argues, such “social benefits are important drivers of development that are highly relevant to post-conflict recovery”. For higher education to fulfil its broader institutional potential, it must *interrupt* this war economy. I return to consider the war economy in fuller depth in the postlegomenon (Appendix A), and to consider the possibilities of higher education as an institution of peace within war economies. In the following section, I interrogate more closely *whose* institution these policies are constructing. This requires a brief exploration of the merging of security and development agendas. I then consider mechanisms of legitimacy and sovereignty as policy possibilities which might promote

higher education as an institution of sustainable peace within Afghanistan’s ongoing national development.

Part 2: “A million dollars is heavier than you think”: Afghanistan and a Gramscian War of Position

“We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors...and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.”

(Senior Aide to President Bush referring to the “war on terror”, quoted by Suskind, 2004, para. 60)

* * * *

Gary Schroen’s helicopter touched down in the Panjshir Valley 17 days after 9/11. As head of a small team of nine CIA operatives, 59-year-old Schroen had been pulled back into service from the brink of retirement as one of only a handful of people within the CIA who had recent experience in Afghanistan (Lamb, 2015; Rashid, 2009). Whilst Barnett Rubin was called into Washington to help formulate a postwar plan – during which members at the table determined that a Supreme Council of Afghanistan would be installed and consist of approximately 150 members, half appointed by the Northern Alliance, and half by the Rome Group³⁶ (Rubin, 2013) – Schroen was preparing to deliver the first round of what became hundreds of millions of US dollars in cash to warlords on the ground in Afghanistan. His team met with Marshal Fahim³⁷ to deliver \$1 million in a black backpack. As one of Fahim’s men casually tried to pick the backpack up with one hand, he suddenly strained against the weight and almost dropped the bag. Schroen said “Yes, a million dollars is heavier than you think” (as quoted in Rubin, 2013, p. 19). The full gravity of that weight is still being counted, and as Chapter 5 set out, was instrumental in peddling US influence in the immediate post-9/11 fight against the Taliban.

* * * *

This section examines just whose state the neoliberal imaginary of higher education is for. Influence, as Schroen’s actions at the behest of the US Government attest, can be understood as commodity.

³⁶ See Chapter 5 for further details of these two groups.

³⁷ Marshal Fahim was Massoud’s replacement after his assassination on 7th of September 2001. Fahim subsequently served as Defence Minister in the interim administration and two different terms as Vice President.

As I seek to explore the mediating effect that the neoliberal reassembly of higher education in Afghanistan has had upon its institutional role in the ongoing state building project, I consider briefly one participant's potent metaphor of *buzkashi*. *Buzkashi* is a game played by individual horsemen who grapple with the carcass of a dead goat. Literally translated as 'goat grabbing', the object of the game is for independent riders to swing down from their horse and secure the *buz* (goat), before taking it a length of a field and returning it to a circle. Each horseman plays for himself, and the only rule is that a rider mustn't use his whip to whip an opponent's horse³⁸. Referencing the various international NGOs and development partners that were vying to have content included within the first National Education Strategic Plan, a Lead Education Policy Author stated "I don't know if you know...the national sport in Afghanistan, *buzkashi*? So [developing education policy] is like this *buzkashi* game. The *buz* is education" (December 1, 2015). As has been established during the preceding chapters, multiple actors, or horsemen, have been interested in exerting influence and control over higher education, and Afghanistan itself. These horsemen are local, regional, and global, and include a healthy diaspora, all vying for influence or control over the *buz* – whether at the level of governance nationally or of education specifically. Indeed, my participant is not the first to identify similarities between Afghan political life and *buzkashi*. A participant and MP in Timor Sharan's (2013, p. 344) study stated that Parliament "has become a *buzkashi*...ground; whoever possesses more power and money abuses it". Sharan's study explores the pervasiveness of patronage within parliament, and makes a compelling argument concerning the commodification of influence within the political landscape.

Interestingly, as the case of the first draft of the NHESP II illustrated in Chapter 6, Giustozzi and Ibrahim (2013) consider the returned diaspora as proxies of foreign influence. This is a particularly notable claim, as the authors chart the percentages of diaspora returnees in Cabinet as above 43% in 2004, 50% in 2006, and 46% in 2009. They write that:

demand for personnel able to manage the reconstruction effort *in terms acceptable to the donors* was later fulfilled by those returning from exile in the West, some of whom had prestigious intellectual credentials, others rather less...*The proportion of the returnees within the ruling elite can be seen as a proxy of foreign influence: as they lacked a base of support within Afghanistan itself, it was often on the insistence of donor countries that they were included in the Cabinet.* (Giustozzi & Ibrahim, 2013, p. 249, emphasis added)

So how can we consider the varying scales and sites of influence within Afghanistan's higher education sector? What can we understand of Tsvetkova's (2017) striking account of the Americanisation and Sovietisation of Afghan higher education during the 'cultural cold war' detailed

³⁸ See Appendix B for further details of *buzkashi*.

in Chapter 4? Or of the various actors involved in the development of strategic planning and higher education law since the fall of the Taliban outlined in Chapters 5-7?

Antonio Gramsci's (2000) notions of war of manoeuvre and war of position are particularly useful in understanding the wide-ranging, national, and supranational interest in Afghan higher education. As Gramsci argues, a war of manoeuvre, or the use of overwhelming and sudden force, was insufficient for sustained or genuine victory as social structures became more interwoven and resilient to shocks and crises. The latticework of relations between state and civil society meant that damage to one part of the social structure was able to be absorbed or repaired by others (Gramsci, 2000). Such an observation can be applied to Afghanistan's own history, in which the emerging interconnections between civic groups altered the outcome of British occupation during the 1800s, and for the first time the elites in Kabul had to pay attention to more than the use of force to retain power (see Chapter 3). Gramsci argued that this necessitated a new pathway to power, which he termed a 'war of position', in which powerful positions within the civic latticework would be held by those sympathetic to the external actors. This was the only pathway to victory in the modern era, and required a shift from a 'war of manoeuvre' to a 'war of position'. For Gramsci, "in politics the 'war of position', once won, is decisive definitively" (2000, p. 230). As Sum and Jessop (2013b, p. 204) elaborate:

forces seeking to promote and realize hegemonic projects should analyse the relevant strategic contexts, engage in a stepwise transformation of the structural selectivities that may obstruct and/or facilitate the realization of the project, and promote individual and collective learning on the part of potential hegemonic subjects and subaltern forces so that they will share its values and objectives. This is, of course, what Gramsci calls a 'war of position'...and it bears on the basic structural and agential mediations of competing hegemonic projects.

To be successful, wars of position require "an unprecedented concentration of hegemony" (Gramsci, 2000, p. 230).

A war of position has been central to international intervention in Afghanistan in its recent history. Since the tone of the intervention shifted from 'killing bad guys' to 'state-building lite', the requirement for building a sufficient concentration of hegemony goes a long way towards explaining the public-facing rallying-cry of US-led forces in Afghanistan: winning hearts and minds. Gramsci's notion of war of position has been used to explore the Afghan context. Writing in 2014, Holland and Aaronson explore the rhetoric used by the British and American Governments to justify their military interventions in Afghanistan and Libya. Their analysis demonstrates that just:

as the 'War on Terror' was perceived to grant Blair and Bush right and reason to lecture states 'harbouring' terrorists, the Arab Spring was, once again, interpreted to afford political

elites a platform to demarcate oppressed citizen from oppressive ruler. And, as before, this demarcation enabled western (coalition) military intervention in non-western states. (Holland & Aaronson, 2014, p. 1)

This war of position, then, was waged by politicians ‘at home’ to shore up support for the military interventions ‘abroad’. Whilst this Gramscian analysis is useful for the exploration of rhetorical justification for military intervention in western states, my application of Gramsci’s explanatory tool to higher education within Afghanistan provides a new analytical perspective by examining education’s role as an ideological apparatus for the concentration of hegemony.

Wars of manoeuvre and of position can offer interesting lines of inquiry within the broader Afghan statebuilding process. Indeed the work of Sharan (2013) and Giustozzi and Ibrahim (2013) highlighted above both begin to illustrate a case of a war of position waged in conjunction with the ongoing war of manoeuvre. As detailed in Chapter 4, from the establishment of the first Faculty of Medicine in 1932, higher education has been an explicit target within Afghanistan’s wars of position. The institution, originally small and elite in nature, was targeted by domestic political groups as well as Soviet and US interests prior to Soviet occupation (Baiza, 2013b; Emadi, 2001; Tsvetkova, 2017), and then explicitly during the 1980s by the USSR (Fayez, 2014; Hyman, 1988; Majrooh, 1987, 1989).

Why this particular (and ongoing) attention to the institution of higher education? It is useful here to return to the notion of soft power first encountered in Chapter 4, and couple this with an understanding of a neo-imperialist agenda that can be identified within current development aid practices (Novelli, 2016; Polman, 2010; Robertson et al., 2007). As I outlined in Chapter 4, soft power is achieved through ideological means, and “occurs when one country gets other countries to *want* what it wants” (Nye, 1990, p. 166). This accounted, for instance, for the targeting of higher education during the cultural cold war. Soft power resonates with the rise of neo-imperialism within development aid to education – of the interest in winning hearts and minds. Novelli (2016, p. 851) outlines a critique of development aid to education as an “imperial technique, emerging out of the collapse of colonial empires to facilitate the transition to new modes of dominance and dependence”. Somewhat in contrast to the early human capital³⁹ thesis, suggesting that countries had modernised due to internal investments and increasing the educated population, neo-imperialist examinations of education argue that development aid intended to position low-income countries as subservient, and maintain that position. Known as dependency theory “an educational [research] strand emerged which viewed educational structures and content as the means by which

³⁹ See Chapter 1 for an exploration of human capital theory

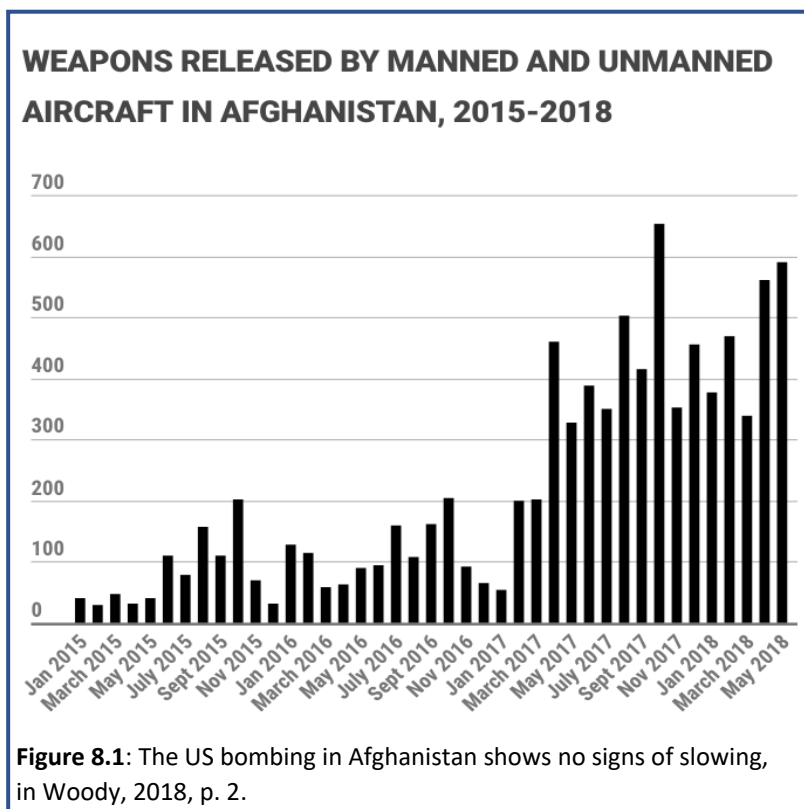
the centre (developed countries) exercised control over the periphery (less developed countries)” (Robertson et al., 2007, p. 12). Articulated in Wallerstein’s (2004) World Systems Analysis, countries at a global core (i.e. high-income countries in the Global North) require and maintain countries at the periphery (i.e. low-income countries in the Global South) to ensure core countries’ dominance, and enable the reproduction of the capitalist relations of production which currently structure a global hierarchy. As Nye (1990) illustrates, this work in the post-cold war era required a new form of power, positioning soft power as a mechanism through which to promote and advance an ideological agenda of hegemony. Education, a key ISA, continues to be targeted to this effect.

At all parts of its relatively short history in Afghanistan, higher education has been a point of intersection between the politically, and militantly, active. Several of the warlords-cum-politicians of post-9/11 Afghanistan attended higher education institutions in Kabul during the 1960s and 70s (Braithwaite, 2012; Rubin, 2002). As Emadi (2001) illustrated in Chapter 4, police crackdowns on political activities in higher education institutions were occurring as early as the 1950s. Indeed, when President Ashraf Ghani spoke to new students at Kabul University (where he had previously been Chancellor) at the beginning of the new school year in August 2017 he discouraged political activity stating that “if universities become centres of politics and protest, you may not be able to accomplish your mission. If campuses become centres of positive thinking, you may reach you[r] goals” (as quoted by Hamdard, 2017, para. 5). This warning against political involvement at higher education’s symbolic figurehead in Afghanistan was clearly informed by a historical understanding of the implications that such activity could carry. Whatever the warnings, in the long-awaited forthcoming elections, and amongst the “usual seasoned politicians, powerful warlords and commanding religious figures, *a new group of educated middle-class leaders...were seeking to appeal to the youth in particular*” (Saif, 2018, para. 3, emphasis added).

The spoils of wars of position, then, are clear. Education – an important and ideological apparatus of the state – has been targeted within Afghanistan’s wars of position for its function as a primary mechanism for the concentration of hegemony, and at higher education for its additional opportunity to influence the elite. This has, however, created significant tensions between those seeing education as a basic human right, those exploring education’s potential to promote peace, and those exploiting education’s potential to promote conflict. These tensions are compounded by the merging of security and development agendas by western states, which has had profound implications for education within Afghanistan. Several authors have outlined the deadly implications of the conflation between development and military agendas (cf. Davies & Talbot, 2008; Novelli,

2010, 2016; Novelli et al., 2014; Novelli & Robertson, 2007; Sayed et al., 2011). Securitisation has been reified in development discourse since the advent of 9/11, a reification which in many ways has been accomplished due to security's foundational position within the liberal peacebuilding hegemony (Dodge, 2013; M. Pugh, 2005). National and global security was a key rhetorical discourse to justify the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 (Holland & Aaronson, 2014), and has been a fundamental component to the ongoing military action by US led forces in Afghanistan (Loewenstein, 2015). As can be seen by the massive increase in bombing since 2015 in Figure 8.1, there is no indication that this action will slow.

I suggest that the result of the security agenda in Afghanistan has led to a hollow state, in which the repressive apparatus operates without the stabilising support of ideological apparatuses, thus requiring the constant application of the repressive apparatus. The massive expenditure and emphasis on military action by US-led forces clearly set an expectation that security was not only an important agenda early in the intervention, but its only agenda. Chandrasekaran's (2012) *Little*



America charts the massive amount of ammunition that one tour of Helmand province fired, only to be outdone by their replacement group in a military form of 'one-upmanship'. Within higher education specifically, the Afghan National Security University's budget – built by the US as an Afghan 'West Point' – has an annual operating budget of \$200 million USD (Milton, 2018), almost twice the amount secured by the MoHE for the entire state higher education sector during the full 5-

year coverage of the NHESP I. Time and again military objectives failed to consider the latticework of civic institutions required to hold ground conquered through wars of manoeuvre, and whilst a perimeter might have been held as a projection of the state's power and control, the lack of institutions to fill these various perimeters have insufficiently engaged with a war of position. A hollow state cannot hope to succeed within a war of position, and whilst the ongoing conflict between international forces continues to lead to civilian deaths and casualties, and as drone strikes create an ever-present threat over the civilian population's heads, US capacity to win Afghan hearts and minds continues to diminish.

The security agenda has significant implications for education aid. Mark Duffield (2014) refers to the urgency with which the security agenda has been pursued within development as the "*radicalisation of development* which derives its urgency from a new security framework that regards the modalities of underdevelopment as dangerous" (p. 22, emphasis added). In the process, education aid – long understood as subsisting within the development space and increasingly being considered as fundamental to humanitarian interventions (Burde, 2014; Lopes Cardozo & Novelli, 2018) – has been co-opted into the security agenda. Writing of Afghanistan, Ansary (2012) illustrates that within a battle of ideas schools are on the front lines, and therefore to build a school is an act of war. Attacks on education centres in Afghanistan have been regular and horrific since 2001, and in addition to general education many of these attacks have been directed at education for girls and women, ethnic minorities, and universities (cf. Baiza, 2013b; Burde, 2014; GCPEA, 2018; Winthrop & Kirk, 2008). As development agendas are seen as congruous with agendas of, for instance, US national security interests, attacks upon education in Afghanistan are seen by their supporters as legitimate attacks on instruments of foreign powers.

Importantly, I'm not suggesting that education and development aid was devoid of interests seated outside of the receiving state prior to 9/11. The wide-ranging agendas and influences within aid have been thoroughly examined by multiple authors (cf. Goodhand, 2013; Novelli, 2016; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Polman, 2010). As Burde (2014, p. 49) highlights, an "apolitical approach to aid is necessarily blind to its effects within a volatile political context and to the causes of violence in conflict-affected areas". Rather, here I am acknowledging the encroachment of a security agenda within Afghanistan's education-based aid programmes. In fact, as illustrated by the Americanisation and Sovietisation of higher education outlined in Chapter 4, one could make the case that higher education has been targeted by the security agenda for decades in Afghanistan. As Duffield argues, the "merger of development and security in this way reflects the transformation of the capitalist

world system from an inclusionary to an exclusionary logic” (2014, p. 22). This encroachment carries with it implications. The “tactical deployment of aid risks undermining the higher policy goal of state-building, overstates the transformative potential of development, and fails to appreciate *the processes through which legitimacy is constructed in the Afghan context*” (Goodhand & Sedra, 2010, p. 79, emphasis added). As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, questions of legitimacy and sovereignty have been central to higher education’s strategic planning, and are inextricably connected with the question of institutional ownership. It is time to address these concepts in further detail.

Crowding In or Crowding Out? Legitimacy, Sovereignty, and Ownership

A regular theme to emerge in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 was a concern with policy legitimacy and ownership. Such concerns are not particular to Afghanistan, and are a common characteristic of conflict affected contexts. Papagianni (2008, p. 49) highlights that states “emerging from long-term, destructive warfare face particularly significant challenges to their legitimacy...new state institutions may lack the support of a segment of the political elites and suffer from serious legitimacy deficits.” Notions of legitimacy which emerged in the preceding chapters were firmly connected to notions of the sovereignty of the Afghan government, the MoHE, and its institutions of higher education. The fundamental question underpinning notions of both legitimacy and sovereignty centres upon the locus of ownership, something which has generated ongoing challenges for the government in Afghanistan (Bhatia, 2007; Starr, 2006). Many of these questions began with the Bonn Conference of 2001. As Starr (2006) details, the international intervention in Afghanistan wanted to address questions of sovereignty first, on the flawed assumption that the various factions involved in the civil war of the 1990s had secessionist intentions. They were convinced that the legitimacy of the government could be dealt with at a later date, and that democratic elections would take care of legitimacy to a large extent.

