THE GLOBAL RELEVANCE OF AFGHAN MIGRATION: A STATE-OF-THE-ART REVIEW AND REPOSITORY

Tobias Marschall

Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung
info@rosalux-geneva.org
Ch. de Balexert 7-9 1219
Châtelaine (Geneva)
rosalux-geneva.org

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACSF	Afghan Civil Society Forum
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
BAMF	Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugee
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ECRE	European Council on Refugee and Exile
FFO	Federal Foreign Office
GCR	Global Compact for Refugees
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
JDMC	Joint Declaration on Migration Cooperation
JWF	Joint Way Forward
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAT	Provincial Advisor Team
PCA	Peace and Conflict Analysis
PDF	Provincial Development Funds
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
RLS	Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
SDG 16	Sustainable Development Goal, Number 16
SIGAR	Special Inspector for Afghanistan Reconstruction
TDA	Transitional Development Assistance
TLO	The Liaison Office
UN	United Nations
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program

Introduction

This study addresses the global relevance of Afghan migration and the scope and impact of German Official Development Assistance (ODA) to migration, during the twenty years of the NATO-led intervention (2001-2021). First, it will review normative definitions of a variety of movements cast under the generic term “migration” in international treaties and among international organisations. It will then address the complex entanglement of war and migration beyond the simplistic refuge lens towards a more comprehensive understanding of migration beyond conventional push and pull factors. It will tackle the magnitude of the movements triggered by the different phases of the intervention between 2001 and 2021 and address their relative success or failure concerning the SDG 16 to “promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.” Given that migration research produced a large body of work, especially from Central Europe and Switzerland, this study will present critical perspectives and review its conclusions about German ODA. As concluding remarks, it formulates several recommendations.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This study mainly consists of a desk review of the existing literature and research on migration as both an object of academic concern and a target of policy intervention. Both interests overlap and complicate univocal claims to conceive migration as an object of study distinct from the various (economic, social, political, gendered, generational and sectarian) dimensions of the conflict. As such, the study thus taps into the entanglement of war and migration, the longer history of patterns of movements and residence within and outside Afghanistan and the complex rapports between foreign led state building and the fractured fabric of the Afghan society.

The study intends to provide supplementary expertise, knowledge base and peace-building capacity to the existing activities of the RLS Geneva office as part of the Social Rights Programme with regard to a human right to peace and migrants rights. It aims specifically to contribute to the evaluation of the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG-16) towards promoting *just, peaceful and inclusive societies* and SDG-10 towards the *reduction of inequalities within and among countries* against the background of the war in Afghanistan. The study is timely for it assesses the extent of migratory movements and reviews current state of the art of the research on the issue as well as its relationship with Germany’s ODA.

Subsequent and unexpected changes in Germany’s policy occurred during the conduct of the study. The German parliamentary elected an Enquete Kommission “Lehren aus Afghanistan für das künftige vernetzte Engagement Deutschlands” and endowed it with a similar mandate. The study consists in a repository of documents, a bibliographic index and an assessment of the existing literature on the issue of migration in Afghanistan.

This study stresses the global relevance of migration in and out of Afghanistan. Migration research in and from Afghanistan has produced an important and non-exhaustive body of work. Migration researchers contributed to revise the main terms and underlying assumptions of the international intervention (state-national framework, linearity, dependency, temporalities and socialites of the movements studied). First, the study reviews normative distinctions of conventional categorisation and normative implications of international treaties and International Organisations' (IO) reports. The complex interplay and entanglement of war and migration constitutes the main part of the study. It affirms an understanding of the issue beyond the notion of refuge towards a more comprehensive assessment. A repository gathers the works mentioned in the study and the extended bibliographic recension of the research. The repository is organised along major axes of research on migration: normative definitions, reports, remittances, diaspora, refuge, migration routes, and critical perspectives.

By means of general introduction to the repository's literature, the study tackles the magnitude of the movements triggered by the different phases of the NATO-led intervention. It looks at the varying scales of movements (refuge, settlement, repatriation, internal displacement) triggered by the different phases of the intervention led by the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF – 2001-14) and following NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM – 2014-21). Given the highly fungible, fluid and ambiguous nature of events in Afghanistan, the study itself participates to contextualise their partial nature and to situate the intervention in a wider historical framework. Throughout, the study addresses their relative success or failure with particular regards to the SDG-16. In alignment with the aim and scope of the mandate, it presents critical perspectives and review conclusions concerning German ODA. Several recommendations precede concluding remarks.

Background

Afghanistan is a country made of many constituencies. A long history of travel and exchange took place within and across its borders. The main tenets of the NATO-led intervention as well as ODA distribution have therefore to be inserted in a longer history of foreign-led interventions and of movement. Assessing the scope and impact of Germany's ODA in Afghanistan is relevant for several reasons. More than forty years of war and protracted conflicts dramatically changed the trajectory of Afghanistan presents one of the most massive cases of displacement since the second World War. Far from being an isolated event, the Afghan crisis extends over national, regional, and international scales. Often misrepresented in the headlines as a "Graveyard of Empires," Afghanistan's protracted conflicts and the movements they spurred prompts to complex and partial conclusions.

Against a general inclination to view the country as a backward place resisting global integration and modernization forces, Afghanistan does not stand out of history as a country riddled by internal tribal feuds. Since the country's initial constitution as a sovereign territory in 1747 under the command of General Ahmad Shah Durrani, Afghanistan has

been subjected to projections of quite distinct (late Imperial, Soviet and then Western-led Democratic) visions of modernisation and development (Shah 2004). The complex intertwining of externally led modernisation projects – often accompanied by militarized interventions – and resistance to the inequalities and violence therewith created marks Afghanistan's history as a nation state. The problematic imposition of a unitary state and national framework imposed with external support upon a fragmented and unstable social fabric is central to understand the conflicts many ramifications. It is of crucial importance here to attend to the normative implications of the formulation and effects of conventional categories of intervention such as religion, ethnicity, urban-rural, etc. While strong sectarian expressions in group ascription or distinction seem to first define the Afghan situation because vocally adopted, years of war and migration durably altered the social formation and its assumedly conventional lines of identification and affiliation. It is thus of crucial importance to situate in both space and time the events studied. Existing literature and works address these issues in depth and extent.

More than four decades of war violently pushed Afghans to take centre stage of the major political issues of the time. Migration research in Afghanistan is key and early in demonstrating both migrants' agency in their quest for safety and the structural contingencies that prompted and conditioned their movements. If movements within and across its blurred borders were to an almost complete extent triggered by violence, they never remained solely determined by war. Whilst war and conflict are the primary reasons for people to leave, decades of scholarship demonstrated how Afghan migration refracts a much more complex issue. Exceptionally harsh economic, environmental and political pressures feature as conventional push and pull factors for migration. However, as migration research has shown, conventional explanation strands do not exhaust the complex entanglement of structural with personal factors. The Afghan wars are thus in many ways representative of the (mis)conduct of the hegemonic world orders at a given time.

Approach, Methodology

The ongoing conflict continues to violently affect central elements of the social fabric in Afghanistan. The writing of this report is therefore the product of a specific moment in time and should be approached as providing elements of understanding bound to a time of withdrawal and takeover. While the purpose and objectives of the NATO intervention are clearly stated in official documents and reports, the concrete means of their ongoing conduct and assessment remain invisible. Research in Afghanistan has established the depoliticising effects of humanitarian and development intervention in the country to an extent in which the ISAF and RSM, through their effective externalisation of the debate on central political issues to technical and managerial problem-solving approaches, can be termed an anti-politics machine (Ferguson 1994). In a country whose putative unity remains eminently contested, adopting a neutral external position rather translates depoliticising efforts to enforce a specific perspective over a plurality of distinctions. This study and annexed repository aim to introduce to the conflict's main tenets and to facilitate the

conduct of further research in making a variety of oft opposed and contradictory sources available in the same place.

The present study consists in two interdependent contributions: a *review* of the literature and a *repository* on migration in Afghanistan. Whilst primarily confined to works in English language, the repository acknowledges the importance of preceding works[1]. The results of the desk review and collection of both primary and secondary literature are compiled in the present study to expose the scope and diversity of movements labelled under the broader umbrella term "Afghan migration." The review of the literature principally serves to introduce to the debate. The study reviews major areas of concerns and debate along the different stages of the intervention (beyond the ISAF and RSM distinction, patterns of fragmentation follow in migratory events) and to extend on the conclusions of the existing research publications. While acknowledging the undeniable relevance of a human-rights framework as propounded by SDG-16, the study addresses the oft unintendedly antagonising effects of the intervention led in principle along this same framework. The study highlights the politics tied to rendering certain elements visible and central at the expanse of several corollary aspects. The ordering of the literature and its review combine thus both categories of a thematic review and labels of a sectorial analysis.

