

**This article was published in the journal *Geopolitics* 2005, 1**

## **Ethnoscaples, National Territorialisation, and the Afghan War<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Summary**

*This article pursues the question of how the territorialisation of power in the establishment of the Afghan nation state has affected the spatial perceptions of political actors and the population at large. This question is particularly topical as spatial references are at present the driving force behind an ethnicisation of politics in Afghanistan. These perceived ethnic spaces, so-called ethnoscaples, not only compete with one another, but also contradict Afghanistan itself as a national territory. Thus since the outbreak of the Afghan war 1979 various political actors have been attempting to mobilise their constituencies over ethnic issues in order to use references to the spatial origins and expansion of their ethnic category to legitimise political claims.*

*The principal argument of this article is that the population's strong identification with the national territory of Afghanistan has to date prevented an ethnicisation of the masses in the Afghan conflict. Furthermore the article argues that the irreconcilability of the various perceived ethnic territories is an obstacle to the currently much-discussed establishment of ethno-federalism.*

### **1. National and Ethnic Conceptions of Space**

The debate about the mutual relations between space and politics, which gained ground in the last decade, is aimed at explaining ethnic and national conflicts not only in the discipline of political geography<sup>2</sup> but also in research in the field of peace and conflict studies.<sup>3</sup> Ernest Gellner<sup>4</sup> even defined the "ideological disenchantment of the territorialisation" of the nation-state as the core task of future research and policy-making. Gellner's postulate is based on the assumption that armed conflicts are primarily quarrels over control of space and that the spatialisation of national and ethnic perceptions contains an enormous, often intractable conflict potential which obtrudes its own logic on political actors. This significance of space derives firstly from the spatial dimension of ethnic conceptions, so-called ethnoscaples, and secondly from the endeavour of the nation-state to achieve unity of the nation and its territory.

### 1.1 Ethnoscapes – The Spatialisation of Ethnic Groups

There is broad agreement in the academic<sup>5</sup> that belief in a common origin is the strongest bond, the ‘social glue’<sup>6</sup>, holding together the members of an ethnic group – an aspect already pointed out by Max Weber<sup>7</sup> in the 1920s. Thus belief in a common origin is the prerequisite to defining a group as an ethnic one, while cultural patterns (e.g. religion, language), which are important to determining the boundaries between ethnic categories<sup>8</sup>, remain exchangeable variables.<sup>9</sup>

Perceptions of origin usually show a markedly constructive character. They can be easily modified and manipulated in keeping with changing conditions and in order to justify certain claims or to underpin legitimacy. Most authors<sup>10</sup> restrict their attention to the temporal dimension of ethnic origin and its constructive character: they look into how common ancestors, common roots of origin and historical events are created or interpreted with an eye to achieving ethnic cohesion. Only rarely do researchers take the spatial dimension of ethnic origin into consideration. This spatial dimension is regarded as a marginal or exchangeable variable in defining ethnic groups.<sup>11</sup> In contrast to this common understanding of origin, confined as it is to the temporal aspect, the present approach assigns a pivotal function to the spatial dimension of conceptions of ethnic origin. Thus it is argued that the temporal dimension of origin, which involves a high degree of abstraction, is unthinkable without a spatial component. A spatial linkage of perceptions of origin is needed to lift belief in an ethnic origin from an abstract to an identifiable, visualised level. This significance of the spatial memory was addressed by Georg Simmel as early as the beginning of the 20th century:

“Usually place unfolds greater associative power than time because it is more intuitively vivid. It is insolubly associated with memory, especially where the mutual relations involved are unique and emotionally charged. And because of the reciprocal relationship between memory and place, place remains the pivot around which memory entwines individuals in correlations that have taken on an ideal hue”.<sup>12</sup>

Like its temporal dimension, the spatial dimension of ethnic origin is a social construction. To cite Simmel<sup>13</sup> again: it is “not space but the structuring and summation of its parts by the soul that are of societal significance.”

The term ‘ethnoscape’, introduced to the academic world by Anjun Appadurai<sup>14</sup>, is useful in examining the linkage between ethnic perceptions and space. However, in contrast to Appadurai, who understands the ethnoscape as the globalised spatial diffusion of ethnic communities, I prefer to follow the approach pursued by Anthony Smith<sup>15</sup>, who defines ethnoscape as the territorialisation of ethnic memory, i.e. the belief shared by ethnic groups in a common spatial frame of origin. Thus it is not necessary for the members of an ethnic group to settle or dominate their ethnoscape. The collective fiction that affiliation with an ethnic group is related to a certain space is sufficient. Ethnic groups “make geography”<sup>16</sup> and “produce space”<sup>17</sup> to legitimise their existence in space and time. However, like the temporal dimension of ethnic origin, ethnoscapes are social constructions which can be and are modified in keeping with given endeavours and interests.

## 2.2 National Territorialisation

The ethnicisation of politics and the emergence of ethnic conflicts are associated with the establishment and worldwide expansion of the nation-state.<sup>18</sup> The assumed need to define the nation on whose behalf a state was to be ruled was usually coupled with a politicisation of differences in identities and cultures, and this was a problem that was often 'resolved' by force of arms. This is why ethnic conflicts emerged with great regularity during the various waves of nation-building which gripped Europe before expanding to embrace the entire globe.<sup>19</sup>

The emergence and expansion of nation-states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was directly related to the territorialisation of politics. Until the dawn of the early modern age political action was organised on the basis of religion, patronage, social status, and lineage.<sup>20</sup> Spatial fixation of politics, for instance an exactly defined political territory, was the exception. Accordingly, toponyms were used arbitrarily, often overlapped, and did not refer to a fixed spatial unit. Only after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and its political consensus, *cuius regio, eius religio*, did the perception gain ground that power to rule is based no longer on a nexus of personal loyalties (*Personenverband*) but on control of an exactly fixed power-space, i.e. a territory. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century statehood was conceivable only in combination with a state territory.<sup>21</sup> The territorialisation of politics was accompanied by a categorisation and taxonomisation of spatial terminology: fixed toponyms were established and provided with geodetically defined boundaries. The displacement of the sovereign by an – in nearly all cases – ethnically defined *Volk* caused the territorial principle to irrupt into national ideologies.<sup>22</sup> The establishment of nation-state concepts made it possible, since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, for collectives that believed in a shared national identity to control a state and territory of their own. The substantive imperatives of the ideologies of nation-states not only entailed social closure, it also brought with it a politics of territorial homogenisation. So it was that the geodetically exactly mapped territory assumed the character of a container of national ideologies and symbols.<sup>23</sup> The fiction that a nation must be settled on a *geschlossenen Volksboden* became a widely accepted one. Spatialisation of national perceptions took on material form in the identity and unity of the nation: all symbols of national identity were now to be attributed to a national territory, and the territory itself advanced to the status of a nation-owned and identity-stimulating symbol.<sup>24</sup> However, this coincidence of nation and territory was challenged time and again by inhabitants who subscribed to deviant ethnic perceptions of temporal and spatial origin.

The territorialisation of national ideologies emerged as one of the most significant prerequisites for the use of violence in the name of a nation or an ethnic group. On the one hand, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the practise of ethnic cleansing gained ground all over the world as a means of creating ethnically homogenised territories and achieving the unity of nation-state and territory.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the establishment of nation-states and the politics of territorial homogenisation were often enough accompanied by the emergence of political counter-movements. Ethnic elites excluded from access to state power competed with national elites by stressing

ethnic counter-ideologies reflecting their own perceptions of ethnoscapes. Once political thinking in terms of the nation-state had attained global primacy, ethnoscapes laid the groundwork for territorialised claims ranging from rights of territorial autonomy and self-determination in a federalist framework to demands for independent territorial nation-states. These ethnoscapes were not in conformity with national territory, since they usually pointed to current or past patterns of settlement and migration or to the territorialisation of ethnic symbols such as battlefields, places of pilgrimage, etc. The rhetorical disputes between protagonists of the nation and rival ethnic groups often culminated in the question: who arrived here first? In many conflicts the belief in a certain ethnoscape was perceived by people as an axiomatic fact that called for certain courses of action: in escalating violent conflicts, for instance, spatial perceptions of national and ethnic identities have again and again provided the immediate legitimacy for acts of violence such as ethnic cleansing and 'ethnocide'.<sup>26</sup>

Against the background of this theoretical approach, I now wish to come to the case of Afghanistan. On the one hand, we should bear in mind that the development of the Afghan state was, until recent times, accompanied by major fluctuations in the political meaning attributed to space. On the other hand, the last century saw the emergence of different ethnoscapes which constitute the main reference points for the political claims raised by today's ethnic entrepreneurs.