However, according to Starr, politically active Afghans held an alternative view. Rather than requiring a redundant acknowledgement to territorial borders which had been roughly unchanged for two centuries, and with no dispute over the location of its capital, most Afghans assumed:

that Afghanistan would return to the status of a unitary state that had existed prior to the Soviet invasion...Unlike the international community, which saw secession as a constant threat, they did not consider secessionism likely or possible. What concerned Afghans from the outset...was the legitimacy of the new government. (Starr, 2006, p. 109)

The international community went about pursuing a 2-step agenda which would see sovereignty of the Afghan state affirmed by various governments, and then the legitimacy of the Afghan government affirmed through democratic elections a few years later. For Afghans, however,

legitimacy and sovereignty of the government needed to occur simultaneously. Elections were important not to create legitimacy, but to confirm it. The:

creation of legitimacy required that each group in the population be convinced that it would have a fair voice in the deliberations of the Kabul government, and that its members would have a reasonable number of places in the new administrative apparatuses being set up. Without such regional and ethnic balance, legitimacy would be non-existent and elections useless. (Starr, 2006, pp. 109–110)

Only when such legitimacy was realised would Afghans “sign on to the new sovereignty” (p. 109).

As multiple observers have documented, including Starr, this flawed approach to the intervention, driven by a (neo)liberal peacebuilding project, has severely hampered Afghanistan’s transition into a post-war state from the beginning. From a broader ideological reason for these failings, Richmond (2013, p. 378) argues that this is because statebuilding, “like liberal or neoliberal peacebuilding, is failed by design”, namely the overreliance of both statebuilding and peacebuilding upon constructing neoliberal states. For Richmond, “[n]eoliberal states do not include comprehensive responses to economic needs and fail to provide public services quickly enough to undercut currents of violence or address the root causes of conflict” (2013, p. 378). From a specific examination of the events following the fall of the Taliban, the fact that coalition forces not only didn’t create a presence, but that former warlords were able to regain influence and control over taxation of goods crossing borders severely undercut both the legitimacy and the sovereignty of the government in Kabul. As international attention was diverted from Kabul towards preparing for, and carrying out, the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the willingness of the Afghan population to ‘sign on to the new sovereignty’ diminished under statebuilding-lite, and the development of the hollow state (Barfield, 2010; Lamb, 2015; Loewenstein, 2015; Rashid, 2009).

US moral leadership in demonstrating the healing powers of democracy was further curtailed under their denial of prisoner-of-war status to al Qaeda, Taliban, or any terrorist suspect. This is a point poignantly made by Ahmed Rashid:

For the greatest power on earth to wage its ‘war on terrorism’ by rejecting the very rules of war it is a signatory to, denying justice at home, undermining the U.S. Constitution, and then pressuring its allies to do the same set in motion a devastating denial of civilized instincts. America’s example had the most impact in Afghanistan, where no legal system existed; in Pakistan, ruled by a military regime; and in Central Asia, where the world’s most repressive dictatorships flourished. By following America’s lead in promoting or condoning disappearances, torture, and secret jails, these countries found their path to democracy and their struggle against Islamic extremism set back by decades. Western-led nation building had little credibility if it denied justice to the very people it was supposed to help. (2009, pp. 293–294)

Rashid's observation considers the implications for the region of US arrogance in their pursuit of a security agenda so explicitly along the lines of their own interests in Afghanistan. Particularly early in the intervention, this was undertaken with relatively little consideration to the broader potential for non-military action. As the steady stream of reports from the office of the Special Inspector General for the Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) indicate, military spending was blind and rampant. The SIGAR office was established to track the massive amounts of US-taxpayer money spent in Afghanistan – over \$110 billion USD by 2015. Massive cases of fraud were immediately uncovered – for instance one contractor was unable to account for \$130 million USD in expenses (MacVicar, 2015). Gross mismanagement of money was also startling. As the SIGAR, John Sopko, said in an interview in 2015,

We identified, for example, \$400 [million] to 500 million for airplanes that the U.S. purchased for the Afghan air force. The Afghan air force couldn't use them. They were the wrong planes for that country. They basically had to be destroyed, and we got three cents on the dollar. (MacVicar, 2015, para. 4)

The total amount received for the 5 years to fund higher education nationally from 2010-2014 was a little over \$110 million USD (MoHE, 2016).

For the US, this conflation of wars of manoeuvre with wars of position has had a lasting impact on Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts. I explore this further in the postlegomenon, however its consideration here is relevant to questions of legitimacy within Afghanistan, and to explore just who it is that national institutions might belong to. As Rubin (2008) outlines, all international interventions:

aim at political objectives, not just building 'states', let alone 'peace', and their success is crucially linked to the international and domestic legitimacy of those objectives and the ability of leaders to mobilize people to defend them. The challenge of legitimacy is doubly difficult in such operations because even though state building always requires a struggle for legitimation among citizens, internationalized operations must also meet a high standard of international legitimation, including appropriate authorization and political support in each of the states that provide financial or military aid. These *various sources of legitimacy may contradict* as well as complement each other. (Rubin, 2008, pp. 25–26, emphasis added)

Indeed, donor governments to Afghanistan often looked for sympathetic individuals to assume positions of responsibility to oversee their respective 'investments' (Giustozzi & Ibrahimi, 2013).

The economic terms 'crowding in' and 'crowding out' offer a useful perspective on the army of external experts and observers that have followed the US-led invasion into Afghanistan.

In the wake of violent conflict, countries often receive an 'aid bonanza'. The influx of humanitarian assistance, reconstruction aid, and international support for peace implementation brings large-scale external resources into the country, at times dwarfing the domestic resources mobilized by the government. (Boyce & O'Donnell, 2007, p. 10)

Crowding in, these authors argue, occurs when this aid bonanza operates to develop and improve various capacities, particularly fiscal capacities, of the receiving state. By contrast, crowding out occurs when the majority of this aid is “routed through private contractors and nongovernmental organizations, bypassing the state...[and] can undermine efforts to build state capacities in budget allocation and expenditure management” (Boyce & O’Donnell, 2007, p. 10). Rubin applies these concepts to the reconstruction effort as a particularly useful device to explore the interests at play in the ongoing statebuilding project:

Crowding out occurs when international efforts or structures displace existing or potential new domestic-level state institutions that might carry out similar functions – i.e., hindering state building. Crowding in occurs when international efforts or institutions provide the space, resources, or training and mentoring for domestic-level actors or institutions in ways that enhance their capacity and potential sustainability – i.e., promoting state building. (Rubin, 2008, p. 28)

The degree to which crowding in is occurring is integral to the implications for institutional legitimation which might follow.

As multiple participants outlined, much of the efforts taking place in the education sector operate on a fine line between crowding in and crowding out. For instance, when I asked a USAID Education Specialist how funds are directed to the MoHE, they answered:

USAID has assessed the Ministry of Higher Education and it has not been approved for direct government-to-government funding. Therefore, USAID works through a Cooperative Agreement awarded competitively to a US organization. (June 28, 2016).

(Interestingly, the World Bank Higher Education Specialist told me that World Bank funds went directly to the MoHE). Indeed, as Baiza (2013b) illustrates, the majority of financial aid to Afghan projects has been routed outside of the various Ministries due to fears of corruption. This has a compounding effect on the perceived and real legitimacy of the Ministries, as outlined when exploring funding in preceding chapters. International intervention, on the one hand, has been critical for moving higher education forward. On the other hand, it has presented tensions concerning institutional legitimacy. As Academic Consultant C explained:

You’ve got these fragile states, and just total overkill from the amount of international community ‘support’ [being provided] – but quite often [it becomes] ‘takeover’... Afghanistan couldn’t rebuild without strong international development funding...but amongst the various agencies there was a lot of working out, a lot of jockeying for position going on. (February 18, 2016)

Academic Consultant B supported these sentiments, stating that:

everything in Afghanistan continues to have a lot of non-Afghan – and I’m going to put this in quotes – ‘experts’! I’ll include myself in that! They come in and they’re supposed to provide technical assistance and guidance. (February 28b, 2017)

Illustrating the jockeying for position going on for higher education, Academic Consultant A outlined the perceived incursion into USAID funded programmes by the British Council:

Academic Consultant A: We don't have much contact with other donors, there's some contact with the British Council, especially around quality assurance. They had their own plan and their own structures. It was based on some premises that were somewhat different from the way that we were trying to get the Ministry of Higher Education to do it. So even now *there's jockeying as we try to absorb the British approach into ours, or end up with a coherent single approach for the Afghans, rather than two competing approaches.*

Daniel: Can you tell me about those premises that your projects have been built on?

Academic Consultant A: Do you mean for quality assurance?

Daniel: Sure.

Academic Consultant A: ... Ours is based pretty much on the North American model. The UK one operates a little differently and involves different kinds of structures. They started putting in different kinds of structures that were really in competition with the structures that we were trying to build, and, anyway, *this is not helpful for Afghanistan, never mind who's right.* I think we've been, frankly, working to co-opt what they're doing, partly because we've got larger resources, and a much bigger footprint, and are in a better position to, are working holistically with the universities, not just on quality assurance. We're training administrators and leaders, we're training faculty members, and starting degree programmes, and so we have more of a, you know, *we have more tentacles in place to try to build the universities.* (February 28a, 2017, emphasis added)

By way of illustrating his final point, he repeatedly interlaced his fingers as he spoke.

When I asked Academic Consultant A about the extent of external influences in higher education, he highlighted not only the influences, but the challenges that can come with that:

There are a lot of external influences because there's a lot of money. There are a lot of other donors to higher education. The Japanese are there, the Germans are there, the Italians, and they tend to kind of swoop in and they often do equipment, or labs, or something... They come in and do x or y for three or four, five years, and then they're gone. Or they delegate, they give the money to the World Bank and they ask the Bank to manage it. Or they give it to UNICEF or UNESCO, and they manage it. (February 28a, 2017)

As my interview with the lead policy author illustrated, external influences were important for the development of the higher education sector, however also created challenges explicitly for the content and shape of the national higher education strategic plans:

With USAID, they'll talk to people at the beginning, but there's no participation because they regard that as a conflict of interest. The result is often – I've seen it many times, not just in Afghanistan – is that they end up with something that isn't entirely what is needed for the country, or for that matter wanted, because somebody has a pet project and decides that 'Oh, what Afghanistan really needs is more schools of journalism, or what South Africa really needs is gender studies programme', or whatever it is. So you get these things put in, and they come with money attached and so in one sense that's useful, but if you ask the Afghans

for instance what their highest priority would have been they would have been in the sciences and engineering and agriculture. (April 14, 2016)

The jockeying for position and influence within the education sector was outlined further by my participant who had shared the *buzkashi* metaphor. Speaking of the Ministry of Education, and the development of Afghanistan's first national strategic plan for primary and secondary education, he laid out the tension that genuine crowding in would have for donor agencies. I quote him here at length:

Lead Education Policy Author: The idea was also at the same time that the donor institutions and non-governmental organisations no longer run their own programmes of education. If JICA, Japanese International Organisation for International Development, if they commit to fund one hundred schools at the national level, let us say that they're ready to fund one hundred thousand adult literacy programmes, so here the requirement was, they should not run their own parallel programmes. They should come to the Ministry and take the programmes that were part of general education or part of the augmentary support ones, *and to run those programmes as part of the Ministry's plan*. The same went for the World Bank, with USAID, and KOICA which is Korean, and SIDA for Swedish, and other governments. But of course, I don't know how much you are aware of the public-private relationship between the Governments and the non-government institutions, they're quite a challenging policy area, but we wanted each organisation *to not run their own projects but be part of the Ministry*.

Daniel: And was there a large uptake by donor institutions, or was there a point at which there were still many parallels happening? Or by and large did that reduce and the money all come through the Ministry of Education?

Lead Education Policy Author: The development of a strategic plan does not and did not necessarily mean a system. So we are talking about developing a strategy locally, but it did not necessarily at that time mean that it was immediately converted into a structural programme, nor did it mean that the donor institutions and the non-governmental organisations would respect it and would commit to it overnight...equally it did not mean that the Ministry could find sufficient budget for it, nor it meant that the funds that were committed by donor institutions were delivered to the Ministry...[O]viously these donor institutions had consultations among themselves and within themselves as well. For example, SIDA, JICA, other countries, USAID, they would make their decisions for their own strategies as far as education, for their own programmes, even though they all accepted the [strategic plan], and they all agreed that this is a shared ownership and both sides have been involved in that. *But it was not easy to convince them, or at least for them it was not easy to abandon their own programmes because if they would stop implementing their own programmes, their own lifeline was also on the line*. (December 1, 2015, emphasis added).

The real tension for aid agencies becomes strikingly apparent here: to be effective they must be prepared to work themselves out of a job. Whilst that might be rhetoric at high policy levels – to reduce dependency on aid and therefore cost to donor countries – the drive to attract donor dollars and increase programming is a product of the neoliberalised aid agency space (Polman, 2010).

Additionally, as Ginsburg (2012a, pp. 73–74) illustrates, circumventing ministry processes is in fact

attractive for some donors, as by “working with NGOs an international organization can limit the need to interact with public sector unions or with competing political parties”.

For those observing the game of *buzkashi* played with education policy from within the country, the lines of contention and disagreement between donors, supranational actors, and Ministries were clear. The locus of ownership, and of legitimation, sat firmly outside of the democratically elected government. As a former vice-chancellor of a rural university stated, these extra-state actors were responsible not just for strategic planning, but also for the development of Afghan laws:

there were some consultants who came and saw that there was only a higher education law that was from maybe thirty or forty years ago, and so they came up with these recommendations that you need to work on that. USAID and World Bank, UNESCO, you know, these were the actual push behind that. (February 27, 2017)

The subsequent challenge centres upon notions of ‘ownership’ – whose institutional imaginary do these strategic plans serve? It is a question which can encapsulate the contestations of both legitimacy and sovereignty within the wider Afghan context (Goodhand & Sedra, 2010).

So whose institutional imaginary *do* these strategic plans serve? And what does that mean for the broader statebuilding project? The policy purpose of economic growth is a direct result of the international intervention’s neoliberal statebuilding project in Afghanistan, within which higher education has been operating since its reassembly in 2001. The primary policy purpose of higher education is to serve economic growth. Within Afghanistan’s war economy, this policy purpose co-opts higher education into an institutional role which *serves* rather than *interrupts* economic development within this war economy. The securitisation of aid and the pursuit of democratic governance and open markets, coupled with a proactive war of position as a mechanism of neo-imperialism, have anchored higher education’s policy legitimacy and ownership outside of the state. The result is that national higher education strategic planning must more firmly reflect the values, assumptions, and agendas of those actors which own influence outside of the state, and has less responsibility to reflect the values, assumptions, and agendas of the students which it serves. This process fundamentally subverts commonly accepted notions of the social contract within democratic societies, and redraws the institution of higher education’s primary stakeholder from the national student to the foreign donor.

Part 3: *Der lange Marsch durch die Institutionen*

Increasingly, a narrow neoliberal framing of education is being challenged. A growing body of research has argued for a broader understanding of the role of education within development

generally, and conflict-affected contexts specifically (cf. Milton, 2018; Milton & Barakat, 2016; Novelli, 2016; Pherali, 2011; Robertson, 2016a; Tierney, 2011). According to Novelli (2010, p. 453), although “economic justifications of education as human capital have not disappeared, it is increasingly recognized that economic growth is undermined by conflict and that a broader understanding of education’s role in promoting tolerance, peace and prosperity needs to be examined”. Basic education continues to receive the bulk of attention and funding (Burde, 2014; Shah & Lopes Cardozo, 2015), with relatively little, if any, going to the tertiary sector within state building missions following conflict (Milton & Barakat, 2016; Tierney, 2011). Participants in my study regularly spoke of the lack of interest in funding public higher education from international donors in Afghanistan to any significant levels. A former Deputy Minister of Higher Education highlighted that funding disparities between the Ministries of Education and Higher Education lead to an increase in competition for what was perceived to be the same pool of funds, and decreased cooperation between the Ministries (February 17, 2016). Minister Fayez called for an increase in funding for higher education from the international community, saying the sector was pivotal in “promoting democracy, knowledge, and technology. That’s the point. That’s the center” (Chuang & Fayez, 2004, p. 33). In light of this, and given the complex sets of relationships, actors, and influences which have assembled Afghanistan’s policy imaginary of higher education, what are the possibilities that higher education might present within Afghanistan’s ongoing state building project?

It is important to begin an inquiry along these lines by problematising two common assumptions of the liberal peacebuilding thesis. These assumptions correlate increased educational attainment with both democracy and with peace, and are strongly interconnected. An increased level of educational attainment, according to the World Bank (2018), correlates to higher participation in voting, as well as an increased amount of importance placed on living under democratic governance. Their conclusion relies heavily upon a study conducted by Campante and Chor (2012, p. 843), which argues that “political participation requires the use of human capital.” An assumed relationship between democracy and peace is central to the liberal peacebuilding project. As Mac Ginty (2010, p. 579) illustrates, the “democratic peace thesis, or the belief that democracies do not go to war and therefore that the extension of democracy will guard against war between and within states, has been fetishised into a core part of the liberal canon.” A key underpinning justification for this fetishisation is liberal peacebuilding’s assumption “that there is a positive correlation between international trade, global economic integration and conflict prevention” (Willett, 2008, p. 80, citing Barbieri, 2002). This two-step correlation between education, democracy, and peace has been largely unquestioned by international interventions in Afghanistan.

Within conflict-affected contexts the causal correlation between increased educational attainment and democratic governance is considerably more problematic. Much of this is related to the potential and real manipulation of education to promote sectarian or divisive political agendas (Burde, 2014; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2015; Novelli, 2010, 2012; Novelli & Higgins, 2017; Shah & Lopes Cardozo, 2015). As Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) influential report outlines, the 'two faces of education' within conflict zones present both positive and negative possibilities for social cohesion, and for peace⁴⁰. Shafiq and Sinno's (2010) study into the relationship between support for suicide bombings, and educational attainment and income, directly casts doubt over the assumption of a direct and constant causal correlation between education, peace, and acceptance of democratic sovereignty. Rather, their work highlights that the "direct effect of educational attainment on suicide bombing attitudes depends critically on the content of education and the values inculcated in educational institutions" (p. 170). Some of the negative faces of education are perhaps less explicit. In the case of post-Yugoslav states for example, the reimagining of post-conflict higher education has been highly politicised in a region which has undergone "fragmentation or diversification, usually along ethnic, linguistic and other social lines. In other words, not only are political communities no longer defined by the boundaries of the nation-states, but multiple political communities exist *within* the boundaries of nation-states" (Baćević, 2014b, p. 291). This saw higher education re-established along linguistic and ethnic lines, and in many instances utilised as a political tool to repress minorities within the state (Baćević, 2014b). The importance of understanding contextual drivers of conflict, and of ensuring that education is sensitive to these drivers and seeks to address them, are fundamental in forging the positive relationship between education and peace.