The repository gathers the available documentation to migration during the years of the NATO-led intervention. It includes reports, evaluations, position papers, research articles, studies, policy briefings and other document formats produced by IOs and NGOs. The sources of academic and research knowledge include monographs, journal articles in main peer-reviewed venues, as well as position papers and blog entries. The sources of institutional knowledge are principally those involved with German ODA, they include the BMZ, the parliament's mandated "Untersuchungsausschuss", Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Deval), the German Development Institute, the GIZ, the Rosa Luxemburg Stifting, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Providing broader context, the grey literature of IOs and NGOs encompasses the ALCS, IOM, IDMC, UNHCR, ICRC, OECD, NRC, OFPRA, SIGAR, UNAMA, UN, USIP, the World Bank, and the Costs of War Project. The contrast that arises from the juxtaposition of evaluations of the intervention with research generates a productive tension to tackle the problem of policy-informed assessments.

To address and situate primary sources, the repository presents a large array of critical studies that extend beyond the Afghan case to reach broader thematic conclusions. The organisation of the repository extrapolates sections from the categories, references and sectors drawn from a diversity of resources. The repository is organised along bottom-up deviated themes: War and Migration, Repatriation, Remittances, Transnationalism, Migrants' Trajectories, Diaspora, Refugee Studies, and State and Society. Whilst classification inevitably produces overlaps, the organisation of the repository follows *topical* and *empirical* lines as transversal issues. Transnationalism, refugee studies and the study

[1] Even if drawing on only English- and French-language sources limits the scope of the analysis (leaving aside, for example, an important strand of literature in Russian), it is worth noting that many of the works referenced in this annotated bibliography were written by Afghan researchers.

of the combination of war and migration constitute major domains of scholarly intervention. The issues of repatriation, remittances, migrants' trajectories and diaspora arose in the research from empirical observation and constitute important thematic contributions the debate.

Among the major journals and publications, the repository reflects: Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies; Journal of Refugee Studies; Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée; Journal of Development Studies; International Migration Review; International Migration; Ethnic and Racial Studies; Migration Studies; Global Networks; International Migration Review; Mobilities; Refugee Survey Quarterly; Disasters; Foreign Affairs; Comparative Migration Studies. Most notably, Christian Bleuer produced two versions of a bibliography on Afghanistan (2012, 2019) for the Afghanistan Analyst Network where migration, refuge and resettlement figure among nineteen major sectors of research. The aim and purpose of the present repository is similar. It intends to make an extended, if not exhaustive, domain of research accessible for the study of migration in Afghanistan. The present review cuts inevitably into lines of debate, inquiry, and lesser do justice to the variety of issues, approaches and methodologies that form the non-exhaustive repository of works. Both the study and the repository work together, they are intended to be complementary and serve research purposes. References in the study can be complemented and perhaps supplemented by the works collected under the main themes and sections the repository. The repository is organised along following themes:

- IO Reports
- War and Migration
- Remittances
- Transnationalism, Critical Perspectives
- Migrants' Routes
- Diaspora
- Refuge and Refugee Studies
- State and Society

Facts, figures and normative Definition of Migration

Since 2016 and the signing at the UN headquarters of the New York Declaration (UN 2016, 2018a), Afghanistan officially announced its support for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR 2018) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Migration and Repatriation is the object of various side-events to international conferences on Afghanistan (UN 2018b). According to the UNHCR, migration includes a broad range of movements. They are differentiated in four types:

Refugee: people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country (UNHCR 1951).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS): Under the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998), internally displaced persons are defined as “persons or group of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border”.

Returnees: Under the IOM Glossary on Migration, return is broadly defined as “the act or process of going back. This could be within the territorial boundaries of a country, as in the case of returning IDPs and demobilized combatants; or from a host country (either transit or destination) to the country of origin, as in the case of refugees, asylum seekers, and qualified nationals. There are subcategories of return which can describe the way the return is implemented, e.g. voluntary, forced, assisted and spontaneous return; as well as subcategories which describe who is participating in the return, e.g. repatriation (for refugees). Throughout this study, the term returnee will be used only to refer to those who have lived abroad and returned to Afghanistan.

Host Communities: UNHCR defines host communities as “communities that host large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, typically in camps or integrated into households directly.”

Whilst war and conflicts stand as the most obvious factors, several practices, forms of movements and strategies complicate normative definitions in international discussions and interventions.

The Afghan crisis counts as one of the most massive and protracted cases of population displacement since World War II. Four decades of war and two invasions have moved millions in a country where migration forcibly turned an integral part of Afghan lives since at least 1979 Soviet invasion. War and violence remain the primary drivers of Afghan migration coupled with exceptional demographic growth since the 90s. Whilst virtually everyone has been affected in some way by the armed conflict, almost half of the Afghan men have been wounded by the effects of violence, half of the families have lost a member due to war and 76 percent had to leave their homes, and almost a million died during the intervention (IPSOS 2009, Crawford and Lutz 2021). After the 1989 Soviet withdrawal, 5.9 millions of refugees moved out of the country (Jackson 2009, IOM 2021, Monsutti 2010, and UNHCR 2000). Following the US invasion of Afghanistan, at least 2.1 million fled the country and 3.2 million displaced internally. However, calculations amend significant underestimates given that the IOM indicates that an additional 2.4 million fled the country between 2012 and 2019 (IOM 2019). Until 2013, Afghans remained the largest refugee population in the world, to remain among the three largest and with an estimated 3 million refugees in Pakistan alone (Vine et al. 2020, 8).

As of mid-year 2020, the total population of Afghanistan is 38.9 million. At the end of 2020, an estimated 4.6 million were living internally displaced, of which 3.5 million due to conflict and 1.1 million due to disaster. In 2021, an estimated 4.3 million were internally displaced due to war and conflict, a scale never met before (IDMC 2020). An estimated 450,000 Afghans were newly displaced internally in 2020. Nearly 90 per cent of these new internal displacements in Afghanistan happened due to conflict and violence (IDMC, 2021). This is

much higher than the global share of new displacements due to conflict and violence which accounted for only a quarter of all new internal displacements in 2020 (GMDAC analysis based on IDMC, 2021).

There are now 100 million displaced people globally (UNHCR 2022) with international migrants accounting for about 3% of the world's population and refugees for a relatively consistent 0.3% (De Haas 2023). About 3 million Afghans are asylum seekers, mostly in Pakistan and Iran. The World Bank provides data on demography with a median age estimate of 19.5 years and about 60 percent of the population under 24 and 42 percent under 14 years old (World Bank 2017, 2020). Without concrete opportunities, it is more than likely that the youth will keep moving. The successive interventions and phases of the war and protracted conflict have led to successive waves, which partly built on existing regional and transnational patterns of migration over time.

According to an evaluation of the UN department of social and economic affairs 'globally, an estimated 5.9 million Afghans lived outside their home country as of mid-year 2020. Female migrants accounted for nearly 45 per cent of all Afghan migrants, and this share is lower than the global average of 48 per cent of female international migrants. Conversely, of all migrants residing in Afghanistan as of mid-year 2020, female migrants accounted for nearly 52 per cent (UN DESA[2], 2020). Of the estimated 5.85 million Afghans who lived outside their home country as of mid-year 2020, nearly 84 per cent of them resided in neighbouring countries in Asia (Iran and Pakistan). Less than 11 per cent of all Afghan migrants resided in Europe (UN DESA, 2020).

Results can appear contradictory given so-called "stock" methodology of calculation which additions total population numbers on a calendar basis. As of December 2020, 2.6 million refugees globally were counted by the UNHCR as coming from Afghanistan, excluding economic migrants therewith. Nearly 84 per cent of them were hosted in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. At the same moment, 1.4 million registered refugees lived in Pakistan (UNHCR, 2021b) and 780,000 Afghans holding refugee cards resided in the Islamic Republic of Iran (UNHCR, 2021a). Another estimated 2.1 - 2.25 million undocumented Afghans lived in the Islamic Republic of Iran as of December 2020 (ibid.). IOM has recorded the return of nearly 870,000 undocumented Afghans from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan in 2020 and another 791,995 undocumented Afghans between 1 January and 30 August 2021 (IOM, 2021).

According to UNHCR, Afghanistan's neighbouring countries currently host more than 2.2 million registered refugees from previous waves of forced displacement. In its *Afghanistan Situational Regional Refugee Response Plan* (RRP), UNHCR projects that there will be more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees and another 1.4 million undocumented Afghans and Afghans of other statuses by the end of 2022.' Currently, and along with the officially declared failure of state-building and counterinsurgency (Moyn 2021), the evacuation of more than 124'000 people (mostly urban and educated) by airplane is historically unprecedented (ICRC 2021). The impact on the social fabric is yet to be assessed but

[2] https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock

there is little to indicate the probability of yet another massive wave of refugees in the near future. Afghanistan's international borders are now closed to an also unexpected extent.

Migration to neighbouring countries, Pakistan and Iran primarily, has been a longstanding coping mechanism for Afghan families since at least the 18th century (Green 2019, 2015, 2013). However, population movements during the Soviet occupation were unparalleled in size and intensity. Further episodes of outmigration marked the 1993-1996 civil war and abated under the subsequent Taliban regime. The size of the entire Afghan diaspora in the US, Australia, Europe and beyond is difficult to estimate exactly, the UNHCR provides data country-by-country (2020).

