THROUGH DISCONNECTION AND REVIVAL: AFGHAN AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN, 1890-2016

by

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Dedication

برای استفانی، همسرم و عشقم.

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Through Disconnection and Revival: Afghan American Relations with Afghanistan, 1890-2016

Abstract

by

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The following dissertation presents a narrative overview of Afghan immigration to the United States. It focuses on the manner in which political turmoil in Afghanistan influenced relations between the U.S. Afghan community and Afghanistan from 1890 to 2016. It also tests whether this relationship conforms to some of the most prominent scholarly models and theorizations of diasporas. In this study, the term "relations" encompasses individuals' interactions and associations with Afghanistan's society and government.

This study finds a long history of diasporic relations between the United States and Afghanistan during this time-period. Historical events such as the British exit from South Asia in 1947, the 1978 coup in Afghanistan, and 2001 U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan have had profound effects on the U.S. Afghan community, influencing the feasibility of travel to Afghanistan, the nature of diasporic relations, and U.S policy toward Afghan immigration. As a result, U.S. Afghan diasporic relations can be broken

into generalizable eras between these critical historical events. Furthermore, the era's politics influenced how the U.S. public perceived Afghans' presence in the United States.

This dissertation also examines how immigrants and ethnic communities such as Afghans in the United States have pursued activities they believed advanced the interests of both their country of origin and adopted country.

Introduction

Americans have often interpreted Afghan immigrants' presence in the United States in highly politicized terms. Indeed, Afghans in the country had hardly begun forming communities at the turn of the twentieth century before anti-"Hindoo" riots broke out targeting South Asian immigrants. Rather than understanding the U.S. Afghan community and its history in its own terms, Americans have frequently given meaning to the community's experiences through its association with politically charged topics. Americans have associated Afghans in the United States with various hot-button subjects such as refugees, Asian immigration, diversity, low wages, terrorism, and anti-Communism. As the concerns and aspirations of the moment changed, so too did the U.S. public's imaging of the Afghan community.

On more than one occasion, this politicization reflected broader U.S. fears about the direction of the "nation," and how well they believed it was maintaining its "traditions." For example, the U.S. Congress enacted a so-called "Asiatic Barred zone" in 1917 that largely prohibited immigration from large sections of Asia. Congress then severely restricted immigration from much of the Eastern Hemisphere except for Northern Europe during the 1920s. These acts were in large part enacted to preserve the country's supposed "values" and demographic "national origins." Then, in 2016, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump made cutting refugee admissions and a "temporary" Muslim travel ban centerpieces of his campaign to "make America great again."

Immigrants and refugees from Muslim-majority countries have also occupied an important position in liberal and internationalist idealism. Donald Trump's opponent in the 2016 election, Hillary Clinton, captured the sentiments of many liberals when she remarked, "turning away orphans, applying a religious test, discriminating against Muslims, slamming the door on every single Syrian refugee – that is just not who we [as a country] are."[1] Of course, much of this type of behavior had already occurred in the country's history. Yet the sentiment articulated how many Americans linked their country's "national character" and "traditions" to Muslims' presence and reception in the United States.

It would be unwise, though, for people to base their "understanding" of ethnic groups solely in the context of contemporary political disputes or ideologies. Given their prominence in the national imagination, it is better to understand Afghans' and other Muslim or predominately refugee communities' history in its own right.

These individuals' experiences and worldviews often defy simplistic political formulas. For example, many post-2001 Afghan immigrants might be uneasy with President Trump's anti-Muslim immigration policy prescriptions, but might also take issue with many U.S. progressive activists' opposition to the War in Afghanistan, a conflict in which many proudly served. Post-2001 Afghan immigrants have been the source of "national security" related anxieties. Yet, many have served the United States

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[1] Note that in full disclosure, this author was employed on behalf of the Democratic Party during the last half-year of revising this dissertation. Citation: Hillary Clinton, "Outlining Plan to Defeat ISIS and Global Terrorism, Clinton Says U.S. Must Choose Resolve Over Fear," hillaryclinton.com, accessed July 2017, https://www.hillaryclinton.com/briefing/statements/2015/11/19/outlining-plan-to-defeat-isis-and-global-terrorism-clinton-says-u-s-must-choose-resolve-over-fear/.

and combatted terrorism before ever arriving in the country. As a whole, political heterodoxy appears to have been the historical norm for Afghans in the United States, without an easily discernible consensus on most issues.

Thus, it is critical to understand Afghans' history in the United States in all of its complexities, rather than as merely symbols for political causes. They have been in the United States for at least one hundred years, and participants in the country's struggles, triumphs, and shortcomings. It is well past time to record this history in a concise, if still uncomprehensive, work.

This study provides a narrative overview of Afghan immigration to the United States from 1890 to the present. Its principal argument is that at least four political events have dramatically altered relations between Afghans in the United States and their country of origin and have influenced patterns of immigration. These turning points have resulted in corresponding eras of diasporic relations. That is, these political events have led to changes in the way Afghans in the United States have interacted with Afghanistan and understood their identity in the United States.

This history can, thus, be broken into five distinct eras; the pioneer era from about 1890 to 1947, the postcolonial era from 1947 to 1978, the Communist-inspired rule of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan era from 1978-1992, the Afghan Civil War era of 1992-2001, and the post-Taliban era of 2001-2016. These changing political situations caused many Afghans in the United States to experience fluctuating levels of interactions with Afghanistan and integration in the United States. This study,

however, shows that more integration in the United States did not necessarily mean fewer relations with Afghanistan and vice versa.

One of the most frequently expressed sentiments by Afghan sources in the United States consulted for this study was a desire to contribute to both Afghanistan and the United States. Towards that pursuit, many Afghans in the United States engaged in activities they believed enhanced their value as both Americans and Afghans. For example, the desire to assist both the United States and Afghanistan played a part in many Afghan Americans' decision to become interpreters for the U.S. military. This study will refer to the process of seeking mutually beneficial activities for their country of "origin" (or ethnic identity) and "host" countries as "symbiotic identity."

This study harbors no illusions of being the final word or definitive account of Afghan history in the United States. Instead, it hopes to provide a basis for additional scholarly work on the Afghan community that might look more deeply at issues relating to identity, socio-economic status, and specific Afghan communities in the United States.

Diaspora Historiography

This study employs several intellectual concepts and terminology from studies of diasporas to interpret the U.S. Afghan community's history. Defined in its simplest terms, the word diaspora simply refers to a people that has dispersed. The word also tends to imply a persistence of communal identity or consciousness after parting from a homeland.

Four prominent theorizations of diasporas are particularly relevant to this study. One is political scientist William Safran's pioneering 1991 (original shorter version in 1988) article, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." In this piece, Safran posited that diasporas were properly understood as an analogy to the Jewish experience. [2] As such, Safran considered the Jewish Diaspora as an "ideal type," from which to compare other diasporic communities.[3] Moreover, Safran argued that disasporas "share several of" the following six characteristics;

> 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific origin 'center' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be-fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return-when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.[4]

Safran's work is of significant intellectual value, as it clarified "diaspora" as an historical analogy, and advanced conceptual guidelines for diasporas. This offered scholars a number of features to examine in their respective studies and a basis to compare the experiences of various diasporic groups. Subsequent works, however, have built upon

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[2] William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 1991. Academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/5029348/Diasporas_in_Modern_Societies_Myths_of_Homeland_and_Return.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

his study, and will thus be addressed in more depth regarding its applicability to Afghans in the United States.

In 1997, sociologist Robin Cohen sought to build upon Safran's conceptualizations in his work, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, and later revised them in subsequent editions of the book. In the 2001 edition, Cohen found Safran's work "very useful" but offered a critique. One major criticism was that Safran had tied too much of his characteristics of a diaspora to notions of homeland.[5] Cohen then offered his own revised set of characteristics of a diaspora. In the 2008 edition of his book, Cohen included the following characteristics,

> 1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions; 2. alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions; 3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements; 4. an idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety, and prosperity, even to its creation; 5. the frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland; 6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and belief in a common fate; 7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group; 8. a sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even where home has become more vestigial; and 9. the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.[6]

Cohen also offered five typologies of diasporas to account for the different causes of their dispersals out of their lands of origins. These models were victim, labor,

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[5] Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: Taylor& Francis, 2001), 23.
[6] Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2008), 17.

trade, imperial and de-territorialized diasporas.[7] Cohen acknowledged that there is diversity within diasporas, that not everyone within it fits the community's typology, and that a diaspora's typology can change over time. For instance, he maintained that labor diasporas are usually short-lived before subsequent generations take up different occupations.

Cohen also addressed a diaspora's role as "agents of development" for their places of origin. Cohen wrote that, "Not only have they [development agencies] acknowledged that the existing volumes of funds transferred are immense, they see channeling aid through diasporas as preferable to sending aid to governments in poor countries, some which are ineffective at best and corrupt at worst."[8] Indeed, Afghans in the United States have played critical roles in Afghanistan's reconstruction process, both economically and politically. This dissertation will examine how political and economic developments have shaped, promoted, and inhibited these diasporic activities.

Overall, Afghans' experiences in the United States share several of Cohen's characteristics and fit his overall diagnosis of a diaspora. Additionally, Afghans in the United States have more or less fit into his typologies of a diaspora. Modifications to two of these typologies, though, can better encapsulate Afghans' history in the United States and the global diaspora.

For example, by the mid-twentieth century, the global and U.S. Afghan diaspora did not precisely conform into Cohen's typologies. Although his "victim" typology largely

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[7] Cohen (2008), 18.
[8] Cohen (2008), 168-169.

fits the circumstances, the term “victim” implies an obvious, usually outside, victimizer. Certainly, outside forces victimized Afghans, forcing many to flee the country. Yet, internal violence and civil war have meant that many Afghan “victimizers” have also been part of the diaspora itself after their affiliated regimes fell.

Renaming Cohen’s term, “victim-refugee,” largely resolves this issue. Once more, this is not to say that Afghan refugees have not been victimized or that Afghans are responsible for their own situation. Unlike the term “victim,” though, “refugee” does not require the analyst to sort victims from victimizer within the diaspora, or imply that victimizers are somehow outside the diaspora. One only needs to establish that most had to leave the country because of war, threat of political violence, or forced bondage. This new terminology would help include all those displaced by civil war and internal persecution, including Liberians, Syrians, and Soviet citizens under Stalin, as well as African slaves, Armenians from the Ottoman Empire, and Cherokees. This modified terminology also saves the analyst the highly problematic and perhaps impossible task of discerning which diaspora is a victim and which diaspora a refugee group.

In addition to this modification, renaming Cohen’s “trade” typology “commercial-educated” would also be beneficial to understanding diasporic histories. Although the term “trade diaspora” is useful, Cohen apparently intended for it to describe commercial or merchant communities overseas. Since at least the mid-twentieth century, though, countless people have left their countries for similar motivations as the traders and merchants, but have taken up different professional and educational occupations. Likewise, these commercial-educated migrants have often

concentrated in universities, corporations, hospitals, construction, and engineering rather than retailing. Since at least 1947, Afghans in the United States have tended to be disproportionately educated in proportion to Afghanistan's total population, but were not a "trading" diaspora.[9]

Another critical work on diasporas that merits consideration is professor James Clifford's critique of diaspora studies in his book *Routes* (1997). Clifford's analysis, which built upon works by Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin and Paul Gilroy, aimed to refute the importance of territorial nationalism for diasporas. Clifford argued, "Contemporary diasporic practices cannot be reduced to epiphenomena of the nation-state or of global capitalism." Clifford added, "While defined and constrained by these structures, they also exceed and criticize them: old and new diasporas offer resources for emergent 'postcolonialisms.'"[10] Clifford critiqued Safran's usage of Jewish history as an "ideal" type for characterizing a diaspora. Furthermore, he argued that "large segments of Jewish historical experience" did not fit some of Safran's criteria for a diaspora, in that

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[9] Cohen himself noted that businesspeople are successors of sorts to the trade diasporas his work focuses on. For instance, in the 2008 edition of his book, he wrote that Japanese "personnel who service the banks, insurance companies, import-export houses and transnational corporations are an updated version of the trading and imperial [a separate typology] diasporas of old." Indeed, the chapter on the trade diaspora was labeled "Trade and Business Diasporas" in the 2008 edition of the book. Still, his work primarily focused on Chinese and Lebanese traders or business owners. Aside from the chapter title, Cohen employed the term "trade" diaspora without the word "business" in the chapter's text. The term "trade," though, does not encapsulate the countless doctors, corporate workers, engineers, nurses, students, and other highly educated people that have often characterized many similar diasporas since the twentieth century. Using the term "commercial-educated" would also include students abroad and those who stay after their studies. Cohen (2008), 165. Education statistics from Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 7.0* [1930-2016 Census 5%, 2001-1016 ACS], Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0; *"Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, accessed 2016-2017,* http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/search/category.aspx?cat=115.

[10] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 244.

there was not always a widespread "strong attachment to and desire for literal return to a well-preserved homeland" among historical Jewish populations.[11]

Unlike Safran and Cohen, Clifford was less interested in defining and categorizing diasporas as capturing their transitional and multicultural potential. Rather than a stifling and unnatural tragedy, Clifford viewed the cosmopolitanism of diasporas as a source of great creativity that held potential for a more humane politics. To be sure, Clifford recognized that diasporic life was not idyllic and that chauvinism could exist within diaspora communities.[12] Yet to him, diasporas held great potential and their histories were not entirely lamentable.

Clifford's piece offers a number of important insights that resonates with Afghan history in the United States. As Clifford would envision, diasporic activity among Afghans in the United States "waxed and waned" depending on political-historical circumstances. Finally, as both Clifford and Cohen posited in their conceptualizations, the experience of being in diaspora has given Afghans an extra degree of cosmopolitanism and creative opportunities. Afghan American written works, humanitarian action, and educational achievements are but a few examples.

Yet, the concept of country or territory has garnered considerable importance for many Afghans in the United States who are part of a state-based diaspora. Rather than attempting to transcend these states, many Afghans in the United States have

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[11] Clifford, 248.
[12] Ibid, 251.

frequently sought opportunities to affirm their value and place in both. As such, the state is an essential element of many of their identities.

Undoubtedly, this was in large part due to the nature of their dispersal. Afghans, like many recent refugee groups, come from a multi-ethnic state with sectarian differences. The calamities that sent them abroad affected all ethnic groups within the state, but rarely co-ethnics outside of it to the same degree. To be sure, individuals might retain their non-state ethnic identity (Pashtun, Hazara, Tajik etc.) in diaspora. The state, though, has remained an important organizing unit for both diasporic associations and international relief or refugee programs. Thus, scholars should be cautious about detaching diasporas from states and nationality.

Another work that warrants this study's attention is sociologist Stéphane Dufoix's *Diasporas*. In this book, Dufoix offered four modes of "collective experience" to explain a diaspora's relationships with the state or "reference" of origin, and other communities in the global diaspora. His modes were 1; centroperipheral (closely linked to a "home country" and formal institutions),2; enclaved ("the local organization of a community within a host country"), based on "shared identity" rather than "a formal link of nationality"), 3; atopic, a de-territorialized mode connected to "a common origin, ethnicity, or religion" with strong linkages among the diaspora in multiple countries, and 4; antagonistic, in which the diaspora opposes the country of origin's government.

These modes are especially helpful for conceptualizing the fluctuations of Afghans in the United States' relationship with Afghanistan through different eras of

history.[13] This dissertation, though, offers some modifications to Dufoix's terminology. Dufoix conceptualized individuals in an "enclaved" mode as tied to a "shared identity," rather than "a formal link of nationality."[14] This dissertation, however, includes state-based identity groups in its conception of an "enclaved' diasporic mode. Indeed, Afghans, Mexicans, Salvadorans, and U.S. Americans in diaspora have state-based identities, and can form enclaves abroad based on this identity.

This connection or affinity, however, does not mean their links to that state's regime are extensive or their experience is highly institutionalized as Dufoix's "centroperipheral" mode requires. Thus, when this study uses the term "enclaved," it does so on the basis of a state being an acceptable "referent" origin for the term.

This study also suggests adding a new "collaborative" mode to Dufoix's modes. Such a mode would help frame U.S. Afghan diasporic relations from 2001 to 2016 in comparative perspective. During this time, Afghans in the United States frequently attempted to assist Afghanistan, although not always through official institutions as Dufoix's centroperipheral mode requires. Some Afghans in the United States joined the new Afghan regime, but almost certainly more joined U.S. government efforts in the country.[15] Meanwhile, the U.S. government issued visas to many Afghan nationals that

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[13] Stephane Dufoix, *Diasporas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
[14] Ibid, 62-64.
[15] The *Daily Beast* reported that there were 1,080 linguists "from the U.S.," and "were usually of Afghan descent." Jesse Ellison, "LOST IN TRANSLATION: As War Nears An End, Our Afghan Translators Are Being Left Behind," *Daily Beast*, October 21, 2012, accessed June 2017, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/10/21/as-war-nears-an-end-our-afghan-translators-are-being-left-behind. See also, Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Material and Social Remittances to Afghanistan," in *Converting Migration Drains Into Gains: Harnessing the Resource of Overseas Professionals*, ed. C. Wescott and J. Brinkerhoff (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2006), 98-126.

assisted U.S. government efforts in Afghanistan. All of these are examples of a "collaborative" diasporic activity between the United States and Afghanistan.

Thus, a "collaborative" diaspora will refer to all diasporas in which individuals are engaged in extensive efforts to assist the land of origin, or loved ones there. These efforts do not need to be linked to the country of origin's government. Conversely, individuals in the country of origin may assist its diaspora in need. Furthermore, a collaborative diaspora may include any diasporic group that largely came to their adopted country through their support of the host-country prior to migration. Hmong refugees in the United States and recent Iraqi special immigrant visa holders are two prominent examples of this form of migration.[16] As in the case of Dufoix's modes, a collaborative one may not apply to everyone within a diasporic group, and other modes can overlap. Finally, diasporic groups do not need to exhibit every characteristic mentioned in this description to be "collaborative." With these theoretical offerings, one can better understand the U.S. Afghan diaspora's history and place it comparative perspective.

In review, this study finds four of the more prominent works of diaspora studies to be markedly useful for understanding Afghans' history in the United States. Yet, it offers a number of modifications to these conceptualizations to better incorporate state-based diasporic groups such as Afghans. These modifications are,

1. Replacing Cohen's victim typology with "victim-refugee"

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[16] See Jeffrey L. Carson "A Foreign and Domestic Policy Gap: The Resettlement of our Allies," (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2015).

2. Replacing Cohen's "trade" diaspora with "commercial-educated"
3. Including states as a "referent origin" in enclaved diasporas
4. Adding "collaborative" to the Dufoix's list of diasporic modes

These modifications would help advance diaspora theory while remaining compatible with their authors' intentions.

Chronology

This study argues that four historical events have had profound consequences for the U.S. Afghan community. These events influenced who migrated between the United States and Afghanistan, why they left, the most common forms of diasporic relations during the era, and how Americans interpreted Afghans' presence in the United States. The time before and during these events can be broken into five distinct eras of diasporic relations between Afghanistan and the United States. The politics of these eras did not affect every Afghan in the same way or degree, but were extremely influential to the U.S. Afghan community's evolution.

The first period was the pioneer era, which lasted from about 1890 to 1947. During this period, the first recorded self-identified Afghans arrived in the United States.[17] Most of these immigrants were male laborers, and often came from British India, especially in the ethnic Pashtun regions of contemporary Pakistan. At this time, the term "Afghan" was often synonymous or at least overlapped with the Pashtun people. Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, but also a major ethnic group of contemporary Pakistan. Thus, many individuals who identified as Afghan during

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[17] See Chapter 1.

this era had not lived in the state of Afghanistan, but often identified as such out of ethnic, anti-imperial, and religious considerations.[18]

During this era, Afghans in the United States fit Cohen's typology of a "labor" diaspora, and were linked to the broader South Asian migration networks described by Dirk Hoerder in *Cultures in Contact*.[19] At various times, employment trends fluctuated between the lumber, agricultural, and automotive industries, but were generally characterized by wage-labor.

Afghans in the United States during the pioneer era likely constituted what Dufoix calls an "atopic" diaspora. That is, Afghans in the United States were often in "a way of being in the world between states that is built around a common origin, ethnicity, or religion that does not reduce one to being a subject of a host country," and characterized by trans-national networks.[20] Still, several caveats should be mentioned. At this time, there were few Afghans in the country, so it is unlikely that many lives revolved around a specifically Afghan diaspora. There is also not enough available evidence to determine conclusively if there were enough transnational links with other Afghans to constitute an "atopic" diasporic relationship, although there were certainly some.[21]

Americans during this era often feared migration from Asia and interpreted Afghans' presence in the United States as a threat to wages and "Americanism." In

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[18] Cohen (2001).
[19] Term "labor diaspora" from Cohen. Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).
[20] Dufoix, 63.
[21] This evidence of this will be explained in the following chapter.

1917, the U.S. Congress prohibited Afghan laborers from immigrating to the United States, along with most other Asian laborers, and eventually denied them the ability to become naturalized citizens.

Free from British domination of their foreign policy since 1919, and with an internationally recognized state, Afghanistan's government began to sponsor students to study in the United States by the 1930s. This development, along with the exclusion of Asian laborers from the United States, appears to have gradually replaced Afghan labor migration to the United States with university students and professionals. Thus, Afghans in the United States evolved from what Cohen terms a "labor" migration into a "commercial-educated" one. These developments, along with the creation of independent India and Pakistan from former British India in 1947, ushered in the new the post-colonial era of diasporic relations.

Aside from an increasingly educated migration to the United States, new political issues emerged during the post-colonial era. Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan were now independent countries with disputed borders. This forced Afghans to contemplate whether they identified more with Afghanistan or another state that encompassed their places of origin. Notably, a number of ethnic Pashtun activists in the United States advocated for establishing an independent Pashtun nation from territory in contemporary Pakistan.