But what of possibilities? Milton and Barakat (2016) employ a four-fold taxonomy to explore the relationship between higher education and what they term "post-war recovery" (406). These are; stabilisation and securitisation, reconstruction, statebuilding, and peacebuilding. Through an extensive application of this analytic across a range of conflict-affected contexts, they reach the conclusion that "there are multiple ways in which higher education can either contribute to or undermine the core processes of post-war recovery" (415). The authors present several of the ways in which higher education contributes to post-war recovery. Whilst "primarily through the teaching and research mission of the sector in addition to its socialization effects", their findings also demonstrated "the contributions of higher education to improving the institutional quality or

⁴⁰ Examples of this have been explored in various points of this thesis, particularly when considering the instrumentalisation of USAID-funded curriculum during the 1980s to militarise a generation of Afghans against Soviet occupation in Chapter 4.

supporting long-term civic development” (415). These were, however, best “conceived as under-recognised societal benefits of higher education that can support the process of post-war recovery” (415). Milton and Barakat’s findings offer a powerful counter-narrative to the heavy emphasis on human capital theory, and an opportunity that demands attention at the level of national higher education strategic planning within conflict-affected contexts. Their work has considerable implications for the design and development of higher education sectors recovering from conflict or protracted crises, and encourages policy planners, ministry officials, and funding bodies working in these regions to expand the ideological foundations of a central institution. The overreliance on a human capital theory discourse still evident in Afghanistan’s higher education strategic planning limits the broader importance and relevance that the institution of higher education can play in the pursuit of peace and stability *in addition to* prosperity.

Realising the possibilities for non-economic dividends requires a long-term perspective of the role of higher education within Afghanistan. As Milton (2018, p. 17) argues, “a domestic higher education system is the foundation for sustainable long-term recovery from conflict”. Locating post-secondary education within a war of position in 1960s Germany, Rudi Dutschke, a student activist, outlined a process of change which he named ‘The Long March through the Institutions’. The purpose of this long march was for the ownership of institutions, and the institution of higher education specifically, to belong to its students as primary stakeholders (Dutschke, 1980). Such a process would enable popular control of what Althusser considered the primary agent of ideological control over society, and as the postlegomenon in the final chapter of this thesis illustrates, popular control of Afghan citizens over the policy imaginary of the institution of higher education locates a significant ISA *within* the Afghan state, and is a necessary step towards the legitimacy and the sovereignty of Afghan higher education, and the multiple economic and non-economic dividends it presents. I examine this further in my postlegomenon to this thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the form, function, and purpose of higher education as it engaged with notions of sovereignty and legitimacy which have emerged from previous chapters. Throughout, an understanding of neo-imperialism has been useful as the chapter has progressed through three parts. The first outlined implications of a neoliberal imaginary for Afghanistan’s higher education sector. Through this first section I make the case that an agenda to promote economic growth within a war economy serves to promote the broader war economy, and can limit the opportunities to disrupt it. As I consider whose interest this imaginary serves, I employ a Gramscian notion of wars of

manoeuvre and position to consider the neo-imperialist potential within reforms targeting higher education explicitly. This discussion demonstrates the multiple agenda which become fixed within policy documents, and has engaged with the troubling merging of security and development agendas. The final section of Chapter 8 has considered the opportunities which sovereignty might offer to higher education, and has set down my assertion that to best serve Afghan needs, policy purposes of higher education should be determined by Afghan sovereignty over its development and content. This chapter has been instrumental in demonstrating the final part of the thesis which I've advanced throughout the study, namely that neoliberalism can have a mediating effect on the institutional role of Afghan higher education within its ongoing state building project. It is now time to bring the thesis to a close, and for that purpose I make some concluding remarks in Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 – Concluding remarks

To think sociology differently is to take connections as the basis of the histories which we acknowledge; to do sociology differently is to act on the basis of having recognized those connections.

(Bhambra, 2014, p. 146)

Introduction

This reflexive final chapter brings together the arguments made throughout the thesis, and considers the contributions to knowledge that it has set out. It has been a difficult chapter to write – mostly due to my enjoyment of the study, and perhaps a not-so-small desire to see it simply go on. However, conclude I must. The doctoral project has served an important purpose in terms of laying a solid foundation for future research agendas, and as I conclude this project I consider Bhambra's (2014) imperative to 'think' and 'do' sociology differently. This has, I believe, been a central component to the work presented here – a search for the manner in which histories are connected, and at all points not losing sight of the centrality of Afghanistan within a truly global policyscape. But there is a silver lining in bringing this project to a close. I can now begin to think and do sociology differently from a new vantage point, one which has broadened significantly from the beginning of this study some years ago. As I bring the chapter and thesis to a close, I finish with some thoughts on possible future research directions.

A two-part thesis

This has been an account of a study undertaken into higher education strategic planning in Afghanistan. Throughout this study I explored the relationship between conflict, higher education, and state building through my investigation of a country that is seeking to develop its higher education sector within a context of historical and contemporary conflict. In the preceding chapters I have argued a two-part thesis, and demonstrated that:

- 1) When Afghanistan's institution of higher education was disassembled through violent conflict, a dominant ideology of neoliberalism reassembled the institution with little contestation; and
- 2) The neoliberal reassembly of higher education has a limiting effect upon its institutional function within an ongoing state building project.

Importantly, this study has taken Novelli and Lopes Cardozo's (2008) challenge to the policy analyst within conflict-affected contexts seriously: that policy within such contexts must be subjected to careful analysis in order to understand who is developing policy, and with what intentions. As the preceding pages have set out, this challenge, first outlined in Chapter 1, has informed decisions made about methodology and participant selection detailed in Chapter 2. It required an historical grounding of the context into which policy was being developed, justifying the exploration of the history of the Afghan state in Chapter 3, and the examination of a history of Afghan higher education in Chapter 4. Further, given the global and local actors at play, and the global and local forms of neoliberalism identified as operating within and through these policies, it required a theorisation of global forms. This is found in Chapter 4 and is applied in the analysis of Afghan higher education strategic planning in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. And as I developed my investigation through notions of legitimacy and sovereignty, this challenge led me towards an application of the Gramscian analytic of wars of manoeuvre and position to engage critically with policy intentions. In short, responding to Novelli and Lopes Cardozo's challenge has structured the entirety of the project.

The identification of dominant discourses within Afghan higher education strategic planning has been central to the thesis. As Chapters 5, 6, and 7 outline, it would be unreasonable to suggest that a neoliberal Economic Growth was the sole driver of Afghanistan's policy reassembly of higher education. There is a strong presence within these policies which construct what I have identified as Human Rights and National Identity discourses. As the final section of Chapter 7 illustrates, within the construction of these discourses an emphasis on Economic Growth emerges. Whilst Human Rights and National Identity discourses exist in many instances as an end in themselves, in many others they are conscripted into service of Economic Growth. In this way, they demonstrate what Sum and Jessop (2013a) theorise as the conscription of the extra-economic into service of the economic sphere.

Additionally, these chapters outlined the challenge of unravelling each discourse within the broader policy assembly. Economic Growth Discourse, for instance, is not constructed absent discourses of Human Rights and National Identity. Rather, in many instances it is constructed *through* the interplay *between* multiple discourses, and each discourse is understood better through an understanding of the policy as an assembled whole. However, as Jessop (2010) reminds us, policy analysis requires a necessary reduction of complexity in order to engage with the multi-complexities presented by reality, and within policies themselves. These central thesis chapters are understood, then, as momentary reductions of complexity with the intent to better understand the discourses

which, cumulatively, constitute the policies responsible for steering the growth and direction of one of Afghanistan's key institutions.

As Chapter 8 argues, an emphasis on Economic Growth as a policy purpose of Afghan higher education presents some limitations to the broader institutional role it can play within the ongoing state building project. These limitations reflect the wider war economy within which Afghan higher education operates (cf. Goodhand, 2004; Goodhand & Sedra, 2010, 2013; Sedra, 2013). As I argue, an institutional purpose to promote economic growth within a war economy positions higher education in service of this war economy, rather than as an institution which might interrupt it. Altering this course will not be simple. As I argue in Chapter 8, higher education is subject to influence from a wide range of elite actors, reflecting what Novelli (2016) identifies as a broader and capitalist neo-imperialism within development aid in education. This reflects the same impetus for the American and Soviet strategic interests in Afghan higher education during the 1960-1970s (Tsvetkova, 2017), considered in Chapter 4. As a mechanism of elite-selection globally (Castells, 1994), it is likely that Afghan higher education will face *increasing* incursions of soft-power, rather than a reprieve from competing extra-state influence. However, my conclusion to Chapter 8 argues that securing institutional sovereignty is a crucial condition to ensure that Afghan higher education serves Afghan needs. This is a long project in a policy environment driven with short vision. It is my profound hope that it is successful.

Contributions to knowledge

This thesis presents contributions to knowledge within three clear domains: substantive, theoretical, and methodological. Below I consider each of these in turn.

Substantive

A key contribution from this thesis is its empirical context of Afghanistan. In his examination of the contemporary western intervention in Afghanistan, Chandrasekaran's (2012) *Little America* claims that the international staff of many NGOs working in Afghanistan after 2010 had shifted considerably. It is standard practice for many of these organisations to transfer international staff on short rotations of one or two years. The 'A' team, he claimed, had headed on to the next conflicts, and the ones after that. Those working in Afghanistan after 2010 were more akin to the 'B' or even 'C' team. Clearly, such a sweeping statement is unhelpful in its generalisation, however the point he is making about modern crises is similar to that made in Polman's (2010) *The Crisis Caravan*: modern conflicts don't stay relevant for long. In this sense, much of the current work on education in emergencies finds its empirical base in more recent conflicts. This is necessary and good.

Researchers *should* be exploring ways to mitigate, reduce, or resolve conflicts in the various spaces in which they occur. There *should* be urgency to this work. The fact remains that an empirical focus on Afghanistan has slowed since the early 2000s. Much of the slow-down of research in Afghanistan may have to do with the broader security situation, and the genuine challenge of access for high quality field work to be conducted. (This is, of course, a key limiting factor to the present study which I outline in Chapter 1). However this may also be to do with the horrendous frequency and intensity of conflicts in other countries since 2001, and the fact that more recent conflicts also require high quality research in pursuit of high quality resolutions to violence.

As several of the authors cited throughout the preceding chapters have illustrated, Afghanistan may have dropped from its millennium centre-stage position, however the ramifications of its conflict continue to reverberate globally. For instance, when ranking origin country for refugees in 2019, Afghanistan stands second only to Syria according to the UNHCR – 2.7 million people⁴¹. Further, Afghanistan's geopolitical position within Central Asia (Rashid, 2013) continues to see the country a recipient of significant volumes of foreign aid. Unfortunately, much of this continues to be military⁴². The current research offers, then, a valuable substantive study into a context which has been affected by inter-generational conflict.

An additional substantive contribution from this thesis is an exploration into higher education within conflict-affected contexts. As a growing number of authors highlight (cf. Baćević, 2014a; Milton, 2018, 2019; Milton & Barakat, 2016; Tierney, 2011), higher education is a pivotal sector within conflict-affected contexts, but far too often does not receive the explicit attention that it requires (Chuang & Favez, 2004). As multiple participants shared during interviews, higher education in Afghanistan received very little attention as primary and secondary education was grown significantly. This short-sighted and uneven development of the formal education sector has led to significant challenges faced by a young higher education sector attempting to manage its massive growth amongst challenges of, as a former Deputy Minister of Higher Education shared, 'academic immaturity'. The possibilities of higher education for conflict-affected contexts continues to be explored, such as through recent work by Sansom Milton. It is hoped that key actors responding to crises will consider prioritising higher education generally within reconstruction efforts, and look to its economic *and* non-economic dividends specifically. Making this a policy priority, I suggest, will be a necessary starting point.

⁴¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

⁴² <https://www.concernusa.org/story/foreign-aid-by-country-getting-how-much/>

Theoretical

This thesis makes a theoretical contribution in two key and interrelated ways. First, it advances the project of Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education which specifically engages with conflict-affected education. As I indicate in Chapter 2, CCPEE has been put forward (Robertson & Dale, 2015) and developed relatively recently (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016b; Novelli, 2016). This study picks up the tenets of CCPEE as a conceptual 'ensemble' (Robertson & Dale, 2015), as it finds entry points within an educational context. It has done so as CCPEE responds "to the cultural turn in social theory...without abandoning the potential of Marxist and critical theory inspired thinking to assist in explaining social reality" (Novelli, 2016, p. 850). As illustrated within the early chapters of this thesis, along with the detailed exploration of each policy's development, key to advancing this theoretical tool has been locating the study and policies historically, culturally, and contextually within their political economy. This has offered a richer understanding, analysis, and explanation of the emergence of a relatively narrow ideological foundation within Afghanistan's higher education strategic plan, and supported the consideration of its mediating effect upon the broader state building project.

Secondly, drawing on Althusserian new-Marxist concepts of ideology and discourse has been instrumental in theorising the arguments made in chapters throughout the thesis, including in the postlegomenon (Appendix A). This has also seen a productive encounter with Gramsci's (2000) theoretical tools such as economism, war of manoeuvre, and war of position, as I explored the multiple realms of actors (local, regional, and global – see Dale & Robertson, 2009) which continue to vying for influence within Afghanistan's higher education polycscape in Chapter 8. To my knowledge, this is the first application of Gramsci's tools to explore the Afghan context in research centred in Afghanistan. Both the application of CCPEE to research a conflict-affected context, and its articulation with new-Marxism, makes a firm case for further research into education in emergencies from a Critical Realist ontology (see Chapter 2).

Methodological

Another contribution made throughout the thesis is methodological. As I outline in Chapters 1 and 2, if I were to undertake research of education policy within the Global North, there is a relative abundance of methodology text books and chapters within established methodological texts which could offer a relatively straightforward and clear set of steps (cf. Bryman, 2004; R. Heck, 2004; Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey, & Walshe, 2005). Many such approaches are wholly unsuitable to education policy analysis within the Global South, and particularly within conflict-affected contexts

(Bengtsson & Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Novelli, 2012; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Robertson, 2012). This study offers opportunities to those wishing to apply elements of a Critical Policy Analysis within such contexts.

These opportunities must be met with a note of caution. Importantly, this study does not and has not offered a step-by-step approach to the application of CPA. Rather, Chapter 2 sets out *conceptual* methodologies, a fundamental distinction which demands that methods, analytical tools, and ethical considerations firmly reflect the policy context(s) under study, and demonstrate a robust intellectual rigour. As I set out in Chapter 1, any attempt at generalisations of findings from this study to other contexts must be subjected to heavy theoretical and empirical testing to ensure validity and appropriateness. Such a caveat also applies to an application of the methodologies conceptualised as I have done here. As Goodhand (2000) argues (and many more besides), there is a heavy responsibility for conducting research within conflict-affected contexts. Much of this rests on the fact that power-imbalances can often be particularly pronounced between researcher and researched within such contexts. By developing methodologies *conceptually*, this research has been able to reflexively engage with participants, methods, data gathering, analysis, and presentation at every turn. There has long been a call from some quarters for research to be conceptually rigorous within education in emergencies (cf. Lopes Cardozo & Novelli, 2018; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016a). It is hoped that this thesis responds effectively, and promotes the utility of such conceptually rigorous approaches.

Looking ahead

These concluding remarks are supported by further detail within the chapters above. They are, in that sense, somewhat reflective. Before bringing the thesis to a close, it is prudent to briefly turn a tentative eye to the future. To my mind there are a few avenues for further and critical enquiry that emerge from this study.

Firstly, the natural next steps to emerge from this work centre on further studies of both policy and practice. The NHESP III is in development ahead of 2020, and quality assurance measures are also under review. Policy analysis conducted here has much to offer the development of these two reviews. At the same time, each review provides valuable further opportunities to explore mechanisms which construct and fix policy purposes within strategic planning for the coming years. Practically, the final stage of Critical Policy Analysis which follows the implementation of policy into the lived realities of universities and higher education institutions was unable to be conducted here. I sincerely hope that conditions within Afghanistan reach a point in the near future at which such

work can be carried out comprehensively. Such work is also a natural continuation of the current project.

Secondly, the bulk of the thesis is concerned with identifying dominant discourses within strategic planning in order to establish the argument outlined above. Once this was achieved, I came to develop an understanding around higher education's institutional purpose within a war economy. The opportunities for higher education to function as an institution of peace within war economies requires further and explicit attention, and future projects will engage more directly with peacebuilding literatures (for instance, engaging with projects such as Pherali & Lewis, 2017). This also opens up an opportunity to undertake policy analyses of other conflict-affected contexts, and to explore potential for generalisations and particularities which can be garnered from such analyses within other contexts.

Finally, and related to the second point, towards the final stages of this study I became increasingly curious to attempt to further explain the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse found within Afghan higher education policy. Here, picking up a Gramscian war of position, combined with a neo-imperialist exploration of global capitalism (cf. Bhambra, 2014; Novelli, 2016; Wallerstein, 2004), may be particularly useful in understanding the pervasive and structuring conditions of conflict more broadly. A postlegomenon to this thesis, in Appendix A below, begins this work, and requires further conceptual development before considering its utility as an explanatory device.

A (personal) conclusion

There are few words left to write for this account of Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning. They have almost all been said. Much of the public-facing work on this project is intellectual – one simply needs to look to the substance of the chapters above to see evidence of this. However, as my opening stanza to this thesis highlights, this study was not born out of a cerebral curiosity. It was born out of something, I think, deeper, and emotional. This emotion peeks through the pages at a few points too, through my personal narratives. The fateful moments which directed me towards a career in education, and then back into pursuing this degree, were driven by a curiosity which was at once emotional and cerebral. This has been fundamental to sustaining me during this research. Often, the cerebral curiosity drove me, and at other (perhaps more often) times it was the emotional curiosity – the desire to find a deeper understanding to the tension and contradiction that burst its way into my classroom on that 5th of August 2002. Whilst (I hope) this project has made intellectual contributions to the field of education in emergencies, perhaps the most significant contribution for me personally has been an opportunity to examine that

contradiction anew: to consider deeply how one can contest an idea. It has been a first step, but a monumental one. And to those that helped me along the way, again I say thank you.

* * * *

Them wanted to Contest an Idea with a Gun.

In my hand was a pencil. Not a knife, and not a gun. I could kill them with a gun.

It was a pencil and it was all I had.

To Contest an Idea, a pencil is all I have.

It is all I have.

Appendix A: A Postlegomenon Towards a Theory of Conflict Capital

For the case of war a special theory is needed; this follows from the fact that the crisis of war differs essentially from those regularly appearing crises which are characteristic of the present economic order.

(O. Neurath, 1973, p. 126)

[T]here needs to be more analysis of capitalism rather than commodities, of social relations rather than only individual choices, and of policy rather than merely structural determinism by objective conditions of oppression or opportunities for greed.

(Cramer, 2002a, p. 1859)

Introduction

This chapter sets out ideas for a theory of Conflict Capital⁴³. I argue, from an Althusserian New Marxist position, that conflict serves as a means of accumulation in the economic sphere, and a mechanism of structuration and reproduction of social relations within the sphere of regulation. To this end, I propose two fundamental principles of conflict: 1) conflict reproduces and expands itself; and 2) conflict requires and structures social relations for this reproduction and expansion. I examine how these two fundamental principles of conflict mirror principles of capital, and propose that conflict can be understood as a form of capital through its functions as a means of accumulation, and a mechanism of structuration. In the case of Afghanistan's higher education policy, the social relations which have been thus structured by conflict become fixed, for a time, within policy documents. Using this chapter as a postlegomenon to my account of Afghan higher education policy,

⁴³ In considering a term for this set of ideas, I acknowledge that there are one or two others working with the terminology Conflict Capital. One is Dr Christine Cheng, who has given talks about Conflict Capital, but as of the time of writing I am unable to find any published pieces. From reading her abstracts for these talks, Cheng builds on social capital in her work. "[C]onflict capital' refers to a society's norms, networks, and bonds of trust that are created in the crucible of civil war, through intense experiences with violence" (<http://www.ccw.ox.ac.uk/events/2015/12/9/conflict-capital-by-christine-cheng-kings-college-london>). My use of the term differs, to the extent that I can see from these abstracts, as I position conflict as a form of capital, rather than a form of social capital within conflict-affected contexts. I look forward to engaging with Dr Cheng's work further over time, as there appears to be clear resonances between these ideas. The second, Dr Jeff Zacharakis, published an article in 2006 which considers conflict as a form of capital in the development of community projects. His use of the term doesn't consider violence, and refers to disputes between members involved in community projects which can be leveraged as "an asset to stimulate citizen participation in controversial community development projects" (Zacharakis, 2006, para. 2). My consideration of the function of conflict as a form of capital differs significantly from Zacharakis', as I use the term to refer to armed violence, and explore conflict's function as both a mode of accumulation, and as a mechanism of the structuration and reproduction of social relations from an Althusserian New Marxist position.