War and Migration

The determination of borders is central to a framework of progressive state determination cum modernisation. The colonial situation and the formation of international borders is a point of ontological rupture. However, the historically unsettled colonial event stretched out more than eighty years of border delineation. As such, the formation of Afghanistan as a unified country was led by successive waves of modernisation or integration processes pitted against traditionally hermetic and bounded societies. In the 1920's, Germany stood in this regard as the major early provider of financial resources and expertise to the construction of infrastructure (Crews 2015). The United States took the lead after the Second World War Notwithstanding early critiques of the modernisation framework's appeal and descriptive inaccuracy (Sahlins 2017, 1987), its de-politicising effect resumes in the image of Afghanistan as a nation formed by a variety of eminently 'inward looking societies' (Dupree 2014)[3]. In this framework, the statism and rigidity of ethnic groups' supposedly established and ingrained boundaries[4] loose accuracy and efficacy. Research rather stressed the effects of their imaginary constitution. Instead of conceiving Afghan migration as a deviance from a normal settled state and its hybrid mode of governance as failed, researchers demonstrated continuity in circulation patterns, the complex entanglement of distinct forms of sociality and the fungibility of solidarity practices in the aftermath of years of war and conflict. Their formulation in normative definitions of migration goes at the expanse of the appreciation of the overlap of a greater number of registers (religious, economic, political, moral and territorial).

[3] A myth long debunked (Hanifi 2011, 2014; Monsutti 2013; Raḥīmī 2017).

[4] Roy stressed in the broader Afghan context that there is a great fuzziness in the terminology in local languages to designate a phenomenon whose reality however raises little doubt. The semantic content of the terms (*awlad*, *qawm*, *qabila*, *tayfa*, *millat*), common to Persian, Pasthu, and Uzbek, is variable and refers to diverse levels of solidarity that are not hierarchical, even if *millat* predominantly points to the nation and *qabila* to the tribe. In raising the question of identity ascription by the means of many of those terms, we can even receive a proper noun in answer, and inversely, proper nouns in response to the same term. (…) But it (terminological indeterminacy) indicates also the difficulty among interlocutors to think in political terms an ascription that but determines the essential of their political loyalty' (1996, 8).

Caution must be raised toward a tendency in reporting to read the impact of new events and Great Power competition as the ‘graveyard of empires’, as a ‘buffer’ in the ‘Great Game,’ at the expanse of an understanding of the instrumental rationale of their imagination (Manchanda 2020, 25). It is thus necessary to move beyond notions of state failure or an understanding of warlords as 'paper tigers,' given their continued authority and presence (Malejacq 2020, 9). While the ongoing war and conflicts recently turned into a new surge of violent events that raise important concerns to the future of the international presence (in Kabul especially), the structuring effects of violence or the threat thereof reveal rather enduring patterns (Adelkhah 2017; Edwards 2017; Miszak and Monsutti 2014; Roitman 2014). A certain continuity in development and military interventions is also demonstrated in their cumulated layers along given routes and sites. Taken together, an assessment of the effects of the new surge in violence and its integration into the longer temporality of the conflict will enable to project a range of scenarios for the future of Afghanistan that will include processual provisions.

Afghanistan is a mountainous land where it is estimated that only 12% is arable, or 8 million out of 650 million hectares total surface. Old irrigation systems were destroyed during the Soviet occupation and most were not rebuilt by lacks of resources, rural exodus and due to the much less water-consuming expansion of poppy cultivation. Constant to the last decades, the destruction in rural zones of agricultural production chains was further aggravated during the Covid-19 pandemic. The use of landmines, aerial bombing, and skirmishes rendered agricultural lands useless, destroyed infrastructures of transport, and disorganised the distribution of agricultural products.

In parallel and not necessary antagonism, according to Hanifi, a centralized state sought to ‘impose reforms yielding extraction, taxation, or exertion of social control at the cost of local autonomy’ (2016, 265). Demands of a centralised state are many (Hetcher 2001), rejection across the rural-urban divide was rather grounded in the extractive and unconstrained actions of the state. Murtazashvili notes that there is no formal representation of villages vis-a-vis the state, even though this was inscribed in the constitution. In the course of her ethnographic study, she found a strong desire to engage with the state directly and on people’s own terms. This underlines the inadequacy of constitutional provisions and resources at hand, ’if village councils were to be formalized, then they would require all the entrapments of the state – salaries, offices, and of course red tape. This is an ambitious undertaking, to put it mildly, in one of the world’s weakest and poorest states (2016, 256). Beyond the longstanding and sought-over state-building incentives, she suggests that readers should recognise ‘the incredible aptitude of Afghans to govern themselves. War and violence does not equate community anarchy and disorder. There is substantial order even in an otherwise anarchic situation’ (2016, 257).

Whilst images of desperate flight flooded media since the start of the NATO-led intervention, only Western countries pledged to accept Afghan refugees, so far. A situation dramatically aggravated with Pakistan's announced deportation of the Afghan population, affecting potentially 1.7 million. Comparisons with past takeovers downsize current relevance of connectivity, remittances, and migration, which Keith Hart originally coined as informal economy (1973). For a country dependent on more than 4 billion USD in official support, the possibility of state bankruptcy following Taliban takeover loomed as an

argument towards international sanctions. However, the control of routes, border crossings, the edges, and central markets of exchanges surely dwarfs the relevance of international revenues, as do remittances compared to international aid. Monsutti estimated to 200 million USD the returns in remittances sent to the Hazarajat district solely by Afghans working in Iran (Monsutti 2009, 102). Mansfield and Smith estimated that for the province of Nimruz only, 'the collection of fees by armed personnel to allow safe passage of goods — raised about $235 million annually for the Taliban and pro-government figures. By contrast, the province received less than $20 million a year in foreign aid.' No data are available on the entire country situation.

A vision focused on legible objectives, even if destabilised by violent events, dismisses the ties elaborated (at least in the North, Murtazashvili 2021) out of neglect from the central government over the last six years, the least. Governance on the long term across multiple social lines, important fractures and imminent integration expose the pointlessness of an exclusionary, isolating politics, which dominated the intervention's framework, and mode of engagement with supposedly neatly bounded units represented by clearly distinguishable interlocutors. While entanglements are many, the Taliban takeover of a very large extant of the state territory was made relatively easy (Jackson 2021). To understand how the often striking 'discrepancies between national and local politics have emerged' (2012, 1), Conrad Schetter notes two major problems. Specific and articulated descriptions of events and their uniqueness make generalisations to the national level difficult or even impossible given their intrinsically contradictory nature. Secondly, in normative terms, the interpretation of processes and actors using heavily connoted terms such as 'tribal,' 'informal,' or 'clientelistic', problematically relates more to a settled academic terminology than the messy and multiple configuration of historical formations.

State-Society Relations

Moving beyond a focus on ideologically informed political stances (2001), Faribah Adelkhah, in line with other researchers (Baczko 2013; Miszak and Monsutti 2013; Mumtaz 2013), considers that land is crucial for the Taliban maintaining over the social, political and economic scene (2013). The transformation is less fundamentally 'traditional' then the result of 'modern' recompositions. The transformation of power sharing practices in the 80s, especially since 2001, led to the emergence of a new class, which marginalised local rulers and enabled Taliban resilience. While Taliban remain conservative, their contemporary relevance reflects all over the expression of the modernity, which shook Afghan society in a context of war. Their pragmatic management and conflict resolution often appeared more efficient than the state to the population (Baczko 2021). The massive distribution of foreign aid led to the further division of society along ethnic and confessional lines in a process of 'invention of tradition' (2017). Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger initially coined with the term invention of tradition the ritualised practices of subverting and politicising heritage for political purposes. In Afghanistan, the attachment of ethnicity in a longer history of exchange considered eminently "traditional" does not evade the political question and its binding and fragmentary dimensions. Raising attention to more mundane patterns of

circulation, mostly bound to the South (Adelkhah and Oszewska 2006), such as those related to pilgrimage or teaching (Adelkhah and Sakurai 2011), she focussed on women's circulation and, at the time, flourishing entrepreneurship (2012).