## **2. The Territorialisation of Power in Afghanistan**

Afghan Historians<sup>27</sup> consistently endeavour to portray Afghan history as something very old that can be traced back to early ancient times. At the same time, the nation state of Afghanistan can be considered as a product of the modernity, since it was created artificially as late as the end of the nineteenth century by the colonial powers of British India and Russia. Thus it is in fact little more than a hundred years old. The Afghan state's short history, the development of state structures and the collapse of the state due to the protracted war since 1979 have been discussed and appraised in a number of publications.<sup>28</sup> However, these publications have concerned themselves exclusively with the development of state apparatus, whilst the extent to which spatial relationships were important in this process of shaping the nation is a question that has been accorded little attention; this is particularly astonishing as territorialisation is, along with the establishment of a dominant state apparatus, the most significant expression of the realisation of any nation state, as pointed out above.

Since Afghanistan became a modern state at the end of the nineteenth century the national territory has been perceived in contradictory ways: on the one hand state actors perceived the national territory as the main framework for their political activities up until the onset of war in 1979. On the other hand the population itself was organised into small and predominantly non-spatial communities and perceived

the Afghan state and its territory as something abstract or even interfering and hostile. In the course of the Afghan war this was turned on its head. The state's progressive collapse meant that the national territory became less and less important for the political and military actors and power was increasingly held over client networks that were seldom defined in spatial terms. In opposition to this was the emergence for the first time in the broader Afghan population of a national Afghan identity, which was anchored in particular on the wish that the national territory should remain intact.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.1 Afghanistan – a Space without Boundaries

Until the end of the nineteenth century the societies that preceded today's Afghans were marked by extreme statelessness. Power was limited to social microcosms and was characterised by a plethora of overlapping loyalties: villages, valley communities, clans, tribes and religious groups made up the most important frames of political reference for identity and action on which power was based.<sup>30</sup> This marked segmentation of society was an obstacle to the implementation of institutionalised power. The rule of the Indian Moguls, the Persian Safavids and the Uzbek Shaibanis who shared control of the area that is now Afghanistan from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries was thus based solely on the personal loyalties they could call upon in different areas. The ruling presence of these empires was thus only indirect and remained weak. Even the Durrani Empire founded by Ahmed Shah in 1747, which had its core in today's Afghanistan, was based on fragile personal loyalties: The majority of rulers, potentates, tribal leaders and governors certainly acknowledged Ahmed Shah's rule when he was present; but as soon as his back was turned they would again behave as though they themselves were entirely sovereign.<sup>31</sup>

This segmentation of power meant that spatial terms were ill defined and highly susceptible to change. Right up to the nineteenth century there was no delineation or clear definition of spatial units. Vague and with each other competing spatial ideas predominated. Apart from clear geographical demarcations such as rivers like the Amu Darya or Indus exact territorial boundaries rarely existed.<sup>32</sup> An example for these vague spatial ideas is Mountstuart Elphinstone's commentary from the early nineteenth century on the spatial terms 'Afghanistan' and 'Khorassan', which reads:

"They have no general name for their own country; but sometimes apply the Persian one of Afghaunistan. Doctor Leyden has mentioned the name Pooshtoonkhau, as bearing this sense; but I never heard it used. (...) The name most generally applied to the whole country by its inhabitants is Khorassaun; but this appellation is obviously incorrect. For, on the one hand, the whole of the Afghaun country is not included within the strict limits of Khorassaun; and, on the other, a considerable part of that province is not inhabited by the Afghans."<sup>33</sup>

The approximate extent of settlement by Pashtun tribes, reaching from Herat through Kandahar to the Indus and to Kabul, was until the nineteenth century very vaguely referred to by the Pashtun-speaking population as Pakhtunkhwa or Roh, whilst the Persian-speaking population preferred the name Afghanistan.<sup>34</sup> What is today

southern Afghanistan was referred to politically and administratively by the overlapping term Zabulistan, and the region between the Hindu Kush and the Indus was called Kabulistan. The term *sar hadd* (frontier area) meant very loosely the area to the northwest of the Sulaiman mountains. The term Khorassan referred to what are today western Afghanistan and eastern Iran, but was also in use in southern and eastern Afghanistan (see the quotation above). Today's northern Afghanistan was referred to alternately as Turkistan, Bactria or Balkh, and central Afghanistan as the Hazarajat or Ghor.<sup>35</sup> The principal cause of these toponymic overlaps and equivalences can be seen in the absence of penetration by any dominating political rule. This is because the administrative efforts of any ruler or state ensure that toponyms are harmonised.

## 2.2 The Great Game

It was only after the long-running confrontations between British India and Russia in the nineteenth century, which went down in history as the *Great Game*, that the state of Afghanistan was founded as a buffer zone between the two colonial powers.<sup>36</sup> At the same time the toponym 'Afghanistan' underwent a spatial metamorphosis. Whilst in the eighteenth century 'Afghanistan' had been a very loose term used by the Persian-speaking population to refer to the area settled by Pashtun tribes, the colonial powers delineated with it the whole area between Persia and their empires, an area characterised by a decentralised and changeable distribution of power. Advances by British Indian troops into the eastern Pashtun tribal areas had made tribal or ethnic borders with neighbouring Afghanistan obsolete. The toponym Afghanistan was no longer understood to refer 'ethnographically' to the Pashtun tribal areas but instead referred 'politically' to the ungoverned buffer zone between Russia, British India and Persia (Figure 1).<sup>37</sup>

Only between 1887 and 1893 did British India and Russia provide Afghanistan with precisely defined territorial boundaries and create a state under the rule of A'bdur Rahman called Afghanistan within this territory. Interestingly this newborn state lay far to the north of the area that had at the beginning of the nineteenth century still been understood under the term Afghanistan. In addition, this delineation of borders took no account of cultural or ethnic homogeneity (Figure 2). Thus, the heterogeneity of the population of Afghanistan is so great that neither language nor religion nor any other cultural pattern forms a unifying national force for all the country's inhabitants. Even Islam, to which around 99% of all Afghans adhere, is not available as a force for national unity because in Afghanistan it takes a multitude of heterogeneous and often contradictory forms: examples are the sectarian divide between Sunnis, Shi'as and Isma'ili Shi'as, and the influences of pre-islamic, tribal, mystical, orthodox or militant tendencies.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.3 The Birth of Afghanistan as a Modern State

The delineation of Afghanistan's territory set the conditions for the enforced building of state structures as well as the monopolisation of power and hierarchisation of governance with the turn of the century.<sup>39</sup> A consequence of the territorial establishment of Afghanistan was that considerations of space, which had been of a lesser importance in the previous political understanding of rule now became central to the political and power interests of rulers: from the end of the nineteenth century the power of all Afghanistan's rulers was no longer to be defined by the number of tribes, local rulers and princes who acknowledged their sovereignty but would instead be determined by their exercise of power over the geodetic precisely defined territory of Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup> This territorialisation of power formed the basis for one of the most explosive conflicts in Afghanistan's hundred-year history: on the one hand the twentieth century saw the progressive development of a modern Afghan state apparatus that perceived the territory of Afghanistan as the main frame of reference for its activities. On the other hand the activities of the inhabitants of the country continued to derive from family, tribal, ethnic and religious loyalties; they therefore operated on a small scale and predominantly on non-spatial or at the local levels. The population took the state and its territorialisation to be abstract factors that had little in common with the daily life of the individual. Additionally, the state did not represent a positive projection of national identity but was instead connoted with negative references such as "forced resettlement, forced labour, military service, taxation and directionless bureaucracy."<sup>41</sup> The low level of interconnection between those involved in affairs of state, who were concentrated in the few urban centres, especially Kabul, and the rural population together with a lack of infrastructure combined to amplify this trend.<sup>42</sup>

Nearly all Afghan rulers until the outbreak of the Afghan war in 1979 found the cultural heterogeneity of Afghanistan's territory an annoyance from the outset and perceived it as an obstacle to the development of a national ideology. For this reason state policy throughout this time period was marked by efforts to homogenise the population through forced resettlement and redistribution of land. This policy was characterised by Pashtun-tinted nationalism, which meant that in general Pashtuns profited from it the most: In this way Pashtun settlers received the irrigated land in the oases of northern Afghanistan and pastures in central Afghanistan were given to Pashtun nomads.<sup>43</sup> The main reasons for the predominance of this Pashtun-biased nationalism were that the Pashtuns constituted the most numerous ethnic category and the Pashtun tribes of eastern Afghanistan were considered as the militarily strongest forces in the country. Furthermore the royal family was Pashtun and the word 'Afghan' was used in Afghanistan as a synonym for Pashtun.<sup>44</sup>

In order to level out the ethnic heterogeneity of Afghanistan's territory and to thwart any attempts at secession, a redefinition of spatial units took place over the course of the twentieth century. Toponyms that carried any ethnic or particularistic perceptions, such as Kafiristan/Nuristan, Khorassan, Turkistan, Qataghan or Hazarajat were replaced by administrative terms which often referred to provincial

towns (e.g. Herat, Bamyan) or rivers (e.g. Kunar) and did not imply any ethnic connotations. The administrative reorganisation that took place in the course of the introduction of the constitution in 1964 also gerrymandered territorial administrative units with the intention that they should be dominated wherever possible by a Pashtun majority and that other cultural identities should be annihilated.<sup>45</sup> The idea of a nation state, that the borders of the national territory should conform precisely to ethnic boundaries, was the ideological starting point for the explosive Pashtunistan dispute: the Afghan government perceived the state of Afghanistan as encompassing the ethnoscape of the Pashtuns, which lay on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border, and wanted to make this a reality. Therefore the Pashtunistan dispute defined the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan from the 1950s through to the 1970s and brought both countries several times to the brink of war.