I advance ideas for a theory of conflict as a form of capital which has been uniquely leveraged in Afghanistan by local and international actors. I do not present this theory as a Grand Narrative, or suggest that it is a full and complete theory to explain the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within Afghan higher education policy. Rather, as I have engaged with these policies and the broader political economy within which they are operating, the notion of conflict functioning as capital is presented here as one way to understand the primacy of Economic Growth Discourse within Afghanistan's national higher education strategic planning.

Through the preceding chapters, the study has demonstrated that when institutions have been disassembled through violent conflict, a dominant (and in this case neoliberal) ideology can (re)establish the institution of higher education with little contestation whilst retaining the conflict character of its context. Chapter 8 argued that the neoliberal re-institutionalisation of higher education has a limiting influence upon the manner in which the institution can fulfil a role as an institution of peace within Afghanistan's state building project. Throughout this postlegomenon, I develop the ideas to argue that Economic Growth Discourse enables on-going conflict by serving as the ideological means to maintain social relations characterised by conflict.

Towards a Theory of Conflict Capital

What *is* Conflict Capital, and what does it *do*? I define Conflict Capital, as (simply) made up of two parts: the sum of conflict's material means (guns, bombs, and the like); and people relating to each other using conflict's material means. Building from this definition, I theorise two fundamental principles of conflict capital: firstly, that conflict capital reproduces and expands itself; and secondly, that conflict capital requires and structures social relations. In other words, I propose that *conflict* can operate as a form of *capital* by functioning as both a means of accumulation, and a mechanism which structures and reproduces the relations of production. What do I mean by capital? Taking an Althusserian New Marxist position, I understand capital⁴⁴: 1) as a store of value, and factor of production; 2) as a series of relations between owners of means of production and of labour; 3) as exploitation of labour in pursuit of surplus-value; 4) as self-reproducing and expanding; and 5) as structuring social relations (Althusser, 2008; Bourdieu, 2011; Marx, 1970, 2013). Points 4 and 5 offer particular insights towards the fundamental principles of conflict, and require further exploration.

⁴⁴ This is not intended to be an exhaustive list or exploration into the forms and functions of capital. However, these points hold particular relevance to a theory of conflict operating as a form of capital.

There are multiple definitions of the forms which conflict can take. However, they all agree that conflict requires multiple parties, can require violence in many instances, and structures the social relations it impacts (cf. Brock, 2011; Friedman, 2003; Mundy & Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Conflict is a social relation, that requires weapons. Firstly, conflict has material means, made up of physical weaponry – guns, bombs, warplanes, ammunition, etc. Secondly, conflict is relational, made up by people interacting with each other using conflict’s material means. Conflict is irreducible to either its material means or its social relations, although each shapes a fundamental principle of conflict operating as a form of capital. I propose these as follows:

Principle 1: Conflict reproduces and expands itself. This accounts for conflict’s function as a mode of accumulation, i.e. a productive force.

Principle 2: Conflict requires and structures social relations. This accounts for conflict’s function as a mechanism which structures social relations, i.e. a regulatory force.

These two principles mirror points 4 and 5 of the nature of capital set out above – that capital is self-reproducing and expanding, and that capital structures social relations. In bringing the two concepts together to explore the function of conflict as a form of capital, Conflict Capital is the *articulation between conflict’s two fundamental principles in order to secure or maintain the reproduction of the relations of production for a regime of accumulation*. So if conflict operates as a form of capital as I claim, what do these understandings of capital offer to an analysis of the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within Afghanistan’s higher education strategic planning?

Ideology and the Reproduction of the Relations of Production

Here I return⁴⁵ to the Althusserian notion of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) to consider their function as a key mechanism in maintaining the accumulation of capital. This section draws on Althusserian New Marxism, and takes seriously Althusser’s insistence that the ideological state apparatuses, first encountered in Chapter 2, perform a determining function within a particular regime of accumulation to create and maintain the social relations of production. Althusser provides an important theoretical grounding for the ideas. For conflict to function as a form of capital, it must be determining from the material Base, or the economic sphere, and *also* determining from the ideological and legal-political Superstructure, or the regulatory sphere. New Marxism’s introduction of the relative determinism of the Superstructure upon the Base justifies my focus on conflict’s determining function from the sphere of regulation upon the sphere of accumulation, and so supports the notion of conflict operating as a form of capital.

⁴⁵ Both Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses were first introduced in Chapter 2.

Althusser (2008) begins his essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, with a reminder of Marx's observation that capital must reproduce its conditions of production at the same time that it produces. His central enquiry for the essay examines the conditions required to secure the reproduction of the relations of production. Through this enquiry, Althusser extends the State Apparatus central to Marxist theory which contains "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc" (Althusser, 2008, pp. 16–17). Althusser categorises traditional Marxist theory's State Apparatus as the 'Repressive State Apparatus' (RSA) which functions primarily and massively by violence, and introduces a new category of apparatuses which function in the modern state primarily and massively by ideology – the Ideological State Apparatuses. These he lists, including such institutions and social organisations as the family, political, cultural, religious, and education structures. There is clearly a plurality of ISAs which form the Superstructure. Althusser's interest in the Superstructure reconfigures its relationship with the economic Base, and requires further exploration for my purposes here.

The regulatory function of the legal-political and ideological components of the Superstructure upon the economic Base marks a significant departure from the economism of orthodox Marxism (Wallerstein, 2004). Neo-Marxists, such as Althusser, Bourdieu, Gramsci, and others, argued against pure economic determinism, taking the position that the:

categories of Marxist thought should be related, not as elements of a causal system, but as components of a totality. Base does not, as it were, determine superstructure. The two, rather, articulate with one another, and the manner of their articulation is consequential for understanding the totality of society... (Wuthnow, 1993, p. 155, as quoted in Rata, 1996, p. 287)

This articulation complicates, necessarily, an understanding of the contradictions⁴⁶ inherent within the capital relation (Althusser, 2005; Sum & Jessop, 2013b). A contradiction, in this sense of the word, "arises when two seemingly opposed forces are simultaneously present within a particular situation, an entity, a process or an event" (D. Harvey, 2014, p. 1). *Capitalism* is the process of endless accumulation – capital's reproduction of itself in endlessly extended form (Ginsburg, 2010; Wallerstein, 2004). This endless accumulation is anarchic, it does not cohere around a central project or position. Further, capital can only accumulate, and requires institutions to reproduce its conditions of production. A central contradiction within the Capital-Labour social relation, then, is between capital's anarchic accumulation, and requirement for the regulatory function of the Superstructure. Accordingly, rather than relying solely upon the causal determinism of capital, New

⁴⁶ See Chapter 6 in Sum and Jessop (2013b) for an in-depth examination of contradictions within the capital relation.

Marxism saw that such contradictions “also affect the wider social formation and are reproduced as capitalism itself is reproduced” (Sum & Jessop, 2013b, p. 245). As Althusser elaborates:

the ‘contradiction’ is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal *conditions* of existence, and even from the *instances* it governs; it is radically *affected by them*, determining but also determined in one and the same movement, and determined by the various *levels* and *instances* of the social formation it animates; it might be called *overdetermined*⁴⁷ *in its principle*. (2005, pp. 100–101, emphasis in original)

More simply, the “*Capital-Labour contradiction is never simple, but always specified by the historically concrete forms and circumstances in which it is exercised*” (Althusser, 2005, p. 106, emphasis in original).

The relative determinism of the Superstructure upon the Base is crucial for a theory of conflict functioning as a form of capital. Whilst the material conditions of conflict are necessary – forming its mode of accumulation, their use is determined by and determining through their articulation with a given social relation, which form the mechanisms of social structuration and reproduction. A change in the institutions which form the regulatory sphere *can have a determination upon* the material Base within an overdetermined social whole. Conflict as a mechanism of social structuration and reproduction then becomes possible. What, then, arrests a theoretical slide into relativism within such complexity of relations? And how does the introduction of the effect of the Superstructure upon the Base retain, rather than reject, Marxism?

Althusser argues that it is through the determinism of the economic Base *in the final instance*. However, this *final instance* is never pure. Althusser acknowledges the “materiality of the processes of production and circulation” as reproducing the relations of production in the first instance; he also recognises that “ideological relations are immediately present in these same processes” (2008, p. 22). This is, in effect, what Althusser means by the overdetermined contradiction:

[T]he economic dialectic is never active *in the pure state*; in History, these instances, the superstructures, etc. – are never seen to step respectfully aside when their work is done or, when the Time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never comes. (Althusser, 2005, p. 113)

⁴⁷ Overdetermination was introduced in Chapter 1, and is the term used by Althusser to indicate the articulations amongst and between the legal-political, and the Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses of the Superstructure, and the material economics of the Base (see Althusser, 2005). These articulations are irreducible to a single constituent part, and are, as this quote indicates, determining in the same movement in which they are determined.

In this way, New Marxism not only avoids a slide into theoretical relativism, but also retains a firm foundation in Marxian economic theory. Althusser writes that Marx's Base and Superstructure in fact are two ends of 'the same chain', "on the one hand, *determination in the last instance by the (economic) mode of production*; on the other, *the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific effectivity*" (2005, p. 111, emphasis in original). Examining the relation between them was the purpose of Althusser's theoretical investigation. Overdetermination, or the relative autonomy of the Superstructure from the Base, as set out by New Marxism, attributed:

greater emphasis to the concept of human praxis or agency while at the same time retaining marxian notions of structural determinants and avoiding both the voluntarism of pluralist theories of change and the technicism that results from the concept of the primacy of productive forces. (Rata, 1996, p. 283)

By exploring New Marxism's break from orthodox Marxism, the reciprocal articulation of the overdetermination between Base and Superstructure becomes possible to consider (Althusser, 2005). As a result, we arrive at a fundamental principle for any inquiry into the forms of capital: it is the legal-political and ideological components of the Superstructure which, for the most part, *secure the reproduction of the relations of production* (Althusser, 2008). This is where the structuring mechanism of Conflict Capital is operating; it is secured and reproduced through the Superstructure. The reproduction of the relations of production is made possible by the respective functions of the RSA and ISAs⁴⁸ in the accumulation of capital. The RSA is required in:

securing by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production which are in the last resort *relations of exploitation*. Not only does the State apparatus contribute generously to its own reproduction...but also and above all, the State apparatus secures by repression...the political conditions for the action of the Ideological State Apparatuses. (Althusser, 2008, p. 24, emphasis in original)

This is a fundamental component in securing the reproduction of the relations of production, as "[i]n fact, it is the [ISAs] which largely secure the reproduction specifically of the relations of production, behind a 'shield' provided by the repressive State apparatus" (Althusser, 2008, p. 24).

Ideology's⁴⁹ function as a 'shield' enables new or renewed accumulation regimes through spacio-temporal fixes, which:

establish spatial and temporal boundaries within which the always-relative, incomplete, provision and institutionally mediated structural coherence of a given order...is secured...[T]his also involves building support in and across many conflictual and contested

⁴⁸ In many ways, these concepts map on to the Gramscian theory of wars of manoeuvre and position employed in Chapter 8.

⁴⁹ For a fuller inquiry into the function of ideology, see discussion in Chapter 1.

fields for the respective accumulation strategies, associated state projects and, where relevant, hegemonic vision. (Sum & Jessop, 2013b, p. 247)

However, as “the underlying contradictions and dilemmas still exist, all such regimes are partial, provisional and unstable” (Sum & Jessop, 2013b, p. 249). The significance of the ISAs is clear, however as Althusser’s lists of ISAs illustrate there are multiple ideological apparatuses at play within the overdetermined social whole. Importantly, in order to achieve a structural coherence of a given accumulation regime, unity of the various ISAs is achieved, “usually in contradictory forms, *by the ruling ideology, the ideology of the ruling class*” (Althusser, 2008, p. 23, emphasis added). The dominant ideology primarily responsible for securing the reproduction of the relations of production is, then, that of a ruling class. This requires us to consider further the notion of domination.

Domination insists upon conflict. To understand domination we must once again, and necessarily, introduce complexity. Any suggestion of a simple domination-subordination of contradictions would undermine the complexity required to examine the overdetermined social whole established in the paragraphs above. For, in a complex whole constructed by and through multiple contradictions, “we cannot ‘find’ one contradiction that dominates the others as we might ‘find’ the spectator a head taller than the others...Domination is not just an indifferent *fact*, it is a *fact essential* to the complexity itself” (Althusser, 2005, p. 201, emphasis in original). Whilst ideology provides a form of unity to the ISAs within a regime of accumulation, and whilst this is determined by the dominant classes, the unity of the whole is not in the domination-subordination of, for instance, class contradictions. Rather, “the unity discussed by Marxism is *the unity of the complexity itself...the complex whole has the unity of a structure articulated in dominance*” (Althusser, 2005, p. 202, emphasis in original). Althusser explains this notion further:

If every contradiction is a contradiction in a complex whole structured in dominance, this complex whole cannot be envisaged without its contradictions, without their basically uneven relations. In other words, each contradiction, each essential articulation of the structure, and the general relation of the articulations in the structure in dominance, constitute so many conditions of the existence of the complex whole itself. (Althusser, 2005, p. 205)

And so, as we further explore points 4 and 5 from the opening section on capital above – that capital reproduces and expands itself, and that capital requires and structures social relations – we encounter an overdetermined social whole, given unity by its complexity, and structured through uneven relations articulated in domination. The ideology of ongoing conflict serves a primary function in, for the most part, securing the reproduction of the relations of production, and that it is the ideology of the ruling classes which performs this function. In this way, the ruling classes obtain

or retain power over a particular regime of accumulation. In the case of Afghanistan, this is a regime where accumulation is enabled through conflict.

How is a dominant ideology established and maintained? For Althusser, it is through the Ideological State Apparatus of education. Working “behind the scenes of its political Ideological State Apparatus, which occupies the front of the stage, what the bourgeoisie has installed as its number-one, i.e. as its dominant ideological State apparatus, is the educational apparatus” (Althusser, 2008, p. 27). In this way, the school is instrumental in securing the reproduction of the relations of production. As Althusser argues:

it is by an apprenticeship in a variety of know-how wrapped up in the massive inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class that the *relations of production* in a capitalist social formation, i.e. the relations of exploited to exploiters and exploiters to exploited, are largely reproduced. (2008, p. 30, emphasis in the original)

The introduction of ISAs into an analysis of capital illustrates the broader extra-economic factors which are integral to capital’s production and accumulation, and positions education squarely as an *ideological* factor before it becomes an *instrumental* factor in the same. As I mentioned above, this redraws the relationship between the economic Base and the Superstructure, and challenges the dominance of purely economic analyses of production.

The redefined relationship between the Base and Superstructure, enabled by the break from a reductionist economism of orthodox Marxism, carries important implications. Chief amongst them, perhaps, can be illustrated through World-Systems Analysis’ project to “abolish the lines between economic, political, and sociocultural modes of analysis” (Wallerstein, 2004, p. 21). In this way, “world system level analyses have focused on the state, specifically in terms of global trends of increasing state authority and power and of national government incorporation and control of education” (Ginsburg, Cooper, Raghu, & Zegarra, 1990, p. 11). This analytical intent appears in Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE)⁵⁰. For CCPEE, a redefined relationship between Base and Superstructure of the New Marxism supports an explicit examination of education in response to the cultural turn in social theory “without abandoning the potential of Marxist and critical theory inspired thinking to assist in explaining social reality” (Novelli, 2016, p. 850). In this way, the CCPEE project builds upon neo-Marxist foundations, and takes seriously what Bourdieu refers to as forms of exchange in which economic theorists are *disinterested*. He elaborates:

⁵⁰ CCPEE was outlined in further detail in Chapter 2.

It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its form and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory. Economic theory has allowed to be foisted upon it a definition of the economy of practices which is the historical invention of capitalism; and by reducing the universe of exchanges to mercantile exchange, which is objectively and subjectively oriented toward the maximization of profit, i.e., (economically) *self-interested*, it has implicitly defined the other forms of exchange as noneconomic, and therefore *disinterested*. (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 81, emphasis in original)

Accordingly, analyses of an overdetermined social whole must necessarily take an interest in those forms of exchange which economic theory finds disinterested. Economically self-interested analyses, in effect, are unable to examine the very mechanisms by which the reproduction of the means of production are secured. To take this step to its logical conclusion, and to apply it to the conflict-affected context of Afghanistan, the Ideological State Apparatus of education *must* feature as a central component within the state-building project for analysts, planners, policy-makers, and citizens alike (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Thus far I have set out a definition of capital, paying particular attention to its primacy in structuring social relations, and its requirement to reproduce itself as it produces. I followed this with my definition of Conflict Capital, illustrating how it mirrors key elements of capital, and placing its mechanism of structuration and reproduction in the Superstructure. I have then engaged in a New Marxist exploration of the reciprocal articulations between Base and Superstructure to justify this position. In doing so, I have drawn on Althusser's argument that ISAs are mainly responsible for securing the reproduction of the relations of production, particularly his insistence that these multiple apparatuses are given unity by the ideology of the ruling class. It is the ideology of the ruling class which is then spread through the educational ISA. This challenges the dominance of the economic Base in determining the relations of production, and therefore requires broader examination of the Superstructure and its ideological anchor. But what of conflict? Specifically, as I develop ideas towards a theory of Conflict Capital, how might conflict function as a mode of accumulation, and a mechanism which reproduces the social relations of production in the sphere of reproduction? In the sections below I examine the 4th and 5th understandings of capital from the opening section – that it reproduces itself in expanded form, and that it structures social relations – and relate them explicitly to the two fundamental principles of conflict – that conflict reproduces and expands itself, and that conflict requires and structures social relations.

Conflict and Accumulation Through Reproduction and Expansion

Capital reproduces and expands itself. Althusser (2008, p. 1) writes:

As Marx said, every child knows that a social formation which did not reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produced would not last a year. This may be 'simple' (reproducing exactly the previous conditions of production) or 'on an extended scale' (expanding them).

Capital, then, must reproduce itself in simple or extended form in order to survive, or 'persist in its being' as Bourdieu says above. As outlined earlier, the pursuit of accumulation in endlessly extending form is the fundamental project of *capitalism* (Wallerstein, 2004). Accumulation within the capitalist project is anarchic, and seeks to throw off regulation at every turn (see Chapter 4 and 8 for discussion of neoliberalism's pursuit for frictionless markets (Peck, 2010) as an example). The quest for endless accumulation forms another of capital's contradictions, indeed its vulnerability – for accumulation is finite. There is only so much that can be consumed. Harvey (2014) refers to capital's quest for endless compounding accumulation as one of capital's 'dangerous contradictions'. For a regime of accumulation to go on, and persist in its being, capital must articulate with the sphere of regulation in order to avoid the stagnation that occurs from a theoretically pure free market (D. Harvey, 2014; Peck, 2010; Wallerstein, 2004). So if capital must reproduce and expand itself, how is this applicable to conflict's first principle?