Against a tendency to de-historicise social formations, authors put aside any primordialist or essentialist conception of ethnicity (Monsutti 2004, 2005; Tapper 1983; Roy 1985), to consider the multiple, contingent, and unstable nature of identification lines (Adelkhah 2017, 10), and even of strategies of affiliations (Monsutti 2005, 99). This resonates with Olivier Roy's analysis (1985) noting that 'people's primary loyalty is, respectively, to their own kin, village, tribe, or ethnic group, generally glossed as *qawm'* (2010, 18). However, "ethnicization" as processes do not equate the distribution of ethnic groups in given areas, or a simple territorialisation of tribal ascriptions (Adelkhah 2017, 27; see also Glatzer 2001). Roy stressed that 'there is a great fuzziness in the terminology in local languages to designate a phenomenon whose reality however raises little doubt. The semantic content of the terms (*awlad*, *qawm*, *qabila*, *tayfa*, *millat*), common to Persian, Pasthu, and Uzbek, is variable and refers to diverse levels of solidarity that are not hierarchical, even if *millat* predominantly points to the nation and *qabila* to the tribe. In raising the question of identity ascription by the means of many of those terms, we can even receive a proper noun in answer, and inversely, proper nouns in response to the same term. (…) But it (terminological indeterminacy) also indicates the difficulty among interlocutors to think in political terms an ascription that but determines the essential of their political loyalty'[5] (1996, 8). Dorronsoro reviews early examples in the 90s where conflicts did not necessarily align with religious, ethnic or territorial affiliations. Historical and social factors do not exhaust the antagonisms (2000, 232). Mentioning the case of Tashqurgan on the road between Kabul and Mazar i Sharif, he concludes that the case 'shows that conflicts between commandants are not always explained in communal tensions that would refer to social structures. The competition among commandants is here the decisive factor that explains fights. The political is explained through the political: the struggle for power (sometimes) refers to itself only'[6] (2000, 233). Ethnicisation as a process 'relies to the contrary on population movements that are either voluntary and motivated by an economic interest, forced by the initiatives of the central government (…), by the

[5] Personal translation. Original text, 'il y a un grand flou de la terminologie en langues locales pour désigner un phénomène dont la réalité ne fait pourtant pas de doute. Le contenu sémantique des termes que l'on rencontre (awlad, qawm, qabila, tayfa, millat), commun au persan, pachtou et ouzbek, est variable et renvoie à des niveaux divers de solidarité qui ne sont pas hiérarchisés, même si millat a surtout le sens de nation et qabila de tribu. En posant la question de l'appartenance identitaire au moyen de plusieurs de ces termes, on peut avoir un même nom propre en réponse, et, inversément, des noms propres différents en réponse à un même terme. (…) Mais il [le flou terminologique] indique aussi la difficulté qu'ont les locuteurs à penser politiquement une affiliation qui détermine pourtant l'essentiel de leur loyauté politique.'

[6] Personal translation. Original text, 'montre que les conflits entre commandants ne s'expliquent pas toujours par des tensions communautaires, qui renverraient aux structures sociales. La concurrence entre les commandants est ici le facteur décisif qui explique les combats. Le politique s'explique par le politique : la lutte pour le pouvoir ne renvoie (parfois) qu'à elle-même.'

convulsions of the agrarian reform (1976-1979), or by the war (1979-2001)'[7] (Adelkhah 2017, 27; see also Simonsen 2004). Thomas Ruttig backs the conclusion that 'Western governments have purposefully deployed corruption and direct payments as a political tool for purchasing and obtaining loyalties. What has suffered tremendously from this are the efforts at installing democratic institutions in Afghanistan' (2019).

Roy suggests thus to consider the entanglement of territorialised groups of solidarity and personal networks as a principal analytical distinction, 'solidarity groups, as they function in our territory, remain infra-ethnic and develop in two forms, that of the "network" essentially based on personal relations and that of the "community" of territorial foundation (the "people" coming from this or that region). In this latter sense, there is a demographic growth of solidarity groups in the framework of a territorialisation (in districts and provinces) that is the working of the State. But this growth remains infra-ethnic and even to the expense of political ethnicity. Be it the case of Kurds, Balutchs, Pashtuns, Iranian Azeris or Tajiks, we observe an impossibility to translate in terms of nation or State an ethnic identity but strong; such a transfer is effectively ignored either by the great political movements with ethnic base (such as the Pashtun Taliban), or undermined by the other forms of solidarity groups (tribal, regional, genealogical, in all the term's significations), such as the Kurds. Where the nationalisms are defined as ethnic (the new Republics issued by the USSR), it is a politically constructed ethnicity from the top and whose starting point was the artificial creation of the "nationalities" by Stalin (founded on the territorialisation and a politics of linguistic differentiation), resumed then as a legitimation model by the political apparatuses during the independences of 1991'[8] (1996, 5).

This brief historical outline enables to better understand how successive interventions deeply affected patterns of outward and sometimes circular movement.

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[7] Personal translation. Original text, 'repose au contraire sur des mouvements de population qui sont soit volontaires et motivés par un intérêt économique soit contraints par des initiatives du pouvoir central (…), par des convulsions de la réforme agraire (1976–1979) ou par la guerre (1979–2001).'

[8] Personal translation. Original text, 'les groupes de solidarité, tels qu'ils fonctionnent dans notre espace, restent infra-ethniques et se développent en deux formes, celle du "réseau" essentiellement fondé sur les relations personnelles et celle de la "communauté" à fondement territorial (les "gens" originaires de telle ou telle région). En ce dernier sens, il y a élargissement démographique des groupes de solidarité dans le cadre d'une territorialisation (en district et provinces) qui est le fait de l'Etat. Mais cet élargissement reste infra-ethnique et se fait même aux dépens de l'ethnicité politique. Qu'il s'agisse des Kurdes, des Baloutches, des Pachtounes, des Azéris iraniens ou des Tadjiks, on constate une sorte d'impossibilité de traduire en termes de nation et d'Etat une identité ethnique pourtant forte; un tel passage est en effet soit ignoré par les grands mouvements politiques à base ethnique (comme les Taleban pachtounes par exemple), soit sapé à la base par les autres formes de groupes de solidarité (tribaux, régionaux, claniques dans tous les sens du terme), comme chez les Kurdes. Là où les nationalismes se définissent comme ethniques (les nouvelles républiques issues de l'URSS), c'est une ethnicité construite politiquement par en haut et dont le point de départ a été la création artificielle des "nationalités" par Staline (fondées sur la territorialisation et une politique de différenciation linguistique), reprise ensuite comme modèle de légitimation par les appareils politiques lors des indépendances de 1991.'

- 1978's -1980’s: Soviet intervention, land reform and unprecedented growth in rural population
- 1980s and 1990s: massive movements of refugees to Pakistan and Iran (and beyond)
- 1989: 5.6 million Afghan Refugees
- 1991: fall of the Kabul government and exceptional urban population drop
- 2000: 4.4 million Afghans abroad
- 2001: repatriation waves to Afghanistan from Pak and Iran as well as other host countries
- 2004-6: deterioration of the security situation
- 2005: 5 million returnees
- 2014: coalition withdrawal announcement and decrease in foreign investments, increase in targeted bombings
- 2016: Afghanistan’s adoption of the United Nations’ New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants
- 2022: 100 million displaced people worldwide, of which 5.9 million Afghans refugees

Claims for blurred boundaries between state and non-state institutions as well as private and public entities, or state versus insurgents (Mansfield 2016, 5) relate to the literature on state and state building (Lund 2006; Bayart 1989). Murtazashvili addresses the entanglement between traditional and modern forms of governance in a biding, not opposing, dynamic where ‘“traditional” order does not impede the development of the state because even the most independent minded communities see a need for a central government— but question its effectiveness when it attempts to rule them directly and without substantive consultation’ (2016, 3). She explains how the long history of resistance to incursions by centralising incentives from traditional authority contributed to a belief that such forms were essentially, and not contingently, inconsistent with the demands of a modernising state.

The rural-centralised relationship is marked by successive “modernisation” efforts or “reform” as ‘throughout Afghan history, citizens were rarely invited to collectively deliberate the contours of what role the state should play in society. Rather, a centralized state sought to impose reforms yielding extraction, taxation, or exertion of social control at the cost of local autonomy’ (2016, 265). Demands of centralised states were many (Hetcher 2001), rejection across the rural-urban divide is rather grounded in the extractive and unconstrained actions of the state. Murtazashvili notes that there is no formal representation mechanism of villages to the state, while village councils are inscribed in its constitutional mandate. She found a strong desire to engage with a state directly and in people’s own terms, stress the inadequacy of constitutional provisions and the resources at hand, ’If village councils were to be formalized, then they would require all the entrapments of the state – salaries, offices, and of course red tape. This is an ambitious undertaking, to put it mildly, in one of the world’s weakest and poorest states (2016, 256). Beyond the longstanding and sought-over state-building incentives, she suggests recognising ‘the

incredible aptitude of Afghans to govern themselves. War and violence does not equate community anarchy and disorder. There is substantial order even in an otherwise anarchic situation' (2016, 257). Biljert's point on the state's imaginary institutions, 'made up of people who may inhabit the offices belonging to their positions, but are otherwise largely pursuing their own agendas. They look like institutions to us, because we assume that the people involved somehow identify with their assigned (depersonalised) tasks and responsibilities. Afghans, however, immediately recognize the amalgams of interests, intrigues and potential sources of patronage' (2009, 167). Olivier Roy adds, 'our analysis is that solidarity groups (*açabiyya*) are not the expression of a traditional society's permanence in a modern State, but a recomposition of allegiance networks in a political and territorial space definitively modified by the fact of the state' (1996, 6)[9].