Finally the Afghan territory also served as a matrix for the establishment of national characteristics. Afghan historians in particular tried to amalgamate perceptions of space and society to create an indissoluble unit for all time. It was thus that the modern construct of the Afghan nation state was placed in historical continuity with ancient *Aryana*, so that it became the recipient of a history reaching back to the very beginnings of ancient time and was in fact elevated to the status of cradle of human civilisation.<sup>46</sup> The best example for this imposition of collective values is the styling of Afghanistan as a “freedom-loving country” – an idea that is omnipresent and that to this day continues to determine people’s actions:

“My dear Afghanistan is an area that from ancient times until today has been a source of culture and of the various stages of man’s spiritual and intellectual development. It is a country that has fostered the thinking and the moral education of mankind, and one in which powerful empires have arisen over the course of history. Its people have in the course of its history always had *the freedom and character of their country* in mind.”<sup>47</sup>

“Freedom”, the trait of an individual’s character that British authors ascribed collectively to the Pashtuns in the course of the *Great Game* as a justification for the failure of British attempts at expansion advanced under the pens of Afghan authors to become a force that fundamentally determined the actions of all the inhabitants of this state, which had only taken shape at the end of the nineteenth century. This national character trait took a prominent role in the propaganda of Afghan resistance to the Soviet invaders (1979-1989) and eventually became the explanation for the failure of Soviet attempts at expansion into Afghanistan. Even the *Coalition against Terrorism’s* military operations against the Taliban in autumn 2001 was greatly influenced by a tremendous respect for the Afghans’ “love of freedom”. It was thus that the USA and its allies preferred to leave the Northern Alliance to fight against the Taliban rather than bringing their own troops physically into view.

## 2.4 The Afghan War

The Afghan war led to major changes in the way space was perceived. On the one hand the national territory progressively lost significance as a frame of reference for the activities of political and military actors. This was above all because the state and

its functions were eroded in the course of the war.<sup>48</sup> One consequence of this collapse of the state was that power became de-territorialised: after the beginning of the 1990s in particular, Afghanistan collapsed into hundreds of petty empires that could scarcely be fixed in spatial terms and which were ruled by a myriad of warlords and local rulers whose power was based on client networks and personal loyalties.<sup>49</sup> Even national borders lost increasingly their function as barriers for political and economic actors: whilst cross-border trade and smuggling to and from neighbouring countries flourished, internal trade came almost to a standstill.<sup>50</sup>

In parallel with the erosion of state structures on the one hand and the de-territorialisation of power and the economy on the other hand, however, a change came about in the general population's spatial perception of the state of Afghanistan. The extraordinary floods of refugees, especially in the first half of the 1980s, had as their consequence a huge rise in spatial mobility. The result was that in the first ten years of the Afghan conflict alone, one in every two inhabitants of the country was forced to leave his or her microcosm and find a new home – often abroad, and frequently in Pakistan or Iran.<sup>51</sup> One side effect of this mobility was that references of social perception shifted from the traditional microcosms to larger units. This happened, especially, since social units such as family, clan, tribe or village, which the inhabitants of Afghanistan had hitherto preferred to define themselves by, had in many cases been destroyed or else could no longer offer the security they had provided in the past.<sup>52</sup> The shift in these fields of social perception held within it a major precondition for the broad development for the first time among Afghans of a national consciousness. Afghans living in exile in particular began now to perceive their country from the outside as a territorial unit and as a positive and often nostalgic point of reference. Finally, since the 1980s the Afghan population has seen its identity threatened by the ongoing wars in Afghanistan, by the involvement of foreign powers and by the progressive fragmentation of the country. Rumours have circulated of Afghanistan being divided into a number of small states or of the impending annexation of various component regions of the country.<sup>53</sup>

This newly arisen national identity was accompanied by a de-Pashtunisation of the national ideology because the majority of the non-Pashtun population now also identified itself with Afghanistan as a country. However, this Afghan identity could hardly be anchored to any common values, traditions or experiences, since any definition of national values inevitably failed against the cultural heterogeneity of Afghanistan and the varying models of ethnic origin in existence. Even the value of "love for freedom" was unusable as a uniting factor because most of the Afghan political parties and actors had been blamed for collaborating with foreign forces and for selling out this national value. Only the belief in the precisely delineated borders and the territorial inviolability of Afghanistan emerged as the national minimal consensus for all Afghans – from whichever ideological, ethnic, religious or political camp. A good example for the territorial definition of national identity's enormous gain in significance is that the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which runs right through the middle of Pashtun tribal areas, had in the past been accorded scant

importance because of the dominance of tribal references. In general Afghans living in this area would have no idea where the border lay and of whether they were in Afghanistan or in Pakistan. Over the course of the war this changed drastically. This is Bernt Glatzer's report<sup>54</sup> from the 1990s:

"Every time we travelled East-West, in the middle of a hilly plain void of any noticeable land marks my Afghan colleagues would suddenly break out in joy, starting praying, laughing and singing, telling me they were now in Afghanistan."

The territorial shape of Afghanistan also became a defining symbol of national identity over the course of the war. No other symbol is used so often in the letterheads, emblems and logos of the numerous non-governmental organisations, parties and associations as the map of the Afghan territory. This ever-recurring symbolic representation of the Afghan territory strengthened the chiefly spatial perception of Afghan identity.

The tremendous significance of the national territory as a frame of reference for the Afghans' identity since the beginning of the 1990s is also the main key to an understanding of the initial sympathies and also the subsequent growing dissatisfaction the population had with the Taliban – a political movement, which emerged in southern Afghanistan in late-Summer 1994. At first a large part of the population hoped the Taliban would bring about a territorial reintegration of the country, which was in a process of disintegration. Their aspiration was that the once fixed territorial delineation of Afghanistan should endure. The Taliban came close to fulfilling this desire, as they brought around 90% of the country under their control and drove away the spectre of Afghan fragmentation. However Taliban rule also made it clear that spatial integrity did not necessarily bring about social integration. This is why the disappointment within the population with the Taliban's radical policies and in particular with their treatment of women and minorities grew vehemently.<sup>55</sup>

With the collapse of the Taliban regime in autumn 2001 the de-territorialisation of power has once again won the upper hand: Afghanistan has disintegrated into the separate spheres of interest of a multitude of warlords, autonomous leaders and potentates, whose rule is based on traditional patronage (Figure 3). The areas under their control can barely be defined in terms of place or territory – indeed if they can be defined at all it is by the checkpoints they have erected, which are used to collect tolls. Often enough three or more militias compete for the control of a small town or a valley. This recent de-territorialisation of rule since the 1990s has many parallels with the Afghan situation prior to the establishment of state structures by the colonial powers.<sup>56</sup> If we follow Braudel's<sup>57</sup> model of *longue durée* it is even possible to ask provocatively whether the hundred-year history of the Afghan nation state was only a short, artificially introduced episode of institutionalised and territorialised rule that is now already in its twilight stages.