During this era, the United States also reformed its immigration policies, sparking significant demographic changes. The new laws, including the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, facilitated increased immigration from Asia and the Middle East by

removing many of the legal barriers placed on immigration from countries in these regions. The reforms further facilitated the migration of highly skilled Afghans, while largely restricting the immigration of laborers. Many of the Afghan migrants to the United States during this era were Afghan Jews, as well as Afghan students and their families.[22]

During this era, the U.S. government struck down restrictions against Asian immigration and immigrants, yet Afghan immigrants were not divorced from the politics of the era. Many of these immigrants were students from elite backgrounds and seen as the future of Afghanistan. The Afghan government often subsidized their studies, while the U.S. government at times tried to cultivate this intelligentsia with favorable views of the United States.[23]

During this era, there were several Afghan communities in locations such as New York and California with apparently few links between each other and different relations with the Afghan government.[24] As such, they constituted what Dufoix would term "enclaved" diasporic modes. Meanwhile, students with government sponsorships maintained what Dufoix calls "centroperipheral" modes. In centroperipheral modes, the diasporic community "is closely linked with the individuals' home country" and representative organizations.[25]

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[22] Sara Y. Aharon, *From Kabul To Queens: The Jews Of Afghanistan And Their Move To The United States.*, First Edition (New York: American Sephardi Federation, 2011).

[23] See pages 121-122

[24] For instance, Afghan Jews who were leaving Afghanistan in large numbers during this era had different relationships with Afghanistan's government than state-sponsored students.

[25] Dufoix, 62.

The 1978 People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan coup and subsequent Soviet military intervention began a new era of U.S. Afghan history that lasted until 1989. During this period, the United States government allowed tens of thousands of Afghan refugees into the country. This was in no small part due to the U.S. government's opposition to Soviet-style communism, and desire to shield the victims of a rival government. From this point on, the U.S. Afghan community became predominately composed of refugees and their descendants.

The arrival of approximately 20,000 Afghan refugees between 1980 and 1989, who were of predominately-Muslim heritage, led to a number of significant changes in U.S. Afghan life.[26] By now, entire nuclear families of Afghan Muslim heritage began to arrive in the United States in large numbers.[27] The increase of Afghan families in the United States made it much easier for U.S. Afghans to establish communal institutions such as mosques and cultural programs in concentrated Afghan enclaves. At the same time, many of the early refugees who fled during the Soviet-Afghan War held onto hope that they would soon return to Afghanistan. This, along with limited resources and time, slowed (but did not extinguish) the development of a permanent infrastructure to support and enhance Afghan refugees' lives in the United States.

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[26] Refugee admissions for 1985 are missing, but statistics for the rest of the decade indicate that 18,491 Afghan refugees were officially admitted into the United States that decade. Over 2,000 refugees were admitted in both the previous two years and following two years. Therefore, the number is almost assuredly around 20,000 officially admitted Afghan refugees for the decade. Unofficially, many other Afghan immigrants were also probably refugees of one form another fleeing war. Ronald H. Bayor, *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 29. This source's statistics were derived from INS yearbooks.

[27] There were some Afghan women in the country from 1950-1979, but were almost unheard of from 1890-1950

Many of these refugees benefitted from U.S. antagonism with the Soviet government. As refugees from a Soviet-sponsored government, Afghans had higher rates of refugee or asylum admissions into the United States than many other nationalities such as Guatemalans and Salvadorans.[28] Furthermore, they were free to demonstrate and voice their disapproval of conditions in Afghanistan without much threat of being considered anti-American, or being accused of putting their country of origin above the United States.

During this era, Afghans in the United States became a predominately victim-refugee typology. Using Dufoix's terminology, they also developed an "antagonistic" relationship with Afghanistan's government. Dufoix defines this as "an 'exile polity'…a political space that is both national and trans-state, formed by groups who refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the current regime in their country of origin, or who consider the country to be under foreign occupation."[29]

During this period, Afghans held notable protests against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and a few U.S. Afghans found employment undermining Soviet-Afghan government control of Afghanistan in organizations such as the U.S.-run *Voice of America*. Yet, most Afghans in the United States were too financially strapped and located too far from Afghanistan to play as prominent role resisting Afghanistan's regime as Afghan exile communities did in Pakistan and Iran. In many respects then, the

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[28] Rates of refugee admissions is unknown, but more Afghans appear to have arrived as refugees between 1981-1986 than all non-Cuban North and South Americans combined. U.S. Department of Commerce (Bureau of the Census), *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 107th Edition (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 12-13. For more on this, and asylum admission statistics see pages 135-136 for a more detailed discussion of this.
[29] Dufoix, 63.

U.S. Afghan diasporic relations were a hybrid between Dufoix's "antagonistic," and "enclaved" modes.

After the Soviet-supported government fell in 1992, civil war between competing rebel factions engulfed the country for much of the next decade. The transformation of the conflict into a civil war had profound implications for the U.S. diaspora.

During this Afghan Civil War era, there was a subsequent U.S. Afghan investment in long-term life in the United States among Afghan immigrants. This in part reflects an understanding that they were not likely going to be able to return to Afghanistan in the near future. Instead, their immediate future was in the United States. Afghans not only founded long-term businesses and community organizations in the United States, but numerous charitable organizations to help Afghans in Afghanistan and refugee camps in its neighboring countries. The founding of these charitable organizations suggests that from 1992-2000, a significant number of Afghans in the United States had resolved to help Afghanistan from the United States (either through direct action or donations) rather than permanently returning amidst the civil war.

These factors, along with increased affluence, allowed U.S. Afghans to form many of the first long-term institutions and cultural retention programs within their American communities during the 1990s. In a sense, these developments represent the beginning of "Afghan American" life in the United States because they indicated a long-term investment in U.S. community building. Newspaper articles also reflected this shift in identities by increasingly referring to U.S. Afghans as "Afghan Americans" or

"immigrants," rather than "refugees."[30] Meanwhile the civil war in Afghanistan led many to become increasingly detached from Afghanistan.[31] As these developments unfolded, refugees fleeing the civil war, and later the Taliban regime, continued to arrive in the United States.

After the Soviet-Afghan War and the Cold War ended, news topics based on events in Afghanistan had far less potential for positive media portrayals. These stories included issues such as prolonged civil war, religious extremism, drug production, and terrorism in Afghanistan.

Diasporic relations during this era are difficult to place in a generalized categorization. The Soviet-backed PDPA government collapsed but political instability ensued. Some Afghans remained engaged in Afghan politics, and others supported humanitarian causes in Afghanistan. Yet, the curtailing of conspicuous political activism, declining prospects of return, and limited travel to Afghanistan suggest that Afghan diasporic relations became more "enclaved," if not increasingly assimilated in a growing number of cases. Afghans would continue as a "victim-refugee" typology, and remain as such through 2016.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and subsequent U.S. response dramatically altered Afghan history in the United States. After the Taliban regime refused to turn over Osama bin Laden, U.S., British, and anti-Taliban Afghan forces

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[30] See pages 182-183 for a more detailed discussion of this issues and methodology used to reach this conclusion. "Search," Infoweb.newsbank.com, America's News, NewsBank, accessed December 2016
[31] See chapters four and five for more on this topic.

ousted the Taliban regime from power.[32] The United States' and international coalition's (ISAF) attempts to support the new government in Afghanistan and combat Taliban and terrorist organizations continued into the next decade. A new post-September 11th era of the U.S. Afghan community's history had begun.

The diverse U.S. responses to the September 11, 2001, attacks had many implications for U.S. Afghans. Islamophobia and prejudice against people perceived as Middle Eastern increased.[33] At the same time, the U.S.-supported overthrow of the Taliban regime opened new possibilities for U.S. Afghans in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the increased media attention reintroduced places, figures, and history to many U.S. Afghans, forcing them to confront the realities of their country of origin.[34]

Additionally, the new regime in Afghanistan and relative increase in security allowed for somewhat regular travel between the United States and Afghanistan for the first time in decades. A small number of U.S. Afghans left the United States indefinitely to join efforts to rebuild Afghanistan's economy and government. Most notably, Ashraf Ghani, who had lived in the United States for over twenty years, became Afghanistan's president in 2014.[35]

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[32] "Timeline: Taliban in Afghanistan," *Al Jazeera*, July 4, 2009, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2009/03/2009389217640837.html.

[33] Christopher Ingraham, "Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Are Still Five Times More Common Today than before 9/11," *The Washington Post*, February 11, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/02/11/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-are-still-five-times-more-common-today-than-before-911/.

[34] Sonia Rahel, "Surviving the Guilt," *Lemar-Aftaab*, Oct-Dec, 1997, UC Berkeley Ctn. 24.16, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley; Joan Ryan, "Royal exiles of a sad land," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 14, 2001, D1, NewsBank; Humaira Ghilzai, interview with the author, October 2015; Obaid Younossi, telephone interview with the author, September 2015. See Chapter V.

[35] George Packer, "Afghanistan's Theorist-in-Chief," *The New Yorker*, July 4, 2016, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/04/ashraf-ghani-afghanistans-theorist-in-chief.

The U.S. government and military also employed a significant number of U.S. Afghans to facilitate U.S. operations in Afghanistan and train soldiers in skills useful for deployment. These positions ranged from role-playing with U.S. troops as "villagers" in mock Afghan villages to serving as battlefield linguists in Afghanistan.

Since 2009, the U.S. government has issued thousands of visas to "local" Afghan personnel and their families who worked on behalf of the United States in Afghanistan, due to concerns about their safety. Their numbers have been significant, and their life experiences can differ from those of many previous Afghan immigrants.

From the vantage point of 2018, it remains unclear whether this period of the U.S. Afghan community's history is best understood as one historical era, or if any of the events between 2001 and 2016 inaugurated a new era. Certainly, the resurgent Taliban rebellion, inauguration of the special immigrant visa program, or perhaps Donald Trump's election may prove to be turning points. As of this writing, though, it did not seem apparent that any fundamental disruption in the diasporic modes and typology had yet occurred. Time will offer additional perspective on this.

Overall, Afghans in the United States from 2001 to 2016 constituted what amounted to a "collaborative diaspora" and remained a "victim-refugee" typology. Politicization of Afghans during this era took on many dimensions. Immigration restrictionists argued that the acts of a few Muslim terrorists, as well as religious fundamentalists in the broader Middle East justified restricting immigration from Muslim-majority countries and ending refugee admissions from these countries. Foreign

policy considerations, however, helped shield, and in some cases expand, Afghan immigration to the United States.

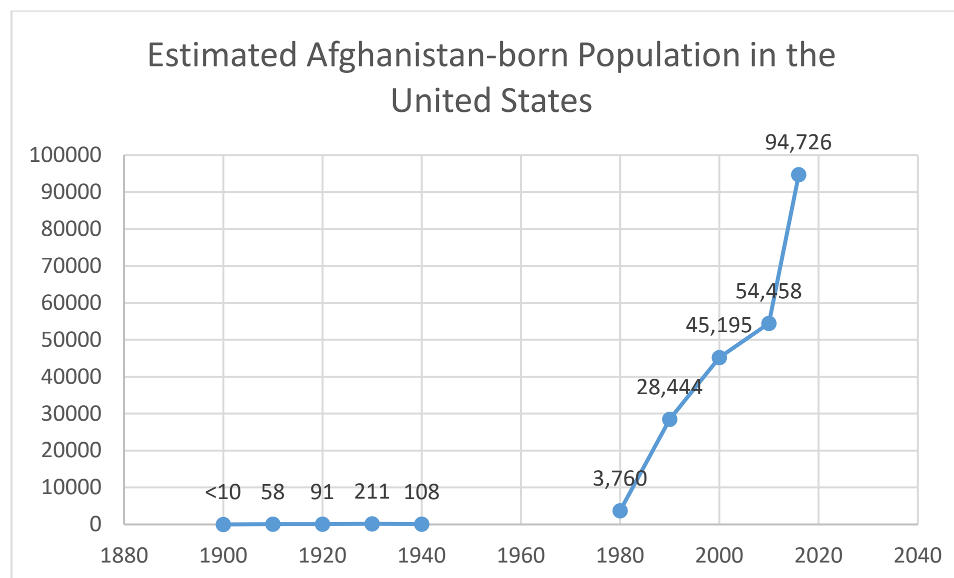

Table 1 Afghanistan Population in the United States since 1900.[36]

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[36] Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed August 2017, https://ancestrylibrary.com; Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed 2016, https://ancestrylibrary.com; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed 2016, https://ancestrylibrary.com; Steve Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, IPUMS (1930 U.S. Census 100%), University of Minnesota, 2015, http://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V6.0; *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry;*Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed August 2017, https://ancestrylibrary.com; "Region and Country or Area of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population: 1960 to 1990," U.S. Bureau of the Census, accessed November 26, 2015, https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab03.html?cssp=SERP; "Table FBP-1. Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 20, 2017, https://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf; "Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population in the United States Universe: Foreign-born population excluding population born at sea: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, accessed May 2018, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_B05006&prodType=table; "Selected Population Profile in the United States: 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, accessed May 2018, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_1YR_S0201&prodType=table.

U.S. Historiography

As noted earlier, the presence of immigrants and refugees from Muslim-majority countries has been a politically charged topic in the United States. Therefore, it is incumbent for there to be full-length histories of the various communities from these countries in the United States in order to understand their experiences outside of politicized renderings. Thus, this study's narrative of the U.S. Afghan community's history is its main contribution to U.S. immigration and ethnic U.S. historiography.

Valuable as they are, general surveys of Muslims in the United States cannot fully account for the diversity within the "Muslim" community, nor do they address the secular realms of identity within each ethnic community in much detail. This is not a failing of these works, but rather a difference in scope and available space. Aminah Beverly McCloud's *Transnational Muslims in American Society*, for example, goes to great lengths to discuss U.S. Muslims' diversity. [37] Full-length case studies, though, are still needed to fill the gaps in surveys' coverage and provide more in-depth examinations of individual communities for scholars.

This dissertation's narrative offers historians a uniquely detailed examination of Afghan history in the United States. Still, readers may find uneven attention given subjects, due to the number sources available for a given topic. The early years of this narrative is in large part constructed by primary sources available on internet databases

[37] Aminah Beverly McCloud, *Transnational Muslims in American Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006).

such as ancestry.com. As decades progress in the narrative, more qualitative sources become available in the form newspaper articles, memoirs, and oral histories. Census and immigration records on individuals, however, become scarcer during this time. The American Community Surveys provide a wealth of quantitative data for recent decades, but information is not available about individuals. Thus, each era has its own abundance and scarcity of sources on given topics, dictating which could be analyzed.

This study's secondary contribution to U.S. historiography is its development of, and argument for, the concept of "symbiotic identity" to the field of immigrant and ethnic studies. As defined by this study, symbiotic identity refers to individuals seeking activities mutually beneficial to both an "ethnic" and "American" (or other country of settlement) identity. For instance, many Afghan Americans believed that serving as an interpreter for the U.S. military in Afghanistan benefitted both countries. As one Afghan American who worked for the United States as an interpreter in Afghanistan articulated,

> I always had it in the back of my mind that I didn't do nothing in Afghanistan… I'm an American citizen you have to work on your citizenship also…You have to pay something back. At the same time, my background is Afghanistan. And I see that we are building Afghanistan, so for me it was kind of [a] win-win situation.[38]

Activities such as serving on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps offered individuals a chance to realize "symbiotic" value to these two countries in relatively short time. For others, though, the process of seeking "symbiotic" activities or identity was longer and more fragmented. For instance, a need to be "productive" compelled many to work long hours to lift themselves out of financial assistance in the United States. After achieving a

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[38] Anonymous, interview with the author, June 2015.

degree of economic security or affluence, though, many sought to channel their success in the United States into efforts to assist Afghanistan.[39] This study hopes to frame this process into a conceptualization I will refer to as "symbiotic identity."

Undoubtedly, aspiring to be valuable to one's "ethnic" and "American" (or other country of settlement) identity was not limited to Afghans, and this concept can be of use for historians of other ethnic or minority groups. One place to begin a conversation on "symbiotic identity" is in the context of Cold War émigré politics. In addition to economic opportunity, the United States offered exiles the opportunity to preserve their beliefs, aspirations, and a chance of serving the cause of their lands of origin.

For its part, the U.S. government often saw political or "national security" value in refugees' presence in the United States.[40] For example, providing asylum to Soviet dissidents, highlighted American freedom of speech and religious figures. Conversely, Soviet-bloc regimes at times courted U.S. dissidents to demonstrate their own commitment to ideals that the United States had failed.[41]

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[39] For more on this, see sections on Afghan American-headed charities on chapters four and five,

[40] For works on U.S. policymakers' support of refugee admission on national security grounds and Cold War émigré activism, see Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Anna Mazurkiewicz, "Political Emigration form East Central Europe During the Cold War," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. LXXII, No. 2 (Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, Autumn 2015), 65-82; Anna Mazurkiewicz, "Political Exiles from East Central Europe in American Cold War Politics, 1948-1954," (English summary of her book, Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w Amerykańskiej Polityce Zimnowojennej, 1948-1954* (IPN, 2016) found on academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/30385031/_Uchod%C5%BAcy_polityczni_z_Europy_%C5%9Arodkowo-Wschodniej_w_ameryka%C5%84skiej_polityce_zimnowojennej_1948-1954_Political_Exiles_from_East_Central_Europe_in_American_Cold_War_Politics_1948-1954_. ; *Anti-Communist Minorities in the U.S.*, ed. Ieva Zake (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2008).

[41] For more on African American critics of the United States relationships with the Soviet Union, see Joy Gleason Carew, Blacks, *Reds, and Russians: Sojourners in Search of the Soviet Promise* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

Beyond symbolic value, the U.S. government hired a number of refugees and exiles for work on foreign policy objectives regarding their countries of origin. This could involve clandestine work, but also employment in operations such as *Voice of America* radio services. Many Cold War refugees embraced collaboration with the U.S. government in part because they believed that their work with the U.S. government was beneficial to their country of origin. Although economic motivations likely played a role in such employment with the U.S. government, ideology does seem to have been influential.[42]

Afghans were just one ethnic group to find employment facilitating U.S. foreign policy objectives. During the Cold War, refugees or émigrés from places such as Eastern Europe and Cuba also worked on behalf of the U.S. government towards goals they felt were beneficial to their country of origin.

Historian Anna Mazurkiewicz found such aspirations among East Central European exiles that collaborated with the U.S. government during the Cold War between 1948 and 1954. To be sure, Mazurkiewicz also found these exiles often "refrained from referring to themselves as immigrants," and thus presumably did not see themselves as Americans either. Additionally, such individuals often disagreed with aspects of U.S. foreign policy.[43]

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[42] Weiner, 29-48, 67-68, 54-55, 160-161, 7173-176; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 622.
[43] Anna Mazurkiewicz, "Political Exiles from East Central Europe in American Cold War Politics, 1948-1954," 480.

Nevertheless, collaborating or working for the U.S. government on issues regarding their country of origin was compatible with their understanding of benefitting their country of origins' interests. Mazurkiewicz argued that although these exiles were largely unable to shape U.S. policy, they helped prevent Western countries from "forget[ting] the plight of the 'captive nations' and disregard[ing] the rights of these people to freedom."[44]

Similarly, Ieva Zake argued that, "Most political refugees [during the Cold War] arrived in the United States with heightened hopes for this country's role in helping liberate their home." Although they often faced disappointments in their efforts to affect policy, Zake maintains that "America was still their best, if not the only, friend, therefore they took advantage of its pluralistic political institutions and made themselves into notable political players."[45] Although Mazurkiewicz and Zake's works suggest many individuals may have been more interested in assisting their countries of origin than the United States, these refugees nevertheless found participation in U.S. institutions and foreign policy to be beneficial to their countries of origin.

Scholars of ethnicity in the United States have also found experiences outside of émigré politics relevant to "symbiotic" identity. For example, Historian Hasia Diner's 2001 book, *Hungering for America*, examined how migrating to the United States allowed Italian immigrants to consume Italian food culture largely unavailable to them in their places of birth. As Diner wrote, "Poor Italians believed that America offered

[44] Quote from Ibid, 484. Discussion of this work summarized from Ibid, 480-485.
[45] Ieva Zake, "Conclusion," in *Anti-Communist Minorities in the U.S.*, ed. Zake (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 255.

good prospects for good food."[46] The ability to afford Italian foods such as macaroni in the United Stated distinguished these immigrants as Italian, but markedly American, or at least Italian-American, compared to the diets of people of their class still in Italy.[47] Thus, migration to the United States allowed them to enjoy success as measured by Italian understandings of success.

Historians of U.S. Jewish history have also examined connections between Jewish identity, Americanization, and liberal views on civil rights. Here too, are examples of "symbiotic identity," in which individuals from an ethnic group use aspects of their identity or experiences to better their adopted country. A prominent example is Hasia Diner's *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935*. In this work, Diner contends that Jewish encounters with discrimination in other lands and their incorporation into U.S. society influenced them to support African American civil rights. Diner wrote that, "the lens through which they [U.S. Jews] saw blacks in the United States refracted their fears for the future and their assessment of the past, as well as their hopes that America might truly be different from all of their other homes."[48] Diner posits that as U.S. Jews struggled with issues such as education, gender, and religion "as

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[46] Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003) EBSCOhost.
Ibid, 47.
[47] Ibid, 48-83.
[48] Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935* (JHU Press, 1995), xiv.

part of their grappling with Americanization and modernization, so too Jews used the issue of race as they created an American Jewish culture."[49]

That is, American Jews recognized the injustice racism against African Americans caused, and wished to help rid it from a land that otherwise held so much promise. Jews attached themselves to African American civil rights causes, out of moral obligation, historical memory, and the belief that it was in their interest. As marginalized newcomers, many Jews felt unable to demand their own unique agenda.