Joining several voices which dismiss a view of warlords standing necessarily against peace, security, and "good governance" (Adelkhah 2017; Baczko and Dorronsoro 2017; De Lauri 2013; Malejacq 2017; Sadeghi 2013), Dipali Mukhopadhyay claims that no warlords 'are created equal' (2014). She explores the rise of "strongman" governance as charismatic leaders in two districts against the backdrop of their inadequacy to meet formal international expectations. Yet she underlines the material and symbolic terms of the Afghan state's de facto and implicit recognition of the importance of these charismatic leaders, in particular in the period following the 2001 Bonn Agreement and subsequent centralising events. The book concludes that the 'puzzling fact remains that some of the government's most formidable competitors, the warlords, have actually served as some of its most valuable partners in the project of provincial governance since 2001' (2014, 2). Drawing comparison with other cases of state formation, she summarizes Afghanistan's history as successive episodes of struggle and conquest but also of cooperation in iterations between fledging regimes and competitive power holders. She builds upon a wide range of scholarship advancing that in 'contexts as diverse as the Ottoman Empire, nineteenth-century Greece, mafiosi Sicily, (…) the involvement of armed non-state actors in the governance project need not always indicate the state's disintegration or defeat' (2014, 8). She goes so far as to state that the 'modern Afghan state can be understood as a weak center struggling to assert itself in one of the world's wildest peripheries' (2014, 9). Further reinforcing a deeply settled stereotype, her conclusion neglects the overlap in many other countries and Afghanistan between state and private interests.

Considering the scope, scale and extent of migration, several scholars contest a linear and static conception (at the core of international policy) that implied eventual settlement (Monsutti 2007a; Stephan Emmrich and Schröder 2018; van Hear 2014) towards a vernacular consideration of Afghan migration in continuous iterations between multiple social spaces, especially regarding the back-and-forth movements between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan (*raft e omad* in Dari). Moving beyond established and quasi-tautological (given the extreme prevalence of war and conflict furthering exceptionally disruptive fault

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[9] Personal translation. Original text, 'notre analyse est que les groupes de solidarité (*açabiyya*) ne sont pas l'expression de la permanence d'une société traditionnelle dans un Etat moderne, mais une recomposition de réseaux d'allégeances dans un espace politique et territorial définitivement modifié par le fait de l'Etat'.

lines of inequality) push- and pull factors, researchers considered the “how” rather than the “why” of Afghan migration. Monsutti suggests to successively conceiving migration as both an *asset* and *political act* (2018), a rite of passage (2007b), and a normal feature of everyday life (2021). Owing to the centrality of migration to Afghan livelihoods and strategies, many distinctions such as rural-urban, nomads-sedentary, as categories of livelihoods and practices have become increasingly obsolete (Pain 2014; Dorronsoro 2021).

Green highlights the longstanding effects of earlier patterns of migration among Pashtun elites since the eighteenth century to cultural centres in India and their importance to elaborate a distinct idiom of ‘Afghan’ identity. With the decline of the Mughal power, he concludes, ‘the collective “Afghan” identity of the diaspora was transmitted to the new Afghan state, where the relationship of this tribal template of Afghan authenticity to the non-Pashtun peoples of Afghanistan remains the defining controversy of national identity’ (2008, 171).

A “Footlose” Economy: Poppy

In this case, the mobile – or conventionally termed, footloose – nature of the poppy economy is illustrative. Pain, Kerami and Nemat resume that ‘almost 20 years since counter-narcotics was instated in Afghanistan in 2001, its policy ambitions to eliminate, or at least control, poppy production in the country, have clearly failed. There has been an inexorable rise in the size of the cultivation area from some 70,000 hectares. in 1994 to over 200,000 ha. in 2016. Since 2001, the US government alone has spent some US$7.28 billion on counter-narcotics programming for scant return in relation to the goals of its policy’ (2021, 8). In her literature review, Bhatia notes that ‘research on illicit drug economies in Afghanistan could engage more with current debates in the civil war and political violence literature, particularly those related to rebel governance and the internal dynamics of insurgent groups’ (2020, 31). She resumes a strong preeminence of qualitative approaches led by ‘David Mansfield, who has produced a steady stream of academic and policy assessments of the illicit drug economy in Afghanistan over the past two decades, often in partnership with various co-authors (Mansfield, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2006, 2011, 2016; Goodhand and Mansfield, 2010; Mansfield and Pain, 2005, 2006, 2008; Ward et al., 2008; Ingalls and Mansfield, 2017). Other scholars who have made notable and ongoing contributions to the literature include Jonathan Goodhand, Vanda Felbab-Brown, and Adam Pain (Goodhand, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2012; Felbab-Brown, 2005, 2006, 2013; Pain, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012)’ (2020, 27).

The effect of opium cultivation is patchy and volatile, mainly due to the “footloose” aspect of the economy. Poppy became main factor for economic development in the former deserts of southwest Afghanistan, turned a ‘place where those excluded from the development driven by the central state can flee’ (Mansfield 2018, 33). The cultivation of poppy led to the dramatic transformation of the deserts in Southwestern Afghanistan, from bare land at the beginning of the 21st century to home of about 2.2 million people in 2016 (Mansfield 2018, 10). Until the 1980s–90s, there is little evidence of extensive production in the area.

Mansfield explains its success, 'as a drought-resistant crop, opium could be obtained despite damaged irrigation systems or inconsistent water supply; as a high-value/low-weight commodity, it be easily transported on poor roads or across porous borders' (Mansfield 2018, 14). Opium provided the land-poor access to ground and on which to grow a high value cash crop that 'provided liquidity for households during periods of food scarcity, family illness, or life events such as births, marriages or deaths' (2018, 14). Poppy affords a certain level autonomy to a wide range of actors in rural areas lacking alternative economic opportunities, due to its rather 'footloose' aspect opium traders, wage laborers and even farmers are quite mobile in response to the changing geopolitical focus of counter-narcotics measures' (Byrd 2008, 17).

Capital increasingly becomes concentrated in the hands of fewer landowners as fewer opportunities for leasing land or wage-labour arise for the land poor. Mansfield sees a 'risk that these former desert areas will no longer have the absorptive capacity they once did' (2018, 33). Mansfield's take stresses the risks of banning drug crop cultivation where 'small variations in the political fabric at the periphery gather enough pace to send reverberations and destabilise the sub-national, national and regional political order' (2016, 1). He highlights the embeddedness of cultivators in a wider array of economic practices and the effects of four different bans, 'provides a granular analysis of the impact of these bans on a diverse rural population, exploring how farmers in different socio-economic groups and locations have responded to efforts to prohibit opium poppy over time; their sources of income and social protection; changes in patterns of food consumption, healthcare and assets; and their collective response to the state's efforts to control drugs' (2016, 4). Lack of studies grounded in extensive periods of field research, for obvious security reasons, and primary datasets generally affect the literature on both efforts to ban opium and coca.

The assessment of the effectiveness of drug control campaigns is made difficult due to the difficulties to estimate levels of cultivation and questions of land ownership and control (Martin 2014). Taliban leadership changed their policy in terms of control or tolerance. Temporary and spectacular efforts were led by Nasim Akhundzada in 1990 and by Hajji Qadir in 1996 were rather limited in geographical scope and temporary. The effective Taliban ban in July 2000 following several requests by the UN and international donors rather appears as an exception in a succession of efforts pitted against economic scarcity. Moreover, the evaluation of the effectiveness of bans on poppy cultivation are tied to the problematic 'depiction of both the state and insurgents as institutions with cohesive structures and hierarchies' (Pain 2016, 5). Indeed, the various factions of the conflict and constituencies are enmeshed in a variety of ties where the economic dimension is a major determinant. Bans often led to rapidly regretted side effects, 'for the Taliban, the ban imposed hardships on the rural population that enabled Western military forces to encourage rebellion against the regime. For the post–2001 Interim Administration and its successor, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, cessation of production led to a rapid rise in the price of opium that made cultivation profitable even in marginal areas.' (Mansfield 2018, 16). Important technological and infrastructural investments were conducted since 2013 (Water pump, pipes, Solar Panels, etc.), Mansfield notes by the spring of 2017, over 25'000 solar-powered deep wells in the southwest alone (2018, 21).

Official Development Assistance and Migration

Regional and international partners of Official Development Assistance include local and regional authorities; organisations from the areas of private sector, civil society, and academia; multilateral and regional organisations; and private charitable organisations such as foundations.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined ODA as an economic and financial measure allocated if meeting following conditions:

1. countries listed by the DAC as ODA recipients or recognised multilateral institutions,
2. to be provided by official agencies or by their executive agencies (i.e. ministries and public institutions at the state, sub-state and local level and extending arms of government),
3. to be administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective,
4. to be conceived as concessional in character (i.e. they are either grants of soft loans, including a grant element to ensure that the loans are more favourably priced than those on the market).