### **3. The Development of Ethnoscapes in Afghanistan**

The development of this territorial national identity in the general population competes with ethnic identities that are themselves also spatially projected. We must nonetheless take account of the fact that before the outbreak of the Afghan war ethnicity enjoyed a very limited status as basis for social organisation, even though the Afghan state had elevated ethnic 'belonging' to become a main guiding principle of politics. Depending on the context, conflicts developed either along ethnic, sectarian, regional, social or economic fault lines and generally remained confined to society's micro-level.<sup>58</sup> There was also an absence of political movements that used ethnicity to make political and economic demands. The parties that emerged in the 1960s were clustered around the urban centres and defined themselves – in keeping with the spirit of the times – by alignment with communist or religious ideologies; ethnic questions played only a subordinate role in party political propaganda, even though many parties only recruited from among the members of one single ethnic category.<sup>59</sup>

This changed over the course of the Afghan war. Although no ethnicisation of the masses took place and ethnic components are only one thread in a very complex web of conflict, ethnicity nonetheless gained in status in warfare and political rhetoric, especially from the 1990s onwards.<sup>60</sup> Even if they tend to do so clandestinely, various actors are attempting to justify and legitimise their ethnic group in the here and now, through the size of the group on the one hand, and through an interpretation of its origins on the other, and in this way they try to bring their political claims to bear. In applying the first of these strategies every politician skews the numbers of his ethnic category upwards in juggling the ethnic arithmetic. The variations in individual ethnic categories are colossal: the figures for the Hazaras vary between approximately one and seven million members<sup>61</sup>; the Pashtuns are said to make up between 34% and 67% of the population.<sup>62</sup> The blurred ethnic boundaries and the situative character of ethnicity mean, however, that there can be no exact, objective answer to the question of the size of Afghanistan's ethnic categories. An ethnic census, such as was envisioned at least for a time by the United Nations, is therefore doomed to failure and may even conceal the danger of an escalation of the conflict, as hardly any of the warring factions would accept its findings.<sup>63</sup>

I would like here to concentrate in detail on the second strategy, that of the interpretation of ethnic origins, and in particular to look at the ethnoscapes that go along with such interpretations. As examples I intend to describe the ethnoscapes that have become widely shared among Pashtuns, Hazaras and Tajiks respectively, and to examine the dynamics these ethnoscapes have undergone. The political explosiveness with these spatial interpretations of origin is that they not only overlap but that they also fundamentally contradict one another.

### 3.1 The Pashtun Ethnoscape

The Pashtun ethnic category is strongly marked by tribal elements that in the past led to intra-ethnic segmentation rather than to unified action on the political level.<sup>64</sup> Most Pashtuns' loyalties were, therefore, to tribal units, most of which comprised only a few hundred or a few thousand members. Accordingly, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Pashtuns did not attribute any great importance to a Pashtun ethnoscape, that is to say ideas of this sort were – as mentioned above – fairly indistinct. Only when Afghanistan became a nation state did the idea of a Pashtun ethnoscape begin to be developed, and it started to take clear shape in the 1950s as the question of Pashtunistan began to arise. The Pashtun urban elite, who understood Afghan national ideology as being explicitly Pashtun, were most prominent in endeavouring to devise a Pashtun ethnoscape – Pashtunistan – and to shore it up intellectually. This urban elite, however, took Pashtunistan to mean not just the Pashtun tribal areas, but instead enlisted natural barriers to delineate the whole area between the rivers Amu Darya and Indus (Figure 4). In this interpretation, which is much more widespread among Afghan Pashtuns than among Pakistani Pashtuns<sup>65</sup>, the northern part of Afghanistan, where Pashtuns are numerically in the minority, is claimed for Pashtunistan on the grounds that the Pashtuns were in previous centuries driven away by successive incursions of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras but are in fact the original inhabitants of the region.<sup>66</sup> Pashtun interpretations of history<sup>67</sup> were used to justify the elevation of the province of Ghor in central Afghanistan, which was settled predominantly by Hazaras in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to the status of the Pashtuns' place of origin. In line with this reasoning, all other ethnic categories in Afghanistan were regarded collectively as intruders from later eras. This Pashtun ethnoscape formed an eminently important point of reference for the politics of Afghan presidents such as Mohammad Daud in the 1950s and 1970s and Hafizullah Amin at the end of the 1970s. And indeed ethnocentric Pashtuns hold to this ethnoscape to this day – *afghan mellat*, for example, a social democratic and Pashtun nationalist party.

The increase in significance of a Pashtun ethnoscape was accompanied by a transformation of the mythology of Pashtun origins over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To legitimise the right to exist in the state of Afghanistan, the belief in descent from the lost tribes of Israel, which was still dominant in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, steadily lost importance and was replaced by an Aryan myth based on the equivalence of Afghanistan and *Aryana* (see above).<sup>68</sup> This legitimised the claim that Pashtuns were “the original inhabitants” of Afghanistan, not Semitic migrants from Israel.

### 3.2. The Hazara Ethnoscape

The ethnic ideas of the Shiite Hazaras, one of the country's most disadvantaged populations, have changed enormously in the last 20 years. The idea that the Hazaras were descended from the Mongols was spread above all by the British in the

19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>69</sup> and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the urban Afghan elite<sup>70</sup>, among whom there were hardly any Hazaras. On this basis the Hazaras appeared to be interlopers who migrated into Afghanistan through the destructive conquests of Genghis Khan and who form the newest element of Afghanistan's population. It is interesting that at the beginning of the 1950s the name of Genghis Khan was not commonly known among Hazaras<sup>71</sup>, but that many Hazaras nonetheless attributed to themselves vague Mongol origins.<sup>72</sup> The area settled by the Hazaras was referred to in general usage as the "Hazarajat" as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the term "Hazarajat" had negative connotations in Afghan usage and meant something like "hillbilly" or "stone age". Prejudices against the Hazaras as an "uneducated", "poor" and "dirty" population group<sup>73</sup> correspondingly found expression in the toponym "Hazarajat".

A drastic change in the Hazaras' ethnic perceptions took hold over the course of the Afghan war. Above all, living in exile and the regime change in Kabul gave many Hazaras access to improved education, something from which they had been continuously excluded by the hostile policies of the Afghan government. This new Hazara elite<sup>74</sup> endeavoured to construct new spatial and historical ideas that were strongly marked by contemporary strategic and political thought and have been academically supported by historical patterns of settlements. These academics firstly insisted that the presence of Hazaras in Afghanistan could already be traced back over 6,000 years – that the Hazaras were therefore the original inhabitants of the country and not descended from Mongol intruders. Secondly, they extended the boundaries of the Hazarajat, as an ethnoscape claimed by the Hazaras, up to the borders of Shiite Iran, citing the extent of the Hazara population in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the basis for this.<sup>75</sup> These academics laid special blame at the door of the Pashtuns for wrongful appropriation of land in previous centuries, which had caused the Hazarajat to contract. That the Hazaras' ethnoscape is larger by far than their present area of settlement is justified by Sayyed Askar Mousavi<sup>76</sup> with the assertion that the Hazaras are Shiites and are permitted to conceal their religious denomination (*taqiah*). He claims that many members of other ethnic categories (Turkmen, Aimaq, Tajiks and also Pashtuns) are in fact Hazaras but lack the confidence to declare this because of the repressive policies of all Afghan governments. This extension of the Hazara ethnoscape, which was strongly approved among the Hazaras, has been accompanied since the 1990s by a trend towards Hazaras calling the territory they claim *Hazaristan* (Figure 5) and no longer *Hazarajat*. This is an attempt on the one hand to diffuse the negative connotations of their ethnoscape and on the other to give expression to a claim for political autonomy.<sup>77</sup>

### 3.3 The Tajik Ethnoscape

The Tajiks are an interesting exception in mapping ethnic origins. This is because the Afghan population, among whom a long pedigree is a qualification of the first order, use the term "Tajik" pejoratively to refer to people who have no picture of their ancestry and accordingly cannot be placed in any ethnic category, that is to say non-Pashtuns, non-Hazaras, etc.; being a Tajik thus incorporated an anti-ethnic alignment

*per se*.<sup>78</sup> As an ethnic category, Tajik refers ultimately to the residual quantity of any Sunni Persian-speaking people with no common ancestral mythology. The Tajiks thus face a difficulty in developing an idea of their own spatial and historical origins. This is also a significant reason why political actors are hardly able to base any demands for influence on Tajik interests. In addition, given that they do not want to be seen as an outpost of “Soviet” Tajikistan, the Afghan Tajiks have only the national territory Afghanistan as their ethnoscape, a country founded in the name of the Pashtuns. Ethnogeny presents a similar problem. If one does not wish to be aligned with the Persians, who are culturally and historically close but enjoy a negative reputation in Afghanistan, the only remaining frame of reference for the construction of a Tajik past is Afghan history, which was written according to Pashtun-oriented state policy. This very problem is at the root of the past negative assessments and continuing weakness of the Tajiks’ ethnic self-image in Afghanistan. Efforts at political motivation among the Tajiks have thus always attempted to build on a negative image of others and failed to create a positive self-image. In defining themselves, so-called Tajiks therefore preferred a regional rather than an ethnic identity and still refer to themselves as Panjshiris, Kabulis, Shomalis, Heratis etc. Similarly the *jami‘at-i islami* (Islamic society) which tried to position itself as a Tajik party disintegrated into independent regional groups competing with one another.<sup>79</sup> A recent attempt at ethnicising the Tajiks sees them as the direct descendants of the Aryans, whilst the Persians are seen as descendants of the Tajiks. In this interpretation an attempt is made to establish the ancient Khorassan as an ethnoscape, encompassing not only Afghanistan but also eastern Iran and the central Asian republics.<sup>80</sup>