Conflict reproduces and expands itself. This is perhaps most evident in the immediate moments of conflict's beginning: who can forget the images of Baghdad as operation *Shock and Awe* began – the single shell and then the entire night sky on fire? The moment before the battles that I lived through in Mazar-i-Shariff as a child were invariably marked by an almost material sensation, a silence and a weight upon the city, before a single high-pitched report from an AK-47 would begin a lethal and massively immediate accumulation of violence. So it can be said that in the immediate moments following conflict's *beginning*, conflict reproduces *and* expands itself. However, this fundamental principle of conflict requires further examination of its two parts.

Firstly, conflict reproduces itself in the pursuit of domination, or in order to maintain domination. This is, then, not a fixed rate of reproduction. Rather, it may require significant expansion or contraction based upon the particular social relations which constitute its social whole. Conflict's ability to reproduce itself is inextricably related to conflict's function in structuring social relations, i.e. what ideological, material, and labour resources have been secured and mobilised which enable further conflict? How popular is the conflict amongst those required to provide these resources⁵¹? And how are those resources able to be exploited, regardless of popularity? In the first instance, the

⁵¹ For instance, see Holland and Aaronson (2014), who explore the rhetorical devices used by the British and American governments to justify military operations in Afghanistan and Libya to their own citizens.

manner in which conflict has structured social relations will dictate conflict's ability to reproduce and expand itself into the second and subsequent instances. If these are sufficient to secure the reproduction of the relations of production, conflict will reproduce itself.

Secondly, conflict expands itself in order to secure domination. Once again, in a particular geographic location this is mediated by the manner in which conflict structures social relations, and once again this requires some caveats. Conflict does not always expand itself in the same manner that, for example, wealth accumulates. In several ways it clearly operates as a mode of economic accumulation – the US troop draw down from Afghanistan in 2014 took billions of dollars out of the Afghan economy (O'Donnell, 2014). However, conflict is also not like other forms of wealth. In its simplest form, this is because fighters who take up arms in a conflict are killed, and as the extent of violence within any conflict has ebbs and flows. However, the expansion of conflict is both through the *spread of violence*, as well as *the expansion of the social relations which are structured by conflict*, both immediate and distant. This includes, for instance, the Communist party's *coup d'état* of 1978 leading to Russian occupation, the altered family relations of the Taliban soldier killed by Masoud's soldier, and the social relations of the employee running logistical support in London for private military contractors operating in Afghanistan. In this way, we can understand that conflict expands itself in material forms for a time, and also in its ability to structure social relations on an expanding scale.

There are cases which support the claim that conflict reproduces and expands itself. For instance, Linda Polman recounts the way in which the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone expanded conflict in order to secure the wealth associated with 'reconstruction' and foreign aid. Whilst the civil war raged there wasn't much attention from the global North, which was preoccupied by the conflict in Yugoslavia. However, by:

using more and more violence, the RUF forced the Sierra Leone army, the government army, to use more and more violence too...Mike Lamin continues: 'It was only when you [the global North] saw ever more amputees that you started paying attention to our fate'. The peace negotiations in Lomé were the result. The international community promised a reconstruction operation if the parties would sign an accord, exactly as the RUF had planned...(Polman, 2010, p. 167)

Additionally, Fearon (2004) charts the number of conflicts and their average duration since 1945. He finds that not only have the number of civil wars increased exponentially since the end of the Second World War until 2004, but the length of these conflicts has also steadily increased, from an average of one year in 1945 to an average of 15 years in 2004. Not only can the expansion of conflict be leveraged to secure new regimes of accumulation, but conflicts are reproducing themselves for

longer, indicating that the reproduction of the relations of production within these regimes are stabilising and becoming institutionalised. So what of the social relations structured through conflict? These, too, perform a function of capital.

Conflict and the Structuration of Social Relations

Capital requires and structures social relations. As Marx and Bourdieu established above, social relations amongst and between capitalists and labourers structure the social world, and are the result – necessarily – of the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts within which capitalist and labourer operate. However, this can be masked by the generalisation of four forms of commodity, referred to as fictitious commodities; labour, land, money, and knowledge:

Each [fictitious commodity] is often treated as a simple factor of production, obscuring the conditions under which it enters the market economy, gets transformed therein, and so contributes to the production of goods and services for sale. But this tendency to naturalize fictitious commodities as objectively given factors of production leads to the fallacious belief, strongly criticized by Marx, that economic value arises from the immanent, eternal qualities of things *rather than from contingent, historically specific social relations*. (Sum & Jessop, 2013b, p. 240, emphasis added)

Relations amongst and between capitalists and labourers are structured by these economic and extra-economic interactions which, in turn, structure societies. This function of capital is reflected in conflict's second fundamental principle.

In the absence of social relations which produce and reproduce conflict, there would be no opportunity for conflict. Conflict requires an other *because* it is a relational activity. Through the interactions between and amongst groups which are mediated by conflict, conflict necessarily performs a *structuring* function upon these social relations. Whether these relations are between nations, or between groups made up of linguistic, ethnic, religious, or kinship identities, or between ruling and subjugated classes etc, conflict is either a struggle for, or an effort to maintain, a dominant position. As unequal relations within the social whole provide an Althusserian *structure articulated in dominance*, conflict – which either alters or maintains domination – performs this structuring function during such time that conflict exists. Indeed, the main inquiry of this study into Afghanistan's higher education policy has illustrated the way in which conflict has structured social relations, which have then been fixed within policy documents.

That conflict requires and structures social relations is not a new observation. For Jonathan Friedman, violence “is directed at an Other who is in conflict with the Self” (2003, p. 23). This violence structures societies beyond the immediate conflict, as “war economies shape peace” (Cramer, 2008, p. 123). Goodhand (2006, p. 70) writes that conflicts “reshape politics, the economy,

social institutions and the state, creating their own dynamics, mutating and changing over time". As conflict structures social relations, new regimes of accumulation are created. Naomi Klein's (2007) *The Shock Doctrine* catalogues the many ways in which conflict structures social relations, from coercing nations into free-market principles, to structuring armed reaction to such coercion. For instance, her particular focus on the privatisation of Iraq following the US invasion is an astounding account of the altered accumulation regime which that conflict enabled – Klein was told by a delegate at the 'Rebuilding Iraq 2' conference in Washington DC that the "best time to invest is when there is still blood on the ground" (Klein, 2007, p. 326). Similarly, Loewenstein's (2015) *Disaster Capitalism* explores the massive profits that have accompanied invasions in to Afghanistan and Iraq, and countless natural disasters elsewhere. Invariably these profits are taken out of the country. In the case of Iraq, laws were passed by the US appointee to ensure that 100 percent of the profits generated in Iraq could be taken out of the country tax free (Klein, 2007). In each of the contexts these two authors examine, conflict structures social relations in local, regional, and global forms. Social relations aren't purely structured through private industry – the proliferation of NGOs operating on business models has also altered social relations within conflict-affected contexts (Goodhand & Sedra, 2010; Polman, 2010). As humanitarian and development organisations have been co-opted into security agendas, the nature of current conflicts has redefined NGO functions to align further with Northern ideological and material interests (Goodhand, 2013; Novelli, 2010, 2012; Sedra, 2013).

What of the end of conflicts? What of the re-emergence of peace? And if conflict reproduces and expands itself, then what's the point? These are important questions, and to answer them I refer back to the notion of spacio-temporal fixes of the contradictions within capital. Conflict operating as a form of capital enables, and is enabled by, a particular regime of accumulation in the same movement. However, the contradictions inherent within a particular conflict are fixed only temporarily by the ideology of the elite in order to enable accumulation. The spacio-temporal fixes which secure a particular regime of accumulation don't address the underlying contradictions inherent to capital's accumulation, and are therefore only ever temporary. Regimes of accumulation change. In fact, these changes are often only made possible *through* conflict⁵² (Cramer, 2002a, 2006). In this way, a time for the expansion of conflict may come to an end, and the violence within conflict may be able to reproduce itself in diffused form, for instance through establishing RSAs, and

⁵² This can be seen, for instance, in the case of the 500,000 public servants fired in Iraq by the American appointee to oversee the interim government. 400,000 of these were from the army, and as businesses were swallowed up by the newly opened access to global markets, the business class joined forces in rising up against the US occupation (Klein, 2007).

still maintain its function in domination. When its domination is challenged, conflict-as-capital may then once again be required to consolidate itself through reproduction and expansion. However, the fact that conflict as a regime of accumulation is temporary offers hope to consider mechanisms which hasten a change of accumulation regime towards a positive peace. That is, in fact, the point.

Given the relative determinism of education within the regulatory sphere, in a moment I turn to consider the ideas of conflict operating as a form of capital within the context of Afghanistan's higher education strategic planning. Indeed, the purpose of this examination into the nature of capital, and its reflection within the nature of conflict, has been to make sense of the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within these strategic plans. However, first I turn to a body of literature on political economies of war. This is an important step in the development of ideas towards a theory of conflict operating as a form of capital. This body of research is preoccupied with the economic and other determinants within conflict-affected contexts. As a recent rigorous review by Novelli and colleagues (2014) indicates, political economies of education within conflict-affected contexts are also on the rise. Below, I position the ideas of this chapter within the field of critical political economy.

War Economies

Political economies of war abound⁵³ (cf. Berdal & Zaum, 2013; Cramer, 2002b; Novelli, Higgins, Ugur, & Valiente, 2014; Pugh, Cooper, & Turner, 2008; Pugh, Goodhand, & Cooper, 2009; Rubin, 2000). However, as Novelli et al. (2014) outline, there are multiple forms of political economy which inform these studies, and they draw from markedly differing theoretical assumptions which result in, of course, markedly different implications for their contexts. On the one hand, many take what Cramer (2002a) argues is a Gramscian economism in their approach. Novelli et al. (2014) outline how such approaches draw from a neoliberal set of assumptions, which atomise actors into individuals operating from an economic rationality and which strips analyses of social relations from war economies. These are often highly influential, or written by highly influential people (McGrath, 2010). For instance, William Easterly's (2007) *White Man's Burden*, in part, advocated for the privatisation of aid – if Harry Potter novels can be shipped, stored, and then released for sale simultaneously in every corner of the world shouldn't we organise humanitarian delivery upon the same free-market principles? Or Paul Collier's (2008) analysis of the 'conflict trap' in *The Bottom*

⁵³ Similar to my caveat regarding an exploration of capital, this section is not a comprehensive review of political economy literature. (To see a recent review of political economies of education in conflict, see Novelli et al., 2014). Rather, for my purposes here, this section engages with a field of research within which my ideas towards a theory of Conflict Capital are intended to fit.

Billion – bad governance, natural resources, or having bad neighbours can keep you poor, and statistically “civil war and low income are mutually reinforcing” (McGrath, 2010, p. 242). These books were huge sellers. My copy of Collier’s *The Bottom Billion* proudly shouts ‘150, 000 copies sold’ from the cover, across an image of a child soldier. There is also the ‘greed and grievance’ theory (cf. Berdal & Malone, 2000; P. Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; P. Collier, Hoeffler, & Rohner, 2009) which explain causes of conflict (civil war specifically) in economic rationality terms, and is another example of the economism within much of the popular political economies of war. With the rise of discourses around preventing and countering violent extremism, greed and grievance theories are particularly influential, e.g. through the description of push and pull factors which ‘co-opt’ individuals into ‘radicalism’ (cf. UNESCO-IIEP & MGIEP, 2017; UNESCO, 2017).

On the other hand, there are powerful critiques of the economic-rationality of such political economies of war. These come from a Critical Political Economy tradition (Novelli et al., 2014), which argues that the *homo economicus* approach is overly reductionist, and advocate for socio-culturally and historically informed approaches to conflict (cf. Cramer, 2002a, 2006; Goodhand, 2004; Goodhand, Hulme, & Lewer, 2000; Novelli, 2010; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Novelli & Robertson, 2007; Pherali & Sahar, 2018; Pugh et al., 2008, 2009; Robertson et al., 2007; Rubin, 2000)⁵⁴. These authors challenge the economic determinism of attempts to explain conflict. McGrath (2010), for instance, mounts a compelling response to Easterly and Collier, in addition to Stiglitz and Sachs, from an *educational* perspective, critiquing their heavy reliance on individualism, championing of economic determinism and free-market ‘solutions’, and their treatment of education solely as a human capital. Rather, McGrath (2010) challenges educationalists to bring further complexity to these economists’ accounts of development, and to identify and try to deal with the contradictions that can emerge within education in development work (such as the tensions between social cohesion and indoctrination, or human capital’s role in generating educational inflation). Cramer (2002a) critiques dominant neoclassical economic theories of armed conflict in developing countries, highlighting their reductionism through their quest to quantify the ‘social’. He then calls for further research into political economies of conflict which examine “relations of force rather than just choices of violence” (2002a, p. 1858). Many of these authors highlight the need to examine conflict and war economies from a multinational-methodologist approach, breaking away from simple national accounts which ignore the role of regional and global policies, actors, and agendas in local conflicts (Goodhand & Sedra, 2010; Novelli, 2012, 2016, 2017; Rashid, 2009;

⁵⁴ As this study has employed a methodology informed by critical realism, many of these ideas are evident throughout the preceding chapters, and make up central theoretical pillars for this study as a whole.

Robertson, 2012; Rubin, 2005; Smith & Vaux, 2003). By exploring the relations between and amongst actors rather than atomising actors to rational, economically-motivated, and self-interested individuals, these approaches also call for enquiry into the globalised and interconnected nature of armed conflict.

A particular strength of such socio-culturally and historically located explorations of war economies is not only their power of critique, but also the broader depth of analysis which they can offer. In the case of Afghanistan, for instance, several critical scholars have engaged with Afghanistan's war economy in order to broaden international and donor conversations and agendas within the ongoing statebuilding project (Giustozzi & Ibrahim, 2013; Novelli, 2010; Pherali & Sahar, 2018). As Goodhand writes, "analysis needs to go beyond the simplistic 'warlords and greedy profiteers' type of discourse that has influenced past and present policies towards Afghanistan" (2004, p. 45). War economy analyses of Afghanistan's context⁵⁵, for instance, have resisted drives to categorise the opium economy as purely 'deviant', or 'illegitimate', but rather understand it in its broader socio-cultural and historical contexts (Goodhand, 2004; Rubin, 2000). The transport mafias which run goods through Afghanistan, and operate in what is officially termed a 'shadow' economy, are one of the largest contributors to the State purse through border taxes (Rashid, 2008, 2009; Rubin, 2002). Rather than dismissing these and other economic activities as extra-statal and therefore criminal, these analyses of Afghanistan's war economy acknowledge that the globalised nature of the conflict has meant that this "economy developed in response to the demands of warlords for resources and of the Afghan people for survival in a country devastated by over 20 years of war⁵⁶" (Rubin, 2000, p. 1790). Further, and whilst not specifically referring to Afghanistan, Cramer (2002a, p. 1855) highlights that although 'ethnic difference' is often cited as a causal factor for conflicts, such analyses needn't be reduced to a simplistic 'greed' model. Rather, they create opportunities to employ "concepts such as envy or mimetic rivalry, which are inherently relational and provide grounds for rooting an analysis of the role of resources and commodities within specific relational structures and histories."

As the opening quotes to this postlegomenon by both Neurath and Cramer illustrate, conflict requires its own form of economic theory, and analyses of these war economies must examine capitalism – the pursuit of regimes of endless accumulation of capital – *in addition to* analyses of commodities. Critical political economies of war consider the articulation of economic reality with a

⁵⁵ Many of these are further engaged with in Chapter 4.

⁵⁶ Rubin's observation weighs all the heavier, given that this statement itself is almost 20 years old.

country's broader socio-cultural, historical, and geo-political realities. For these reasons, I position the ideas outlined in this chapter within the critical political economy tradition. It is now time to consider the articulation of Conflict Capital with the educational ideological apparatus.

Conflict Capital and Afghanistan's Higher Education Strategic Planning

This final section considers my doctoral project in light of the two principles of a theory of Conflict Capital: that conflict reproduces and expands itself; and that conflict requires and structures social relations. As I apply these ideas to an empirical case, I introduce education into the ideas of conflict operating as a form of capital. This is important, as education is the primary ISA responsible for securing the reproduction of the relations of production. Below I make considerable references to various thesis chapters. This section is necessarily brief. Considering the introductory nature of these ideas within the broader doctoral project (and an ever-climbing word count), the section concludes by considering a few avenues necessary for the further development of a theory of Conflict Capital.

Does the Afghan conflict structure social relations, and reproduce and expand itself? As the preceding chapters have illustrated, social relations in Afghanistan have been structured by conflict for several decades (see Chapters 3 and 4). More recently, as higher education policies have been authored, the social relations of key authors and agendas for each policy have been structured by conflict (see Chapter 5). Conflict in Afghanistan has been reproduced and expanded in a variety of ways – again this is illustrated through various chapters within the thesis (cf. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 8). As we have seen from earlier sections to this postlegomenon, it is ideological apparatuses which, for the most part, secure the reproduction of the relations of production. When we consider the two fundamental principles of conflict operating as a form of capital, and relate these principles to the educational context in Afghanistan, it is clear that education has been leveraged in the past to secure the reproduction of the relations of production mediated by conflict (cf. Baiza, 2013; Burde, 2014; Novelli, 2010). So, how does the case of current higher education policy fit within this frame? After all, the SAP and the NHESPs I and II certainly don't promote conflict in the same explicit manner that USAID-funded textbooks did during the 1980s and 90s.

Here I return to the primary policy purpose of higher education within Afghanistan which I have established in the preceding chapters: to promote economic growth. As I argued in Chapter 8, an institutional role to promote economic growth within a war economy positions higher education as a mechanism for growth of that war economy. Having stripped the non-economic, or Bourdieu's *disinterested*, social relations from the policy purpose of higher education, the complexity within Afghanistan's higher education context is only considered through the solitary and overly-

reductionist perspective of economic rationality. This has been informed by a neoliberal ideology, which has been profoundly successful in securing the reproduction of the relations of production of a conflict-mediated regime of accumulation. At the same time that neoliberalism has secured the reproduction of the relations of production, it has been able to mask the exploitation required in order to secure the conditions for accumulation. Within the Afghan conflict, much of this accumulation has been achieved by individuals and companies in the global North, with very little of the vast sums of aid and military money remaining in the country (Klein, 2007; Loewenstein, 2015). In this way, a policy purpose for higher education to promote economic growth within a war economy is mediated through social relations structured by conflict. At the level of higher education strategic planning, the ideology of neoliberalism assumes a particular local form (see Chapter 5) which enables the reproduction and expansion of a regime of accumulation structured by/through conflict. In this way, conflict is operating as a form of capital – both in structuring and reproducing social relations – within the policy purpose of higher education in Afghanistan. This explains the dominance of Economic Growth Discourse within the NHESPs I and II. The dominance of Economic Growth Discourse secures the reproduction of the relations of production necessary for the current regime of accumulation operating in Afghanistan. The social whole involves actors far outside of Afghanistan. As Chapter 8 argues in conclusion, altering higher education’s function will require time, a long march through the institutions, a reclamation of its purpose to serve its citizens ahead of the demands of capitalism.