As of 2020, Germany was the world's second's largest donor of development funding to the Afghan civil society (BMZ OECD 2020). However, the notion of civil society translates in terms such as the host, receiving end or community do not correspond to actual and shifting social formations in Afghanistan, further blurred by the volatility of war and conflict. Donini, Niland and Wermester stress the growth and evolution of more robust foreign interventions since the 1990s and following Soviet troops' withdrawal, often led by UN peace operations (2004). Nowhere have the workings of the institutions of global governance been more visible and central than in Afghanistan, Kandiyoti continues over the country's relevance to various efforts ranging 'from the Strategic Framework (SF) experiment initiated in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (…) there has been a will to integrate and co-ordinate humanitarian, human rights, peace-building and economic development efforts' (2005, 2). Dorronsoro has decried the ambivalence in Western politics to couple military with humanitarian interventions (2003, 21). In his latest publication, he concludes that 'after many decades of freedom of speech, the solidarities carrying Western values (associations, NGOs) remain to the most without popular basis and without recognition beyond very limited circles'[10] (2021, 185). He argues towards understanding the lines of conflict and provision in a multiplicity of

[10] Personal translation. Original text, 'après plus d'une décennie de liberté d'expression, les solidarités porteuses de valeurs libérales (associations, ONG) restent pour la plupart sans base populaire et sans reconnaissance en dehors de milieux très réduits.'

fields and the fluidity that characterises connivances and interactions in a highly unstable and hybrid social space. Weak and interstitial fields account for the 'multiple positioning and circulation of actors, weak internal differentiation, grossly defined boundaries, transnational structure, coexistence of many disciplines'[11] (2021, 35). In turn, the violent intervention into national affairs did not shape a new political order – as officially announced (BMZ 2020).

Efforts of translation, but also friction and channelling are key to understand the externally led state- and peacebuilding process. 'State disruption confronted Afghanistan's rulers and their international supporters with a challenging legacy after 2001. The emergence of a neopatrimonial political order, with formal bureaucratic and administrative structures entwined with informal networks and patronage, has significantly affected attempts at aid delivery' (Maley 2018, 995). To Maley, 'aid monies do not make their way seamlessly from donors to beneficiaries. Rather, they flow through convoluted channels shaped by the character of political systems and bureaucratic processes in specific environments. They can do good (or some good) yet at the same time have unintended consequences that are strikingly negative. Understanding the mechanisms that can produce these outcomes is important if some of the problems that have surfaced in Afghanistan are not to recur elsewhere in the future' (Maley 2018, 996). It is to the disentanglement of those mechanisms and their unintended consequences in particular regards to migration that the present study is dedicated.

Migration-Development Nexus: Decisive Remittances

Considering the scope of Afghanistan's protracted conflict and the number of Afghans abroad, migration ranges across a broad spectrum of mobility practices (internal displacement, refuge, economic migration). Migration cannot only be perceived from a variety of perspective but is also a substantial economic strategy. This section provides a review of the state-of-the-art research on the role and scope of remittances, largely outstanding ODA globally and an assessment of the scope and impact of remittances (as part of the vernacular and established Hawala system) on the Afghan conflict and fragmented social fabric. Researchers hint on the increased but invisible transfer of Afghan assets into cryptocurrencies and markets (Ratha et al., 2021a). Remittances are usually understood as financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants to friends and relatives back in communities of origin. However, the statistical definition and quantitative focus of international remittances only partially reflects this common understanding.

Afghan migrants play an important role in contributing financially to their country of origin. In 2020, an estimated USD 788.9 million in remittances[12] were received in Afghanistan —

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[11] Personal translation. Original text, 'multipositionnement et circulation des acteurs, faible différentiation interne, frontières mal définies, structure transnationale, coexistence de multiple disciplines.'

[12] https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/remittances

approximately 4 per cent of Afghanistan's total GDP.[2] According to the 2016-2017 Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS)[13], remittances represent an income source for almost 1 in every 10 Afghan households. Remittances accounted for nearly 4.1 per cent of Afghanistan's GDP, making it the fifth highest recipient country in Southern Asia in terms of share of national GDP (Ratha et al., 2021a[14]). However, the security developments in 2021 are expected to cause a drop in annual remittances to 0.6 billion. This is forecast to account for 3.1 per cent of the national GDP in 2021 compared to 4.1 per cent in 2020 (Ratha et al., 2021b[15]). In terms of remittance outflows, the political and economic situation has led to increased remittances from Afghanistan to Pakistan, and this flow is expected to remain steady until the situation in Afghanistan stabilizes (ibid.).

Remittances, usually understood as the money or goods that migrants send back to families and friends in origin countries, are often the most direct and well-known link between migration and development. Remittances exceed official development aid but are private funds. Global estimates of financial transfers by migrants include transactions beyond what are commonly assumed to be remittances, as the statistical definition used for the collection of data on remittances is broader (see IMF, 2009[16]). The initiative of the World Refugee Survey published yearly reports since 1961 and were halted by US government in 2009. The reports provide a substantial and through overview of transformation in migration routes and patterns during the years preceding the Soviet intervention, civil war and the first phase of the NATO-led intervention. However, estimates are far from accurate, due to the methodological challenges outlined below (Alvarez et al., 2015[17]; World Bank, 2016; Plaza and Ratha, 2017[18]).

Remittances can also be sent within countries and not just across borders. These are commonly called internal remittances. Furthermore, not all remittances are of financial or in-kind nature. Social remittances are defined as "the ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending-country communities" (Levitt, 1998: 927). Social remittances include innovative ideas, valuable transnational networks, knowledge, political values, policy reforms and new technological skills. 'As the overall influx of refugees is declining, ODA-eligible refugee expenditures (in Germany) are expected to decline significantly, and absent any other growth, Germany is expected to again fall below the 0.7 per cent target. DAC's policy of recognising refugee expenditures as ODA has been the subject of controversial discussions in recent years, since the expenditure is neither a

[13] https://www.nsia.gov.af:8080/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ALCS-2016-17-Analysis-report-.pdf

[14] https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data

[15] https://www.knomad.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl251/files/2021-11/Migration_Brief 35_1.pdf

[16] http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2007/pdf/bpm6.pdf

[17] https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mpp_issue_21.pdf

[18] http://www.knomad.org/publication/handbook-improving-production-and-use-migration-data-development-0

financial transfer to developing countries nor does it have a direct development purpose' (Bohnet, Klingebiel, Marschall 2018, 3).

The conjunction of militarised and development intervention has been the object of wide critiques as in the case of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) where the link and benefit to the population was considered secondary to the accomplishment of military goals through the temporary provision of aid (Jackson 2010). US Army manuals for troops in Afghanistan and Iraq qualified aid as 'a non-lethal weapon,' to 'win the hearts and minds of the indigenous population to facilitate defeating the insurgents' (US Army 2009). The provision of aid and means for sustainable development ended up secondary to direct security concerns. Such an approach to aid created paths of dependency at the expense of autonomy and self-sufficiency. Moreover, participation of the population in the provisioning of aid and in development programs increased the risk of civilians to be targeted in an eminently antagonized field of distribution..

Migration Research, Critical Perspectives

The toll of the war on the population has been immense and has not been exhaustively assessed to date. Despite attempts in estimates in the 80s and 90s (Sliwinski 1989), census data is lacking. Still, war's violence and its pre-emptive force (Alber 2004) established trends in movements mainly along gender, urban-rural, and religious lines. In many ways and principally because of the length and scope of the protracted conflict, migration became a normal, and not exceptional, aspect of Afghans' lives (Monsutti 2008). The fungibility of ties, the variability and rapidly shifting nature of social contexts due to war and lingering conflicts dramatically affected an already fragmented social fabric. Given the highly volatile, changing and ambiguous nature of social ties, solidarity networks and groupings, movement across social lines of differences but also international boundaries became the norm rather than an exceptional situation as implied in the normative logic of conventional definitions of migration. In this latter perspective, migration stands out as an anomaly in need of fix or arrangement aimed towards eventual settlement.

Existing scholarship raises a conception of migration as a banal aspect of people's lives, a non-linear and iterative process, an asset, and strategy, further upsetting the static framework of international conventions. Migration research is key to destabilise established conceptions of ethnicity, solidarity, and religious frameworks through a study of movement across boundaries and their contingent reification therewith assessing the fungibility of transversal ties of solidarity and cooperation (Monsutti 2014). The scale and scope of internal displacements and migrations since at least the 1990s complexified supposedly rigid rural-urban distinctions towards a more comprehensive view including key events.

Competition and conflict are rife within the extended field of development (Coburn 2014; 2016). This involves the asserted creation of new opportunities and paths towards social ascension and emancipation and the structural conditions which often led to greater disparities since integration options to the externally led intervention were solely authorised through temporary work engagements or even selective access (Billaud 2012b; 2012a;

2015). The absence of bottom-up control mechanisms further undermined policy adjustment whose critique was principally carried out by researchers, externally (Dorronsoro 2009; 2021; 1993; Bashir and Crews 2012; Crews 2015; Scalettaris 2013; 2020).