#### 4. Ethnoscapes – the Basis for Policy and Warfare

Ethnic issues took a predominant role in the politics of the four most important warring parties in the 1990s, even if the political actors avoided publicly underpinning their political aims with ethnic arguments. In line with the idea of Afghanistan as the “country of the Pashtuns”, the Taliban favoured the establishment of an authoritarian central state, wholly negating the ethnic question so that any attempts to cast doubt on the Pashtun claim to hegemony were nipped in the bud. Pakistan’s immense influence on the Taliban may have been the reason why the movement made no claim on Pashtun areas in Pakistan. Particularistic interests predominated in the three leading parties of the Northern Alliance who had joined forces in 1996 as a force to oppose the Taliban. Because of the concentration of members of their ethnic categories in northern and central Afghanistan respectively, *jumbesh-i melli Islami* (National Islamic Movement) and *hizb-i wahdat* (Unity Party), defining themselves as the political representatives of the Uzbeks and Hazaras, favoured confederate models that would guarantee them cultural and political autonomy. Rashid Dostum, the leader of *jumbesh-i melli Islami*, even toyed at times with the idea of secession. The outright lack of a Tajik ethnoscape and the wide dispersal of Tajiks throughout

Afghanistan were the main reason that the *jami'at-i islami*, which was attempting to position itself as the representative of the Tajiks, failed to come up with any constitutional ideas until the collapse of the Taliban in Winter 2001/2.<sup>81</sup>

As the conflict in Afghanistan became ethnicised, especially after 1992, ethnic perceptions of space increasingly took the lead in determining the warring parties' actions. It was thus that in the course of the 1990s all the warring parties imposed ethnic homogenisation on the areas they controlled or at least attempted to bring about a state of hegemony for their ethnic category in those areas. Ethnic logic held the 'other' to be a potential security risk, a fifth column. Because he might go over to the enemy, with whom he must feel aligned because of their shared ethnicity.<sup>82</sup> This became particularly clear between 1992 and 1994, when various parties were fighting for control of Kabul and bombed the city to rubble. The arrival of the warring factions in Kabul was accompanied by violent ethnic cleansing and massacres (for example the massacre of Hazaras in Afshar) carried out with the aim of ethnically homogenising whole areas of the city.<sup>83</sup>

Fighting in the rest of the country was marked by attempts to make the ethnoscapes a reality.<sup>84</sup> These attempts at homogenisation were particularly significant in northern Afghanistan, one of the most ethnically heterogeneous regions of the country. Taliban advances at the end of the 1990s brought about a redistribution of land in favour of Pashtun settlers.<sup>85</sup> In response, from 1997 onwards, the Northern Alliance attempted to drive Pashtuns out of northern Afghanistan. The result of the Taliban's collapse in autumn 2001 was that an estimated 20,000 Pashtuns were driven out of northern and western Afghanistan.<sup>86</sup> The massacres in Mazar-i Sharif were a part of this pattern as well: in 1997 Northern Alliance units butchered several thousand Taliban. The Taliban responded by carrying out systematic massacres of Hazara civilians in Mazar-i Sharif, in which they murdered far in excess of 5,000 people.<sup>87</sup> That the ethnic factor became so especially important in northern Afghanistan is due to the fact that competing ethnoscapes collide here more than anywhere else in Afghanistan. Displacement and murder alike were repeatedly justified with the assertion that this region belonged to the perpetrator's own ethnoscape and that the ethnic 'other' had settled there unlawfully. Central Afghanistan with its Hazara majority presents a similar pattern. Here the Taliban attempted to re-establish Pashtun sovereignty through the return of Pashtun nomads who had dominated the region politically and militarily in the twentieth century up to the outbreak of the Afghan war.<sup>88</sup> The densely populated and predominantly Tajik Shomali plain north of Kabul presents an interesting case. At the end of the 1990s the front line dividing the Taliban from the Northern Alliance ran right through the Shomali plain. The Taliban pursued a systematic scorched earth and ethnic cleansing policy in the areas they controlled, which included the deportation of thousands of Tajiks. To prevent the Tajik population from returning, they destroyed villages, irrigation apparatus and farmland or gave vacant land to Pashtun fighters of particular merit. The Taliban intention was to create a dense Pashtun-settled ring north of Kabul in order to make it clear once and for all that Kabul was a 'Pashtun city'.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the significance they assumed in warfare and political rhetoric alike, these perceptions of ethnoscapes were in many places sharply contradictory of the real balance of power. Thus for example the idea of self-government by ethnic units foundered on the splintering of Afghanistan into autonomous petty empires (especially from 1992 to 1996 and from 2001 onwards) over which political parties could exercise only limited control, even if some warlords such as Mohammad Fahim, Rashid Dostum and Padcha Khan are emphasising their ethnicity in order to legitimize their autonomous position.

### **5. Ethno-Federalism – a Way out of the Crisis?**

As I have tried to show, various ethnic spatial perceptions are competing in Afghanistan. Alongside the various ethnoscapes it seems significant to me that in the course of the war in Afghanistan the national territory, which had hitherto been accorded only scant significance, became the chief uniting factor for all Afghans. The enormous flux of refugees and the military and political fragmentation of the country had as their consequence that for the majority of Afghans the integrity of their national territory took on outstanding relevance as a positive and often nostalgic point of reference; indeed the concern that the national territory should remain intact became the single generally recognised driving element of Afghan identity. Thus all the warring parties were aware that Afghanistan's territorial integrity was inviolable, which meant that they could only implement their various ethnoscapes to a limited extent in pursuing their own political interests.

Seen in the context of ethnic perceptions becoming increasingly spatial, several political leaders claim for an ethno-federal system in Afghanistan. On the one hand warlords such as Isma'il Khan and Rashid Dostum are in favour of such a system to defend their political autonomy. On the other hand representatives of nearly all ethnic minorities advocate ethno-federalism worried about the re-establishing of a Pashtun dominated state. However this much-discussed option<sup>90</sup> should be approached with scepticism. Because of the irreconcilability of the various ethnoscapes the implementation of ethno-federalism could well lead to an intensification rather than an alleviation of the conflict and might in addition shift the ethnic difficulties from the national to the federal level: at member-state level the practice of ethnic intolerance by members of the ethnic group in power could quickly become established so that incidences of ethnic cleansing would scarcely be avoidable.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, minority elites would be strongly tempted either to tamper with provincial boundaries or to form their own federal states. The introduction of ethno-federalism is all the more questionable because ethnically homogeneous areas do not exist in Afghanistan and most valleys and villages are highly ethnically diverse.

Instead of ethno-federalism, discussions concerning the creation of a decentralised state in Afghanistan, in which the exceptionally strong tradition of local autonomy and self-government can proceed, are very promising. The Indian or Swiss model, where

the administrative entities are not exclusively or primarily defined in ethnic terms, and where they enjoy strong provincial or local autonomy, might serve as a model. Regarding the case of Afghanistan the once established provinces and districts should remain the territorial basis of the administration of this federal system. Consideration should be given to the huge increase in recent years in Afghans' personal identification with their provinces, which were only set up in 1964. When I travelled to Afghanistan in 1997 it was usual among Afghans to name the province when explaining ones origins and not, for example, to refer to the region or to ones ethnicity. The retention of Afghanistan's administrative areas would thus correspond with the identities of the majority of Afghans and would thwart the futile debate over the compositions of and justifications for each of the individual ethnoscapes. Certain of these administrative units could receive autonomy in legal, lingual, religious or cultural spheres.