African American civil rights, then, would be the frontline in which racism would be defeated or upheld.[50] For the United States to be "truly different," racism had to end, and for this to happen, the United States had to live up to its ideals. As Diner surmised, "The Yiddish newspapers displayed just how American they had become when they stressed the great gulf between the rhetoric of American democracy and the reality of racism."[51] Evoking American democracy, therefore, was not contrary to Jewish interests, and their political activism was not contrary to American ideals. The relationship was symbiotic.

Historian Seth Forman incorporated some of Diner's themes into his own work on African American-Jewish relations, and took it in a somewhat different direction. According to Forman, "Jews set about adjusting their Jewishness to American life, and

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[49] "Just as they [U.S. Jews] grappled with education, social welfare…and the nature of religious ritual as part of their grappling with Americanization and modernization, so too Jews used the issue of race as they created an American Jewish culture." Ibid.
[50] Ibid, ix-xvi.
[51] Ibid, 47.

the connecting link for Americanization was liberalism."[52] Forman contends that supporting civil rights for African Americans were not always in Jews' self-interest, but that Northern U.S. Jews often embraced civil rights causes out of a desire to ensure their distinctiveness. As Forman put it, "if the Jews in the North had absorbed the postwar commitment to freedom and equality, only more so than other Americans, they believed that was one way of ensuring communal purpose and survival."[53] Under this formulation, Jewish enthusiasm for African American civil rights was symbiotic to both American "postwar commitments" and Jewish distinctiveness. These examples all demonstrate instances in which historians interpreted individuals or communities as seeking to simultaneously affirm their "American" and "ethnic" identities.

This study also comes into conversation with studies of "whiteness" in ethnic and immigrant communities. Scholars in this field have generally examined the forces that have encouraged and coerced ethnic Americans and immigrants into assimilating into the U.S. "mainstream." Overall, these scholars argue that societal privileging of "whiteness" led many U.S. ethnic groups to identify as white, and adopt racial exclusivist ideologies. By conceiving themselves as "white" and thus, separate from African

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[52] The full quote was as follows, "Knowing that the United States bore no responsibility for Jewish history and so-offered the Jews no special quarter, Jews set about adjusting their Jewishness to American life, and the connecting link for Americanization was liberalism." Seth Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind: A Crisis of Liberalism* (NYU Press, 2000), 17.

[53] Forman contends that, "if the Jews in the North absorbed the postwar commitment to freedom and equality, only more so than other Americans, they believed it was one way of ensuring communal purpose and survival." Ibid, 53.

Americans, immigrants were often able to secure psychological and material benefits for themselves.[54]

These conceptual tools help explain the circumstances that led a number of South Asians, including Afghans, in the early twentieth century to argue in U.S. courts that they were white, and thus eligible to become naturalized citizens. Still, these whiteness studies can often be narratives of one-way assimilation that often equates "Americanness (or (Americanization") with "whiteness." Historian Neil Foley wrote, for example,

> for many immigrant groups, assimilation, in part, meant becoming "American," which is also to say, becoming White. And becoming White, Toni Morrison has written, means that "A hostile posture toward resident blacks must be struck at the Americanizing door before it will open."[55]

To be sure, many in the United States have historically conflated "whiteness" and "Americanness." Yet, "Americanness" has by no means meant the same thing to everyone. After all, Diner and Forman maintained that Jews often envisioned "Americanness" as democratic and liberal (broadly defined), if still flawed by racism. As Diner wrote about Jews in the United States from 1915-1935, "Having nowhere else to

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[54] See David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (Verso, 1999); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (Basic Books, 2006); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (Rutgers University Press, 1998); Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*, 1 edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).Neil Foley, "Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian Pact with Whiteness," in ed. Neil Foley, *Reflexiones 1997: New Directions in Mexican American Studies* (Austin: CMAS University of Texas Press, 1998), 53- 70.

[55] Ibid, 53.

go, they defined America as their last and heretofore most promising stop in two millennia of diaspora."[56]

Some Afghans in the United States also expressed admiration for American society and multiculturalism. Despite being told otherwise as a youth, Hassan Etemadi, who arrived in the United States during the 2010s, concluded Americans were tolerant of religious beliefs. Referring to his neighborhood in the San Francisco Bay Area, Etemadi stated, "in my areas that I am living in right now, I can see a church, and I can see a, you know, mosque which is right close to each other, and this is astonishing, especially for me to see you know how we [Afghan Muslims] are treated in this place…You have freedom and you can practice any religion you want."[57] Thus, immigrants have not always equated "Americanness" or "Americanizing" with white, Christian hierarchy.

Indeed, advocates of civil rights and multiculturalism have advanced an alternative conception of "Americanness" that envisioned extending the country's "heritage" of individual liberties to all segments of the population. Rather than a radical break with U.S. culture, such advocates articulated this vision as the realization of long-held American proclamations of freedom, individuality, and egalitarianism. Thus, this study seeks to distinguish between "Americanization," and "whiteness," the latter of which implies an ideology of racial exclusion or privilege. An individual may serve in the U.S. military or enjoy American food without the intention of "becoming white." As this

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[56] Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land*, xiv.
[57] Hassan Etemadi, interview with the author, October 2015.

study will demonstrate, many immigrants and "ethnic" Americans have desired to remain both American and distinct with their identity of origin.

This dissertation also supports the findings of a number of historians such as Donna Gabaccia and Carl J. Bon Tempo who have discussed the politicization of refugees and refugee admissions in the United States. Bon Tempo's work, which largely focuses on the formation of U.S. refugee policy during the Cold War, found that despite significant opposition to refugee admissions, "many Americans warmly welcomed refugees, regarding their arrival as consistent with that part of the American tradition that promises succor to victims of persecution."[58] Furthermore, Bon Tempo found that "refugee policymaking, because it was a 'national security' issue, was somewhat insulated from anti-newcomer blasts."[59] Indeed, U.S. admission of Afghan refugees during the Afghan-Soviet War support Bon Tempo's arguments. This project builds upon his work, and extends the narrative timeframe of his book. After the Cold War, refugee policy advocates could no longer use anti-Communism to advance their policies, but could find bipartisan support for admitting former non-citizen U.S. personnel from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as "special immigrants."

Donna Gabaccia's 2012 book, *Foreign Relations*, examined links between "immigrant foreign relations," U.S. foreign relations, and immigration policy. This dissertation also finds a link between foreign policy and immigration, and supports her assertion that immigrants and their descendants have often "collaborated across

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[58] Carl J. Bon Tempo, 2.
[59] Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 2.

borders," and "mobilized" in the United States to affect policy regarding issues important to them.[60]

Yet this dissertation reveals a different relationship between foreign policy and immigration politics. Gabaccia's work tends to see a link between military interventionism and immigrant restrictionism. In her words, "xenophobia has been a constant companion of periods of international warfare in U.S. history." Certainly, xenophobia often accompanied war. Yet, with perhaps the exception of World War I, immigration U.S. citizenship laws liberalized for Afghans when the country was engaged in international conflicts. The U.S. war in Afghanistan was no exception. While Donald Trump's election on an immigration reductionist platform can be tied to post-September 11th xenophobia, it should be noted that it occurred during a time of troop withdrawals and bipartisan disillusionment with international engagement.

This dissertation offers historians of the modern United States an important case study from which to test links between immigration, refugee policy, and U.S. foreign policy. While the Afghan community was, and is, a minor immigrant/refugee population and perhaps too small to be seen as a general model, its experiences can complicate and offer perspective on a number of issues or scholarly theories, particularly in regards to the post-September 11, 2001 United States. Such perspective is needed because our collective understanding of this period remains compromised by the recent haze of ideology and partisan memory.

Afghan American Studies

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[60] Gabaccia, 3

As U.S Afghan or Afghan American studies are still in its nascent stage, this study does not endeavor to reshape or "correct" previous works on the community. Instead, it seeks to construct a substantial narrative for future scholars' utilization and critique. Afghan American studies will likely expand in the coming years. It is this author's hope that this study will aid this growth by offering a history of the community for future projects to consult and critique.

This project comes into conversation with a number of published works. Presently, the most in-depth book on Afghans in the United States is Maliha Zulfacar's *Afghan Immigrants in the USA and Germany: A Comparative Analysis of the Use of Ethnic Social Capital* (1998). Zulfacar's work employs Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital and habitus as an explanatory tool for analyzing Afghan communities' efforts to build a viable approach for success in the host-country.[61]

Zulfacar found that Afghan immigrants in both Germany and the United States often had to make adaptions to life in both countries. What was valued or beneficial in one cultural context could have adverse effects in their new setting.[62] Those who largely resisted adaption found themselves facing "isolation and resignation under the pressures of their new circumstances."[63]

Additionally, Zulfacar found that Afghan immigrants in the United States and Germany often lacked the "cultural capital" necessary to achieve high levels of success

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[61] Maliha Zulfacar, *Afghan Immigrants in the USA and Germany: A Comparative Analysis of the Use of Ethnic Social Capital* (Münster; New Brunswick, N.J.: LIT Verlag, 1998), 37.
[62] Ibid, 209.
[63] Ibid, 213.

in mainstream society. As a result, they used the "social capital" they possessed such as kinship networks, strong family support, and "cultural capital" within the Afghan community, and invested heavily in their children's futures. As Zulfacar writes, "Because of their former high status and social position [in Afghanistan], they seek access to the power structure of their new social structure through their children, whom they hope will acquire legitimate, institutionalised signals emanating from a well-recognised educational institution."[64]

My own research hopes to supplement Zulfacar's work by examining U.S. Afghans' relationships with Afghanistan throughout various eras of history. During the Afghan civil war of the 1990s, for example, Afghans in the United States may have best obtained cultural capital through an investment in cultural preservation. After travel to Afghanistan increased during the 2000s, though, interactions in the country itself may have become a more alluring option.

Perhaps the only historical book of length on U.S. Afghans is Sara Y. Aharon's *From Kabul to Queens: The Jews of Afghanistan and their Move to the United States*. Aharon's work posits that Afghan Jews have adopted broader identities such as "Sephardic" and "Orthodox" in the United States that have allowed them to integrate into larger Jewish communities.[65] Aharon found that Afghan Jews in the United States have a lower level of nostalgia or remembrance for Afghanistan than other ethnic groups have for their place of origin. [66] Overall, Afghan Jews in the United States have

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[64] Ibid, 215.
[65] Aharon, *From Kabul To Queens*, 138.
[66] Ibid, 139.

acculturated in the United States, while attempting to retain their unique culture. This, however, has been challenging due to their small numbers.[67] My own study does not challenge Aharon's findings, but seeks to incorporate Afghan Jews in the United States into the discussion of the broader U.S. Afghan diaspora.

Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi's edited *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Afghan American Literature* provides a collection of short memoirs, essays, and a timeline of Afghan history in the United States. This work provides researchers with exceptional primary resource material and its timeline has been of invaluable assistance for this dissertation.

There have also been shorter published entries and articles written about Afghans in the United States. Shah Mahmoud Hanifi's 2006, "Material and Social Remittances to Afghanistan," in *Converting Migration Drains Into Gains: Harnessing the Resource of Overseas Professionals* is one such example.[68] This work examined the impact of remittances between the United States and Afghanistan. Hanifi's work saw potential for *hawaladars* (informal bankers commonly used in Muslim-majority countries) facilitating joint-investments with customers in Afghanistan and other projects related to reconstruction. Hanifi also saw potential for skilled individuals within the diaspora to contribute through professional organizations and employment in

[67] Ibid, 5.
[68] Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Material and Social Remittances to Afghanistan," in *Converting Migration Drains Into Gains: Harnessing the Resource of Overseas Professionals*, ed. C. Wescott and J. Brinkerhoff (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2006), 98-126, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/27967/converting-migration.pdf.

government positions. Social division and mismatched expertise (for example, skilled professionals serving as translators), however, hampered such efforts.

Ceri Oeppen also offers an informative entry on Afghans in the United States in *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans*. Oeppen's work is rich in statistics and touches on many of the important topics in the U.S. Afghan community's development such as the refugee wave of the 1980s and return to Afghanistan after 2001. The work, though, was primarily intended as a community profile of Afghans in the United States during the early 2000s rather than a full-length history as this dissertation offers.[69]

Oeppen also wrote about Afghan American return trips to Afghanistan in her work, "A stranger at 'home': interactions between transnational return visits and integration for Afghan-American professionals."[70] Oeppen found that Afghan Americans who made return trips to Afghanistan often felt they had become "strangers" in Afghanistan. Oeppen also found that there were also "reverse flows" of remittances from Afghanistan to the United States in the form of government positions, economic opportunities, and property sales. Thus, return trips were not necessarily the "antithesis" of integration (or transnationalism), and "in some cases transnational activities can support integration."[71]

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[69] Ceri Oeppen, "Afghan Immigrants," in *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor (ABC-CLIO, 2011), 29.
[70] Ceri Oeppen. "A stranger at 'home': interactions between transnational return visits and integration for Afghan-American professionals," *Global Networks*, Volume 13, Issue 2, (April, 2013): 261-278, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/glob.12008/epdf.
[71] Ibd, 262,276.

My own work often found similar situations and emotions expressed by some Afghans who visited Afghanistan. Like Oeppen, this dissertation did not find a strong negative correlation between return visits or transnationalism and integration. Indeed, as this dissertation shows, many Afghan Americans saw their dedication to, or efforts with, Afghanistan as compatible (symbiotic) with their commitment to the United States.

Since 2010, there have also been a growing number of master theses and dissertations examining topics related to Afghan Americans.[72] Morwari Zafar's 2016, "COIN-operated anthropology: Cultural knowledge, American counterinsurgency and the rise of the Afghan diaspora," examined Afghan Americans' role in cultural advising and interpreting for the U.S. war in Afghanistan. Zafar argued, "the Afghan-American diaspora as it exists today is a product of the encounter with American militarism."[73] Zafar was critical of much of the work Afghan American contractors produced, stating, "the knowledge produced [by Afghan American contractors for U.S. military] is a reflection of the social memory, history, class stratification, and migration experiences of Afghan-American households, and not necessarily a reflection of Afghanistan's socio-cultural reality or the collective consciousness of the Afghan population."[74]

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[72] See for example, Jeffrey L. Carson, "A Foreign and Domestic Policy Gap: The Resettlement of Our Allies," (PhD Diss., Northeastern University, 2015); Esther Frogel, "Afghan Jews and their Children: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Lived Experiences and Psychological Impact of Acculturation on First and Second Generation Traditional Afghan Jewish Immigrants," (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2015); Morwari Zafar, "COIN-operated anthropology: Cultural knowledge, American counterinsurgency and the rise of the Afghan diaspora," (PhD diss., Linacre College, University of Oxford, 2016).
[73] Morwari Zafar, "COIN-operated anthropology: Cultural knowledge, American counterinsurgency and the rise of the Afghan diaspora," 15.
[74] Ibid.

Zafar acknowledged that Afghan Americans had done "important work…in bridging cultural and linguistic divides," but found that many of the Afghan American cultural advisers for the U.S. military had limited qualifications or experience in Afghanistan in recent decades.[75] Others simply told the military what they thought they wanted to hear, or reinforced what they had already been told so as not to "confuse" them. As a result, Afghan Americans often conveyed simplistic "Orientalist" views of Afghanistan and Afghans, and frequently attributed abuses such as Afghan government corruption to "Afghan culture."[76]

My own research touches on many of Zafar's topics such as translators and cultural advising, but evaluating the methods and effectiveness of Afghan American contractors and employees is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Whereas Zafar's work focused on socio-economic motivations for working on behalf of the U.S. in Afghanistan, my own work found more ideological motivations for carrying out the work, and positive contributions of Afghan Americans. This analysis is not intended to contradict her work, as much as complement it with another angle to approach the subject.

Esther Frogel's dissertation "Afghan Jews and their Children," examined Afghan Jews' experiences with assimilation, ethnic identity, and memories of Afghanistan. Frogel found that Afghan Jews held a variety of identities such as Jewish, American, and Afghan. Furthermore, she found Afghan Jews' levels of acculturation and views of

[75] Quote from Ibid, 281.
[76] Ibid, 243-283.

Afghanistan varied considerably among generations and sex. Male immigrants shared higher levels of nostalgia for Afghanistan than women, and second generation Afghan Jews were less likely to strictly adhere to religious traditions.[77] Although many individuals from the second generation were proud of their heritage, as a whole they "indicated that they related more to the dominant culture, and were less likely to try to maintain their parents['] culture of origin."[78] The study also concluded that first generation Afghan Jewish immigrants experience high "expectation[s] of danger."[79]

As this historiographical review has indicated, Afghan history in the United States offers historians a unique perspective on issues such as ethnicity and Americanization. U.S. Afghans' unique experiences during both the Soviet War and U.S. "War on Terror" provide an important opportunity to contrast Afghan experiences in this setting with other ethnic groups' experiences in similar political circumstances. Throughout their history in the United States, Afghans have often tried to balance Afghan and U.S. identities with the political realities of both countries. When the occasion has arisen, many Afghans have acted upon opportunities to affirm both identities.

Methodology

This dissertation is the product of analyzing a substantial wealth of primary documents. These sources included newspapers databases, the U.S. census and

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[77] Esther Frogel, "Afghan Jews and their Children: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Lived Experiences and Psychological Impact of Acculturation on First and Second Generation Traditional Afghan Jewish Immigrants," (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2015), 110-150.
[78] Ibid, 130-150. Quote from Ibid, 130.
[79] Ibid, 119-120.

American Community Surveys, historical archives, oral history interviews, and of course secondary source material.

Although this dissertation employed a number of tried and true sources and methods, constructing a portrait of the early twentieth century U.S. Afghan community required a nuanced methodology. The most important resources for this era were the U.S. census data, naturalization papers, and other documents found on ancestry.com. After conducting searches for Afghanistan-born individuals in the 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1940 U.S. censuses on ancestry.com, I compiled information on excel sheets for quantification. I consulted the original scan of the census document to extract additional information than was available on the Ancestry transcription and protect against false positives of people incorrectly transcribed as born in Afghanistan. Although data on individuals may be inconsistent over the course of decades due to name changes, spelling changes, language barriers, and withholding information, I am confident that the aggregate data allows for at least a basic understanding of the community for a given decade.

I also consulted naturalization papers, passenger manifests, and contemporary travel guides to piece together how individuals travelled to the United States. Secondary sources regarding other South Asian communities and African American Muslims in similar locations and historical eras were also consulted to provide historical context.

I obtained data for the 1930 census through a different methodology. For this task, I pulled the data from IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series) website, extracted the data into the SAS statistics program, then inputted it into an Excel sheet

for tabulation. The original census documents were not viewed for 1930, unless a particular individual was being examined, and looked up on ancestry.com. As a result, there may be slight over-counts due to not being able to view the original documents and eliminate false-positives. When I wrote this dissertation, census data on individuals was unavailable past 1940.

Fortunately, there was a gradual increase in available historical media accounts of Afghans past 1940. This dissertation reflects this shift in sources. There is more discussion on what some Afghans thought In chapter two, which covers the years between 1947 and 1978, but less data on what was “representative” or typical. I obtained some quantitative data on U.S. Afghan during the 1970s by filtering individuals by birthplace and immigration year on the 5 percent sample of 1980 Census, available on the IPUMS website. Still, this methodology leaves a significant degree of imprecision.

Quantitative data on Afghans in the United States is particularly scarce between 1941 and 1979. Not only is census data on individuals unavailable past 1940, but the community was not large enough to appear on subsequent 1% demographic samples of the U.S. Census. Afghan immigrants, however, do show up on the 1980 5% sample and subsequent censuses after that date. I generally accessed post-1979 data through IPUMS, as well as U.S. Census Bureau’s American factfinder website. The annual American Community Annual American Community Surveys (2001-2016) featured on the IPUMS website proved invaluable for this dissertation.

In addition to aggregate statistics, there are substantial numbers of memoirs, media accounts, and living sources that offer insights about Afghans in the United States

since 1978. Historical newspaper archives on NewsBank and ProQuest available to Case Western Reserve University Students were exceptionally useful for accessing historical newspaper accounts. The University of California San Diego, and Sacramento, San Diego County, and San Francisco Public libraries were also immensely helpful for allowing me to access additional newspaper databases that required a library or student ID card.

It should be noted that oral histories and memoirs were largely employed to humanize the text, with little intention of implying these experiences were "representative" cases. After all, most interviewees were selected because they had done something notable or might share some insight on a specific organization, activity, or experience. Sometimes interviewees were used as examples of a particular sentiment being shared beyond one person, but not to imply that they were "representative" or what most Afghans experienced.

Terminology and Scope

This study generally refers to its subjects as "U.S. Afghans" or "Afghans in the United States" rather than "Afghan Americans." This was because "Afghan American" connotes a sense of identification with the United States as well as a sense of permanence. Although many have embraced the term, it does not effectively describe those who have only temporarily lived in the United States, identified as Afghans in exile, or at a particular historical moment saw their absence from Afghanistan as a temporary situation. Additionally, using "U.S. Afghan," avoids conflating "American" with the United States. This is not to say the term Afghan American is inaccurate or problematic, but it is too specific for the scope of this study. Occasionally, this

dissertation uses the term "Afghan American" to refer to specific individuals who identify as such or are U.S. citizens, as well to provide clarity in some case where other terms could be confusing. The term "Afghan Americans" is also used in the dissertation's subtitle to assist internet searches find the work.

In many ways, this is not a diaspora study in its purest sense, for it does not focus on other Afghan communities outside of the United States. Yet, "diaspora," remains a critical concept to understand this history. Terms such as "immigrant community" or "transnational community" do not encompass all Afghans in the United States. The Afghan community in the United States has also included individuals born in the United States. Therefore, this study is not solely a study of immigrants. Nor have all Afghans in the United States been "transnational" throughout their lives. All Afghans in the United States, though, are part of a history of dispersal from a common land of origin. As a result, the terms "diaspora" and "diasporic community" are the most inclusive to apply to Afghans in the United States.