Considering German migration policies in Afghanistan, the triage logics of international asylum policy and their entanglement with the filtering practices of nation states drastically restrain any legal mobility since the beginning of the NATO-led intervention (Scalettaris 2021). Restriction further aggravated since the Taliban takeover by the closure of the contested Afghanistan-Pakistan border, as well as more restricting Iranian border policies raise the question as to how far latest events are a continuation of the border and migration management practices and policies introduced during the intervention period (2001-2021).

All along, there is a continuity in migration to Iran and Pakistan until 2010 approximatively when migration became much more difficult if not impossible. At the same time, there is a need to contrast the perception of the Taliban as monolithic and stable movement. Taken as a political formation is problematic for several reasons. First, the entanglement of political with religious references in their discursive and effective articulation blurs a strict distinction between both realms as analytical categories. Then, the movement experienced different leadership phases characterised by a high level of charismatic authority over the following of established set principles such as for a bureaucratic ideal mode of governance. Lastly, the movement's capacity for compromise and accommodation of certain demands must be taken into account since they find themselves as governing actors in quest of political legitimacy in the wake of important changes in outlook and aspirations among, in particular, the urban population (protests are taking place in Kabul and Herat). Whilst the level of coercion and resistance effectively changed since the takeover, there are no causal links to infer with migration nor foreign interventions necessarily. The ICRC for instance kept its personnel in place and obtained subsequent guarantees. Imminent threats come from detached and volatile ISIS elements. Counter-intuitively, and against the dominant predictions pronounced following the takeover, no mass outmigration episode ensued. Whilst levels of humanitarian and development assistance drastically reduced, the supposed main source of revenue and support for a major part of the population, migration patterns remained the same. Afghan migrants consist to the vast majority of young men seeking with the support of their families' chances to work and establish themselves in a Western country[19]. Families and women, the main target and casualties, of the new regime's banning policies (restrictions in participation to education, public sphere and daily activities) did not flee the regime's oppressive policies but a few admirably continue resisting.

Scalettaris examines the UNHCR land allocation scheme to accommodate landless returnees, concluding that 'the enforcement of the national order in Afghanistan ultimately participates in maintaining the Afghan state and Afghan refugees in a subaltern position within the interstate system. That system implies a world in which Afghan migration

[19] IOM, Boz and Hakim 2020.

constitutes an illegitimate deviance and the Afghan state's weakness and incapacity to govern justifies external interventions' (2013, 204).

The shift during the decolonisation from a world made of empires to a world of sovereign and independent nation states (Bayart 2007, 2020) is key to understand the contemporary salience of migration as a source of both political and social scientific concern. Migration, as defined normatively, implies a movement across international borders or a flight, in the case of refuge, away from a threatened sense of identification or belonging to a territory. Nation states, in their Westphalian and contemporary modes of expression, governance and administration assume a uniform and static association between a language, state and territory. Ethnicity in this regard became a prominent category. Bayart, Geschiere and Niamnjoh warn, however, that 'this ethnicisation of the autochthony should not mislead. It does not express "primordial" entities anterior to colonisation. It proceeds directly from the latter, as many historians and anthropologists have shown. Ethnicity is a product of the State and of the appropriation of itself instead of its negation or subversion. It is all case integral to the process of human, political, and economic territorialisation whose formation was a vector since a century' (2001, 180).[20] In this regard, Adelkhah underlines the contribution of the scholarship on Afghanistan to anthropological debates on ethnicity, considering Tapper's (1983), Roy's (1985) and Monsutti's (2005) early efforts to sideline primordialist definitions (Adelkhah 2016, 5). She raises in substance that an 'attention brought to the political economy of this form of social consciousness, in a context of civil war, should not conduct to its reduction to a purely material struggle (…). It should neither obliterate the extreme fluidity of senses of belonging, and thus solidarity, as much on the collective than individual level, in concrete and daily life. Identification lines are multiple, relative, contextual, and subject to negotiation' (2016, 5).[21] The sharpening and simultaneous splintering of ethnic lines of identification through violent conflicts[22] formed migrants' perceptions as well as aspirations to participate in wider, yet unknown – at times violent – nationalist modernisation projects.[23] Migration as such translates a movement across lines of identification and in practice can be read as a form of contestation of a

[20] Personal translation. Original text, 'Mais cette ethnicisation de l'autochtonie ne doit pas tromper. Elle n'exprime pas des identités « primordiales » antérieures à la colonisation. Elle procède directement de celle-ci, comme l'ont montré nombre d'historiens et d'anthropologues. L'ethnicité est un produit de l'État et un mode de partage et d'appropriation de celui-ci, plutôt que sa négation ou sa subversion. Elle est en outre inséparable du processus de territorialisation humaine, politique et économique dont sa formation a été le vecteur depuis un siècle.'

[21] Personal translation. Original text, 'l'attention portée à l'économie politique de cette forme de conscience sociale, dans un contexte de guerre civile, ne doit pas conduire à sa réduction à une lutte purement matérielle (…). Elle ne doit pas non plus oblitérer l'extrême fluidité des sentiments d'appartenance, et donc de solidarité, tant au niveau collectif qu'individuel, dans la vie quotidienne et concrète. Les lignes d'identifications sont multiples, relatives, contextuelles, et sujettes à négociation.'

[22] Akiner 1997; Kandiyoti 2005; Miszak and Monsutti 2015.

[23] Appadurai 1998, 2010; Horowitz 1985; Kassymbekova 2011; Kimura 1999; Kolossov and Petrov 1992; Schlee 2006; Smith 1981; Tchoroev 2002; Tsing 2015, 22; Wimmer and Min 2006.

nation state order in which ethnicity constitutes, above social, political, religious, gendered, generational and factional lines, the principal mode of governing moving bodies and constituencies.

Pathways and Routes: a Heavy Toll

Official data on the deaths of Afghans (and others) during migration are almost non-existent. Reports reflect only a small fraction of the veritable number of Afghans who have lost their lives seeking safety and a better life outside of their home country. This lack of data also means that many Afghans are never identified after their death.'[1]

It is estimated that at least 1536 Afghans have died or disappeared on migration routes since 2014, according to data collected by IOM's *Missing Migrants Project*[24]. Most of these cases occurred in transit in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the remains of 1103 Afghans have been repatriated to their families in Afghanistan, including 122 in 2022 alone (as of 25 March 2022). At least 178 people have died attempting to leave Afghanistan on evacuation flights in 2021, and at least another 11 Afghans have lost their lives trying to cross border between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey in 2021. In total, the deaths of 164 Afghans have been documented on routes to and through Europe since 2014, including on the Eastern Mediterranean crossing (82), at the Turkey-Greece land border (10), in the Western Balkans (46), and in the English Channel crossing to the United Kingdom (16). 'A total of 560,710 first-time asylum applications were filed by Afghan nationals in the European Union (EU-27) countries between 2015 and 2020. Among the EU-27 countries, Germany, Greece and Hungary received the highest number of total first-time applications during the same period (Eurostat[25], 2021).'[26]

To Barnet Rubin's early use of the term war economy (drawn from the concept of moral economy), the development of an Afghan diaspora linked to neighbouring societies, the opening of borders, and lack of customs enforcement in many areas. In his eyes, 'the Afghan war economy has generated a pattern of regional economic activity and associated social and political networks that compete with and undermine legal economies and states. This regional economy is in turn linked through the drug and arms trade to globalized crime' (2000, 1791).

[24] https://missingmigrants.iom.int/

[25] https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en

[26] https://www.migrationdataportal.org/infographic/first-time-asylum-applications-afghans-2015-2020

Repatriation: a Contested Program

In 2005, around 5 million refugees and internally displaced people returned home (officially labelled as returnees, they often settled in new lands and areas, mostly in Kabul, while their places of origin were mostly destroyed). Fifteen years later, an additional 2.5 million returnees made their way back, totalling about one fifth of the entire population (Vine et al. 2020, 9; UNHCR 2019). The number of asylum applicants' rejections in Germany kept growing after the 2014 planned withdrawal of foreign troops. In 2017, Germany rejected the applications of 56'722 Afghans in 2017 alone[27]. Considering regional trends, 'while some returned because of increased safety and stability in parts of Afghanistan, others returned because of subsequent displacement: for example, some Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan to escape violence in Pakistan. In recent years, the Iranian government has forced hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees to leave Iran; others have left as a result of Iran's international-sanctions-battered economy' (Vine et al. 2020, 9). Joint Way Forward (JWF) accords were signed on 6 October 2016 during the Brussels donor conference on Afghanistan. Despite a joint declaration on migration and cooperation (JDMC) between the EU and Afghanistan (ECRE 2021), the European Council on Refugee and Exile (ECRE) took clear position and published policy notes regularly, 'The title is something of a misnomer because instead of reflecting a holistic approach, covering all relevant aspects of migration and mobility between Afghanistan and the EU, the agreement focuses on supporting and increasing deportations to Afghanistan. It also fails to consider the dynamics of forced displacement and migration in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.' Principal countries hosting Afghans have long been favourable to gradual, voluntary and dignified repatriation and sustainable reintegration. Still, reports on the worsening security situation (EASO 2017; OCHA; HRW 2018; Stahlman 2017) in Afghanistan abound. OCHA publishes weekly humanitarian updates (OCHA 2021). The United Nation Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) provides quarterly reports from March 2013 to November 2015, it then published a bulletin on Population Movement from March 2016 to January 2017.