However, any form of federalism or decentralisation in the Afghan context may imply the perpetuation of the rule of regional warlords. And indeed, capture of regional state structures by warlords and other regional bosses represents a danger for an integrated Afghan state. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that warlords cannot be transformed into provincial governors, as was the case in other regions of the world, including Europe, in comparable phases of state-building processes.<sup>92</sup>

## **6. Outlook**

Since the end of the cold war most violent conflicts have been intra-national ones with an ethnic component.<sup>93</sup> I have tried to show here that the advent of such conflicts is inextricably linked to the formation of nation-states and the enforcement of national ideologies. In this context the spatial references of national and ethnic perceptions play a crucial role in (1) implementing national ideologies, (2) determining the demands made by ethnic movements, and (3) carrying out violent actions in the name of an ethnic or national group. Particularly where ethnoscapes are precisely delineated – that is to say territorialized – the implementation of this ethnic perception of territory can become the central concern in a conflict, especially as demands for self-determination in a world that is arranged in nation-states are most easily brought to bear when they are expressed in territorial terms.

Spatial concerns such as those I have outlined for Afghanistan have similar status in other trouble spots around the world, such as the former Yugoslavia, Israel/Palestine, Sri Lanka or Rwanda. Further study of ethnoscapes and their significance in conflict situations and investigation of the question of how the formation of nation-states affects the spatial perception of politics are a significant area of research for Peace and Conflict Studies as well as for Political Geography, and one which has so far hardly been explored.<sup>94</sup> This line of enquiry not only allows a deeper level of analysis of ethnic and national issues but is also – as I have attempted to illustrate with the

example of ethno-federalism in Afghanistan – of vital importance in the development of suitable strategies for conflict prevention and resolution.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> This article is based on a review of primary and secondary literature as well as on field trips to Afghanistan in Autumn 1997 and Summer 2002. I presented an early draft of this article at the annual conference of the *Geopolitische Analysen* working group in Bonn on 16 December 2002. I would like additionally to thank Robert Canfield, Andreas Pott and Ulrike Joras for their extremely helpful comments and suggestions.
- <sup>2</sup> For example D. Knight, 'Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 72/4 (1982) p.514-531; D. Knight, 'Bounding Whose Territory? Potential Conflict between a State and a Provincial Desiring Statehood', *Geopolitics* 4/2 (1999) pp.209-238; R. Mellor, *Nation, State and Territory* (London: Routledge 1989); P.J. Taylor, 'The State as Container: Territoriality in the Modern World-System', *Progress in Human Geography* 18/2 (1994) pp.151-162.; J. Agnew, & S. Corbridge, *Mastering Space. Hegemony, Territory and International Politics* (London: Routledge 1995); G. Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics. The Politics of Writing Global Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996); G.H. Herb and D.H. Kaplan (eds.), *Nested Identities. Nationalism, Territory, and State* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 1999); A. Murphy, 'National Claims to Territory in the Modern State System: Geographical Considerations', *Geopolitics* 7/2 (Autumn 2002) pp.193-214.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1986); A.D. Smith, 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism', *International Affairs* 72/3 (1996) pp.445-458; A.D. Smith, 'When is a Nation?', *Geopolitics* 7/2 (Autumn 2002) pp.5-32; T.D. Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press 1996).
- <sup>4</sup> E. Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidefield & Nicolson 1998).
- <sup>5</sup> See B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1983); Smith (footnote 3); F. Heckmann, *Ethnische Minderheiten, Volk und Nation. Soziologie inter-ethnischer Beziehungen* (Stuttgart: Enke 1992); M. Nash, 'The Core Elements of Ethnicity', in: J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996) pp.24-28.
- <sup>6</sup> J. Rex, '„Rasse“ und „Ethnizität“ als sozialwissenschaftliche Konzepte', in E.J. Dittich & F.-O. Radtke (eds.), *Ethnizität. Wissenschaft und Minderheiten* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich 1990) pp.141-153.
- <sup>7</sup> M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr 1921) p.528.
- <sup>8</sup> It seems appropriate to differentiate between "ethnic categories" and "ethnic groups". While the first term refers to a population that shares common cultural patterns (e.g. religion, language and customs), the latter term should be used exclusively for the people who act in the name of a certain ethnic category. In the following ethnic labels such as Pashtuns, Tajiks or Hazaras always refer to the ethnic category. See R. Jenkins 'Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17/2 (1994) pp.197-223; C. Schetter, *Ethnizität und ethnische Konflikte in Afghanistan* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag 2003) pp.63-67.
- <sup>9</sup> See F. Barth, 'Introduction', in F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Differences* (Bergen: Univ. Forlaget 1969) pp.9-38; S. Cornell 'The Variable Ties That Bind: Content and Circumstance in Ethnic Processes', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19/2 (1996) pp.265-289; D. Conversi; 'Nationalism Boundaries, and Violence', *Millenium* 28/3 (1999) pp.553-584.
- <sup>10</sup> For example Anderson (footnote 5); Heckmann (footnote 5) p.36; R. Panossian, 'The Past as Nation: Three Dimensions of Armenian Identity', *Geopolitics* 7/2 (Autumn 2002) pp.121-146.
- <sup>11</sup> For example E. Orywal and K. Hackstein, 'Ethnizität: Die Konstruktion ethnischer Wirklichkeit', in: T. Schweizer et al. (eds): *Handbuch der Ethnologie* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag 1993) pp.593-609, here p.595.
- <sup>12</sup> G. Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchung über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot 1908). p.635.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.615.
- <sup>14</sup> A. Appadurai, 'Topographies of the Self and Emotion in Hindu India', in C.A. Lutz and L. Abu-Lughod (eds.), *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990) pp.92-112; A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996).
- <sup>15</sup> Smith (note3) p.445-458.
- <sup>16</sup> W. Hartke, 'Die Bedeutung der geographischen Wissenschaft in der Gegenwart', in *Tagungsbericht und Abhandlungen des 33. Deutschen Geographentages in Köln 1961* (Wiesbaden 1962) pp.113-131.
- <sup>17</sup> H. Lefebvre, *The Production Of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell 1991).

- <sup>18</sup> See Anderson (note 5); E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell 1984).
- <sup>19</sup> J. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence. Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W. Norton & Company 2000); A. Wimmer, *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict: Shadows of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002). A. Wimmer and C. Schetter, 'Ethnic Violence', in: W. Heitmeyer and J. Hagan (eds.), *International Handbook of Research on Violence* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 2003): 247-260.
- <sup>20</sup> See P. J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2001).
- <sup>21</sup> J. H. Agnew, 'Mapping Political Power Beyond State Boundaries: Territory, Identity, and Movement in World Politics', *Millenium* 28/3 (1999) pp. 499-521, here p. 503.
- <sup>22</sup> R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1992); C. Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press 1997).
- <sup>23</sup> A. Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1985); Taylor (note 2); A. Wimmer, 'Territoriale Schließung und die Politisierung des Ethnischen', in C. Honegger et al. (eds.), *Grenzenlose Gesellschaft?* (Opladen: Budrich & Leske 1999) pp.1200-1208.
- <sup>24</sup> See D. Knight (note 2) p.520.
- <sup>25</sup> See A. Bell-Fialkoff, *Ethnic Cleaning* (New York 1996: St. Martin's Press).
- <sup>26</sup> See W. Wood, 'Geographic Aspects of Genocide. A Comparison of Bosnia and Rwanda', *Transactions of the British Geographers* 26/1 (2001) pp.57-75; Wimmer (note 19).
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. M.G.M. Ghobar, *Afghanistan dar masir-i tarikh [Afghanistan in the Course of History]* (Qom: Kanoun-i Mojahir 1980 [1968]); M. Ali, *The Afghans* (Kabul: Punjab Education Press 1969 [1958]); S.Q. Rishtia, 'Afghanistan: Crossroad of Different Cultures', *Writers Union of Free Afghanistan* 6/3 (1991) pp.20-26.
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. H. M. Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd-al Rahman Khan* (Austin: University of Texas Press 1979); J.-H. Grevemeyer, *Afghanistan. Sozialer Wandel und Staat im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Express Edition 1987); Ch. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826 - 1863)* (Richmond: Curzon 1997). Ch. Noelle-Karimi et al. (eds.), *Afghanistan – A Country without a State?* (Frankfurt: IKO Verlag 2002).
- <sup>29</sup> I. Boesen, 'Honour in Exile: Continuity and Change among Afghan Refugees', in: E. Anderson and N.H. Dupree (eds.), *The Cultural Basis of Aghan Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press ? 1990), pp.160-174, here 172; B. Glatzer, 'War and Boundaries in Afghanistan: Significance and Relativity of Local and Social Boundaries', *Die Welt des Islams* 41/3 (2001) pp.379-399; Schetter (note 8) pp.462-463.
- <sup>30</sup> Schetter (note 8) pp.170-217.
- <sup>31</sup> Grevemeyer (note 28) pp.26-28.
- <sup>32</sup> See Ch. Noelle: 'Es ist ein weiter Weg nach Bukhara. Raum-Zeit Koordinaten in der Sichtweise afghanischer Chroniken', in R. Haag-Higuchi and C. Szyska (eds.), *Erzählter Raum in Literaturen der islamischen Welt* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz 2001) pp.131-148.
- <sup>33</sup> M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India, Comprising a View of the Afghan Nation, and a History of the Douraunee Monarchie* ,2 Vol. (London: Bentley 1815) Vol. 1, pp.151-152.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid. p.200; Kakar (note 28) p.1; L. Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1973) p.XIXL; J.L. Lee, *The "Ancient Supremacy": Bukhara, Afghanistan and the Battle for Balkh, 1731 – 1901* (Leiden: Brill 1996) pp.XXXI-XXIV.
- <sup>36</sup> H. Kreutzmann, "Vom „Great Game“ zum „Clash of Civilizations“. Wahrnehmung und Wirkung von Imperialpolitik und Grenzziehungen in Zentralasien", *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen* 141/3 (1997) pp.163-185.
- <sup>37</sup> Schetter (note 8) pp.164-168.
- <sup>38</sup> A. Wieland-Karimi, *Islamische Mystik in Afghanistan. Die strukturelle Einbindung der Sufi in die Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart (Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung 182): Franz Steiner Verlag 1998).
- <sup>39</sup> Kakar (note 28).
- <sup>40</sup> D.B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age. Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1996) p.86.