This study uses a minimum of Dari, Pashtu, or Arabic terms. This is to avoid unnecessarily exoticizing or "othering" concepts that have similar words in English. Furthermore, the partial use of foreign words in otherwise translated sentences can make for garbled interpretations, such as, "There is no god but Allah," (rather than "There is no god but God,") which implies that Muslims believe in a "different god" than Christians and Jews.

Although this study is transnational, its scope is generally restricted to the United States and Afghanistan in order to allow for a wider breadth of time to be examined.

Despite shared foreign policy experiences and other similarities, the United States' central role in the Cold War and War in Afghanistan makes it difficult for one to assume that any formulation of theory applying to U.S. policy and the Afghan diaspora would apply to those in Canada. Such a study may be possible, but would require sacrifices to the timeframe this study employs. As this study is primarily concerned with change over time, priority was instead given to being inclusive of all known eras of migration in the United States rather than a broader geographic/national focus.

In this study's early chapters, Afghanistan is referred to as part of South Asia. This was done to note similarities between migrants from Afghanistan and those of British India and its successor states. Chapters discussing the years after the Cold War, however, place Afghanistan in the "broader Middle East" or the "Islamic World." Although these latter terms have obvious flaws, they probably represent the most commonly held mental geography among the U.S. public.

Finally, this study has made little attempt to define who is "Afghan," and has instead striven to include nearly all those who have identified as such.

Chapter I: The Pioneer Era (1890-1947)

Introduction

Between 1890 and 1947, the first recorded Afghans arrived in the United States.[80] It would not be long before American residents would politicize their lives in the United States. As the first Afghan immigrants arrived in the United States, riots broke out in a number of towns demanding the expulsion of 'Hindoos," a moniker commonly used during the era to refer to all South Asians. During these years, judges and U.S. policymakers would render decisions on Afghan immigrants' ability to become citizens. These legal judgements affected Afghans' right to vote and to own land in some states such as California. In 1917, U.S. policymakers even forbade the immigration of people from South and mainland East Asia, unless from an exempted occupation.[81] Thus, politics was not merely an abstract intellectual exercise, but a process that limited life opportunities and constrained integration into the "American community."

At the heart of these controversies was Afghan immigrants' perceived racial status, which determined immigrants' eligibility to become citizens. As a small and recent ethnic group in the United States, U.S. authorities held few established methods for classifying them in American racial hierarchies and shared no consensus on the

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[80] This was determined through U.S. Census files found on ancestry.com. Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed August 2015-2018.

[81] Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, Second edition (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 279;
Kritika Agarwal, "Shadows of the Past: Trump's Executive Order on Immigration and the Asiastic Barred Zone," *Tides Magazine*, February 5, 2017, South Asian American Digital Archive, https://www.saada.org/tides/article/shadows-of-the-past.

matter.[82] At various times, Afghans were designated as white, black, "Hindoo," and "other" on U.S. government documents. Afghans also faced contradictory rulings on their racial status and subsequent right to citizenship until the mid-twentieth century.

Given the importance of race to U.S. society during this era, Afghans in the United States had little choice but to make sense of their place in a socially constructed racial hierarchy, and decide how to approach it. Their decisions, and Americans' acceptance or rejection of them, affected both their place in an ethnic community and their position in the era's national hierarchy.

South Asian politics were also part of Afghans' lives in the United States. Most individuals appear to have generally been aware of international boundaries, imperial relations, and in later years, post-independence state rivalries. Nationalism left its mark on the Afghan community and was a unit of community organization. For example, an Afghan organization existed in the United States as early as 1921.[83] Afghanistan and "Afghan" identity, though, experienced shifting borders and ambiguous conceptualizations. As a result, membership in the Afghan community in the United States appears to have been rather open and attracted some individuals born outside of its contemporary borders.

The Origins of "Afghan" Migration

In the early twentieth century, the terms "Afghan" and "Afghanistan" had notably ambiguous meanings. It is not always certain what individuals meant by

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[82] Wartime whiteness case when small size is deemed to make Thind criteria ineligible.
[83] "Afghan Party Received Here," *Sacramento Union*, July 4, 1921, p. 1, California Digital Newspaper Collection.

identifying as such in the United States.[84] Historically, the term “Afghan” had been synonymous with the Pashtun people, but nation-building efforts attempted to extend this definition to nearly all of Afghanistan’s people.[85] Further complicating matters, Afghanistan’s borders were disputed, so there was no consensus where Afghanistan “properly” began and ended. As a result, there was no unanimity on who was “Afghan” and where “Afghanistan” was delineated.

Early twentieth century understandings of “Afghan” and “Afghanistan” were highly influenced by experiences with European imperialism and nationalism. Prior to the nineteenth century, people in present-day Afghanistan would have said they lived in the “Khurasan,” “Zabulistan,” Kabulistan,” “Turkistan” regions or perhaps a given dynasty’s empire.[86] These names were as likely to reference cities, geological features, or the land’s relative position to the sun as much as they might signify an ethnic group. European concepts of nationalism, though, would eventually change this.

British and Westerners tended to refer to the kingdom that occupied much of the contemporary country’s geography as “Afghanistan.” This was in reference to what they understood to be the largest ethnic group in the region, Afghans (Pashtuns).[87]

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[84] Indeed, in the case of census data, it is unclear who identified them as “Afghan.” Such a determination may have been made by a single individual from a large household of laborers who talked to the census taker.

[85] See Vartan Gregorian, “Mahmud Tarzi and Saraj-ol-Akhbar: Ideology of Nationalism and Modernization in Afghanistan,” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Summer, 1967): 349, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4324163; Senzil K Nawid, “Tarzi and the Emergence of Afghan Nationalism: Formation of a Nationalist Ideology,” American Institute of Afghanistan Studies (Boston University), 2009, http://www.bu.edu/aias/nawid_article.pdf.

[86] Anthony Hyman, “Nationalism in Afghanistan,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 2 (2002): 301-301, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3879829.
These names though were for regions larger than towns or hamlets, that were also important identifiers.

[87] Ibid, 301-302.

"Afghanistan," though, was not exclusively home to Afghans/Pashtuns, but Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and other ethnic groups as well. Nevertheless, the early nineteenth century Durrani Empire and its successor states became known as "Afghanistan" to Westerners, and eventually the kingdom's people would all commonly be known as "Afghans."[88]

The British also played a critical role in determining Afghanistan's borders. Despite facing a number of spectacular military defeats in their efforts to control Afghan politics, the British government was eventually able to force Afghanistan into its sphere of influence after the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1881). British officials, though, did not necessarily want to rule Afghanistan. After 1881, British policy makers were largely content to leave it as a "buffer state" between their own empire and Russia's, so long as they could largely determine Afghanistan's foreign policy.[89]

Out of these developments, a great controversy arose that would have severe ramifications for Afghanistan' relationship with its neighbors and Afghan identity itself, the location of its southern and eastern border. The origins of this border controversy stretched back to the early nineteenth century, after Afghanistan had lost Pashtun-majority lands to Ranjit Singh's Sikh Empire. Following Ranjit Singh's death, however, the empire was subsequentially defeated and annexed into British India in wars lasting

[88] Note these is still controversy about the term Afghans, with some non-Pashtuns rejecting the term as too Pasthun-centric. For more on this issue see, Sayed Askar Mousavi, The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic, and Political Study (St. Martins Press, 1997).
Anthony Hyman, "Nationalism in Afghanistan."
[89] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 146-17, 153-154.

from 1845 to 1849.[90] As a result, the status of the fore-mentioned Pashtun-majority lands was unclear.

Many Afghan officials wanted the land "back," but British officials resisted. In 1893, the British pressured the Afghan government into to accepting a boundary, the so-called "Durand Line," that left this contested territory within British India's orbit. It was unclear, though, if these were formal political borders or simply spheres of influence.[91] The status of these Pashtun-majority territories would prove exceedingly controversial and a source of exasperation for generations of Pashtun nationalists in Afghanistan, neighboring states, and in diaspora.[92]

Notably, many of the first people in the United States to identify as Afghans or from Afghanistan were born in towns located near this border, often on British India side. Thus, interpreting what these individuals meant by terms such as "Afghanistan" requires a degree of interpretation and a familiarity with the border controversy. As will be seen, interpretations of these controversies would remain integral to many such people's continuing sense of self and belonging through the first half of the twentieth century. An issue that would only grow in importance after the lands in question were eventually incorporated into Pakistan in 1947.

The border agreement also marked a symbolic turning point in Afghanistan's history, as it would help mark its rulers' shift from prioritizing imperial expansion to

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[90] Hyman, 301; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 368-372, chart 21. Dates from "Sikh Wars," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed August 2017, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sikh-Wars.
[91] For more on this ambiguity, see Dupree, 426-427.
[92] For more on Durand Line controversies see, Dupree, 425-428, 489-495 Ewans, 160-162 Barfield, 208-209.

nation-building.[93] After acquiescing to the 1893 boundary agreement, Afghanistan's King Abdur Rahman set his focus on consolidating power within his kingdom's borders (or perhaps its sphere of influence), keeping out "foreign influences," and building up his kingdom's military capacity. A process that would have profound implications for Afghan identity.

As in the case of the Americas, "nation-building" in Afghanistan at times took on massive land expropriations, forced religious conversions, and genocidal violence against those who resisted the state's expansion.[94] This violence was particularly prominent under King Abdur Rahman's rule. Yet under other leaders' guidance, Afghan nation-building efforts were not as intolerant. After the king's death in 1901, succeeding Afghan monarchs collaborated with modernist intellectuals such as Mahmud Tarzi to build a "modern Afghanistan" capable of resisting European interference.[95] Unlike post-World War I modernists in Turkey and Iran, Afghan modernists of the era did not insist on ethnic or linguistic homogeneity.[96] As Afghanistan historian Vartan Gregorian wrote, Tarzi's newspaper, *Sarj-ol-Akhbar* sought to construct a "geographic" and "religious" understanding of the word, "Afghan."[97] An understanding of the term that was

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[93] Dupree, xix.
[94] For Abdur Rahman's reign see, Dupree, 417-429, Mousavi, 111-136 Barfield, 146-163.
[95] Nawid, "Tarzi and the Emergence of Afghan Nationalism: Formation of a Nationalist Ideology;" Gregorian, "Mahmud Tarzi and Saraj-ol-Akhbar: Ideology of Nationalism and Modernization in Afghanistan," 349.
[96] See Ibid.
[97] Gregorian, "Mahmud Tarzi and Saraj-ol-Akhbar: Ideology of Nationalism and Modernization in Afghanistan," 349.

eventually cemented in Afghanistan's 1923 constitution.[98] Thus, "Afghanistan" and "Afghan" took on an increasingly less ethnic, and increasingly state-based connotation.

As seemingly improvised as Afghan identity construction was, it proved a source of ample meaning and obligation to its citizens and diaspora. Afghan nationalism would both rally people to resist foreign intrusion and compel individuals to invest in "their" community's welfare. Like many enduring ideals, it was born out of pragmatism, but served both practical and ideological purposes. As will be seen, the debates and "nation-building" efforts of turn of the twentieth century Afghanistan would resonate across the globe to its diaspora in the United States.

Migration out of South Asia

Self-identified Afghans who arrived in the United States at the turn of the century constituted a minor tributary stream into a larger flow of South Asian labor into markets across the globe. Greater opportunity, made possible by advancements in transportation and the expansion of the British Empire, fueled these migrant networks.[99]

Afghan and/or Pashtun migration was part of this global flow of labor searching for greater opportunities.[100] By at least the turn of the twentieth century, Pashtuns from Afghanistan and British India had begun migrating to various territories of the British

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[98] Nawid, "Tarzi and the Emergence of Afghan Nationalism: Formation of a Nationalist Ideology."
[99] Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America*, 1st edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 7-8. Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2002), 366-404; Dirk Hoerder, "Migrations and Belongings," in *A World Connecting: 1870–1945*, ed. Emily S. Rosenberg, Akira Iriye, and Jürgen Osterhammel (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2012),435-589.
[100] For more on South Asian migration during this era, see Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium*; Hoerder, "Migrations and Belongings."

Empire, including South Africa, Singapore, Australia, and the Caribbean. These individuals often worked as indentured workers in plantations, transporters, or in security forces.[101] Many of those who ended up in the United States had probably first worked in these outposts of the British Empire. Indeed, U.S. naturalization documents of Afghanistan-born laborers of the era frequently listed locations such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and London as last places of foreign residence.[102]

Geographic and occupational patterns suggest some of the Afghan migrations to the United States were linked to much larger ethnic Punjabi movements to the United States. Many self-identified Afghans who lived in the United States in the early twentieth century settled in the same locales as Punjabis (present-day India and Pakistan), travelled along similar routes, and often worked in the same occupations. Additionally, they shared an analogous gender imbalance and often took up comparable living arrangements.[103] Yet many of these similarities may have been a result of shared economic conditions, knowledge of North American wages, and routes out of South Asia rather than actual co-migration.

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[101] Nichols, *A History of Pashtun Migration, 1775-2006*, 107-134.
[102] *"Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, accessed 2017,* ancestrylibrary.com*.*
[103] For living and work arrangements see Jensen 24-41, *SAA*, Leonard, 39-65.

SALOON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered

S. S. Nippon maru sailing from Hong Kong 9th, May, 1908

Figure 1 This cropped image of a passenger manifest from Hong Kong to Honolulu shows a single Afghan traveler among almost entirely Punjabi passengers. Citation: National Archives and Records Administration, Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Honolulu, Hawaii, National Archives Microfilm Publication, A3422, 019, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787-2004; RG 85, Ancestry, accessed August 2017, https://ancestrylibrary.com.

Government and passenger manifests suggest that Afghan immigration to the United States consisted of multiple legs in the early twentieth century. Afghans had to utilize existing imperial channels of transportation, sometimes over the course of taking up different occupations in vastly different regions of residence.[104] First, Afghans had to travel to a port such as Hong Kong or Manila that featured trans-Pacific voyages.

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[104] *Bradshaw's Through Routes to the Capitals of the World and Overland Guide to India, Persia, and the Far East: Handbook of Indian, Colonial, and Foreign Travel, with Itineraries of the principal Railways, ocean-tracks, River-ways, post Roads, and Caravan Routes, Maps, Plans, Glossaries, and Vocabularies*, (London: Bradshaw's Guide Offices, 1903); "Description of Repairs to Shafts of S.S. Minnesota," *Railway and Marine News*, 9, no. 1 (January 15, 1911), 14-15; also consultation with Puget Sound Maritime History Society.

For occupations, see "Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, accessed 2016-2017, http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/search/category.aspx?cat=115.

North America ports of entry varied. Initially, Vancouver, Canada was an important North American destination (about 4,700 "Indians" arrived from 1906 to 1907) for South Asian labor.[105] After Canada effectively banned South Asian migration in 1908, though, it appears that most Afghans, along with other South Asians migrating to North America, bypassed Canada.[106] Western U.S. cities such as Seattle and possibly San Francisco were common North American ports of entry from at least 1908 through 1916.[107] By the late 1910s, a separate Atlantic migration route took Afghan immigrants to the United States by way of Europe.[108]

Afghan migrations to the United States are indicative of a globalization and continental integration brought on by Western empires and advances in technology.[109]

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[105] Arrival statistic from "A hundred years of immigration to Canada 1900-1999," Canadian Council for Refugees," accessed August 2017, http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-1900-1999.

[106] This was concluded by a compilation of naturalization records that listed where individuals had departed from, as well from the following articles about the decline of South Asians in Canada. Only one person, a student's departure to the United States listed British Columbia between 1908 and 1947. Granted that only two people before 1908 had listed British Columbia as a place of departure, it may have never been significant to begin with.
For Canada, see Ibid; Norman Buchignani, "South Asian Canadians," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Historica Canada, March 4, 2015, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/south-asians/. Hugh Johnston, "Komagata Maru," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Historica Canada, May 19, 2016, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/komagata-maru/. Ancestry.

[107] As of this writing, for naturalization records for the California's Central Valley region appear to remain largely un-digitalized and remain difficult to obtain. It is plausible that many of the Afghan immigrants who lived in this region arrived in the United States via San Francisco. Regardless, the importance of Seattle, and the subsequent rise of New York's importance for Afghanistan-immigration is apparent from naturalization papers. *"Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, accessed 2016-2017,* http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/search/category.aspx?cat=115.
For Central Valley naturalization records "remain largely un-digitalized and difficult to obtain," see "California Naturalization and Citizenship,"FamilySearch, accessed August 2017, https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/California_Naturalization_and_Citizenship.

[108] *"Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, accessed 2016-2017,* http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/search/category.aspx?cat=115.

[109] See Karen Isaksen Leonard, *The South Asian Americans* (Greenwood Press, 1997); Jensen, *Passage from India*; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium*, 366-404; Dirk Hoerder, "Migrations and Belongings," 435-589.

Although more isolated than most countries, Afghanistan was part of this new global system. As will be seen, its migrants would not sever inter-connectivity and global awareness upon crossing the Pacific. Nor would they escape the racial politics of their new home in the United States.

The First Communities

Afghan communities in the United States were exceedingly small at the turn of the twentieth century. In fact, U.S. census records indicate fewer than 10 Afghanistan-born residents in 1900, and approximately 58 in 1910.[110] Still, by this latter date, the U.S. Afghan population bore a number of characteristics that would hold for decades to come.

For instance, a majority of Afghans in 1910 were laborers, a situation that would remain true through at least 1940. As in the coming decades, they were predominately, if not entirely, male and mostly unmarried. Although Afghans travelled to the United States alongside others from the Asian continent, they did not exclusively settle with

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[110] My search of the 1900 census records, using ancestry.com, found three. Searches for additional people in 1910 and 1920 censuses who claimed immigration dates of 1900 or earlier yielded six additional people. See introduction for an overview of the methodologies used in the demographic research for this chapter.

Citations: *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900,* Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed August 2017, *https://ancestrylibrary.com*; Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed 2016, *https://ancestrylibrary.com*; *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed 2016, https://ancestrylibrary.com*. Steve Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, IPUMS (1930 U.S. Census 100%), University of Minnesota, 2015, http://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V6.0.

other Asian nationalities.[111] Finally, Afghans were highly mobile in the 1910s, with a significant number likely leaving the United States.[112] Ethnic enclaves were no sooner established before they would disperse.

Even by 1910, Afghan mobility was such that Afghans had settled throughout the American West in states such as Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Nevada. One person even lived in the Alaska territory. Those who lived away from the coasts tended to be fluent in English and engaged in small-scale retailing occupations such as peddling or street vending that took them to far-off markets in the interior. Most, however, stayed near the coast and worked as laborers in the lumber industry.[113]

[111] This information was extracted from transcriptions of data from ancestry.com. As part of this study's efforts to compile data on Afghanistan-born individuals in the 1900, 1910, and 1940 censuses, brief notes were taken on the ethnicity of Afghanistan-born individuals' neighbors and co-inhabitants of their dwelling. Ibid.
[112] Ibid; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.
[113] Ibid.

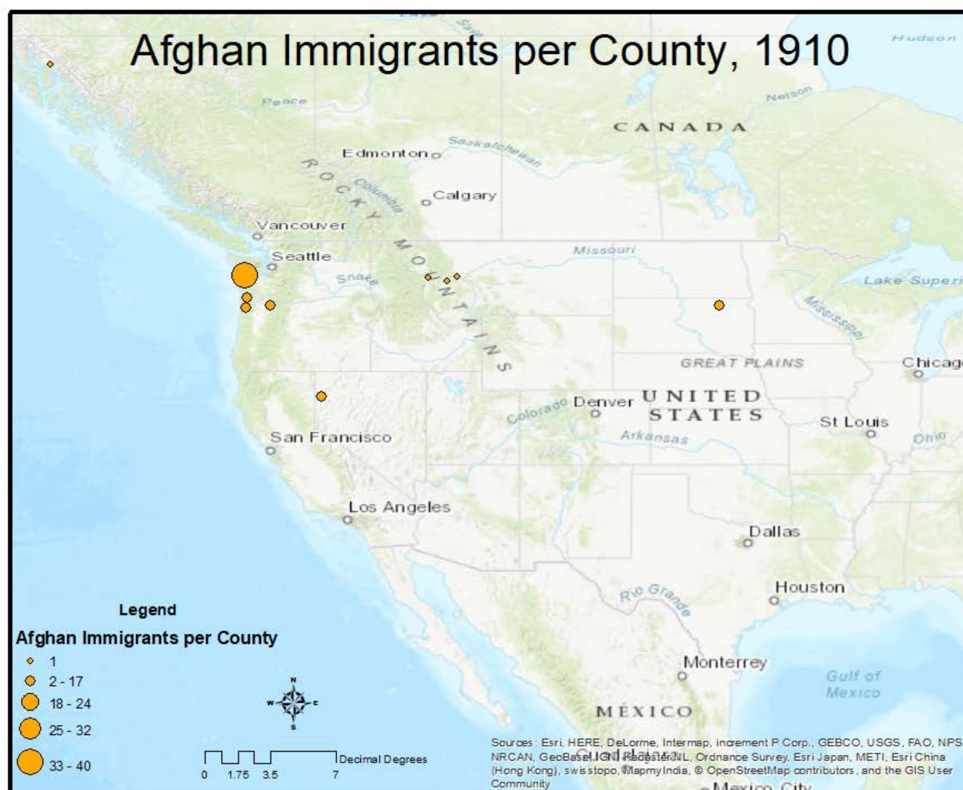

Figure 2 1910 County-level concentration of Afghanistan-born population in the United States (2017 county boundaries). Citation: Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*Ancestry.com; ArcMap.*

In 1910, the heart of the Afghan community was located in the Aberdeen-area of Washington state, where the census of that year indicated approximately 40 Afghanistan-born residents.[114] Nearly all of these individuals, if not all, worked in the region's lumber industry. Historically, a logging community with rolling hills, Aberdeen is located south of Seattle on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. At the time, the town was by no means a "shining city on a hill," a "gold mountain," or worthy of any other

[114] "Afghan" here refers to those with Afghanistan listed as their birthplace in the census. Many of these individuals were also listed as Pashtu speakers. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry.

immigrant idealization of pioneer lands. Instead, it bore a stronger resemblance to frontier towns of “Old West” mythology, characterized by early deaths and a desire to extract the land’s resources into profit. Nevertheless, it appears to have been the first recorded settlement in the United States of more than five Afghans.[115]

Figure 3 Aberdeen, Washington circa 1915. Image courtesy of Jones Photo Historical Collection. Photograph Copyright Anderson & Middleton Company. Citation: “View of Chehalis River at Aberdeen – circa 1915 - #L400400_1,” Jones Photo Historical Collection, Anderson & Middleton Company, accessed August 2017, http://www.jonesphotocollection.com/Obj16279?sid=163278&x=2322347.