[27] http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/201712-statistik-anlage-asyl-geschaeftsbericht.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Conclusions

Concerned with the Afghanistan case per se, this study ponders on the main lines of contention raised in migration research with a set of concluding remarks and recommendations towards an inclusive understanding of the complex issue of migration. While migration research effectively addressed the methodological and political challenges linked to migration's subversion of a national state order, the guidelines and framework of the NATO-led intervention and distribution of ODA as well pursued the evident aim of strengthening institutions and the building a national constituency.

Scholars raised several claims toward understanding migration as an integral feature of Afghan lives, not an exception from a supposedly settled state. Migration occurred not as a simple and direct effect of the violence of more than forty years of war and conflict. Conventional push and pull factors do not exhaust the scale and range of movements' possibility. Migration takes place in social relations, sometimes distant, whose fabric are irreducible to a fixed set of identification lines. The rapport between a national state order superimposed with external financial support and leverage can offer some elements of answer to the problem. Migration in this regard does not depart or stand out as a case disconnected from military interventions. The unequal disbursement of ODA created discontents oft expressed contestation in violent form or in movement. The state-society relationship who needs to be revised according to the disruptive effects of successive waves of international intervention into an unstable national fabric. As such, the moving formation of the social and political field in Afghanistan cannot be separated from the impact of externally led interventions. Patterns of movements are inscribed in a wider history of connectivity to neighbouring countries, especially Iran and Pakistan. In a longer historical frame, the integration of the Afghan state into greater political and financial networks affected the creation and interruption of opportunities such the agrarian reform by the end of the seventies and the war which ensued.

The inherent critique arising out of migration research contests the statism, linearity and exceptionalism which characterises lines of intervention and ODA allocation . Moreover, the entanglement of the selectiveness of the international asylum policy distinguishing economic migrants from refugees with the triage logics of states and governing bodies almost closed, or only for a few beneficiaries, legal pathways for outmigration. While ODA distribution is significant, the money sent from migrants living abroad to families, remittances, far outreached its amount. The effects are many and difficult to discern since research either highlights the size and scale of financial flows at the macro levels or the redistribution and allocation of remittances at the micro level. Repatriation has been one of the most hotly debated and contested issue relating to Afghan migration in Germany, an extended body of reports on the country's security situation was produced in its wake.

Chronological Timeline of Selected Events

- 1747: foundation of Ahmad Shah Abdali (Sadozai) Durrani dynasty, generally accepted as the first Afghan monarchy.
- 1759: battle of Panipat, extension of the Afghan monarchy to the Indus.
- 1818: collapse of Ahmad Shah's (Sadozai) dynasty; rule passes to the Mohammadzai dynasty.
- 1818-1835: partition of Afghanistan in almost independent principalities.
- 1835-1839: first part of Dost Mohammad's reign.
- 1839-1842: first Anglo-Afghan war, Shah Shoja in power.
- 1842-1863: second part of Dost Mohammad's reign.
- 1863-1879: Shir Ali's reign.
- 1878-1880: second Anglo-Afghan war.
- 1880: start of Abdul Rahmân Khân's reign, who establishes the foundations of the modern State and ensures the country's unification at the cost of bloody campaigns.
- 1887: delineation of the Northern boundary of Afghanistan by a joint Russian and British commission.
- 1893: the Durand line agreement marks the Eastern boundary of Afghanistan with British India.
- 1896: Afghanistan's border with Russia is settled.
- 1901: Habibullah Khan's accession to the throne.
- 1919: assassination of Habibullah, Nasrullah Khan's accession to the throne.
- 1919: third Anglo-Afghan war.
- 1919-1929: Amânullah Khan's accession to the throne, Queen Soraya's central role to redefine the position of women in Afghan society.
- 1923: first constitution.
- 1929-1930: revolt against Amânullah who escapes in exile, intermission of Habibullah Kalakani "Bacha-yi saqâo", installation of a conservative dynasty.
- 1929: Habibullah Kalakani's accession to the throne.
- 1929: Mohammad Nadir Khan's accession to the throne.
- 1933: assassination of Nadir, Zahir Shah's accession to the throne. His uncle, Hâshem, assures the regency.
- 1953-1963: Daud, king's cousin, is Prime Minister. His claims over Pashtunistan raise strong tensions with Pakistan. Modernisation of the Army.
- 1964: New (liberal) constitution introduced by Zahir Shah. Elections, establishment of a bicameral parliament (Senate, *meshrano jirga* and Parliament, *loya jirga*) and introduction of universal suffrage.
- 1964: settlement of Afghanistan's eastern boundary by an Afghan and Chinese commission, formally completing borders of the country.
- 1965: First parliamentary elections.

- 1969: Second Parliamentary elections.
- 1973: coup of Prime Minister Daud Khan, who overthrows the monarchy and establishes the Republic of Afghanistan.
- 1978: Saur Revolution; coup d'état by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) on 22 April.
- 1978-1979: following the communist coup of April 1978, revolts in the countryside. Exiled parties are formed in Peshawar.
- 1979: Nur Mohmmand Taraki is killed by Hafizullah Amin, who takes over as President of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in September.
- 1979: Soviet invasion, on December 27. Babrak Kârmal is installed as President of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan by the Soviet.
- 1979: migration from the Afghan Pamirs led by Rahman Kul Khan to neighbouring Pakistan.
- 1980: The United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia begin to supply money and arms to the mujahideen.
- 1982: The United Nations General Assembly calls for Soviet withdrawal.
- 1983: migration from Pakistan to Van, Turkey, establishment of the village *Uluu Pamir Khoyu.*
- 1985: More than five million Afghans are estimated to be displaced by the war (mostly in Iran and Pakistan).
- 1986: In May, Soviet Premier Gorbachev announces Soviet withdrawal within four years at UN sponsored peace talks in Geneva.
- 1986 (4 Mai): Babrak Kârmal is replaced by Dr Mohammed Najibullah as president of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.
- 1988 (14 April): Geneva agreements (between The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, the US and Pakistan). Soviet withdrawal is completed as planned in January 1989.
- 1989: The last Soviet army units leave Afghanistan on 15 February.
- 1991: Soviet Union collapses in December; financial support to Afghanistan's communist regime stops.
- 1992: Dr. Najibullah steps down, the regime collapse, followed by civil War.
- 1992: Islamic State of Afghanistan headed by Hazrat Sighbatullah Mojadeddi is announced.
- 1994: formation of the Taliban movement, capture of Kandahar (September).
- 1996: Taliban take over Nangarhar in August, Kabul in September and execute Najibullah.
- 1997 Taliban establish the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan recognized by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan.
- 2001: assassination of commander Masood on September 9, attacks in the United States on September 11.
- 2001 (November): the United States overthrow the Taliban regime.
- 2001 (December): Hamid Karzai is announced as Head of the Afghan Interim Administration at the Bonn conference.

- 2002: emergency *loya jirga* in Kabul; Hamid Karzai is designated as temporary chief of the executive.
- 2004: election of Karzai to the Republic's chairmanship.
- 2005: parliamentary elections (election of Hajji Turdi Akhun as representative of the Afghan Pamirs to the *loya jirga*).
- 2006: ratification of a repatriation program to the Kyrgyz Republic by the Prime Minister.
- 2009: Karzai is re-elected to the chairmanship.
- 2009: (December): Obama announces the so-called 'Surge' by deploying an additional 30,000 troops to the country, totalling 100,000.
- 2010: Second parliamentary elections (end of Hajji Turdi Akhun's office).
- 2012: (September): the surge officially ends and transition of security responsibility to Afghan forces starts.
- 2014: In September, the National Unity Government Agreement is signed. Ashraf Ghani becomes president following an agreement with Abdullah Abdullah, who is named chief of the executive.
- 2014: By the end of the year, the Islamic State – Khorasan Province appears in southern Nangarhar.
- 2014: end of the majority of Western troops (December).
- 2017: eleven Afghan Kyrgyz families leave to Kyrgyzstan as part of Kyrgyzstan's repatriation program.
- 2019: presidential elections; contested re-election Ashraf Ghani.
- 2020 (29 February): agreement in Doha (Qatar) between the Taliban and the United States, opening the way to US troops' withdrawal. Power partitioning agreement signed on May 17 between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. Start of the intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha (Qatar) on September 12.
- 2021 (15 August): Taliban takeover.
- 2021 (September): failed migration of 350 persons from the Little Pamir to Tajikistan.

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