- <sup>41</sup> D. Fröhlich, *Nationalismus und Nationalstaat in Entwicklungsländern. Probleme der Integration ethnischer Gruppen in Afghanistan* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain 1969) pp.190-198.
- <sup>42</sup> H. Kreuzmann, *Ethnizität im Entwicklungsprozeß. Die Wakhi in Hochasien* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag 1996).
- <sup>43</sup> E. Grötzbach, *Kulturgeographische Wandel in Nordost-Afghanistan seit dem 20. Jahrhundert* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain 1972); R. Bindemann, 'Historische Bedingungen des Widerstandes der Hazara', *Pogrom* (1982, Special Issue Afghanistan) pp.30-38.
- <sup>44</sup> See Schetter (note 8) pp.277-282.
- <sup>45</sup> M.N. Shahrani, 'Ethnic Relations and Access to Resources in Northeast Badakhshan', in J.W. Anderson & R.F. Strand (eds.), *Ethnic Processes and Intergroup Relations in Contemporary Afghanistan* (New York: 1978) pp. 15-25, here p.20; B. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1995) p.73.
- <sup>46</sup> Cf. Grevemeyer (note 28).
- <sup>47</sup> H. A'bd al-hay Habibi, *Tarikh-i mokhtasar-i Afghanistan [A Short History of Afghanistan]*, 2 Vol. (Kabul: 1345-1348/1967-70) Vol. I, p.1; translated into German in J.-H. Grevemeyer, 'Bericht über die publizierte afghanische Historiographie', in C. Rathjens (ed.), *Neue Forschungen in Afghanistan*. (Opladen: Leske & Budrich 1981) pp.27-37, here p.35; my italics.
- <sup>48</sup> A. Wimmer, & C. Schetter, 'Putting State-formation First: Some Recommendations for Reconstruction and Peace-Making in Afghanistan', *Journal for International Development* 15 (2003), pp.525-539.
- <sup>49</sup> C. Schetter, 'The 'Bazaar Economy' of Afghanistan', in Ch. Noelle-Karimi et al. (eds.), *Afghanistan – A Country without a State?* (Frankfurt: IKO Verlag 2002) pp.109-127.
- <sup>50</sup> B. Rubin, 'The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan', *World Development* 28/10 (2000) pp.1789-1803.
- <sup>51</sup> UNHCR, *Brennpunkt: Afghanistan. Die nicht endende Krise* (Genf Flüchtlinge 2/Oktober 1997).
- <sup>52</sup> C. Schetter, 'Der Afghanistankrieg – Die Ethnisierung eines Konflikts', *Internationales Asienforum* 33 (1/2) (2002) pp.15-29.
- <sup>53</sup> Rubin (note 45).
- <sup>54</sup> Glatzer (note 29) p.383.
- <sup>55</sup> A. Rashid, *Taliban. Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2000).
- <sup>56</sup> Noelle (note 28).
- <sup>57</sup> F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1996).
- <sup>58</sup> See P. Centlivres, 'Identité et image dans le nord de l'Afghanistan', *Revue Européen de Science Sociales et Cahier Vilfredo Pareto* 13/53 (1980) pp.29-41, here pp.33-35.
- <sup>59</sup> Rubin (note 45).
- <sup>60</sup> See C. Schetter, 'Ethnizität als Ressource der Kriegführung', in C. Schetter & A. Wieland-Karimi (eds.), *Afghanistan in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Frankfurt: IKO Verlag 1999) pp.91-108; Schetter (note 8).
- <sup>61</sup> Cf. E. Orywal (ed.), *Die ethnischen Gruppen Afghanistans* (Wiesbaden: Reichert 1986) p.70; H. Emadi, 'The Hazaras and their Role in the Process of Political Transformation in Afghanistan', *Central Asian Survey* 16/3 (1997) pp.363-387, here p.365.
- <sup>62</sup> Cf. Orywal (note 61) p.70; WAK Foundation for Afghanistan, *The Ethnic Composition of Afghanistan. A Six Year Survey and Research (1991-1996)* (Peshawar: Khatiz Organisation for Rehabilitation 1999).
- <sup>63</sup> Schetter (note 52) pp.582-586.
- <sup>64</sup> Cf. Schetter (note 8) pp.164-282.
- <sup>65</sup> For Pashtun nationalists from Pakistan, on the other hand, northern Afghanistan is not important. Instead, they understand Pashtunistan to mean the area in which Pashtuns have settled. In addition, the renaming of the Northwest Frontier Province to Pakhtunkhwa is a political issue that has led time and again to tensions between central government and Pashtuns.
- <sup>66</sup> Cf. Grevemeyer (note 28) pp.144-145.
- <sup>67</sup> B. Dorn, *History of the Afghans* (Karachi: Indus Publications 1976 [1829-1836]) p.37.