Put bluntly, life in the Aberdeen lumber industry was difficult. As local historian Andrew M. Prouty described it, the occupational hazards of the U.S. and Canadian lumber industry rendered “a history of almost unremitting violence…committed against the land by the loggers and the reciprocal violence endured by the men themselves

[115] It is unknown if this community had been continuously settled by its Afghan residents, or was a product of intrastate migration. It is also possible that this was the last remaining community of size in the region after a series of anti-Asian riots throughout the U.S. Pacific Northwest and British Columbia.

while 'opening up the country.'"[116] In 1923, alone, at least 215 people perished in logging work related deaths in Washington.[117] Those who managed to find work in the saw mills could avoid falling trees, but faced the prospect of severing their limbs on the mill's saws.

Figure 4 Aberdeen-area workers next to a saw mill circa 1907. Image courtesy of Jones Photo Historical Collection. Photograph Copyright Anderson & Middleton Company. Citation: "Men near sawmill and long pond – circa 1907 - #G1259_1," Jones Photo Historical Collection, Anderson & Middleton Company, accessed August 2017, http://www.jonesphotocollection.com/Obj16279?sid=163278&x=2322347.

Yet under these menacing circumstances, some 40 Afghanistan-born immigrants eked out a life for themselves.[118] In 1910, 35 were crammed into two households in

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[116] Andrew M. Prouty quoted in John C. Hughes and Ryan Teague Beckwith, *On the Harbor: From Black Friday to Nirvana* (Stephens Press, LLC, 2005), 16.

[117] Ibid, 14.

[118] Most Afghan immigrants in the Aberdeen area shared their housing with large numbers of other Afghans. Thus, it is not entirely clear if each individual identified themselves as Afghan, or if this

Aberdeen and neighboring Junction City, Washington. These two households, in fact, constituted a majority of the country's Afghanistan-born people.[119]

Afghans were not the only ones to live in such circumstances. For example, historian Joan M. Jensen found similar living arrangements among Punjabi immigrants in California, writing,

> …men often lived together, hired one man as cook, and were able to save as much as two-thirds of their wages to send home. Although a few men who lived together worked separately, each contributing his share to group expenses, the most common arrangement was to form labor partnerships in which the men lived in common, worked as a unit, and divided earnings equally.[120]

There is another possible explanation for Afghan living arrangements in Aberdeen. As will be seen, racial violence was rampant at the time, and riots against South Asian immigrants had stricken the Pacific Northwest in 1907. It is possible that the Afghans in the Aberdeen region were living in temporary arrangements after Afghans in others towns sought sanctuary from rioting in preceding years.

By the 1920 Census, all Afghans had apparently left the Aberdeen region, though a few remained in the state.[121] The first recorded Afghan community in the United States was no more, but Afghan life in the United States would increase in the years to come.

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designation was given to them by someone speaking to the census takers. Information for each individual, though, is differentiated and not the product of a hastily made block entry.

[119] Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry.

[120] Jensen, 39 See also Leonard SAA, 45.

[121] Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.

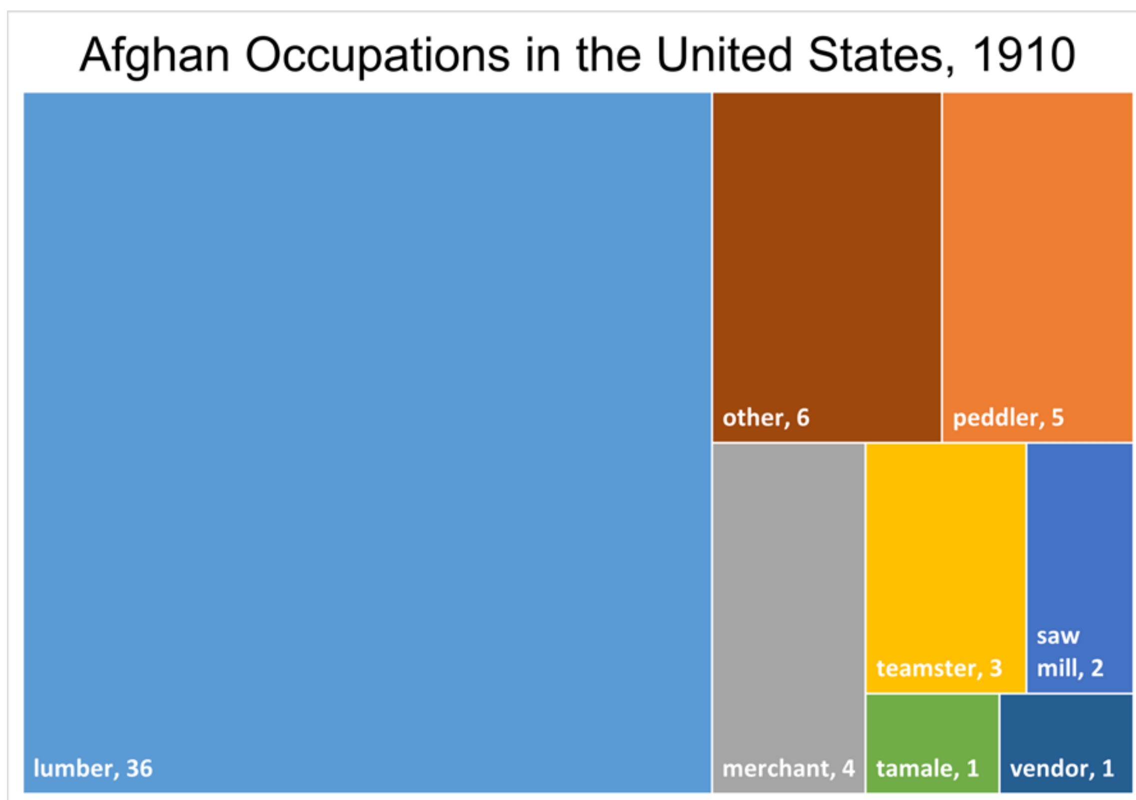

Table 2 Occupations of census-reported Afghanistan-born individuals in 1910. Citation: Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry.com, https://ancestrylibrary.com*. Map from ArcGIS online.*

What did "Afghan" Mean?

Given the ambiguity of the terms "Afghan" and "Afghanistan," a considerable degree of historical analysis is needed to spell out what was meant by these identifications during the first decades of the twentieth century. Self-identified Afghan responses on U.S. government documents during the era demonstrate that they employed multiple and often overlapping understandings of "Afghanistan" during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Indeed, some U.S. immigrants who identified as Afghan (during at least one point in their lives) were from towns on the British India side of the 1893 Afghan boundary/border. For instance, Joseph Joffrey's grave-marker in the Afghan section of a Sacramento cemetery listed Afghanistan as his place of birth. Joffrey, though (whose

given name was Dollha Khan), was born in a town in contemporary Pakistan before the 1893 border treaty.[122] His brother, Aurang Shah, was listed as born in Afghanistan in the 1930 and 1940 U.S. Censuses, but listed the Northwest Frontier Province of India on his World War II draft registration.[123] He was born after the border agreement. Zarif Khan, a restaurant owner in Wyoming, was born in the town of Bara prior to it being formally annexed by British India. He also identified as Afghan.[124] Noting these places of birth is not to suggest such individuals were any less "Afghan" than others born within contemporary Afghanistan's borders. Rather, it demonstrates the flexibility of national identities during this era, and perhaps self-identified Afghans' in the United States disinclination to adapt "Indian" identity.

Notably, many of these individuals had been born prior to the establishment of the 1893 boundary (border).[125] Thus, they likely considered themselves born in

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[122] He also listed himself as from Texas in the 1940 census, so there may have been some creativity with these designations. Fortunately, his son was subject of an extensive biography so a relatively reliable sketch of his life can be sorted out. Sasha Anawalt, *The Joffrey Ballet: Robert Joffrey and the Making of An American Dance Company*, Reissue edition (New York: Scribner, 1996), 365-366; "Joseph 'Joe' Joffrey, Find A Grave, accessed June 30, 2017, https://www.findagrave.com. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Bureau of the Census, Seattle, King, Washington, Roll: T627_4380A, ED: 40-224B, ancestrylibrary.com.

[123] *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Bureau of the Census, Sacramento California, Roll: 81A, ED: 34-90, ancestrylibrary.com; *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, Bureau of the Census, Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts, Roll: 945, p. 24B, ED:24B, ancestrylibrary.com.

[124] Kathryn Schultz's article about Zarif Khan states that his "natal village was ceded to British India before his birth." The British had indeed effectively controlled much of Pashtun areas that are now part of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan since the Sikh Wars, but the 1893 border/boundary between British India and Afghanistan had not been agreed upon at the time of Zarif Khan's birth around 1887. Many believed this land was still part of Afghanistan. The 1893 border/boundary agreement, though, had actually not been signed by the time of his birth around 1887. Kathryn Schulz, "Citizen Khan," *New Yorker*, June 6 & 13, 2016 Issue, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/06/06/zarif-khans-tamales-and-the-muslims-of-sheridan-wyoming.

[125] This statement is based on data regarding individuals showing up on ancestry.com searches of the 1910 and 1920 U.S. censuses for people born in Afghanistan, and then compiled into an excel sheet. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry*; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*

Afghanistan. Others born after 1893 would presumably have little incentive to differentiate themselves from their "Afghan" family members and neighbors by identifying as "Indian" or "Hindoo."

Additional factors may have also compelled individuals to identify as "Afghan." It was more indicative of an individual's religion, ethnicity, and region than generic terms common in the United States at the time such as "Indian" or "Hindoo." "Afghan" was also free of colonial association.[126] Instead, Afghans and Afghanistan held the prestige of resisting the British military and remaining one of the last independent nations in Asia, a prestige similarly afforded to Ethiopia among the African diaspora.[127] The presence of a strong anti-imperialist movement among South Asians in the United State may have influenced individuals to avert identifying with an imposed British identity such as "Indian."[128] Still, it does not appear as though "Afghanistan" was merely a signifier of Pashtun ethnicity among immigrants.

Not all people who claimed to be from Afghanistan in the United States were Pashtun nationalists from British India. Naturalization papers indicate that at least a significant number of Afghans were born within contemporary Afghanistan's borders.[129] Some of those who cited birth in Afghanistan on the 1920 census were Persian

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[126] Karen Isaksen Leonard wrote that, "Some Muslims had resented being termed "'Hindus,' Salim Khan told me (Sacramento, 1982), and gave their place of birth as Afghanistan to differentiate themselves from the majority group of Sikhs from India. Khan came after 1946; I found it hard to check this statement, since descendants' versions of place names are not reliable." Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 27.
[127] For Ethiopia's importance to African American activism and internationalism see, James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961*, New edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
[128] For more on South Asian anti-imperialism activism in the United States, see Jensen.
[129] These forms often list cities such as Kabul, Herat, and Jalalabad listed as individuals' places of birth. *"Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, accessed 2016-2017,* http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/search/category.aspx?cat=115.

speakers.[130] These individuals were probably either non-Pashtuns or Pashtuns from Afghanistan's urban centers. Additionally, one person who listed Afghanistan as their birthplace was likely Jewish. [131] Thus, "Afghanistan" and "Afghan" were anything but strict definitions.

These differing, but by no means mutually exclusive, understandings of Afghan identity offer insight into the development and extent of early twentieth century Afghan nationalism. Self-identified Afghans that arrived in the United States appear to have held sophisticated understandings of ethnic and national identifications. They knew where Afghanistan's borders were demarcated and, as we shall see, the colonial relationships of its neighboring states. Afghanistan meant something to them, but their relationship to its government is unclear and was probably minimal, given the lack of records regarding it. All characteristics that suggest what Dufoix would call an "atopic" or perhaps "enclaved" labor diaspora.

Afghan Encounters with Race

During the early 1900s and 1910s, the United States was a country deeply gripped by the issue of race. Afghan immigrants to the U.S. West entered a land not far removed from its frontier legacy, marked by racism, violence, and cut-throat

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[130] *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*

[131] The individual who was likely Jewish had the common Jewish surname Cohen, and was listed as of the "Hebrew" race on his naturalization petition. "Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, ancestrylibrary.com; *Index to Petitions for Naturalizations Filed in Federal, State, and Local Courts in New York City, 1792-1906*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC, NAI Number: 5700802, *Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009,* record group 21, digital image, Ancestry, accessed September 2017, https://ancestrylibrary.com.

competition. Although Afghans needlessly suffered from these hazards, they also resisted and compromised with the existing order.

By the time Afghans entered the United States, there was already enthusiasm for the exclusion or even expulsion of Asian immigrants to the United States. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act restricted all but a few exempted Chinese from immigrating to the United States, and many in the United States aspired to extend immigration exclusion to all of Asia.

In 1907, riots broke out in the lumber town of Bellingham, Washington, causing its large South Asian population to flee. Shortly afterwards, similar riots broke out in nearby Vancouver, British Columbia.[132] Anti-Asian immigrant activities also occurred in Aberdeen, Washington that year.[133] Perhaps because of this and other anti-immigrant hostilities, Washington state's Afghan population dramatically dropped afterwards, as did the South Asian population in British Columbia.[134] Yet, it should also be noted that the difficult and hazardous working conditions of the lumber industry may have also played a part in this decline. Nevertheless, the danger anti-Asian sentiment posed to Afghan hopes of making a life for themselves was clear.

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[132] Seema Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 25-27.

The absence of an India-born population in Bellingham, Washington was confirmed using an Ancestry.com. Notably, though, there was a significant Chinese population in the city in 1910, after the riots. "The 1907 Bellingham Riots," Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, accessed August 2017, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/bham_intro.htm; Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry.

[133] Jonathan H. X. Lee, *History of Asian Americans: Exploring Diverse Roots: Exploring Diverse Roots* (ABC-CLIO, 2015), 79.

[134] For Canada, see http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/south-asians/. For Afghans in the U.S., *Fourteenth Census of the United States*, 1920, Ancestry.com.

While racial status was undoubtedly an omnipresence facet of life in the United States, government officials often struggled to place South Asians (including Afghans) into a racial category. In the context of early U.S. history, "white," generally meant not "black" and not "[American] Indian." As the country annexed territory, and people from around the globe immigrated to the United States, though, it became unclear where the legal borders of whiteness stood. The stakes were high, as only "whites" and people of "African descent," were the only immigrants eligible to become naturalized citizens at the time.[135] Proving their "whiteness" became a route to citizenship.

This was a complicated matter that defied many contemporary conventions. Nearly every European immigrant group was considered legally white. Despite often being seen as a race apart, Mexicans in the United States were also promised eligibility for U.S. citizenship under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, and thus deemed legally white in most instances.[136]

U.S. officials appear to have held inconsistent opinions regarding South Asians' "whiteness" and responded with contradictory responses to their citizenship applications.[137] Historian Joan Jensen found that by 1908, the bureau of naturalization

[135] Ibid, 245.

[136] This interpretation of Mexican "whiteness," however, was at times ignored, especially in non-government affairs. Cite historiography

[137] In the first half of the twentieth century, Asian Americans had limited success obtaining citizenship. Although Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 outright denied Chinese the right to naturalize, the eligibility of other people of Asian birth was left up for a great deal of interpretation. According to historian Joan M. Jensen, Asian citizenship cases were at first taken up by local clerks of court where Japanese applicants were usually rejected, but South Asians applicants were sometimes approved. Jensen, *Passage from India*, 248-249; Schulz, "Citizen Khan." For laws and rulings regarding Chinese immigrants see, Ian Haney López, *White by Law 10th Anniversary Edition: The Legal Construction of Race*, Revised and Updated: 10th Anniversary ed. edition (NYU Press, 2006), , 3-5, 32-34, Kindle edition.

began “actively opposing” Asia Indian (and presumably all South Asian) naturalization applicants, but were unable to prevent courts from accepting them.[138]

In one case, Abdullah Dolla, a self-identified Afghan born in Calcutta, India, won a court case that accepted his petition for naturalization. According to Jensen’s account, Abdullah Dolla asserted that he had been treated as a white person in Savannah, Georgia, even owning a burial space in the city’s white cemetery. Therefore, he was white and eligible for citizenship.[139] The judge eventually became satisfied that Dolla was sufficiently white, but not before asking him to pull up his sleeves so he could examine the skin-tone of his arms.[140] Thus, the door to legal whiteness and citizenship was not entirely closed for Afghans, but a great deal of skepticism and opposition had to be overcome.

U.S. officials’ uncertainty regarding early Afghan immigrants’ ethnic or “racial” categorization can also be seen in U.S. census documents. Sixteen percent of Afghans identified by the U.S. census were designated as white in 1910, and 38 percent in 1920.[141] It is uncertain if these designations were self-identifications or made by the census-taker. Location, though, seems to have been a key variable in determining someone’s racial designation in the census.[142] For instance, census takers marked most,

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[138] Jensen, 249.
[139] Ibid, 250.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry; *Fourteenth Census of the United States*, 1920, Ancestry.
[142] That year, Afghan immigrants tended to be marked as white in states with few Afghan immigrants. Afghan immigrants in California in 1920, which by then had by far the largest Afghan population, tended to be marked as “other” or Hindu (or Hindoo), while those in Montana were marked as white. Yet, this pattern appears to have been broken when in 1940, many Afghan immigrants in Tulare, California were designated as white, while in Rio Vista, California, they were marked as of the “Afghan race.” Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry; *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*

if not all, Afghans in Aberdeen, Washington as “black,” while those in neighboring Junction City were marked as “other” under race.[143] As in the court cases, the racial identity of Afghans and other South Asians had no obvious answer.

After the U.S. Congress enacted the Immigration Act of 1917, legal discrimination against Afghans and other South or mainland East Asians took on new intensity. Along with other measures curtailing immigration, Congress enacted what has been called the “Asiatic barred zone,” which largely prohibited immigration from Asian countries and territories east of Iran. The principles of the law was re-enforced by the 1924 National Origins Act that severely restricted migration from Asia, and most of Europe.[144]

It should be noted that anti-Asian immigrant sentiment was not a uniquely U.S. phenomenon during the first decades of the twentieth century. Canada, too, enacted successive laws between 1908 and 1930 that severely restricted Asian immigration into the country. The country also effectively excluded most African Americans from the United States from immigrating.[145] Lawmakers in Australia also enacted similar non-

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[143] Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry.

[144] For a map of the “Asiatic barred zone,” see Todd Shaw, Louis DeSipio, Dianne Pinderhughes, Toni-Michelle C. Travis, *Uneven Roads: An Introduction to U.S. Racial and Ethnic Politics* (CQ Press, 2014), Map 5.1.
For more on immigration restriction between 1917 and 1930, see
Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton University Press, 2004), ACLS Humanities E-Book edition; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955); Daniels, 278-284.

[145] Canada effectively prohibited South Asian immigration in 1908, Asians in 1923, excluding agricultural workers, farmers, and other exempt occupations. In 1930, these restrictions extended to nearly all Asians except spouses and young children of Canadian citizens. “A hundred years of immigration to Canada 1900-1999,” Canadian Council for Refugees, May 2000, http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-1900-1999; Norman Buchignani, “South Asian Canadians;” Steve Schwinghamer, “The Colour Bar at the Canadian Border: Black American Farmers,” Canadian Museum of Immigration of Immigration at Pier 21,” accessed September 2017, https://www.pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/the-colour-bar-at-the-canadian-border-black-american-farmers.

white immigration restrictions in 1901 and in South Africa in 1911.[146] Thus, the anti-immigrant backlash of the era was a transnational movement against some effects of an increasingly inter-connected world.

The laws, though, could not entirely prevent migration. In fact, migration from Afghanistan into the United States continued at approximately the same pace or higher until least 1924, the year the National Origins Act passed.[147] Still, the laws undoubtedly lessened immigration from what it could have been and remained the law of the land until at least World War II.

The right to become naturalized citizens was an important issue for Afghans and other South Asians staying in United States on a long-term basis. During this era, this right affected far more than the ability to vote. States such as California and Washington had enacted alien land laws that prevented non-citizens from owning, or in some cases, leasing land.[148] Furthermore, the 1907 Expatriation Act revoked the citizenship of spouses who married non-citizen husbands. When the Cable Act repealed this law for most spouses in 1922, loss of citizenship was retained for women who married non-citizen Asians.[149] Thus, lacking citizenship could severely impact immigrants' ability to integrate into U.S. society and obtain any level of political leverage.

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[146] Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 2002, 402; "White Australia policy begins," National Museum of Australia, accessed September 2017, http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/white_australia_policy_begins.

[147] By 1930, just over half of Afghans (50.7 percent) in the United States had actually immigrated to the country after the introduction of the of the Immigration Act of 1917. By 1925, though, immigration does seem to have slowed. IPUMS (1930 U.S. Census 100%).

[148] For Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 55; Nicole Grant, "Alien Land Laws and White Supremacy," Seattle Civil Rights & Labor Project," 2008, accessed January 2017, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/alien_land_laws.htm.

[149] Daniels, 281; Meg Hacker, "When Saying 'I Do,' Meant Giving Up Your U.S. Citizenship," *Prologue* (Spring 2014): https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/spring/citizenship.pdf.