The ideas that I have begun to map out here are imperfect. They require considerably further theoretical development, and empirical application, to test their validity. However, they fit within a significant body of literature that already exists. One might reasonably ask, what is different from a theory of conflict as capital, and Klein’s *Shock Doctrine* or the established literature on disaster capitalism? This is an important question, and I suggest that the answer is found in the examination of capital above. Capitalism is a pursuit of endless accumulation (Wallerstein, 2004), and therefore uses what capital *is* and what capital *does* to this end. Analyses using Conflict Capital should examine fundamental principles of conflict as they function as capital, and as they retain material determinism in the final instance, whilst exploring the ideological mechanisms which secure the reproduction of the relations of production (namely, education) at all points. It is my hope that this answers Cramer’s challenge in the opening quote to this postlegomenon, that there needs to be “more analysis of capitalism rather than commodities, of social relations rather than only individual choices, and of policy rather than merely structural determinism by objective conditions of oppression or opportunities for greed” (2002a, p. 1859).

These ideas also indicate the opportunity for peace from contradiction. The contradiction between capitalism's anarchic accumulation and its regulatory social relations opens space for the change of a regime of accumulation to become possible. This opportunity and space for change places a particular emphasis on the mechanisms within the sphere of regulation which, for Althusser, is dominated by the educational ideological apparatus. I have argued in Chapter 8, as have many of the authors that I have interacted with throughout the thesis, that the implications of the ideas in this postlegomenon position education as a crucial institution for peace (Burde, 2014; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016a; Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, & Smith, 2017). As outlined in Chapter 2, there are three dominant categories of research into education and conflict: a focus on the cost of conflict on education; the way that education can cause conflict, and cause peace; and the policy structures which govern education in conflict affected contexts (Novelli, 2012). When considering the implications of Conflict Capital as a theoretical tool, I think that education is the *only* apparatus that is sufficiently entangled in the nature and structure of the overdetermined social whole to interrupt and alter the reproduction of means of production within war economies. I think that exploring the manner in which education can become an ideological apparatus which *interrupts* these war economies is the only way in which lasting, sustainable, positive peace is possible – whether we talk about it as wars of position, or ISA, or what have you, only education can re-define conflict's position as the mechanism through which the relations of production are structured, and are reproduced. This is education's function. To ignore education in the analysis of mechanisms which secure the reproduction of the relations of production is to only engage with a partial representation of the social whole.

Looking ahead, these ideas for a theory of Conflict Capital require considerable and further development. Two lines of further inquiry are immediately evident for me at this point. The first, is to develop these ideas further into a robust theoretical tool, and to apply these ideas to empirical evidence to gauge its usefulness. The second, is to engage further with peacebuilding and statebuilding literature, and to use these bodies of research to develop the theoretical and practical applications of a theory of Conflict Capital – at all points retaining its articulation with education. Given the thesis which I have argued in this study, and given the ideas that I have begun to develop throughout this postlegomenon, I believe that these two lines of inquiry are important, and I look forward to pursuing them.

* * * *

Appendix B: Buzkashi (see Chapter 8 Part 2)

* * * *

Anticipation hangs upon the city; palpable, tangible, fresh. Morning's stillness is broken by steel-shod hoofs striking stone with rhythmic precision. This is the season's first horseman, sitting proud and high, clipping his horse's gait and arching his horse's neck, as they make their way to The Field on the outskirts of town. Next to the abandoned silo and under the assertive presence of the Hindu Kush, an open expanse of ground transitions the wintery scape from city to desert and is ringed on three sides by mounded earth. At the Southern end is a structure which acts as a platform and bleacher for the city's elite. The others park our cars on the mounded earth as more horsemen arrive to compete for fame and a warlord's fortune. In my childhood home of Mazar-i-Sharif in Northern Afghanistan, my father and my brother and I would drive out to park on the mounded earth with bags full of salted pistachio, bundled up in jackets and hats, and watch these horsemen compete.



Rider and buz break from the pack. Photo by Jim Couch

Buzkashi is a game with few rules and is played on a field with fluid boundaries. Literally translated into English from Dari, Buzkashi means 'goat grabbing'. Regional variations exist, however in Afghanistan each horseman plays for himself, with the object of carrying a headless calf or goat carcass (the term buz is used in this context, even for calves) from a circle at one end of a field, dragging it around a flagpole at the other end of the field, and depositing it back into the circle. Riders swivel down from their saddles in a powerful display of horsemanship, and grab the carcass from under the feet of their opponents' horses before trying to escape the crowd and round the flag. Calves are commonly used, as goat carcasses are more likely to tear. Each horseman carries a short and heavy whip in his mouth, and is able to whip his own horse, and any of his opponents in order to successfully wrestle the buz away from him. A horseman may not strike his opponents' horse. The buz must be carried by hand, and cannot be fixed to the rider's saddle.

I remember one particularly well-attended game of Buzkashi with more than a hundred horsemen. I was standing on the mound between our Toyota Hilux and an SUV, paying more attention to cracking pistachio nuts than the horses, when I was suddenly picked up from behind, dragged backwards, and thrown into the bed of our Hilux. I turned to protest and saw a close family friend jump into the truck behind me. A split second later horses, two abreast, charged through the gaps between cars and over mounded earth in pursuit of the lead rider and buz. Spectators were scrambling on top of cars, under taxis, and into the bed of other trucks to avoid being trampled. The game continued in the dirt street as horses surrounded buses, battered car mirrors, and shattered tail lights, before a new horseman

wrested the buz up off of the street and forced his way back towards the flag pole, opponents thundering in pursuit, pouring through gaps between cars on their way back over mounded earth and onto The Field.



A rider reaches for the buz. Photo by Jim Couch

* * * *

Y: In my capacity as a National Coordinator for UNESCO-IIEP, we were dealing only on certain levels. There are still going to be the non-governmental organisations and obviously these donor institutions had consultations among themselves and within themselves as well. For example, CIDA, JICA, other countries, USAID, they would make their decisions for their own strategies as far as education, for their own programmes. Even though they all accepted the [NESP I], and they all agreed that this is a shared ownership and both sides have been involved in that, it was not easy to convince them, or at least for them it was not easy to abandon their own programmes. Because if they would stop implementing their own programmes, their own lifeline was also on the line. So that is a, it's a very complicated process.

D: And it has so many moving parts.

Y: It's like, I don't know if you know...the national sport in Afghanistan, buzkashi? So [developing education policy] is like this buzkashi game. The buz is education.

(Excerpt from interview with a Consultant and National Education Strategic Plan coordinator, December 12, 2015)

* * * *

Appendix C: Sample of Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

School of Critical Studies in Education



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Te Kura Akoranga o Tamaki Makaurau
INCORPORATING THE AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Epsom Campus
Gate 3, 74 Epsom Avenue
Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 64 9 623 8899
Facsimile 64 9 623 8898
www.education.auckland.ac.nz

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: Consultant

Project Title: A critical analysis of Afghanistan's National Higher Education Strategic Planning

Researcher: Daniel Couch

My name is Daniel Couch and I am currently studying for a Doctoral degree in Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Auckland in New Zealand. My study is investigating the influences which have shaped Afghanistan's National Higher Education Strategic Planning, and any tensions that might exist within the policies themselves. I respectfully invite you to be part of my research. This would consist of an interview in person, and will require approximately an hour of your time. A follow-up interview may be held via Skype at your request.

With your permission the interview will be recorded. In that case, you may request that the recorder be turned off at any stage during the interview. During the interview you may leave at any time, or not answer a question if you wish. You may withdraw your interview from this research at any time up until two weeks following the interview. The recordings and transcription will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Faculty of Education of the University of Auckland. After a six-year period the information will be destroyed. All interviews will be transcribed. You may choose to edit the transcription for accuracy within one week of receiving your copy of the transcription if you wish.

Please note that I am unable to guarantee confidentiality with respect to the Skype and telephone interviews and to the material provided in all interview types. Additionally, as I will know your identity, your participation in this research is not anonymous. Because I am only interviewing a handful of people who have been involved with the development of Higher Education in Afghanistan there is a slight chance that a few people may be able to guess your identity once I share my findings in the form of a PhD thesis and any subsequent academic papers or presentations. However I will be very careful to maintain your anonymity and will ensure that your identity is not revealed in any publications or presentations.

If you would like to receive a digital copy of my completed PhD thesis I encourage you to let me know, and I will send that to you once it is completed.

In addition to the interview, you may contact me at any time via email. My email address is d.couch@auckland.ac.nz

I am extremely grateful for your time in helping to make this research possible, and hope that it may provide insights for future Higher Education policies.

Kind regards



Researcher: Daniel Couch
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Email: d.couch@auckland.ac.nz

Supervisor: Professor Elizabeth Rata
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland,
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Ph :(09) 373 7599 x 46315
Email: e.rata@auckland.ac.nz

Co-supervisor: Dr Ritesh Shah
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland,
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Ph :(09) 373 7599 x46356
Email: r.shah@auckland.ac.nz

Head of School: Associate Professor Carol Mutch
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland,
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Ph :(09) 373 7599 x 48257
Email: c.mutch@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12 Aug 2015 for 3 years until 12 Aug 2018, Reference Number 015083.



**CONSENT FORM: Consultant
(A RECORDING OF YOUR CONSENT WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX
YEARS)**

Title: A critical analysis of Afghanistan's National Higher Education Strategic Planning

Researcher: Daniel Couch

I have read the Consultant Participant Information Sheet and I understand the nature of this research. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

- I agree to take part in one interview of approximately 60 minutes and have the option of agreeing to a follow-up interview. With my permission this will be recorded and transcribed.
- During the interview, I can refuse to answer any questions, stop audio recording, or leave at any time. Because participation is voluntary, I can withdraw data before transcription begins (two weeks after the interview).
- I have the opportunity to edit the transcript for accuracy within one week of receiving the transcript.
- The data will be used in the researcher's thesis, conference presentations and academic publications.
- I am aware that, due to the public nature of my position, I may be identified.
- The data will be securely stored at the University of Auckland for a period of six years and after that date will be destroyed.
- A copy of the research findings will be made available to me upon request.

I hereby give my informed consent to participate in the research project *A Critical Analysis of Afghanistan's National Higher Education Strategic Planning*.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: Daniel Couch
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Email: d.couch@auckland.ac.nz

Supervisor: Professor Elizabeth Rata
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland,
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Ph :(09) 373 7599 x 46315
Email: e.rata@auckland.ac.nz

Co-supervisor: Dr Ritesh Shah
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland,
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Ph :(09) 373 7599 x46356
Email: r.shah@auckland.ac.nz

Head of School: Associate Professor Carol Mutch
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland,
Private Bag 92 601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035
Ph :(09) 373 7599 x 48257
Email: c.mutch@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 12 Aug 2015 for 3 years until 12 Aug 2018, Reference Number 015083.

References

- Abdulbaqi, M. (2009). Higher education in Afghanistan. *Policy Perspectives*, 6(2), 1–15.
- Althusser, L. (2005). *For Marx*. London: Verso.
- Althusser, L. (2008). *On ideology*. London: Verso.
- Alvi, H. (2003). Reconstruction in post-Taliban Afghanistan: Women and education. *Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation Sur La Recherche Feministe*, 30(3–4), 13–37.
- Ansary, T. (2012). *Games without rules: The often interrupted history of Afghanistan*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.
- Apple, M. W. (2007). Beyond cheap french fries: Remembering the social in social disaster. In K. J. Saltman (Ed.), *Schooling and the politics of disaster* (pp. 209–219). New York: Routledge.
- Aturupane, H., Gunatilake, R., Shojo, M., & Ebenezer, R. (2013). *Educational attainment in Afghanistan: An economic analysis* (South Asia Human Development Unit No. 62). Washington, DC.
- Babury, O., & Hayward, F. M. (2013). A lifetime of trauma: Mental health challenges for higher education in a conflict environment in Afghanistan. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 21(68), 1–22. Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/index.php/epaa/article/view/1219>
- Babury, O., & Hayward, F. M. (2014). Afghanistan higher education: The struggle for quality, merit, and transformation. *Planning for Higher Education Journal*, 42(2), 1–32.
- Babury, O., & Hayward, F. M. (2015). Innovation in higher education in developing countries : The example of Afghanistan. In T. Gore & M. Stiasny (Eds.), *Going Global* (Vol. 4, pp. 50–59). London: IOE Press.
- Bacevic, J. (2019). Knowing Neoliberalism. *Social Epistemology*, 33(4), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2019.1638990>
- Baćević, J. (2014a). *From class to identity: The politics of education reforms in former Yugoslavia*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Baćević, J. (2014b). What kind of university for what kind of society? Nation-states, post-national constellations, and higher education in the post-Yugoslav space. In P. Zgaga, U. Teichler, & J. Brennan (Eds.), *The globalisation challenge for European higher education: Convergence and diversity, centres and peripheries* (pp. 287–308). Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Baiza, Y. (2013a). Afghanistan: Religion, state and education. In M.-E.-R. Ahmed (Ed.), *Education in West Central Asia* (pp. 21–38). London and New York: Bloomsbury.
- Baiza, Y. (2013b). *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, influences and legacies since 1901*. New York: Routledge.
- Baiza, Y. (2014). Madrasa Education Reform in Afghanistan, 2002–13: A Critique. *Reforms in Islamic Education: International ...*. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.nz/books?hl=en&lr=&id=FyT-AgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA77&dq=Baiza+Afghanistan+and+Education&ots=6xEys-ezKY&sig=hgzmSAr7oon6SxllqvK6Pevq8Ug>
- Bajaj, M., & Kidwai, H. (2016). Human rights and education policy in South Asia. In K. Mundy, A. Green, B. Lingard, & A. Verger (Eds.), *The handbook of global education policy* (pp. 206–223). London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

- Barakat, S., Connolly, D., Hardman, F., & Sundaram, V. (2013). The role of basic education in post-conflict recovery. *Comparative Education*, 49(2), 124–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2012.686259>
- Barfield, T. (2010). *Afghanistan: A cultural and political history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Barker, K. (2007, January 21). At the Supreme Court, an unlikely new hero. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/chi-0701210351jan21-story.html>
- Bengtsson, S. E. L., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016). Education, conflict, and globalisation: Guest Editors' introduction. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14(3), 327–330. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2016.1189203>
- Berdal, M., & Malone, D. M. (Eds.). (2000). *Greed and grievance: Economic agendas in civil wars*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Berdal, M., & Zaum, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Political economy of statebuilding: Power after peace*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhambra, G. K. (2014). *Connected sociologies*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Bhaskar, R. (2008). *A realist theory of science*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhaskar, R. (2015). *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Bhatia, M. (2007). The future of the Mujahideen: Legitimacy, legacy and demobilization in post-Bonn Afghanistan. *International Peacekeeping*, 14(1), 90–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310601114301>
- Billaud, J. (2015). *Kabul carnival: Gender politics in postwar Afghanistan*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bonal, X. (2016). Education, poverty, and the “missing link”: The limits of human capital theory as a paradigm for poverty reduction. In K. Munce, A. Green, B. Lingard, & A. Verger (Eds.), *The handbook of global education policy* (pp. 97–110). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Bourdieu, P. (2011). The forms of capital. In I. Szeman & T. Kaposy (Eds.), *Cultural theory: An anthology* (pp. 81–93). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470755679.ch15>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Boyce, J. K., & O'Donnell, M. (2007). Peace and the public purse: An introduction. In J. K. Boyce & M. O'Donnell (Eds.), *Peace and the public purse: Economic policies for postwar statebuilding* (pp. 1–15). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Braithwaite, R. (2012). *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan, 1979-1989*. London: Profile Books Ltd.
- Brock-Utne, B. (2007). Worldbankification of Norwegian development assistance to education. *Comparative Education*, 43(3), 433–449. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060701556455>
- Brock, C. (2011). Education and conflict: A fundamental relationship. In J. Paulson (Ed.), *Education, conflict and development* (pp. 17–32). Oxford: Symposium Books Ltd.
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burde, D. (2014). *Schools for conflict or for peace in Afghanistan*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Burde, D., & Khan, J. (2016). Will you send your daughter to school? Norms, violence, and girls' education in Uruzgan, Afghanistan. *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 2(1), 42–80. <https://doi.org/10.17609/N8T66M>
- Burkard, A., Knox, S., & Hill, C. (2012). Data collection. In C. Hill (Ed.), *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena* (pp. 83–101). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Burnes, A. (1973). *Travels into Bokhara, together with a narrative of a voyage on the Indus* (Fourth Edi). Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Bush, K. D., & Saltarelli, D. (2000). *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: Towards a peacebuilding education for children*. Florence: UNICEF.
- Campante, F. R., & Chor, D. (2012). Schooling, political participation, and the economy. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94(4), 841–859. https://doi.org/10.1162/REST_a_00206
- Carnahan, M., Manning, N., Bontjer, R., & Guimbert, S. (2004). *Reforming fiscal and economic management in Afghanistan*. Washington DC: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and World Bank.
- Carney, S. (2009). Negotiating policy in an age of globalization: Exploring educational “policyscapes” in Denmark, Nepal, and China. *Comparative Education Review*, 53(1), 63–88. <https://doi.org/10.1086/593152>
- Castells, M. (1994). The university system: Engine of development in the new world economy. In J. Salmi & A. M. Verspoor (Eds.), *Revitalizing higher education* (pp. 14–40). Washington, DC: IAU Press.
- Chandrasekaran, R. (2012). *Little America: The war within the war for Afghanistan*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Chuang, A., & Fayeze, S. (2004). If you believe in faith: An interview with Afghanistan's Minister of Higher Education. *Academe*, 90(5), 31–33.
- Clifford, M. L. (1989). *The land and people of Afghanistan*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Cobb, D. J., & Couch, D. (2018). Teacher education for an uncertain future: Implications of PISA's Global Competence. In D. Heck & A. Ambrosetti (Eds.), *Teacher education in and for uncertain times* (pp. 35–47). Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8648-9_3
- Codd, J. (1988). The construction and deconstruction of educational policy documents. *Journal of Education Policy*, 3(3), 235–247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093880030303>
- Collier, A. (1994). *Critical realism: An introduction to Roy Bhaskar's philosophy*. London: Verso.
- Collier, P. (2008). *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56(4), 563–595. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/gpf064>
- Collier, P., Hoeffler, A., & Rohner, D. (2009). Beyond greed and grievance: Feasibility and civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 61(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/gpn029>

- Collier, S. J., & Ong, A. (2005). Global assemblages, anthropological problems. In A. Ong & S. J. Collier (Eds.), *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems* (pp. 3–21). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Collins, R. (1998). *The sociology of philosophies: A global theory of intellectual change*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Constitution of Afghanistan (1964).
- Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004).
- Cossa, J. (2008). *Power, politics, and higher education in Southern Africa: International regimes, local governments, and educational autonomy*. Amherst: Cambria Press.
- Cramer, C. (2002a). Homo economicus goes to war: Methodological individualism, rational choice and the political economy of war. *World Development*, 30(11), 1845–1864. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X\(02\)00120-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(02)00120-1)
- Cramer, C. (2002b). War, peace and capitalism: Is capitalism the harbinger of peace or the greatest threat to world peace? In A. Saad-Filho (Ed.), *Anti-capitalism: A Marxist introduction* (pp. 152–163). London: Pluto Press.
- Cramer, C. (2006). *Civil war is not a stupid thing: Accounting for violence in developing countries*. London: Hurst.
- Cramer, C. (2008). Trajectories of accumulation through war and peace. In R. Paris & T. D. Sisk (Eds.), *The dilemmas of statebuilding: Confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations* (pp. 129–148). London: Routledge.
- D'Souza, R. (2018). *What's wrong with rights?* London: Pluto Press.
- Dale, R. (1994). Applied education politics or political sociology of education? Contrasting approaches to the study of recent education reform in England and Wales. In D. Halpin & B. Tryona (Eds.), *Researching education policy: Ethical and methodological issues* (pp. 31–42). London: The Falmer Press.
- Dale, R. (1999). Specifying globalization effects on national policy: a focus on the mechanisms. *Journal of Education Policy*, 14(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/026809399286468>
- Dale, R., & Robertson, S. L. (2009). Beyond Methodological ISMS in Comparative Education in an Era of Globalisation. In R. Cowen & A. M. Kazamias (Eds.), *International Handbook of Comparative Education* (pp. 1113–1127). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6403-6>
- Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (1997). *Explaining society: Critical realism in the social sciences*. London: Routledge.
- David, M. (2007). Equity and diversity: Towards a sociology of higher education for the twenty-first century? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28(5), 675–690. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690701505664>
- Davies, L., & Talbot, C. (2008). Learning in conflict and postconflict contexts. *Comparative Education Review*, 52(4), 509–517. <https://doi.org/10.1086/591295>
- Daxner, M. (2011). Reclaiming Afghanistan. *World Policy Journal*, 28(2), 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0740277511415057>
- Deakin, H., & Wakefield, K. (2013). Mixed-interview methods: reflections of two PhD researchers