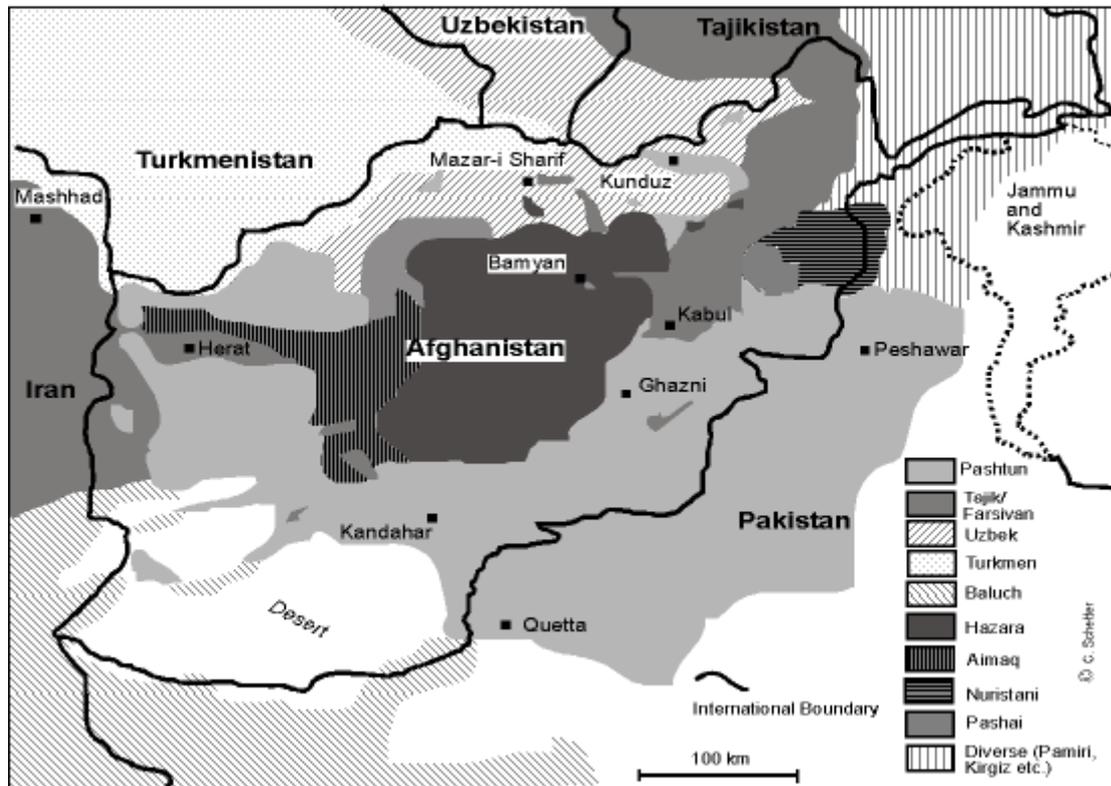
- <sup>68</sup> It is interesting that the Pashtunistan and Aryan ideologies are accorded more importance among urbanised Pashtuns, for whom tribal connections have become less important, than in the Pashtun tribal areas, where the tribal order remains intact and the belief in descent from the tribes of Israel is more widespread.
- <sup>69</sup> E.g. H. W. Bellew, *The Races of Afghanistan; Being a Brief Account of the Principal Nations Inhabiting that Country* (Calcutta: Thacker 1880).
- <sup>70</sup> M.G.M. Ghobar, 'Le role de l'Afghanistan dans la civilisation islamique' *Afghanistan* 1 (Jan.-March 1946) pp.27-34.
- <sup>71</sup> E.E. Bacon, 'The Enquiry into the History of the Hazara Mongols of Afghanistan', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 7 (1951) pp.230-247, here p. 232.
- <sup>72</sup> K. Ferdinand, 'Preliminary Notes on Hazara Culture. The Danish Scientific Mission to Afghanistan 1953-55', *Historik-filosofiske Meddelelser Udgivet af det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab* 37/5 (Kopenhagen 1959) p.113.
- <sup>73</sup> S.A. Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan. An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Richmond: Curzon Press 1998).
- <sup>74</sup> Especially S.A. Shahrstani, 'Garj wa Garjistan [Garj and Garjistan]', *Garjistan* 1/1 (Kabul: 1365/1987); H. Poladi, *The Hazaras*. (Stockton: Mughal Publications 1989); Mousavi (note 73).
- <sup>75</sup> K.N. Qambari, *A Brief Note on Hazara and Hazarajat of Afghanistan* (Paper presented at a conference held in Quetta, unpublished Manuscript 1987).
- <sup>76</sup> Mousavi (note 73) p.61.
- <sup>77</sup> The Persian ending *-tan* denotes autonomous administrative and provincial units. See O. Roy, 'Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?', in W. Maley (ed.), *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (London: Hurst 1998) pp. 29-42.
- <sup>78</sup> P. Centlivres, 'Problèmes d'identité ethnique dans le Nord de l'Afghanistan', *Iran moderne: actes du XXIXe Congrès international des Orientalistes* (Paris 1976) pp.8-13, here p.10 ; P. Snoy, 'Die ethnischen Gruppen', in P. Bucherer-Dietschi & Ch. Jentsch (eds.), *Afghanistan Ländermonographie* (Liestal: Stiftung Bibliotheca Afghanica 1986) pp.121-152, here p.139.
- <sup>79</sup> Schetter (note 8) pp.515-517.
- <sup>80</sup> <http://members.tripod.com/~khorasan>, 08.04.2003.
- <sup>81</sup> Schetter (note 8) pp.510-517 and pp.522-525.
- <sup>82</sup> Wimmer and Schetter (note 19).
- <sup>83</sup> Schetter (note 8) pp.510-516.
- <sup>84</sup> For the following see Schetter (note 8) pp.528-541.
- <sup>85</sup> Amnesty International, *Afghanistan: The Human Rights of Minorities* (Report ASA; 11/14/1999; Nov. 1999).
- <sup>86</sup> Human Rights Watch, 'Paying for the Taliban's Crimes: Abuses against Ethnic Pashtuns in Northern Afghanistan', *Human Watch Report* 14/2 (April 2002).
- <sup>87</sup> Human Rights Watch, 'Afghanistan: The Massacre in Mazar-e Sharif', *Human Watch Report* 10/7 (1998).
- <sup>88</sup> Bindemann (note 43); Mousavi (note 73).
- <sup>89</sup> See A. Samsur, *Bache-ye Saqqao dewom [The second son of the water porter]* (Cologne 1376/1998) pp. 170-172.
- <sup>90</sup> *Federations 2001, Special Issue on Afghanistan* (Ottawa October 2001) ([http://www.forumfed.org/publications/pdfs/special issue afghanistan oct 2001.pdf](http://www.forumfed.org/publications/pdfs/special%20issue%20afghanistan%20oct%202001.pdf)). 19. April 2003.
- <sup>91</sup> Wimmer and Schetter (note 48) p.536.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid. p.536-537.
- <sup>93</sup> Cf. T. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington: United States Institute for Peace 1993); Schetter, 'Das Zeitalter der ethnischen Konflikte', *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 4 (2002) pp.473-481.
- <sup>94</sup> Even if there are few comparable studies on these conflicts to date such as M. Todorova, *Imaging the Balkan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997; Knight (note 2); Wood (note 26)).

FIGURE 1

THE SPATIAL SHIFT OF AFGHANISTAN IN THE COURSE OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

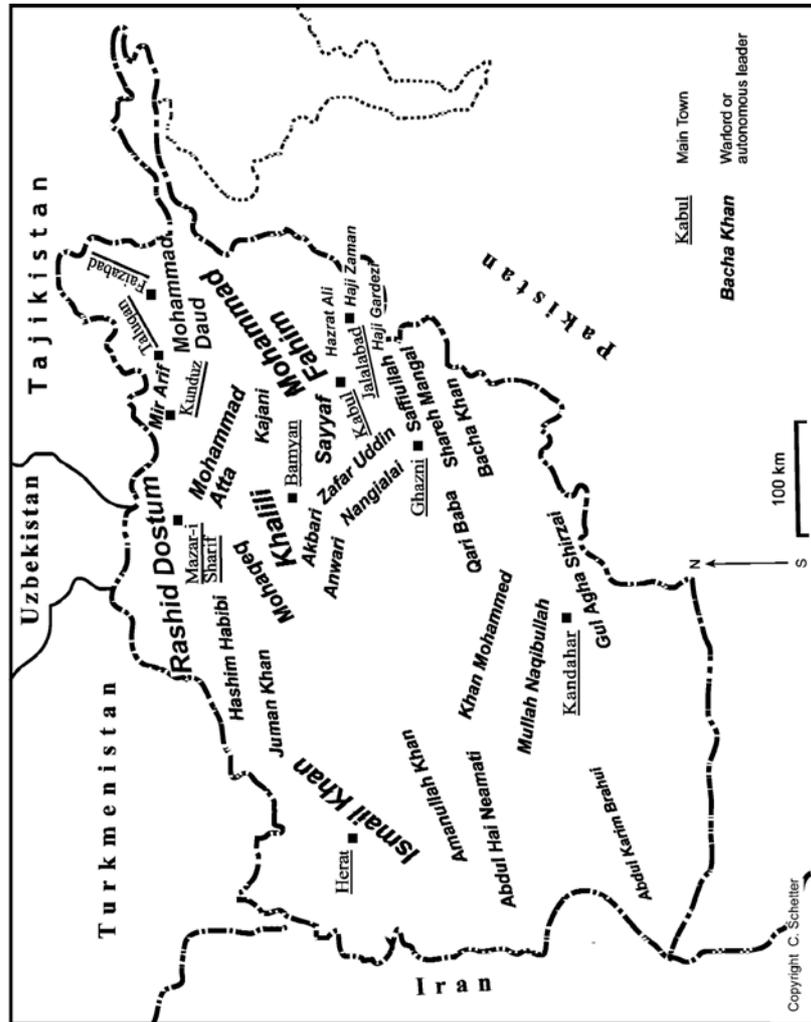


FIGURE 2  
ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND THE NATIONAL BOUNDARIES OF MODERN  
AFGHANISTAN



Note: this map is only able to provide a very rough overview over the location of the most significant ethnic categories. Most of the regions are much more heterogeneous than the map is able to present. Usually members of several ethnic categories are to be found in the same valley, town or village. Also it has to taken into consideration that the high spatial and social dynamics (e.g. migration patterns, marriage systems) of society always stand in the way of mapping ethnic categories.

FIGURE 3  
 MAPPING WARLORDISM IN AFGHANISTAN (2002/3)



Note: this data collection is based on an analysis of international reports, agency news, and personal interview carried out by the author and his collaborators in 2003.

FIGURE 4  
PASHTUNISTAN – THE ETHOSCAPE OF THE PASHTUNS



FIGURE 5  
HAZARASTAN – THE ETHNOSCAPE OF THE HAZARAS