Not long after the passage of anti-Asian immigration legislation, the U.S. Supreme Court intervened in at least two notable controversies regarding Asian racial identity and the ability of Asian immigrants to secure citizenship. In 1922, the high court ruled that Japanese-born Takao Ozawa was ineligible for citizenship because he was not of the "Caucasian race." Then in 1923, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that India-born Bhagat Singh Thind was ineligible for citizenship despite scholarly arguments that Asian Indians were "Aryan" or "Caucasian." The court instead reasoned that there was no scholarly consensus regarding racial origins, and determined what mattered most was that "Hindus" were not commonly understood to be white. The court decision also evoked the 1917 Immigration Act, writing "it is not likely that Congress would be willing to accept as citizens a class of persons whom it rejects as immigrants."[150] By this reasoning, all those born in countries within "the barred zone" could be deemed ineligible for naturalization, except for those of recent European descent.[151]

Yet, it was not entirely clear whether this was the case. At least two important questions had to be answered. One was whether the *Thind* ruling only applied to "Hindus" of India. Second was whether all "Asians" native to countries within the "barred zone" (generally extending east of Iran) were ineligible for citizenship, or just those explicitly declared ineligible in court cases. These questions were critical for

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[150] Marian L. Smith, "Race, Nationality, and Reality: INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898, Part 2," *Prologue*, Vol. 34, No.2, (Summer 2002): https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2002/summer/immigration-law-2.html; U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Sing Thind, 261 U.S. 204, 205 (1923), FindLaw, http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/261/204.html.

[151]Accounts of these cases are from Smith, "Race, Nationality, and Reality: INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898, Part 2;"
López, 5-6; Ngai, 44-47; Jensen, 246-269; U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Sing Thind, 261 U.S. 204, 205 (1923).

Afghan immigrants in the United States, both those from contemporary Afghanistan and those from what was then British India. The stakes surrounding these legal questions would increase.

Shortly after the *Thind* decision, official efforts were launched to retroactively revoke Asian Indian citizenship and land ownership.[152] Presumably, this applied to many self-identified Afghans, especially those born in what was now British India. Indeed, Zarif Khan, the Afghan restaurant operator in Wyoming, had his citizenship revoked in 1926.[153] Spouses already married to Asian-born U.S. citizens could presumably lose their citizenship if their spouse was deemed ineligible for citizenship. In states with alien land laws, such as California and Washington, a loss of citizenship could invalidate Asian immigrants' ownership of land. In 1924, California Attorney General U.S. Webb declared that the state's alien land law prevented Asians from owning land, and that they were to forfeit all land in their possession. The legal back-and-forth to uphold, protect, and evade these revocations would continue for years to come.[154] In 1924, the Immigration Act of that year prohibited individuals from immigrating to the United States who were ineligible for citizenship.[155] Eligibility for citizenship and racial classification had taken on new levels of importance.

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[152] Ngai, 49-50.
[153] Kathyrn Schulz, "Citizen Khan."
[154] Jensen, 258-271; Nicole Grant, "White Supremacy and the Alien Land Laws of Washington State," Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, 2008, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/alien_land_laws.htm#_edn32; Ngai, 47-50
[155] Marian L. Smith, "Race, Nationality, and Reality: INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898, Part 2."

Afghans in the United States would face a string of relevant court decisions that would end their ability to obtain citizenship. In 1925, the *United States v. Ali* decision dealt a significant blow to naturalization prospects for self-identified Afghans born in India. The decision reasoned that an Arab from India was not eligible for citizenship, regardless if he was of "Arabian" heritage because the defendant's claim was not markedly different from Thind's contention that he was eligible for citizenship.[156] Similar arguments involving a Parsi from India were later struck down despite Parsis' ancestral roots in Iran, a country not included in the barred region.[157] This did not bode well for Afghans in India who may have wished to argue their origins outside of India rendered them white. Until a court ruled otherwise, they too were presumably ineligible for naturalization.

Naturalization attempts by individuals from Afghanistan did not fare much better in the years after the *Thind* ruling. In 1928, a federal judge in California ruled that an applicant from Afghanistan, Feroz Din, was not white, and instead "approximates to Hindus." Therefore, under the *Thind* criteria, he was not eligible for naturalization. The judge added, "What ethnologists, anthropologists, and other so-called scientists may speculate and conjecture in respect to races and origins may interest the curious and

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[156] Ibd; United States v. Ali, 7 F.2d 728 (E.D. Mich. 1925), casetext, https://casetext.com/case/united-states-v-ali;
López, 168.
[157] Wadia v. United States, 101 F.2d 7 (2d Cir. 1939),casetext, https://casetext.com/case/wadia-v-united-states; López, 168; Wadia v. United States, 101 F.2d 7 (2d Cir. 1939), Google Scholar,
https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=15430296811482160399&hl=en&as_sdt=6&as_vis=1&oi=scholarr.

convince the credulous, but is of no moment in arriving at the intent of Congress in the statute aforesaid."[158] The following year, the quota board tasked with determining immigration quotas for the restrictive 1924 National Origins Act finished its reports from which the new immigration quotas were to be based. Afghanistan was granted 100 visas per year, but only for those eligible for citizenship and immigration (presumably those of European or Western hemisphere heritage).[159] Like other countries, though, individuals from certain exempted occupations could still obtain long-term visas for travel to the United States.

Since the 1980s, a number of scholars have examined immigrants' attempts to assume a white identity and adopt U.S. views on racial hierarchy.[160] Self-identified Afghans' encounters with race in the United States offer scholars some new perspectives on this historiography, but the details and motivations of these individuals' remain murky. In some cases, Afghans did assume aspects of white identity.[161] Whether or not this extended into accepting U.S. racial hierarchies, though, is unclear. Identifying as "white" or "American" and seeking the legal benefits that accompanied such an

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[158] In Re Feroz Din, 27 F.2d 568 (N.D.Cal. 1928), casetext, https://casetext.com/case/in-re-feroz-din; López, 70.
[159]Ngai, 24-29.
[160] David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, New Edition edition (London: New York: Verso, 2007); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 1 edition (New York: Routledge, 2008); Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*, 58879th edition (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*, 1 edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Neil Foley, "Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian Pact with Whiteness," in ed. Neil Foley, *Reflexiones 1997: New Directions in Mexican American Studies* (Austin: CMAS University of Texas Press, 1998).
[161] Examples of assuming white identity include adopting English names or claiming to be from the United States. The examples found in this study could not conclusively determine long-term identification with whites.

identification was not necessarily indicative of racism. Much was at stake, and pragmatic views on race may have appeared as their only chance at preserving the rights entitled to them by naturalization.

South Asian immigrants were not the only ones to contest simplistic ethnic boundaries. Thirty U.S. born individuals in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana listed their race as Afghan on their World War I draft registration cards.[162] Two people in Richmond, Virginia and one in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania did likewise. Every one of these individuals that this study was able to identify was categorized as "mulatto," black, or another term synonymous with African American in at least one census.[163] In other words, they were individuals who were otherwise commonly identified as native-born African Americans, but identified as Afghan on their draft cards.[164]

There were a number of factors possibly influencing these decisions to identify as Afghan. For one, claiming Asian or "foreign" identity allowed African Americans to potentially enjoy a number of privileges otherwise denied to them on the account of race. Listing their race as Afghan on draft cards may have been an effort by African Americans to become eligible. According to Robert M. Dannin, a pragmatic desire to

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[162] *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards*, United States, Selective Service System, *, 1917-1918*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, M1509, 4,582 rolls, Ancestry, accessed 2017, http://search.ancestrylibrary.com.

[163] This was determined through ancestry.com searches of these individuals. "Census and Voters," Ancestry.com.

[164] It is unlikely that these individuals were Afghans trying to "pass" as African Americans, given that it would have required more misrepresentations about their places of birth, parents' lineage, and possibly their own names than the other way around. Given the Jim Crow laws in the South at the time, it is unlikely that these individuals would have wished to "pass" as African American, and probably would have chosen another "whiter" and more privileged ethnic group if they wished to conceal their national origins. Furthermore, if they were hiding their Afghan origins, they probably would not have left "Afghan" as their race.

assume an alternative identity motivated some African Americans to seek out Judaism and Islam to affirm these identities. Ashkenazic Jewish congregations in the United States, though, held significant power to restrict or "authenticate" membership into their religious community, and posed a problem towards quick large-scale conversion to Judaism. As Dannin wrote, however, "conversion to Islam suggested a practical alternative because it permitted a similar degree of social latitude (by no means absolute) without the corresponding problems of authentication because 'normative' Islam was demographically insignificant, and more or less invisible, until after 1965."[165]

There were also potential ideological and spiritual motivations for claiming an "Afghan identity." At the time, some African Americans born in the United States began rejecting their classification as "Negroes."[166] As professor Sylvester A. Johnson wrote, such individuals, "asserted blacks were a people with peoplehood, with history and heritage that transcended the space and time of the American experience of slavery and racism."[167] Instead of "Negroes," these individuals linked themselves with Jewish and Moorish history, and what they saw as a broader "Asiatic" or "African-Asiatic" racial identity. In the early twentieth century United States, a number of African American religious organizations built upon ideas of "Asiatic" roots. Various black Jewish

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[165] Robert M. Dannin, "Greatest Migration?," in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith, *Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible* (Rowman Altamira, 2002), 60-61.
[166] See Sylvester A. Johnson, "The Rise of Black Ethnics: The Ethnic Turn in African Religions, 1916-1945," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 2010): 127, accessed January 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/rac.2010.20.2.125?origin=JSTOR-pdf.
[167] Ibid, 127.

movements, for instance, believed that the African Diaspora in the United States were descendants of "Ethiopian Hebrews," as practiced in Ethiopia.[168]

The Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA), which had a considerable African American membership during the early twentieth century, also envisioned themselves sharing a common African-Asiatic heritage.[169] They saw themselves as Moorish Americans, with Islam as their indigenous religion.[170] Members who took up the Moorish identity often wore fezzes and other "Moorish" clothing and Islamic-world names. The Moorish Science Temple of America promoted solidarity with other peoples of color against white imperialism and racism. It is plausible that a similar religious ideology influenced the thirty-three individuals to mark their identity as Afghan on their draft cards.

One individual listed as "Wallie Dodd Fard (Ford)" with residence in Los Angeles, California, also claimed Afghan identity on his World War I draft registration. As opposed to those in Louisiana who were listed as of U.S. birth and "Afghan" race, however, Ford's draft card listed his race as Caucasian, and Shinka, Afghanistan, as his place of birth.[171] In subsequent decades, some individuals, including FBI officials, have attempted to prove that this man was the founder of the Nation of Islam, W.D. Fard (also referred to as Wallace Fard and Fard Muhammad). *Washington Post* journalist Karl

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[168] Ibid, 132-134.
[169] Ibid, 132-145.
[170] Ibid, 134-136.
[171] This draft card can be found at *World War I Selective Service Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, entry for Wallie Dodd Ford, Ancestry, accessed September 2017, http://search.ancestrylibrary.com. Presence of draft card found on "Wallace Fard Muhammad," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wallace_Fard_Muhammad.

Evanzz, who wrote a critical biography of Nation of Islam leader, Elijah Muhammad, alleged that Wallie Dodd Ford was one of the many of aliases of Fard, and that he was born in New Zealand to a South Asian (in present-day Pakistan) father and British mother.[172] The Nation of Islam has asserted that Ford and Fard was not the same person, and that the identity controversy was a smear by the FBI.[173] The issue remains unresolved and a source of controversy.

Regardless, African American attempts to assume "Asiatic" identities demonstrate that individuals had a degree of agency in constructing their ethnic identity during this era. Furthermore, when there were opportunities to benefit from assuming a different ethnic identity, it was common for individuals to seek alternatives from their prescribed ones. Rather than exclusively cases of ethnic "passing," many individuals sincerely viewed themselves as "Asiatic-African."

In the early twenty century United States, "race" was a conduit through which nearly all facets of intellectual and civic life passed. Few born in the United States failed to accede to this preoccupation, and few who journeyed there remained unmoved by its constructions. Afghans were not unique in trying to become members of the privileged ethnic group, nor were they alone in seeking a higher appreciation of their ethnic status. U.S. society's requirement of "whiteness" for a host of legal and social rights pushed Afghans and other immigrants into this ideological quagmire. Race not only affected

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[172] Note Evanzz does not apparently mention the draft card specifically in his book, but alleged that Ford was in Los Angeles at the time. Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999).
[173] For a rebuttal of Evanzz's claims by the Nation of Islam publication, *The Final Call*, see Dr. Wesley Muhammad, "Master W. Fard Muhammad and FBI COINTELPRO," The Final Call, January 4, 2010, http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/Perspectives_1/article_6699.shtml.

how Afghans constructed their place in the U.S. social hierarchy, but what it meant to be Afghan in the United States.

Diasporic Consciousness: 1900-1920

Deciphering Afghan inter-diasporic relations during this era requires a considerable level of reading into sources. Unsurprisingly, evidence from U.S. government documents suggest that Afghans in the United States understood the basic political issues facing Afghanistan and South Asia. Moreover, they were familiar with South Asia's international borders, imperial relations, and concepts of nationalism. Finally, the existence of ethnic networks, chain migration, and an Afghan organization in the United States suggests a level of diasporic interconnectivity.[174]

These findings are significant because it might otherwise be presumed that nationalism was restricted to elites and urban-dwellers in Afghanistan during this time. Anthony Hyman, wrote in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, that, "Afghanistan's rural population lived for the most part in remote areas and had very restricted horizons and minimal political consciousness."[175] Thus, it is worth noting that Afghans in the United States, even those who often hailed from small towns in Afghanistan or western British India, had a far broader intellectual horizon than the village and embraced some degree of nationalism as an organizing unit. Whether this popular nationalism was distinct among the U.S. diaspora, or widespread among Afghanistan's population, though, remains unresolved.

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[174] See below for details on this.
[175] Anthony Hyman, "Nationalism in Afghanistan," 299–300.

U.S. naturalization documents reveal a sophisticated understanding of political geography. At least two individuals born after the 1893 boundary agreement were listed as born in "Afghanistan, India."[176] These individuals understood themselves to be from Afghanistan, but realized their town of birth was now located in British India. Furthermore, individuals' insistence that they were born in Afghanistan, and not the Sikh or British Empire, which had since occupied much of these annexed lands, suggests a level of Afghan nationalism. A number of others listed Afghanistan as their place of birth, but renounced their allegiance to Great Britain's monarch as their current sovereign. [177] Taken together, these documents exhibit signs of both geopolitical sophistication and Afghan nationalism.

It also appears that Afghans' communications with one another facilitated movement in the United States. For example, Afghans frequently migrated within the United States and usually ended up residing in a city with at least one other Afghan. Many of these towns were rather obscure so there is little chance their presence was a

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[176] This was recounted to the same clerk by two individuals living at the same address, so it is not entirely sure if this determination was made by the applicant or clerk. Given that it would be unusual for a clerk to come up with such a designation on his/her own, it seems likely to have been stated by the applicants. These two applicants were John William Mohamid and Lethef Kaan.
Petitions for Naturalization, 1903 – 1972, Textual Records, 131 Boxes and 67 Volumes, NAI: 654310, Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21, National Archives at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, digital image, Ancestry.com.

[177] Since many applying for naturalization cite Afghanistan as their place of birth, but renounce their allegiance to the British monarch, it appears many are referencing that their place of birth had since been annexed by Great Britain. Some though, many have previously lived in Great Britain and its empire. One cited "Herot" Afghanistan, but renounced their allegiance to both the Afghan government "and/or" the British monarch. "Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, ancestrylibrary.com; *Index to Petitions for Naturalizations Filed in Federal, State, and Local Courts in New York City, 1792-1906*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC, NAI Number: 5700802, *Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009,* record group 21, digital image, Ancestry, accessed September 2017, https://ancestrylibrary.com.

coincidence. There were over twenty Afghans living under one roof in Junction City, Washington in 1910 who had arrived in the United States at different times. In that case, it is possible that living arrangements may have been facilitated by a lumber company rather than diasporic connections. Still, some kind of diasporic network was likely involved to prompt such a high percentage of Afghans in the United States to take residence in the area to begin with.

There is further evidence of a diasporic migration network in a Portland, Oregon household during the 1910s. In this case, six Afghans listed the same address in Portland in their naturalization papers. Most of these individuals were food venders, so it is unlikely an employer facilitated this arrangement. It is possible these individuals were family members, but they were not all from the same town and did not all arrive in the United States at the same time.[178] It appears then, that they did not come to the United States together, and decided to group together either through communications abroad or through a network in the United States.[179] This suggests that Afghans in the United States during era constituted what Dufoix would refer to as a transnationally connected "atopic" mode of strong transnational diasporic relations.

Further evidence of this connectivity can be found in the lives of early twentieth century Afghan tamale vendors. For instance, journalist Kathyrn Schulz found that tamale vender Zarif Khan settled in Sheridan, Wyoming, as an assistant to Azed Khan (who was a tamale maker as well). Zarif Khan would eventually open a restaurant. Three

[178] "Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, ancestrylibrary.com.
[179] Ibid.

additional tamale venders and a chili seller with the Khan surname would live in the same house in Sheridan over the next ten years, and all but Zarif Khan would leave.[180] It should be noted that these individuals were not necessarily, or even likely, related. Khan was a common surname among Afghans in the United States, and not necessarily linked among families.[181] The Portland and Sheridan households suggest that Afghans learned where others were located and facilitated one another's movement.

Further insights into this diasporic network are found in coverage of a 1902 murder of a tamale maker known as Mereli (Amir Ali Aden Khel) in the Seattle area, who was likely Afghan.[182] It appears that no one was ever convicted of this murder, so there is little certainty of what happened. Regardless, newspaper coverage of the incident indicates that Afghan tamale makers often knew one another at the very least, and as suspects in the murder case, may have engaged in varying degrees of violence against one another.[183] If accurate, these facts suggest that communications existed between

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[180] Schulz, "Citizen Khan."

[181] Schulz too, notes people with the Khan surname were "generally unrelated" and that it was "extremely common." For more on Afghan and Islamic-world immigrant naming conventions, see Ibid; Karine Megerdoomian, "The Structure of Afghan Names," Mitre Product, November 2009; "Afghans in Butte, Suspected of Murder, Surrender to Chief," *Butte Inter Mountain*, frontpage-3, April 23, 1902: Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025294/1902-04-23/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1902&index=1&rows=20&words=Mereli+Peddler&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1903&proxtext=%22mereli%22+%22peddler%22&y=16&x=13&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.

[182] In one article, the victim was improbably described as a "Sekh" in one article and a "countryman" of the accused in another. Most of the suspects were Afghan tamale makers. It is unlikely Amir Ali Aden Khel was a Sikh, unlikely given his name. For "Sekh," "IGNORANCE NOT BLISS," *Tacoma Times*, January 4, 1904, page 4: Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085187/1904-01-04/ed-1/seq-4/#date1=1789&index=0&rows=20&words=Mereli+murder&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1924&proxtext=mereli+murder&y=8&x=27&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1; For "countryman," see "Afghans in Butte, Suspected of Murder, Surrender to Chief," *Butte Inter Mountain*.

[183] Newspapers mentioned that other Afghans disliked the victim, and at least once referred to him as a "bully." Ibid.

Afghans outside of their local or kinship affiliations, and that Afghans knew of one another's presence.

Afghans in the United States travelled transnational routes and often held sophisticated conceptualizations of national identity. Although their numbers were relatively small, they added to a growing diaspora and migration circuit that experienced a broad world. Their lives and consciousness were not confined within an ancestral village.[184] They were both products of and agents in a world increasingly organized by nationalism, empire, and steam-powered transportation.

Afghan Communities in 1920

By 1920, much had changed for Afghans in the United States. By then, California had emerged as the new center of an Afghan community numbering approximately 91 census-recorded residents nationwide.[185] Although a majority of Afghans in the United States were still laborers (and almost exclusively male), agriculture replaced the lumber industry as the primary employer.[186] Few, if any, Afghans remained in the Aberdeen, Washington, area. Afghan occupational and geographical distribution was also more diverse.

The 1920 Census indicates that most Afghans were engaged in an assortment of working-class occupations. California agricultural work was the single most common occupation among them. Some individuals, though, were employed in lumber and other

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[184] For more, see Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 2015).
[185] *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*
[186] *This was determined by extracting information on Afghans in the United States in 1920 from ancestry.com. Ibid.*

resource extraction occupations such as mining. Afghan workers in the United States tended to cluster around a given industry in the various communities. For example, most Afghans in California were engaged in agriculture, but the five Afghans residing in Lackawanna, New York, all worked in the steel industry.[187]

Figure 5 "The Yard Gang," photograph of employees of the New Idria Quicksilver Mining Company, circa 1910s in Idria, California. The man with the turban in the first row is likely Pashtun as his turban is similar to that worn by Pashtuns in Southern Afghanistan and Pashtun regions of Pakistan region. Citation: Solaiman Fazel and Alam Payind provided consultation as to the probable ethnic origins of the turban wearer. Image courtesy of California State Library. Citation: "The yard gang," California State Library, Collection: Mines and mining: Quicksilver: New Idria Mines, image caption: The yard gang. N.I.Q.M. Co., Idria, CA, call number: 1998-0442, accessed August 2017, http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/N8UJ6T29XJ9IFNYM9JRXBAQUS3Y8YCQ563ACIYU1XNXFCHK71G-50395?func=full-set-set&set_number=005924&set_entry=000002&format=999.

Retailers, however, often scattered their establishments away from other Afghans. These individuals, who tended to have no spouse overseas, often operated very modest businesses such as food vending. A number of individuals branched out from a major metropolitan area such as Seattle into the Western interior.[188] With some

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[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

success, some vendors were able to open more formal businesses such as restaurants. The previously mentioned Zarif Khan, for instance, settled in Sheridan, Wyoming, in 1909 as an assistant to a tamale maker named Azed Khan, before opening up a restaurant there some six years later.[189] Dollha Khan and his brother Aurang Shah found success as chili vendors in Seattle, Washington. Afterwards, Dollha Khan became a success restaurant owner, while Aurang was able to attend medical school and become a physician.