- using Skype. *Qualitative Research*, 0(0), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794113488126>
- Dean, K., Joseph, J., Roberts, J. M., & Wight, C. (2006). Realism, Marxism and method. In K. Dean, J. Joseph, J. M. Roberts, & C. Wight (Eds.), *Realism, philosophy and social science* (pp. 1–31). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2008). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Continuum.
- Devetak, R. (2008). Globalization's shadow. In R. Devetak & C. W. Hughes (Eds.), *The globalization of political violence: Globalization's shadow* (pp. 1–26). New York: Routledge/Warwick Studies in Globalisation.
- Dodge, T. (2013). Intervention and dreams of exogenous statebuilding: The application of Liberal Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq. *Review of International Studies*, 39(5), 1189–1212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210513000272>
- Duffield, M. (2014). *Global governance and the new wars: The merging of development and security*. London: Zed Books.
- Dupree, L. (1980). *Afghanistan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Durkheim, E. (2013). *The rules of sociological method: And selected texts on sociology and method*. (S. Lukes, Ed.) (2nd ed.). Wakefield: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dutschke, R. (1980). *Mein langer Marsch: Reden, Schriften und tagebücher aus zwanzig Jahren*. Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Easterly, W. R. (2007). *The white man's burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Emadi, H. (2001). Radical political movements in Afghanistan and their politics of peoples' empowerment and liberation. *Central Asian Survey*, 20(4), 427–450. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634930120104627>
- Eyerman, R. (1981). False consciousness and ideology in Marxist theory. *Acta Sociologica*, 24(1–2), 43–56.
- Fayez, S. (2014). *An undesirable element: An Afghan memoir* (Kindle). Berlin: First Draft Publishing.
- Fearon, J. D. (2004). Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others? *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), 275–301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343304043770>
- Fraser-Tytler, W. (1953). *Afghanistan: a study of political developments in Central Asia* (2nd ed.). London: Oxford University Press.
- Friedman, J. (2003). Globalization, dis-integration, re-organization: The transformations of violence. In J. Friedman (Ed.), *Globalization, the state, and violence* (pp. 1–34). Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Gale, T. (1994). Beyond caricature: Exploring theories of educational policy production and implementation. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 21(2), 1–12.
- Gale, T. (1999). Policy trajectories: Treading the discursive path of policy analysis. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 20(3), 393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630990200304>
- Gale, T. (2001). Critical policy sociology: Historiography, archaeology and genealogy as methods of policy analysis. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(5), 379–393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930110071002>

- Garwood, P. (2006, September 11). Coca-Cola plant opens in Afghan capital. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/11/AR2006091100073.html>
- GCPEA. (2018). *Education under attack 2018*. New York: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack.
- Ghani, A. (1978). Islam and state-building in a tribal society Afghanistan: 1880-1901. *Modern Asian Studies*, 12(2), 269–284.
- Ghani, A., & Lockhart, C. (2008). *Fixing failed states: A framework for rebuilding a fractured world*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Alexander Street Press.
- Ginsburg, M. (2010). Improving aid effectiveness or transforming the global capitalist system. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 13(1), 37–43.
- Ginsburg, M. (2012a). Public private partnerships, neoliberal globalization and democratization. In S. L. Robertson, K. Mundy, A. Verger, & F. Menashy (Eds.), *Public private partnerships in education: New actors and modes of governance in a globalizing world* (pp. 63–78). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9780857930682.00011>
- Ginsburg, M. (2012b). Teachers as learners: A missing focus in “Learning for All.” In S. J. Klees, J. Samoff, & N. Stromquist (Eds.), *The World Bank and education: Critiques and alternatives* (pp. 83–93). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-903-9>
- Ginsburg, M. (2017). Teachers as human capital or human beings? USAID’s perspective on teachers. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 20(1), 6–30.
- Ginsburg, M., Cooper, S., Raghu, R., & Zegarra, H. (1990). Educational reform: Social struggle, the state and the world economic system. In M. Ginsburg (Ed.), *Understanding educational reform in global context: Economy, ideology and the state* (pp. 3–48). New York: Routledge.
- Ginsburg, M., Espinoza, O., Popa, S., & Terano, M. (2005). Globalisation and higher education in Chile and Romania: The roles of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. In J. Zajda (Ed.), *International handbook on globalisation, education and policy research: Global pedagogies and policies* (pp. 221–234). Springer.
- Ginsburg, M., & Lindsay, B. (1995). Conceptualizing the political dimension in teacher education. In M. Ginsburg & B. Lindsay (Eds.), *The political dimension in teacher education: Comparative perspectives on policy formation, socialization and society* (pp. 3–20). London: Routledge Falmer.
- Girdwood, J. (2007). Reforming the World Bank: From social-liberalism to neo-liberalism. *Comparative Education*, 43(3), 413–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060701556372>
- Giustozzi, A. (2007). War and peace economies of Afghanistan’s strongmen. *International Peacekeeping*, 14(1), 75–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310601114285>
- Giustozzi, A. (2009). *Empires of mud: Wars and warlords in Afghanistan*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Giustozzi, A., & Ibrahimi, N. (2013). From new dawn to quicksand: The political economy of statebuilding in Afghanistan. In M. Berdal & D. Zaum (Eds.), *Political Economy of Statebuilding: Power after Peace* (pp. 246–262). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203101308>

- Goodhand, J. (2000). Research in conflict zones: Ethics and accountability. *Forced Migration Review*, (8), 12–15.
- Goodhand, J. (2004). Afghanistan in Central Asia. In M. Pugh, N. Cooper, & with Jonathan Goodhand (Eds.), *War economies in a regional context: Challenges for transformation* (pp. 45–89). London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Goodhand, J. (2006). *Aiding peace? The role of NGOs in armed conflict*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Goodhand, J. (2013). Contested boundaries: NGOs and civil-military relations in Afghanistan. *Central Asian Survey*, 32(3), 287–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2013.835211>
- Goodhand, J., Hulme, D., & Lewer, N. (2000). Social capital and the political economy of violence: a case study of Sri Lanka. *Disasters*, 24(4), 390–406. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00155>
- Goodhand, J., & Sedra, M. (2010). Who owns the peace? Aid, reconstruction, and peacebuilding in Afghanistan. *Disasters*, 34(SUPPL. 1), 78–102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7717.2009.01100.x>
- Goodhand, J., & Sedra, M. (2013). Rethinking liberal peacebuilding, statebuilding and transition in Afghanistan: An introduction. *Central Asian Survey*, 32(3), 239–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2013.850769>
- Gramsci, A. (2000). *The Antonio Gramsci reader: Selected writings 1916-1935*. (D. Forgacs, Ed.). New York: New York University Press.
- Guimbert, S., Miwa, K., & Thanh Nguyen, D. (2008). Back to school in Afghanistan: Determinants of school enrollment. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28(4), 419–434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2007.11.004>
- Haack, S. (2004). Realism. In I. Niiniluoto, M. Sintonen, & J. Woleński (Eds.), *Handbook of Epistemology* (pp. 415–436). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-1986-9_10
- Hakala, W. (2012). Locating “Pashto” in Afghanistan: A survey of secondary sources. In H. F. Schiffman (Ed.), *Language policy and language conflict in Afghanistan and its neighbors: The changing politics of language choice* (pp. 53–89). Leiden: Brill.
- Hamdard, A. (2017, August 17). No room for politics on campuses, says Ghani. *Pajhwok Afghan News*. Retrieved from <https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/08/17/no-room-politics-campus-says-ghani>
- Hanifi, S. M. (2011). *Connecting histories in Afghanistan: Market relations and state formation on a colonial frontier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2003). *New imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism. A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2014). *Seventeen contradictions and the end of capitalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, L., & Green, D. (1993). Defining quality. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 18(1), 9–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293930180102>
- Hayward, F. M. (2008). Strategic planning for higher education in developing countries. *Planning for*

Higher Education, 36(3), 5–21.

- Hayward, F. M. (2015). *Transforming higher education in Afghanistan: Success amidst ongoing struggles* (Kindle). Kindle: Society for College and University Planning.
- Hayward, F. M., & Amiryar, S. (2003). *Feasibility study on private sector involvement in tertiary education in Afghanistan*. Kabul: AED and the World Bank.
- Hayward, F. M., & Ncayiyana, D. J. (2003). *A guide to strategic planning for African higher education institutions*. Sunnyside: Centre for Higher Education Transformation.
- Heck, R. (2004). *Studying educational and social policy: Theoretical concepts and research methods*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D., & Perraton, J. (1999). *Global transformations: Politics, economics and culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Henry, M., Lingard, B., Rizvi, F., & Taylor, S. (2001). *The OECD, globalisation and education policy*. Oxford: IAU Press.
- Holland, J., & Aaronson, M. (2014). Dominance through coercion: Strategic rhetorical balancing and the tactics of justification in Afghanistan and Libya. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 8(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2013.856126>
- Hopkins, B. D. (2008). *The making of modern Afghanistan*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Hyman, A. (1988). In memoriam: Professor Sayed Bahauddin Majrooh. *Central Asian Survey*, 7(2–3), 209–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634938808400639>
- INEE. (2010). *Minimum standards for education: Preparedness, response, recovery*. New York: INEE. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Minimum_Standards_English_2010.pdf
- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. (2008). *Afghanistan National Development Strategy*. Kabul: IROA.
- Jasanoff, M. (2017, July 20). Koh-i-Noor by William Dalrymple and Anita Anand review - an infamous diamond and imperial bloodshed. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from theguardian.com
- Jessop, B. (2008). A cultural political economy of competitiveness and its implications for higher education. In B. Jessop, N. Fairclough, & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Education and the knowledge-based economy in Europe* (pp. 13–39). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. Retrieved from http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-94-6091-915-2_4
- Jessop, B. (2010). Cultural political economy and critical policy studies. *Critical Policy Studies*, 3(3–4), 336–356. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171003619741>
- Kamola, I. (2013). Why global? Diagnosing the globalization literature within a political economy of higher education. *International Political Sociology*, 7(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ips.12008>
- Keane, C. (2016). *US nation-building in Afghanistan*. New York: Routledge.
- Kipling, R. (1989). *Complete verse: Definitive edition*. New York: Doubleday.
- Kirk, J. (2004). Promoting a gender-just peace: The roles of women teachers in peacebuilding and reconstruction. *Gender & Development*, 12(3), 50–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070412331332310>
- Kirk, J. (2007). Education and fragile states. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 5(2), 181–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720701425776>

- Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Kolhatkar, S., & Ingalls, J. (2006). *Bleeding Afghanistan: Washington, warlords, and the propaganda of silence*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Kühn, F. P. (2008). Aid, opium, and the state of rents in Afghanistan: Competition, cooperation, or cohabitation? *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 2(September 2014), 309–327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502970802436338>
- Kühn, F. P. (2009). Supporting the state, depleting the state: Estranged state-society relations in Afghanistan. In H.-G. Erhart & C. C. Pentland (Eds.), *The Afghanistan challenge: Hard realities and strategic choices* (pp. 57–76). Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Lamb, C. (2015). *Farewell Kabul: From Afghanistan to a more dangerous world*. London: HarperCollins.
- Lawson, T. (1997). *Economics and reality*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Loewenstein, A. (2015). *Disaster capitalism: Making a killing out of catastrophe*. London: Verso.
- Lopes Cardozo, M., & Novelli, M. (2018). Education in emergencies: Tracing the emergence of a field. In A. Verger, M. Novelli, & H. K. Altinyelken (Eds.), *Global Education Policy and International Development: New Agendas, issues and policies* (2nd Editio, pp. 234–254). London: Bloomsbury.
- Lopes Cardozo, M., & Shah, R. (2015). Situating studies of education and conflict within the evolving field of Comparative and International Education. In *The contested role of education in conflict and fragility* (pp. 249–255). Rotterdam: SensePublishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-010-9_16
- Lopes Cardozo, M., & Shah, R. (2016a). A conceptual framework to analyse the multiscalar politics of education for sustainable peacebuilding. *Comparative Education*, 52(4), 516–537. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2016.1220144>
- Lopes Cardozo, M., & Shah, R. (2016b). “The fruit caught between two stones”: The conflicted position of teachers within Aceh’s independence struggle. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 7724(July). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2016.1145572>
- Mac Ginty, R. (2010). Warlords and the liberal peace: State-building in Afghanistan. *Conflict, Security and Development*, 10(4), 577–598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2010.500548>
- Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The local turn in peace building: A critical agenda for peace. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(5), 763–783. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.800750>
- MacGregor, K. (2015, April 10). Higher education is key to development - World Bank. *University World News*. Retrieved from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150409152258799>
- MacVicar, S. (2015, June 17). SIGAR: We built an Afghanistan they can’t afford. *Al Jazeera America*. Retrieved from <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/compass/articles/2015/6/17/john-sopko-sigar.html>
- Majrooh, S. B. (1987). Education in Afghanistan: Past and present—A problem for the future. *Central Asian Survey*, 6(3), 103–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634938708400595>
- Majrooh, S. B. (1989). Afghan intellectuals in exile: Philosophical and psychological dimensions. *Afghanistan Center at Kabul University*. Retrieved from http://afghandata.org:8080/jspui/bitstream/azu/3150/1/azu_acku_pamphlet_ds354_m35_198

- Marginson, S. (2008). Global field and global imagining: Bourdieu and worldwide higher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(3), 303–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690801966386>
- Marginson, S. (2016). The worldwide trend to high participation higher education: Dynamics of social stratification in inclusive systems. *Higher Education*, 72(4), 413–434. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-016-0016-x>
- Marx, K. (1970). *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. New York: International Publishers.
- Marx, K. (1972). *The eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte* (Third Revi). Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Marx, K. (2013). *Capital*. London: Wordsworth Editions Limited.
- May, T. (2011). *Social research: Issues, methods and process*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- McCowan, T. (2011). Human rights, capabilities and the normative basis of “Education for All.” *Theory and Research in Education*, 9(3), 283–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878511419566>
- McCowan, T. (2015). Theories of development. In T. McCowan & E. Unterhalter (Eds.), *Education and international development: An introduction* (pp. 31–48). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203835364>
- McGrath, S. (2010). The role of education in development: an educationalist’s response to some recent work in development economics. *Comparative Education*, 46(2), 237–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050061003775553>
- McKee, A. (2003). *Textual analysis: A beginner’s guide*. London: SAGE Publications.
- McMahon, W. W., & Oketch, M. (2013). Education’s effects on individual life chances and on development: An overview. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61(1), 79–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2012.756170>
- Michener, J. A. (1963). *Caravans: A novel of Afghanistan*. London: Random House.
- Milton, S. (2018). *Higher education and post-conflict recovery*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Milton, S. (2019). Syrian higher education during conflict: Survival, protection, and regime security. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 64(October 2018), 38–47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.11.003>
- Milton, S., & Barakat, S. (2016). Higher education as the catalyst of recovery in conflict-affected societies. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14(3), 403–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2015.1127749>
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan 1385-1389*. Kabul: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2011). *Education Interim Plan 2011-13*. Kabul, Afghanistan.
- Ministry of Education. (2014). *National Education Strategic Plan 2015-2020*. Kabul, Afghanistan.
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2009). *National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014*. Kabul, Afghanistan.
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2016). *National Higher Education Strategic Plan: 2016-2020*. [Draft]

Kabul, Afghanistan.

- Ministry of Higher Education, & UNESCO-IIEP. (2004). *Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Higher Education in Afghanistan*. Kabul, Afghanistan.
- Moore, R. (2007). *Sociology of knowledge and education*. London: Continuum.
- Moore, R. (2014). Social realism and the problem of the problem of knowledge in the sociology of education. In B. Barret & E. Rata (Eds.), *Knowledge and the future of the curriculum: International studies in social realism* (pp. 23–40). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Morrison, A. (2014). Introduction: Killing the Cotton Canard and getting rid of the Great Game: Rewriting the Russian conquest of Central Asia, 1814–1895. *Central Asian Survey*, 33(2), 131–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2014.915614>
- Muhr, T., & Verger, A. (2009). Venezuela: Higher education, neoliberalism, and socialism. In D. Hill & E. Roskam (Eds.), *The developing world and state education* (pp. 71–89). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203889251>
- Mundy, K., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2011). Educating children in zones of conflict: An overview and introduction. In K. Mundy & S. Dryden-Peterson (Eds.), *Educting children in conflict zones: Research, policy, and practice for systemic change* (pp. 1–13). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Naidoo, R. (2011). Rethinking development: Higher education and the new imperialism. In R. King, S. Marginson, & Naid (Eds.), *Handbook on globalization and higher education* (pp. 40–58). Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Najeeb Shafiq, M., & Sinno, A. H. (2010). Education, income, and support for suicide bombings: Evidence from six Muslim countries. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54(1), 146–178. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002709351411>
- Nawid, S. (2012). Language policy in Afghanistan: Linguistic diversity and national unity. In H. F. Schiffman (Ed.), *Language policy and language conflict in Afghanistan and its neighbors: The changing politics of language choice* (pp. 31–52). Leiden: Brill.
- Neurath, O. (1973). *Empiricism and sociology*. (M. Neurath & R. S. Cohen, Eds.). Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Nola, R. (2010). Knowledge, belief, critical evaluation and education. *Pacific-Asian*. Retrieved from http://pacificcircleconsortium.org/uploads/PAE_22__1__final_10.pdf#page=33
- Novelli, M. (2010). The new geopolitics of educational aid: From Cold Wars to Holy Wars? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(5), 453–459. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.03.012>
- Novelli, M. (2012). Education, conflict and social (in)justice: Insights from Columbia. In M. Schweisfurth & C. Harber (Eds.), *Education and Global Justice* (pp. 21–36). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Novelli, M. (2016). Capital, inequality and education in conflict-affected contexts. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(6), 848–860. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2016.1165087>
- Novelli, M. (2017). Education and countering violent extremism: Western logics from south to north? *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 47(6), 835–851. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1341301>
- Novelli, M., & Higgins, S. (2017). The violence of peace and the role of education: Insights from Sierra