Ethnic commercial networks or occupational strategies were not unique to Afghans in the United States. Similar economic strategies for small-scale commercial or food establishments existed for Greeks, Jews, Japanese, and Arabs (particularly of Christian faith) who inhabited the American West. Similar small-scale retailing business practices could also be found among minority populations in regions as diverse as Southeast Asia and West Africa.[190]

Overall, though, business ownership appears to have been rather uncommon for Afghans in the United States in 1920. Most remained laborers in working-class occupations.[191] This does not necessarily mean laborers failed to meet their goals in the United States. Some Afghans, for instance, may have intended for their stay in the United States to be short, and leave after earning enough to take their earnings back home or to another country.

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[189] This is gleaned from journalist Kathryn Schulz's account of Zarif Khan in the *New Yorker*. Schulz, "Citizen Khan."

[190] For West Africa, see "Far from home," *Economist*, May 20, 2011, https://www.economist.com/blogs/baobab/2011/05/lebanese_west_africa.

[191] *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Ancestry.*

In fact, a significant minority of Afghans appear to have left the United States over the next decade.[192] One likely motivation for leaving the United States was reunification with spouses or children. Indeed, census data suggests that Afghan immigrants from the pre-1911 immigration cohort who were married and living apart from their spouses declined as a percentage of that arrival cohort overall.[193] This indicates that these married individuals were more likely to leave the United States than other Afghan immigrants were. The passage of severe restrictions on immigration from Asia in 1917 would have made family reunification in the United States very unlikely, and may have played a part in these departures of married men. Still, the absence of Afghan women in the United States before the passage of this legislation suggests many Afghan immigrants never desired to reunite with family in the United States.

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[192] My tally indicated 58 individuals born in Afghanistan in the 1910 U.S. Census, and that in 1920 Census, there were 41 people citing a pre-1911 immigration year. Five did not report an arrival year in that Census. These numbers strongly suggest that less than a majority of identified Afghans in 1910 left the United States by 1920. Still, individuals appear to have frequently disappeared from the census, or perhaps changed their name or indicated nativity, so extreme caution must be used for making inferences with these statistics. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.

[193] The 1910 Census indicated there were 21 married Afghan immigrants, 36 percent overall. None of these married individuals lived with their spouse. The 1920 Census indicated that only about fourteen percent of the pre-1911 immigration cohort were married and living away from their spouse. One can then deduce that Afghan immigrants who were married and living away from their spouses were more likely to leave the United States by 1920.
Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Ancestry*; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry; https://ancestrylibrary.com.*

Although there was a significant change in the location and occupations of Afghans in the United States between 1910 and 1920, some aspects of the Afghan community remained. Most remained laborers, and a majority were single men. Afghan women remained extremely rare or non-existent in the United States, just as had been the case in 1910.

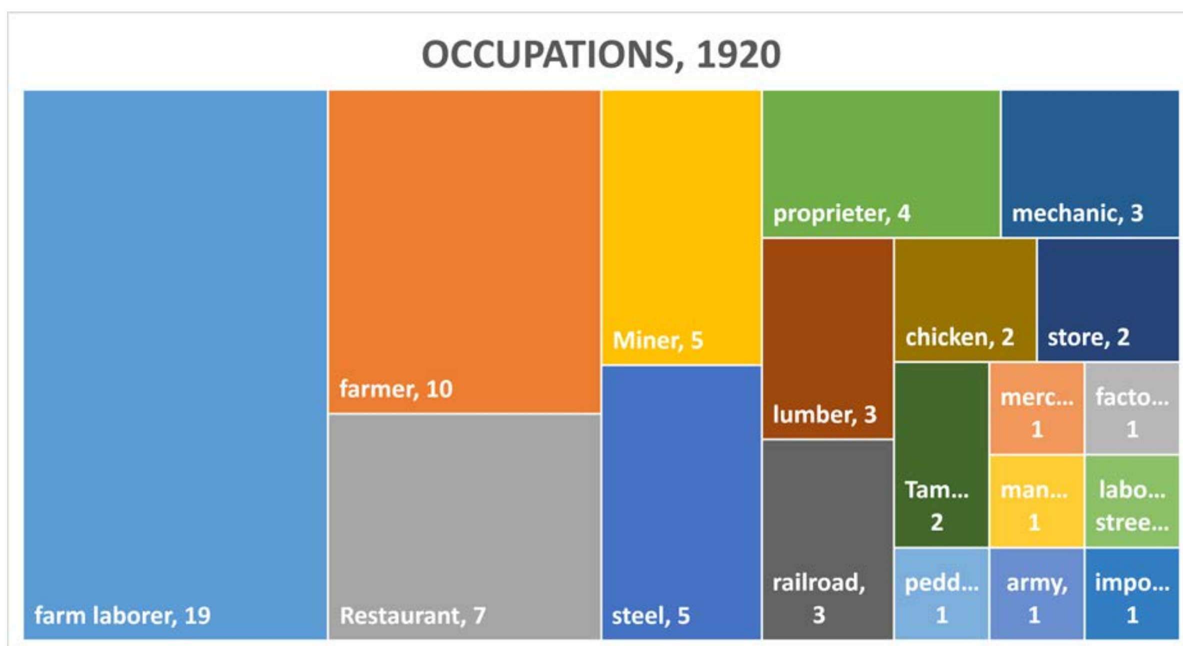
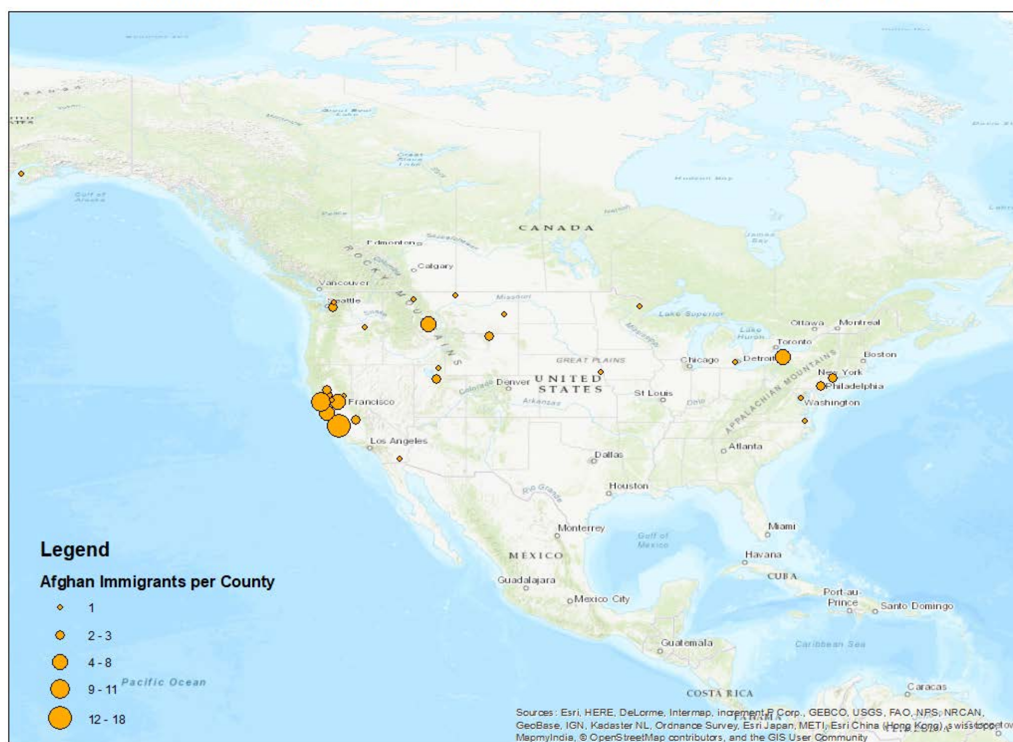


Table 3 Occupations of Afghanistan-born individuals in the United States. Citation: *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*

Afghan Immigrants in the United States by County, 1920



Citation: U.S. Census Bureau, Ancestry.com, ArcGIS

Figure 6 1920 County-level concentration of Afghanistan-born population in the United States (2017 county boundaries). Citation: *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*Ancestry.com; ArcMap*.*

In Diasporic Relations After 1918

In 1919, the energetic, if at times reckless, modernizer Amanullah ascended to Afghanistan's throne. Like many of his elite contemporaries throughout Asia, Amanullah hoped his pursuit of a "modernized" Afghanistan would shield the country from Western imperialism. That year, the new king audaciously launched the Third Anglo-Afghan War in which the country wrestled full independence and control of its foreign policy from Great Britain. As post-war negotiations with Great Britain continued, the

Afghan government sent representatives to the world powers in order to establish relations with them.[194]

As the Afghan government drew up plans for diplomatic relations with the United States, an obscure figure living in India planned her own trip abroad. This individual went by the name of "Princess Fatima," and was a descendent of a nineteenth century Afghan king. As it turned out, her 1921 trip would be a media sensation, resulting in some of the only articles in the United States to mention an Afghan community in the United States.

She planned a trans-continental railroad trip across the United States where she would sell an exceptional diamond in her possession in hopes of sending her sons to school in Oxford with the proceeds. Not one of modest ambition, Princess Fatima let it be known she hoped to speak to the U.S. president, or as she was quoted as referring to him, "that handsome man" in the White House.[195]

At the time, the U.S. government was refusing to meet with the Afghan diplomats who had come to Washington and hoped to establish relations with the United States. A meeting between Fatima and the President would amount to a sort of diplomatic recognition that had thus far eluded the official diplomats. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the Afghan diplomats were less than enthusiastic about Princes Fatima's hopes of a meeting.[196]

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[194] Dupree, 445-446

[195] St. Clair McKelway, "THE BIG LITTLE MAN FROM BROOKLYN-I," *New Yorker*, November 16, 1968, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1968/11/16/the-big-little-man-from-brooklyn.

[196] Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 432; Leon B. Poullada and Leila D.J. Poullada, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan & the United States, 1828-1973*, (Omaha: The center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Dageforde

Princess Fatima was undeterred by a lack of official recognition and stoked a sensational level of publicity regarding her trip. At the time, “Orientalist” concepts of the broader Middle East stirred Western imaginations and the press reveled in heavy dosages of bally-hoo.[197] Media outlets delighted in covering every outing of Princess Fatima and her sons.[198] Upon reaching the United States, her sons were featured on page one of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, under the headline, “One Wife Enough, Says Prince; Legal Polygamy Does Not Lure.”[199]

Not long after her entry into the United States, Princess Fatima planned a trip to Sacramento, California, where members of the local Afghan and Muslim community waited to greet her. This excursion, however, did not proceed without some controversy, and a good deal of confusion. The local Afghan association, which had allegedly spent $1,000 towards a reception, was scheduled to meet her at the train station. Her train, however, encountered difficulties and she ended up taking a car into town. Thereupon, the local Muslim association greeted her. The Afghan association remained at the train station, apparently unware of what had unfolded. By the time members of the Afghan association eventually met up with her, she was proceeding through town in a parade complete with a marching band. The Afghan Association,

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Publishing, 1995), 27. Tamim Ansary, *Games without Rules: The Often-Interrupted History of Afghanistan* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2012), 115.

[197] For Orientalism and Ballyhoo, see Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945, Updated Edition*, Updated ed. edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's* (Perennial Library, 1964); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed edition (New York: Vintage, 1979).

[198] Ansary, 115.

[199] “One Wife Enough, Says Prince Legal Polygamy Does Not Lure: Royal Afghan Visitor to San Francisco Asserts His Country’s Chief Need Is Railroad Lines,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 27, 1921, p. 1, NewsBank (America’s News) (San Francisco Public Library website).

however, did manage to host a reception where the Princess and one of her sons spoke.[200]

The following day, the *Sacramento Union* newspaper reported controversy between the Muslim association and an Afghan association over which organization had provided an interpreter for her. The Afghan association's general secretary even accused the Muslim association of "misrepresenting themselves" and taking "all the glory."[201] The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported an entirely different individual as an interpreter.[202] Adding confusion to the historical record, the *Sacramento Union* reported that "100 members of the local Afghan association turned out to greet Princess Fatima," while the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that "more than 100 members of the local Moslem association" greeted Princes Fatima in her car. It is not entirely clear if these were competing claims by the two organizations, both true, a combined total of the two organization, or a mistake made by the media.

Regardless, Princess Fatima's trip to the United States would eventually end unsuccessfully, without making much, if anything on her diamonds.[203] This, though,

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[200] "Afghan Party Received Here," *Sacramento Union*, July 4, 1921, p. 1, California Digital Newspaper Collection.
[201] Ibid; "Visit of Princess Starts Bitter Row," *Sacramento Union*, July 4, 1921, p. 1: California Digital Newspaper Collection.
[202] "Afghan Princess Visits Sacramento: Rival Receptions Planned for Royal Fatima," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 4, 1921, p. 1: ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[203] By Ansary's account, a con artist, who helped arrange the meeting with President Harding obtained the diamond from her. According to the *New Yorker*, though, she instead sold the diamond, but for far less than she hoped. A *Sacramento Union* article from 1922 reported of the con man's arrest and stated that the "the big diamond will remain in a safe deposit vault here to await settlement of the demands of her creditors and customs officials." "Fatima To Leave With Flat Purse," *Sacramento Union*, March 10, 1922, 1,2, California Digital Newspaper Collection. Ansary, 115; St. Clair McKelway, "THE BIG LITTLE MAN FROM BROOKLYN-I."

would not occur before some remarkable feats such as being given "the keys to the city" by New York City's mayor, and even gaining an audience with President Harding.[204]

More than a colorful anecdote, the Afghan association's reception of Princess Fatima, and frustrations with the Muslim association offer some insights into diasporic relations. It is noteworthy that ethnic Afghan identity was important enough to exist alongside a religious-oriented Muslim organization in the area, and national pride high enough to sponsor an event. Second, it is highly unlikely that the organization received any sponsorship or guidance from the Afghan government, given Fatima's rogue status. Indeed, after Princess Fatima met the U. S. President, a member of the official Afghan delegation recalled being "humiliated to read in the newspapers that President Harding had entertained Princess Fatima," while they were being ignored by Washington.[205] This strongly suggests a level of disconnect or independence between the association and Afghanistan's government. Further evidence of what Dufoix would call either an "enclaved" or "atopic" diaspora, in which ethnic identity and agendas are predominately determined within the country of settlement or among the transnational diaspora as opposed to formal links with the place of origin's government or nationality.

More speculatively, it demonstrates that religious affiliations were not enough to unify individuals of various Muslim backgrounds together in California. Finally, if the Afghan association was truly able to mobilize close to one hundred people, it would suggest a phenomenal level of comradery and level of communication. The 1920 U.S.

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[204] St. Clair McKelway, "The Big Little Man from Brooklyn-I,"
[205] Adamec, 432.

Census, after all, only recorded ninety-one people in the United States who were born in Afghanistan.[206] The conflicting newspaper stories about which organization mobilized the 100 people, though, leaves this matter unresolved.

Afghan Communities after Exclusion

The Afghan migrant population in the United States does not appear to have immediately decreased after the passage of the restrictive immigration laws between 1917 and 1924. Instead, three new developments, perhaps related, occurred that added to the vitality of the U.S. Afghan community. First, was an increase in trans-Atlantic Afghan migration that began during World War I. Second, was the emergence of an Afghan community in the Detroit Metropolitan region that far-surpassed the size of previous Afghan urban-industrial communities in the United States. Third, was the arrival of Afghan students who were exempt from restrictive immigration laws. As a result of these developments, the U.S. Census recorded the Afghanistan-born community rising from approximately 91 in 1920 to about 211 in 1930.[207]

After World War I broke out in 1914, Afghans increasingly used trans-Atlantic routes to migrate to the United States. A search of naturalization records on Ancestry.com revealed no Afghan immigrant arrivals in East Coast cities between 1889 and 1914. Between 1915 and 1920, however, 28 out of 29 naturalization applicants had arrived in cities located on the Atlantic Coast. These numbers should not be taken as an accurate representation of the most common ports of arrival because many of the

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[206] Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.

[207] For notes on the different methodology for the 1930 Census, see introduction. IPUMS (1930 U.S. Census 100%); *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Ancestry.*

naturalization applications from California were not available in the digital database. Regardless, these statistics indicate a significant increase in trans-Atlantic migrations.[208]

There were several reasons for this shift to Atlantic migration. After World War I broke out, employment in the Detroit metropolitan automobile industry became a popular destination for recent Afghan immigrants. The East Coast was also closer to Detroit, and thus a better route to access the city. Another possible factor is that trans-Atlantic crossings, especially from England, may have been easier to embark from, legally or otherwise, than other destinations. Afghans may have also been travelling alongside other Muslim immigrants that commonly made Detroit their destination at the time. Regardless, by 1930, Afghans in the United States were no longer heavily concentrated in the West. Modest numbers of Afghans also lived in the New York-New Jersey region, with individuals scattered among several other states east of the Rocky Mountains.

The Detroit-area enclave, though, dwarfed all previous Afghan population nodes, registering at least seventy-one people.[209] Afghans were remarkably dispersed throughout the region. Some lived and worked in industrial suburbs such as Hamtramck, Dearborn, and Pontiac, while others operated retail and service businesses in and around downtown Detroit.[210] The Detroit area was also unique for being home to large

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[208] Information from naturalization papers found on Ancestry was transcribed onto a excel sheet and quantified. *Petitions for Naturalization*, Ancestry.com.

[209] Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 7.0* (1930 Census 100%), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0.

[210] *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Records of the Bureau of the Census,* T626, 2,667 rolls, *National Archives, Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed 2017,* https://ancestrylibrary.com.

Muslim and broader Middle Eastern community that oversaw what was probably the first mosque established in the United States.[211] The Detroit Afghan enclave, however, proved to be short-lived and had all but disappeared by 1940, probably as a result of the Great Depression.

A new stream of students, often sponsored by Afghanistan's government, also added to the Afghan population in the United States. According to Afghanistan experts Leon and Leila Poullada, Afghanistan's government assigned an educational field for many of these students to study shortly before they departed for the United States. Early students included future Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Zahir and Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Kayeum. Most of these individuals did not stay long in the United States, and returned to Afghanistan after their studies.[212] This influx of disproportionally educated and prominent migrants, though, appears to have continued for the remainder of the century. Indeed, U.S. educated Afghans would continue to play an influential role in Afghanistan's government in future eras.

Afghans were not the only U.S.-educated students to play central roles in their home-countries' post-independence politics. Indeed, these individuals were part a small sample of a flow of Asian intellectuals seeking higher education in the United States. Influential framer of the Indian constitution, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (PhD, Columbia 1927), Pakistan People's Party founder and prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (BA,

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[211] For more on the early twentieth century Muslim community in Detroit, see Sally Howell, *Old Islam in Detroit: Rediscovering the Muslim American Past*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[212] Poullada and Poullada, 28-30.

Berkeley, 1950), and Syngman Rhee (PhD, Princeton, 1910), first president of the Republic of Korea were just a few of these students.[213]

Those studying at the university on behalf of Afghanistan's government constituted the beginning of what Dufoix would term a centropheripheral (closely linked) diasporic relationship with Afghanistan's government. Their numbers in the United States, though, appear to have been few until after World War II.[214] In time, the number of students from Afghanistan would increase, as would the Afghan government's role in diasporic relations.

Other features of Afghan life in the United States during the 1920s remained similar to past decades. By the time of the 1930 census, the Afghanistan-born population in the country was almost exclusively, or perhaps entirely, male. Most were employed in labor occupations, of which, agriculture appears to have remained the single most common form of employment. Non-agricultural work, though, accounted for about half of those employed.[215] Aside from government-sponsored students, there is little evidence of direct ties between Afghan migrants in the United States and the

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[213] "Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar," Columbia [University] Global Centers: Mumbai, accessed September 2017, https://globalcenters.columbia.edu/content/bhimrao-ramji-ambedkar; "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed September 2017, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Zulfikar-Ali-Bhutto; "Syngman Rhee," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed September 2017, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Syngman-Rhee.

[214] Writer Tamim Ansary wrote that his father who studied in the United States during World War II "was one of five students sent to the United States the first year the scholarship program was resumed." Ansary, 22.

[215] Based off census data from the IPUMS website, this study found 45 percent of employed Afghans in the United States with listed occupations to be engaged in agricultural work in 1930. Most with unlisted occupations resided in California, where Afghans tended to be more employed in agriculture than in the East and Midwest. IPUMS (1930 U.S. Census 100%).

Afghan government until after World War II. By and large, Afghans in the United States still constituted what Cohen would term, a “labor” diaspora.

1930-1940

Immigration restriction and the Great Depression affected the U.S. Afghan community. By 1940, many of the socio-economic characteristics of the Afghanistan-born population had reverted to conditions as they had been in 1920. For instance, the 1940 census indicates that the country’s Afghanistan-born population shrank from about 211 to 108, only slightly above its 1920 total. Industrial employment also declined, and few Afghans remained in the Detroit area. The Afghanistan-born population became even more centered in a few agricultural towns in California’s Central Valley.[216]

[216] *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940,* Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed August 2017, https://ancestrylibrary.com.