- Leone. *Compare*, 47(1), 32–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2015.1119650>
- Novelli, M., Higgins, S., Ugur, M., & Valiente, O. (2014). *The political economy of education systems in conflict-affected contexts: A rigorous literature review*. London: DfID. Retrieved from <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/>
- Novelli, M., & Lopes Cardozo, M. (2008). Conflict, education and the global south: New critical directions. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28(4), 473–488. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2008.01.004>
- Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M., & Smith, A. (2015). *A theoretical framework for analysing the contribution of education to sustainable peacebuilding: 4Rs in conflict-affected contexts*. University of Amsterdam: UNICEF. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335446.001.0001>
- Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M., & Smith, A. (2017). The 4Rs Framework: Analyzing education’s contribution to sustainable peacebuilding with social justice in conflict-affected contexts. *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 3(1), 14–43.
- Novelli, M., & Robertson, S. L. (2007). The politicization of development aid to education after September 11. In K. Saltman (Ed.), *Schooling and the politics of disaster*. New York: Taylor and Francis.
- Nye, J. S. (1990). Soft power. *Foreign Policy*, 80(Autumn), 153–171.
- Nye, J. S. (2008). Public diplomacy and soft power. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 94–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699>
- O’Connor, M., & Netting, F. (2011). *Analyzing social policy: Multiple perspectives for critically understanding and evaluating policy*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- O’Donnell, L. (2014, June 9). The Afghan war economy collapses. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/09/the-afghan-war-economy-collapses/>
- Oates, J. (2015). Use of Skype in interviews : The impact of the medium in a study of mental health nurses. *Nurse Researcher*, 22(4), 13–17.
- Oketch, M., McCowan, T., & Schendel, R. (2014). *The impact of tertiary education on development*. London: DfID. Retrieved from <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/195887/Default.aspx>
- Özerdem, A., & Sofizada, A. H. (2006). Sustainable reintegration to returning refugees in post-Taliban Afghanistan: Land-related challenges. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 6(1), 75–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800600590678>
- Ozga, J. (1987). Studying education policy through the lives of the policy-makers: An attempt to close the macro-micro gap. In S. Walker & L. Barton (Eds.), *Changing Policies, Changing Teachers: New directions for schooling?* (pp. 138–150). Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Ozga, J. (1990). Policy research and policy theory: A comment on Fitz and Halpin. *Journal of Education Policy*, 5(4), 359–362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093900050405>
- Paghman, J. K. (2014, February 1). Abdul Rasul Sayyaf: Man of the mountain. *The Economist*. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/banyan/2014/02/01/man-of-the-mountain>
- Pandey, A. (2015, July 6). Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hezb-e-Islami announces support for ISIS in Afghanistan to combat Taliban. *International Business Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibtimes.com/gulbuddin-hekmatyars-hezb-e-islami-announces-support-isis-afghanistan-combat-taliban-1996462>

- Papagianni, K. (2008). Participation and state legitimation. In C. T. Call & V. Wyeth (Eds.), *Building states to build peace* (pp. 49–72). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Paris, R. (2010). Saving liberal peacebuilding. *Review of International Studies*, 36(02), 337. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000057>
- Pawson, R. (2006). *Evidence-based policy: A realist perspective*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Pawson, R., Greenhalgh, T., Harvey, G., & Walshe, K. (2005). Realist review--a new method of systematic review designed for complex policy interventions. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 10 Suppl 1(July), 21–34. <https://doi.org/10.1258/1355819054308530>
- Peck, J. (2010). *Constructions of neoliberal reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Peck, J. (2013). Explaining (with) neoliberalism. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 1(2), 132–157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2013.785365>
- Pherali, T. J. (2011). Education and conflict in Nepal: Possibilities for reconstruction. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9(1), 135–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2010.513590>
- Pherali, T. J., & Lewis, A. (2017). Higher education partnerships for peace and development. *Education and Conflict Review*, 1(1), 13–16.
- Pherali, T. J., & Sahar, A. (2018). Learning in the chaos: A political economy analysis of education in Afghanistan. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 13(2), 239–258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499918781882>
- Polman, L. (2010). *The crisis caravan: What's wrong with humanitarian aid?* New York: Picador.
- Popper, K. (1978). Three worlds. In *Paper presented at the Tanner Lecture on Human Values* (pp. 143–167).
- Poullada, L. B. (1987). The road to crisis 1919-1980: American failures, Afghan errors and Soviet successes. In R. Klass (Ed.), *Afghanistan: The Great Game revisited* (pp. 37–70). New York: Freedom House.
- Psacharopoulos, G., & Woodhall, M. (1985). *Education for development*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican0963-140>
- Pugh, M. (2005). The political economy of peacebuilding: A critical theory perspective. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 10(2), 23–42. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41852928>
- Pugh, M. (2008). Employment, labour rights and social resistance. In M. Pugh, N. Cooper, & M. Turner (Eds.), *Whose peace? Critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding* (pp. 139–158). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pugh, M., Cooper, N., & Turner, M. (Eds.). (2008). *Whose peace? Critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pugh, M., Goodhand, J., & Cooper, N. (2009). *War economies in a regional context: Challenges of transformation*. New York: International Peace Academy. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10454/2704>
- Rabinow, P. (2003). *Anthropos today: Reflections on modern equipment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rahin, A. R. (1998). The situation of Kabul University Library: Its past and present. *World Libraries*, 8(2), 2–4. Retrieved from

<https://worldlibraries.dom.edu/index.php/worldlib/article/view/349/305>

- Rasanayagam, A. (2003). *Afghanistan: A modern history*. London: I. B. Tauris & Co.
- Rashid, A. (2008). *Taliban: Islam, oil and the new great game in Central Asia* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Taurus.
- Rashid, A. (2009). *Descent into chaos: The U.S. and the disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Rashid, A. (2013). *Pakistan on the brink: The future of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the West*. London: Penguin.
- Rata, E. (1996). *Global capitalism and the revival of ethnic traditionalism in New Zealand: The emergence of tribal-capitalism*. [Unpublished Doctoral Thesis] University of Auckland.
- Rata, E. (2013). Knowledge and the politics of culture: An example from New Zealand's higher education policy and practice. *Anthropological Theory*, 13(4), 329–346. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499613509993>
- Rata, E. (2014). The three stages of critical policy methodology: An example from curriculum analysis. *Policy Futures in Education*, 12(3), 347. <https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2014.12.3.347>
- Reimers, F. (1997). Education and structural adjustment: Unmet needs and missed opportunities. In J. Lynch, C. Modgil, & S. Modgil (Eds.), *Education and development: Tradition and innovation* (pp. 3–18). London: Cassell.
- Richmond, O. P. (2013). Failed statebuilding versus peace formation. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 48(3), 378–400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713482816>
- Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). *Globalizing education policy*. London: Routledge.
- Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2011). Social equity and the assemblage of values in Australian higher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 41(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2010.549459>
- Robertson, S. L. (2009). Market multilateralism, the World Bank Group, and the asymmetries of globalizing higher education: Toward a critical political economy analysis. In R. M. Bassett & A. Maldonado-Maldonado (Eds.), *International organizations and higher education policy: Thinking globally, acting locally?* (pp. 113–131). New York: Routledge.
- Robertson, S. L. (2012). Researching global education policy: Angles in/on/out... In A. Verger, M. Novelli, & H. K. Altinyelken (Eds.), *Global education policy and international development: New agendas, issues and policies* (pp. 33–52). New York: Bloomsbury.
- Robertson, S. L. (2016a). Piketty, capital and education: A solution to, or problem in, rising social inequalities? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(6), 823–835. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2016.1165086>
- Robertson, S. L. (2016b). The global governance of teachers' work. In K. Mundy, A. Green, B. Lingard, & A. Verger (Eds.), *The handbook of global education policy* (pp. 275–290). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118468005.ch15>
- Robertson, S. L., & Dale, R. (2015). Towards a 'critical cultural political economy' account of the globalising of education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 13(1), 149–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2014.967502>
- Robertson, S. L., & Komljenovič, J. (2016). Unbundling the university and making higher education

- markets. In A. Verger, C. Lubienski, & G. Steiner-Khamsi (Eds.), *World yearbook of education 2016: The global education industry* (pp. 211–227). London: Routledge.
- Robertson, S. L., Novelli, M., Dale, R., Tikly, L., Dachi, H., & Alphonse, N. (2007). *Globalisation, education and development: Ideas, actors and dynamics*. London: DfID.
- Robeyns, I. (2005). The capability approach: A theoretical survey. *Journal of Human Development*, 6(1), 93–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/146498805200034266>
- Robeyns, I. (2006). Three models of education: Rights, capabilities and human capital. *Theory and Research in Education*, 4(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878506060683>
- Romer, P. M. (1993). Two strategies for economic development: using ideas and producing ideas. In L. Summers & S. Shah (Eds.), *The strategic management of intellectual capital* (pp. 211–238). Washington, DC: World Bank Publisher. Retrieved from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/03/01/000009265_3970716142307/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf
- Roy, O. (1990). *Islam and resistance in Afghanistan* (Second Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rubin, B. R. (1992). Political elites in Afghanistan: Rentier state building, rentier state wrecking. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24(1), 77–99.
- Rubin, B. R. (1999). Afghanistan under the Taliban. *Current History*, 98(625), 79–91.
- Rubin, B. R. (2000). The political economy of war and peace in Afghanistan. *World Development*, 28(10), 1789–1803.
- Rubin, B. R. (2002). *The fragmentation of Afghanistan* (2nd ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rubin, B. R. (2005). Peace building, state building: Constructing sovereignty for security. *Survival*, 47(4), 93–106.
- Rubin, B. R. (2008). The politics of security in postconflict statebuilding. In C. Call & V. Wyeth (Eds.), *Building states to build peace*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Rubin, B. R. (2013). *Afghanistan from the Cold War through the War on Terror*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, USA.
- Rubin, B. R., & Hamidzada, H. (2007). From Bonn to London: Governance challenges and the future of statebuilding in Afghanistan. *International Peacekeeping*, 14(1), 8–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310601114236>
- Rushdie, S. (1995). *Midnight's children*. London: Random House.
- Russell, S. G. (2018). Global Discourses and Local Practices: Teaching Citizenship and Human Rights in Postgenocide Rwanda. *Comparative Education Review*, 62(3), 000–000. <https://doi.org/10.1086/698305>
- Saif, S. K. (2018, October 30). Educators emerge as parliamentary candidates in election. *University World News*. Retrieved from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20181030150916538>
- Samady, S. R. (2001). *Education and Afghan society in the twentieth century*. Unesco. Paris. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001246/124627e.pdf>
- Sayed, Y., Davies, L., Hardy, M., Madandar Arani, A., Kakia, L., & Bano, M. (2011). Global security, religion and education development: A crisis for the field of comparative education? *Compare*:

- A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 41(3), 415–431.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2011.564033>
- Sayer, A. (2000). *Realism and social science*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.
- Sayer, A. (2001). For a critical cultural political economy. *Antipode*, 33(4), 687–708.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00206>
- Schendel, R., McCowan, T., & Oketch, M. (2014). The Economic and Noneconomic Benefits of Tertiary Education in Low-income Contexts. *International Higher Education*, (77), 6.
<https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2014.77.5673>
- Schetter, C. (2005). Ethnoscapes, national territorialisation, and the Afghan war. *Geopolitics*, 10(1), 50–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040590907712>
- Schiffman, H. F., & Spooner, B. (2012). Afghan languages in a larger context of Central and South Asia. In H. F. Schiffman (Ed.), *Language policy and language conflict in Afghanistan and its neighbors: The changing politics of language choice* (pp. 1–31). Leiden: Brill.
- Sedra, M. (2013). The hollowing-out of the liberal peace project in Afghanistan: The case of security sector reform. *Central Asian Survey*, 32(3), 371–387.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2013.843387>
- Sen, A. (1993). Capability and well-being. In M. Nussbaum & A. Sen (Eds.), *The quality of life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Senghaas, D. (2012). Friedrich List and the basic problems of modern development. *Review: Fernand Braudel Center*, 14(3), 451–467.
- Shah, R., & Lopes Cardozo, M. (2014). Education and social change in post-conflict and post-disaster Aceh, Indonesia. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 38, 2–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.06.005>
- Shah, R., & Lopes Cardozo, M. (2015). The politics of education in emergencies and conflict. In T. McCowan & E. Unterhalter (Eds.), *Education and international development: An introduction* (pp. 181–200). London and New York: Bloomsbury.
- Shanks, K. (2016). The changing role of education in the Iraqi disputed territories: Assimilation, segregation and indoctrination. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14(3), 422–433.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2015.1128807>
- Sharan, T. (2013). The dynamics of informal political networks and statehood in post-2001 Afghanistan: a case study of the 2010–2011 Special Election Court crisis. *Central Asian Survey*, 32(3), 336–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2013.843301>
- Sherman, J. (2008). Afghanistan: Nationally led statebuilding. In C. Call & V. Wyeth (Eds.), *Building states to build peace* (pp. 303–334). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Shore, C., & Wright, S. (1997). A New Field of Anthropology. In C. Shore & S. Wright (Eds.), *Anthropology of Policy: Critical perspectives on governance and power* (pp. 3–33). London: Routledge.
- Sigsgaard, M. (2009). Education and fragility in Afghanistan: A situational analysis. *International Institute for Educational Planning*. Retrieved from

http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv:22822%0Ahttp://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/education_and_fragility_in_afghanistan.pdf

- Singer, P. W. (2008). *Corporate warriors: The rise of the privatized military industry* (2nd ed.). New York: Cornell University Press.
- Singh, G. (1959). *Ahmad Shah Durrani*. (A. P. House, Ed.). London.
- Smith, A., & Vaux, T. (2003). *Education, Conflict and International Development*. Oxford: DfID. Retrieved from <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/sd29.pdf>
- Sneath, D. (2007). *The headless state: Aristocratic orders, kinship society, and misrepresentations of nomadic Inner Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sobel, M. E. (2005). Causal inference in the social sciences. In J. L. Scott & X. Yu (Eds.), *Quantitative social science volume 1: Overview and major issues* (pp. 73–83). London: SAGE Publications.
- Spink, J. (2005). Education and politics in Afghanistan: The importance of an education system in peacebuilding and reconstruction. *Journal of Peace Education*, 2(2), 195–207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400200500185794>
- Starr, S. F. (2006). Sovereignty and legitimacy in Afghan nation-building. In F. Fukuyama (Ed.), *Nation-building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (pp. 107–124). Maryland: John Hopkins University Press.
- Starr, S. F. (2013). *Lost enlightenment: Central Asia's golden age from the Arab conquest to Tamerlane*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2004). Globalization in education: Real or imagined? In G. Steiner-Khamsi (Ed.), *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending* (pp. 1–6). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Stromquist, N., & Monkman, K. (2014). Defining globalization and assessing its implications for knowledge and education, revisited. In N. Stromquist & K. Monkman (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Integration and contestation across cultures* (pp. 1–20). Maryland: R&L Education.
- Sullivan, J. R. (2012). Skype: An appropriate method of data collection for qualitative interviews? *The Hilltop Review*, 6(1, Article 10), 54–60.
- Sum, N.-L., & Jessop, B. (2013a). Competitiveness, the knowledge-based economy and higher education. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 4(1), 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-012-0121-8>
- Sum, N.-L., & Jessop, B. (2013b). *Towards a cultural political economy: Putting culture in its place in political economy*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Suskind, R. (2004). Faith, certainty and the presidency of George W. Bush. *The New York Times*.
- Tadjbakhsh, S. (2009). Conflicted outcomes and values: (Neo)liberal peace in Central Asia and Afghanistan. *International Peacekeeping*, 16(5), 635–651. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310903303271>
- Tarabini, A. (2010). Education and poverty in the global development agenda: Emergence, evolution and consolidation. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(2), 204–212. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.04.009>
- Taylor, S. (1997). Critical Policy Analysis: exploring contexts, texts and consequences. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(1), 23–35.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630970180102>

- Tierney, W. G. (2011). The role of tertiary education in fixing failed states: Globalization and public goods. *Journal of Peace Education, 8*(2), 127–142.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2011.589256>
- Tikly, L., & Barrett, A. M. (2011). Social justice, capabilities and the quality of education in low income countries. *International Journal of Educational Development, 31*(1), 3–14.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.06.001>
- Trotman, J., & Robertson, S. L. (1992). Taking the queen's shilling: Public policy, research and academics in the 1990s. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 13*(1), 67–89.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630920130105>
- Tsvetkova, N. (2017). Americanisation, Sovietisation, and resistance at Kabul University: Limits of the educational reforms. *History of Education, 46*(3), 343–365.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2016.1246676>
- Turner, B. S., & Khondker, H. H. (2010). *Globalization East and West*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- UNESCO-IIEP, & MGIEP. (2017). *Youth led guide on prevention of violent extremism through education*. New Delhi: UNESCO MGIEP. Retrieved from
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002605/260547e.pdf>
- UNESCO. (2017). *Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide for policy-makers*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002477/247764e.pdf>
- UNICEF. (2013). *UNICEF back-to-school guide: Evidence-based strategies to resume education in emergencies and post-crisis transition*. Geneva: UNICEF. Retrieved from
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF_Back_To_School_Guide_2013.pdf
- Unterhalter, E. (2007a). *Gender, schooling and global social justice*. New York: Routledge.
- Unterhalter, E. (2007b). Gender equality, education, and the capability approach. In M. Walker & E. Unterhalter (Eds.), *Amartya Sen's capability approach and social justice in education* (pp. 87–108). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2009). Discourse and Ideology. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (pp. 379–407). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446289068.n18>
- Verger, A., Novelli, M., & Altinyelken, H. K. (2018). Global education policy and international development: A revised introduction. In A. Verger, M. Novelli, & H. K. Altinyelken (Eds.), *Global education policy and international development: New agendas, issues and policies* (pp. 1–34). London: Bloomsbury.
- Wallerstein, I. (2004). *World-systems analysis*. London: Duke University Press.
- Waters, M. (2001). *Globalization* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Welch, A. (2011). Introduction: Challenge and change in Southeast Asian education in the global era. In A. Welch (Ed.), *Higher education in Southeast Asia: Blurring borders, changing balance* (pp. 1–20). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Welch, A., & Wahidyar, A. (2013). Evolution, revolution, reconstruction: The interrupted development of higher education in Afghanistan. In M. Buck & M. Kabaum (Eds.), *Ideen und Realitäten von Universitäten [Universities: Ideas and Realities]* (pp. 88–105). Frankfurt: Peter

Lang Publishing.

- Willett, S. (2008). Trading with security: Trade liberalisation and conflict. In M. C. Pugh, N. Cooper, & M. Turner (Eds.), *Whose peace? Critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding* (pp. 67–84). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Winthrop, R., & Kirk, J. (2008). Learning for a bright future: Schooling, armed conflict, and children's well-being. *Comparative Education Review*, 52(4), 639–661. <https://doi.org/10.1086/591301>
- Woody, C. (2018, June 21). The US is on pace to bomb Afghanistan more than ever this year, but the nominee to be US commander there “can’t guarantee ...an end date.” *Business Insider*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/us-bombing-afghanistan-at-record-pace-but-no-end-date-in-sight-2018-6?r=US&IR=T>
- World Bank. (2000). *Higher education in developing countries: Peril and promise*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2002). *Constructing knowledge societies: New challenges for tertiary education*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2018). *World Development Report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Education Forum. (2000). *The Dakar Framework for Action - Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf>
- Yapp, M. (2001). The legend of the great game. *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, 111, 179–198. Retrieved from <http://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/proc/files/111p179.pdf>
- Zacharakis, J. (2006). Conflict as a form of capital in controversial community development projects. *Journal of Extension*, 44(5).