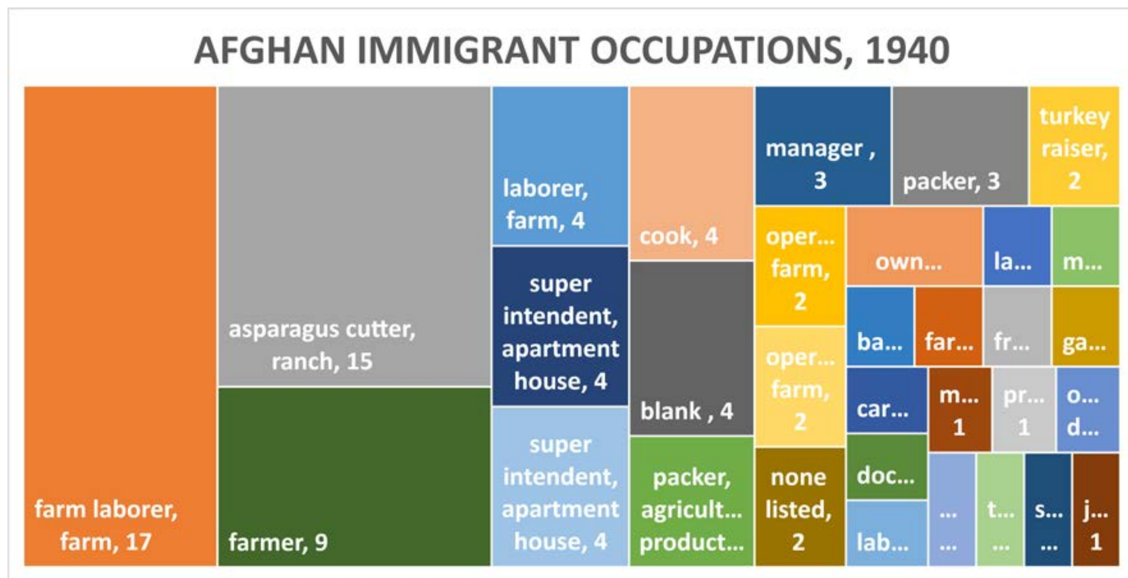

Table 4 Occupations of census-reported Afghanistan-born individuals in 1940. Citation: Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Ancestry.

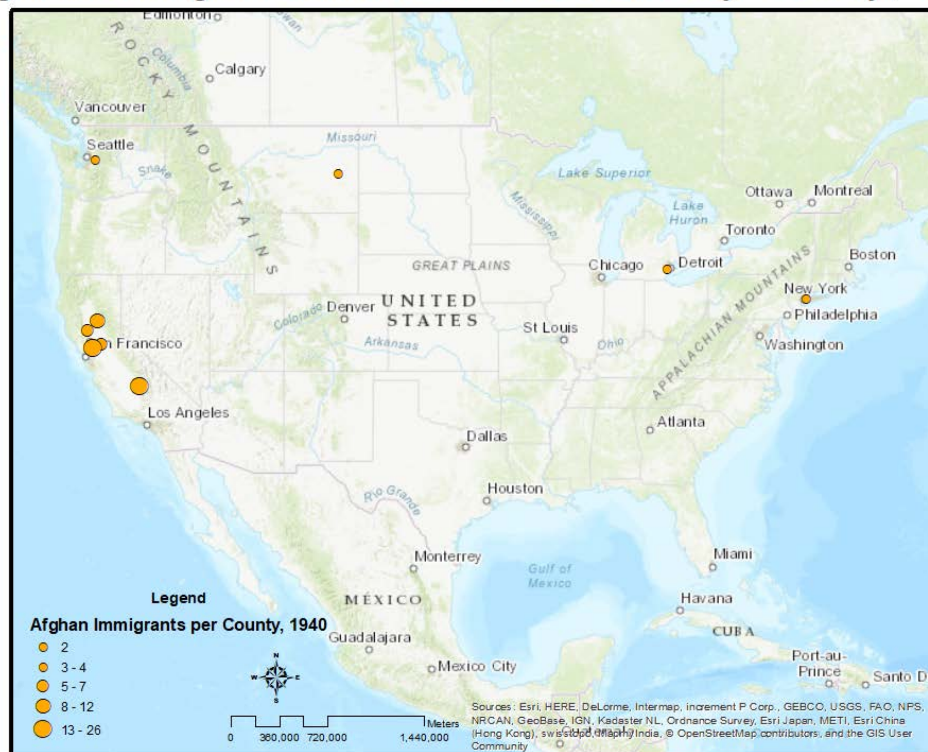

Figure 7 County-level concentration of Afghanistan-born population in the United States in 1940 (2017 county boundaries). Citation: Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com, accessed 2016-2017, https://ancestrylibrary.com; Map made with ArcMap.

Afghans in the United States During World War II

The Second World War would prove to be a turning point for the legal rights of Afghans in the United States. Despite the internment of Japanese Americans, the U.S. government liberalized a number of immigration and naturalization laws during the war and lead-up to U.S. entry. These polices opened a path for Afghan naturalization rights. In 1940, Congress enacted the Alien Registration Act of 1940, shortly before U.S. entry into the war. The act forced immigrants to register with the Federal Government, but also permitted the U.S. attorney general to halt deportation of certain immigrants residing in the country illegally.[217]

Although historian Mae Ngai found that this discretion largely benefitted European immigrants, Afghans also won a significant victory from the process.[218] In 1941, Afghanistan-born Nashad Khan, sought discretionary relief of his deportation from the Board of Immigration Appeals.[219] Khan had illegally arrived in the United States as a seaman in 1926, and had since married and become a father of three children. In order to qualify for "discretionary relief" of his deportation, though, he had to be eligible for naturalization. This required officials to deem him as belonging to a "race" eligible for naturalization.

The board ruled in his favor, finding Afghans to be "white." In its 1945 ruling, the Board of Immigration Appeals took issue with the 1928 *In re Feroz Din* ruling that

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[217] Ngai 87-90; Marian L. Smith, "Race, Nationality, and Reality: INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898, Part 2."
[218] Ngai 87-90.
[219] "Recent Decisions of the Board of Immigration Appeals," Department of Justice: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Monthly Review*, Vol. III, No. 4 (October 1945): *(format)*; In the Matter of K, 2 IN Dec. 253 (B.I.A. 1945), casetext, https://casetext.com/case/in-the-matter-of-k-27.

Afghans were not white. The Board of Immigration Appeals stated that with less than 200 Afghans in the country, there was limited "common understanding" of their whiteness, which had been the basis for the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on Indian "Hindus" in the *Thind* case. Lacking such a "common understanding," the board declared that expert analysis had to be consulted to determine the matter. The "authorities," the board maintained, held that Afghans were closely linked to Persians (Iranians), an ethnic group eligible for naturalization. Therefore, if Persians (Iranians) were allowed to naturalize, presumably as white, then Afghans should share that racial categorization.

Thus, the board deemed Noshad Khan white and that deportation of him "would result in serious economic detriment to his citizen wife and citizen minor children."[220] The Immigration and Naturalization Services' legal office concurred and the U.S. attorney general ratified the board's decision.[221] Presumably then, Afghans (at least those born in Afghanistan) were legally white, and no longer excluded from naturalization and perhaps even immigration, given the legal link between the two at the time. It remains unclear if all courts followed this understanding of Afghan eligibility.[222]

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[220] In the Matter of K, 2 IN Dec. 253 (B.I.A. 1945).

[221] Marian L. Smith, "Race, Nationality, and Reality: INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898, Part 2;" "Recent Decisions of the Board of Immigration Appeals," Department of Justice: Immigration and Naturalization Service; In the Matter of K, 2 IN Dec. 253 (B.I.A. 1945).

[222] Marian L. Smith, **"**Race, Nationality, and Reality: INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898, Part 2."

One year after the conclusion of World War II, President Truman signed the Luce-Celler Act into law. The act allowed 100 Asian Indian nationals and "Filipino persons or persons of Filipino descent" to immigrate. The act also allowed individuals of both nationalities to become naturalized citizens, regardless of race.[223] This law was likely of great importance to many self-identified Afghans who, because of the contemporary location of their town of birth, were nationals of British India. As a result of the act and the Nashad Khan ruling, Afghans were presumably eligible to immigrate to the United States and seek citizenship.[224]

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 settled issues regarding Afghan eligibility. The legislation made all nations and ethnic groups eligible to immigrate and naturalize, but allotted Asian countries only the minimum 100 immigration visas per year.[225] Given the low number of immigrants from the country before exclusion, however, it was unlikely that more than one hundred Afghans per year would have requested visas anyway. Indeed, 100 new arrivals would have nearly doubled Afghanistan-born population recorded in the census of 1940.[226] Similar visa limitations against newly independent India and Pakistan, though, were proportionally more restrictive.

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[223] Daniels, 328; Grace Pusey, "Today in History: Luce-Celler Act Signed in 1946," South Asian American Digital Archive, July 2, 2014, https://www.saada.org/news/20140702-3609. "The Luce-Celler Act of 1946," *PBS*, accessed August 2017, http://www.pbs.org/rootsinthesand/a_lucecellar.html.
[224] Account from Smith, "Race, Nationality, and Reality: INS Administration of Racial Provisions in U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law Since 1898, Part 2."
[225] "The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act)," United States Department of State: Office of the Historian, accessed August 2017, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/immigration-act.
[226] Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Ancestry.

The End of an Era

Between 1890 and 1947, self-identified Afghans endured both economic hardships and waves of xenophobia to establish lives for themselves in the United States. This required both an ability to adapt to new professions in order to secure higher pay, and an understanding of U.S. cultural and legal practices.

Collectively, Afghans in the United States appear to have constituted what Cohen would term a "labor" diasporic typology during this era. Furthermore, they constituted something between what Dufoix terms an "atopic" and "enclaved" mode of diasporic experience. That is, Afghan identity was tied more to "a shared identity" than "a formal link of nationality" during this era. Which side of the international border an individual was born in, was not of paramount importance. Many had a fluid sense of identity and multiple ethnic identities. Additionally, they largely operated outside of the scope of Afghanistan's government.

Circumstantial evidence suggests intra-national and transnational links between Afghan nodes of population may have been significant enough to constitute an "atopic" mode of diasporic experience. For instance, evidence of ethnic re-clustering every decade or so into obscure towns suggests that some form of communication and relaying of prospective opportunities existed.[227] Similarly, the presence of Afghans residing in the same house in Portland, Oregon, despite arriving in the United States at different times and originating from different towns suggests communication and

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[227] Recall the household in Oregon with people from different towns of birth, and the murdered Afghan allegedly from a "different tribe."

connectivity between the diaspora. Finally, the presence of an Afghan association and some individuals' tendency to identify as from Afghanistan, regardless of their birthplace's relation its border, suggest a level of national consciousness among Afghans in the United States at this time.

Still, not enough evidence exists to separate these experiences from the typical familial chain migrations that accompany nearly every immigrant group. Thus, it is possible that Afghans were no more "atopic" or transnational than any other "enclaved" immigrant group in the United States. Regardless, Afghan identity did mean something in the United States, and Afghans' worldview was not limited to a town or ethnic neighborhood.

Despite living in a very different time, the pioneer Afghans in the United States encountered many of the same dilemmas and contradictions of being immigrants that future generations would face. These individuals were often determined, worldly, practical, and adaptive, but not entirely immune to opportunism and violence of the times. A number penetrated the prejudice of the era to make prosperous lives for themselves and form meaningful relationships with Americans of all backgrounds. Most, however, had to measure success in more modest terms.

Chapter II: The Post-Colonial Era (1947-1978)

The British withdrawal from India in 1947 and subsequent birth of independent states in South Asia marked a significant turning point for Afghan diasporic relations. As individuals grappled with the unfolding events, competing understandings of nationalism and allegiances became a source of tension among Afghans and South Asians in the United States.

Migration patterns also shifted during the era. Afghan labor migration to the United States became increasingly rare and replaced by newer migrants who were disproportionately educated and more diverse in gender and religion.[228] These developments led to the U.S. Afghan community segmenting into three basic communities, the pioneer generation and their descendants, post-war II migrants of Muslim heritage, and Afghan Jews.

Afghanistan after Partition

Politics in Afghanistan and South Asia abruptly shifted in the years following World War II. In 1947, British India was split into two separate states and granted independence. One country, Pakistan, was comprised of Muslim-majority regions of British India, while non-Muslim-majority areas joined an independent India. In the months surrounding independence, widespread violence broke out, with a death toll in the hundreds of thousands, at minimum. Some 12.5 million people were displaced as millions of Muslims living in India headed for Pakistan, and non-Muslims migrated to

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[228] See pages, 118-120.

India.[229] Pakistan and India's governments soon became rivals and engaged in numerous conflicts against one another during the ensuing decades.

This post-colonial order thrust a new set of issues upon Afghanistan. Tensions surrounding the status of Pakistan's Pashtun-majority territories near Afghanistan's border tainted relations between Afghanistan and newly independent Pakistan. Many Afghan officials considered the 1893 boundary agreement with British India illegitimate, and were outraged when these territories were incorporated into Pakistan. In protest, Afghanistan initially voted against Pakistan's entry into the United Nations.[230] The dispute would not end there. In the coming decades, Afghanistan's government supported efforts to establish an independent country called Pashtunistan (or Pakhtunistan) in Pakistan's Pashtun-majority territories.[231] Before long, controversies regarding the region's status became a source of activism among its diaspora in the United States.

Afghans in the United States after De-Colonization

The emergence of newly independent states altered many South Asian immigrants' understanding of their ethnicity and national identity. Self-identified Afghans were no exception. Many hailed from towns now located in Pakistan, but had left prior to the nation's creation. Historically, their sense of collective memory and identification was with Afghanistan. Adding additional complexity, activists in South Asia

[229] Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 217-219.
[230] Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 491; Leon B. Poullada and Leila D.J. Poullada, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan & the United States, 1828-1973*, (Omaha: The center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Dageforde Publishing, 1995), 99.
[231] Ibid, 488-494.

had launched a movement for an independent Pashtunistan that would encompass many of these immigrants' towns of birth.

By the 1950s, Pashtun (Pakhtuns) advocates of separating from Pakistan and establishing an independent Pashtunistan had become a force in the Sacramento, California area. Foremost among them was Sacramento-based doctor Aurang Shah who had immigrated to the United States in 1916.[232] After achieving economic success with his brother as a chili vendor, he received a master's degree from Harvard University and a medical degree from Tufts.

Aurang Shah had apparently been born into a prominent family within Pakistan's present borders.[233] The proud secular Pashtun, though, was born decades before Pakistan's existence, and appears to have never developed any affinity for that country.[234] Instead, he felt more of a kinship with the Pashtun people and state of Afghanistan, even identifying with the latter at certain points of his life.[235]

By at least 1951, Aurang Shah had come to identify as a Pakhtun (Pashtun) from Pakhtunistan (Pashtunistan) and deeply opposed to Pakistan's control of his land of origin.[236] Despite this evolution in identity, he retained a sense of kinship with

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[232] Sasha Anawalt, *The JOFFREY BALLET: Robert Joffrey and the Making of An American Dance Company*, Reissue edition (New York: Scribner, 1996), 17-22.
[233] Anawalt states that Dollha Khan's father was "a ruling khan." Family account has it that Dollha Khan and Aurang Shah arrived in the United States with a sack of gold from their mother. Anawalt, "Chapter 1: The Chili Recipe." Aurang Shah birthplace from *Records of the Selective Service System, 1926-1975*, National Archives at St. Louis, Record Group, 147, Ancestry.com.
[234] Secular from Anawalt, "Chapter 1: The Chili Recipe."
[235] *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Bureau of the Census, Sacramento California, Roll: 81A, ED: 34-90, Ancestry.com; *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, Bureau of the Census, Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts, Roll: 945, p. 24B, ED:24B, Ancestry.com.
[236] "Doctor Will Take Part in Afghan Celebration," *Sacramento Bee*, May 26, 1951, p. 3.

Afghanistan and spoke at events that sought to bolster the U.S. general public's image of the country.[237]

Aurang Shah's activism on Pakhtunistan independence likely had a personal as well as an ideological component. Before immigrating to the United States, Aurang Shah had attended a school founded by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who had since become a prominent advocate for Pashtunistan independence.[238] Pakistani authorities' arrest of Abdul Ghaffar Khan for advocating Pashtun separatism shortly after Pakistan's independence, likely helped spark Aurang Shah's activism.[239]

Ghaffar Khan's importance to Aurang Shah, and implicitly to Pakhtunistan activism in the United States, is clear. At one protest in 1950, a protester held a sign reading, "Why is Khan Abdul Ghaffer Khan In Jail?" outside a reception for Pakistan's prime minister in Sacramento.[240] Additionally, Aurang Shah wrote a letter to the editor in the *Sacramento Bee* protesting the arrest of "Pakhtun leaders" in 1956. He wrote another letter to the editor in 1965, criticizing the United States' refusal to issue Ghaffar Khan a visa to visit the country.[241] These efforts all kept Pakhtunistan independence and Ghaffar Khan's arrest active stories in the *Sacramento Bee*.

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[237] "Physician Will Talk," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 1, 1955, p. 2; "Physician Will Talk," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 1, 1955, p. 2. NewsBank (Sacramento Public Library); "Sacramento Physician Will Show Afghanistan Movies," *The Sacramento Bee*, March 26, 1955, 17, NewsBank (Sacramento Public Library).
[238] Abdul Ghaffar Khan's influence on Aurang Shah is discussed in Anawalt, 19. For more on Abdul Ghaffar Khan, see "Abdul Ghaffar Khan," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Khan-Abdul-Ghaffar-Khan.
[239] "Abdul Ghaffar Khan," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, February 6, 2009, accessed January 2017, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Khan-Abdul-Ghaffar-Khan;
[240] "Pakistan Premier Ends Capital Visit, Seeks US Aid," *The Sacramento Bee*, May 16, 1950, p. 4, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).
[241]Aurang Shah, M.D., "Speaks For Pakhtuns," *Sacramento Bee*, March 10, 1956, Pg., 5. Aurang Shah, M.D., "Let Him Come," *Sacramento Bee*, April 23, 1965, Editorial Page, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

Aurang Shah's activism, though, was not limited to letter writing and protest. By at least 1951, he had become president of the Azad [free] Pakhtunistan Association of America.[242] His efforts on behalf of Pakhtunistan independence took him on multiple trips to the United Nations and embassies.[243] The most noticed of his efforts, though, was hosting annual Pakhtunistan Independence Day events. These events' attendance was significant in both size and stature. In 1962, the *Sacramento Bee* reported one event's attendance at approximately 150 people.[244] Diplomats from various countries regularly attended the events, with Afghan officials' presence especially notable. Prominent personalities such as the consul general of Afghanistan in San Francisco, the charge d'affairs of the Afghan embassy in Washington D.C., and Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States (and future prime minister), Mohammed Hashim Maiwandwal all attended at various times.[245]

Another letter to the editor that discusses Pakhtunisan leaders' arrest is Aurang Shah, MD., "Pakistan Election," *Sacramento Bee*, October 2, 1964, C5, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

[242] In all likelihood, Aurang Shah also founded Azad Pakhtunistan Association of America, which had existed since at least 1949. This date is from a pamphlet of that year cited in Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature* (University of Arkansas Press, 2010). 1951 date from "Doctor Will Take Part in Afghan Celebration," *Sacramento Bee*.

[243] James J. Brown, "Looking Around," *Sacramento Bee*, August 27, 1961, B1, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).
James J. Brown, "Looking Around," *Sacramento Bee*, December 13, 1959, B1, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).
James J. Brown, "Slain Physician Had Fought For Land Of Birth," *Sacramento Bee*, August 25, 1966, A10, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).
James J. Brown, "Looking Around," *Sacramento Bee*, August 27, 1967, B1, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

[244] This attendance was reported in Aaron Epstein, "Envoy Says US Aid Kills Pakhtuns In Pakistan," *Sacramento Bee*, August 29, 1962, C2.. For information on events from other years, see "Afghan Envoy Cites Plight of Pakhtunistan," *Sacramento Bee,* September 3, 1965, D17, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library). "Pakhtunistan Day Celebration Is Set," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 27, 1952 p. 25, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

[245] Ibid; "Pakhtunistan Group Sets Freedom Fete," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 30, 1955, Pg. 9; James J. Brown, "Looking Around," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 22, 1966, B1. "Cocktail Parties Prelude Autumn, *The Sacramento Bee*, September 7, 1957, B2.

Aurang Shah's efforts did not go unnoticed. For instance, he was a frequent subject of articles in the *Sacramento Bee*. In 1962, Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States, M.H. Maiwandwal, presented Aurang Shah with the "Shah the Stor," 2nd degree, reportedly Afghanistan's highest non-military decoration, for his efforts in the United States. The California State Assembly subsequently passed a resolution recognizing Aurang Shah for his advocacy of the Pashtunistan issue and congratulating him for his decoration.[246]

As Aurang Shah interpreted events, the Pakistani government was perpetuating the "foreign" occupation of Pashtun lands. As he articulated in 1962, "the era of colonialism is past," and that "we want them [Pakistan] to leave us alone to work out our own destiny."[247] He repeated the theme of colonial domination in 1965, stating "the nation [Pakhtunistan] does not owe allegiance to Britain, nor does it owe allegiance to Pakistan."[248] As evidenced by his organization and protests, he found some support for these views in California.

Not all Muslims and Pashtuns in California, though, shared Aurang' Shah's views. In 1952, the *Sacramento Bee* reported that a "Pakistani group" at a Sacramento-area mosque "adopted a resolution disputing the claims of Dr. Aurang Shah of Sacramento of the existence of the Pukhtunistan Nation," and declared that "Pukhtuns are loyal to Pakistan."[249] One of the featured speakers that day was the consul general of Pakistan,

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[246] "Pakhtun Is Paid Honor For His Freedom Fight," *The Sacramento Bee*, April 20, 1962. B2.
[247] James J. Brown, "Afghan Envoy Outlines Pakhtunistan Role In East-West Asia Struggle," *The Sacramento Bee*, April 18, 1962, C1, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).
[248] "Afghan Envoy Cites Plight of Pakhtunistan," *Sacramento Bee*.
[249] "Moslems Honor Prophet Abraham In Religious Rite, *The Sacramento Bee*, September 1, 1952, Page 13, , Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

who had also led the day's prayers for Eid al-Adha. It is not entirely clear whether this effort had significant support from local residents or if it was largely an effort by Pakistani officials.

This was not the only documented example of support for Pakistan in Sacramento. Local resident Sanchi Khan, who was secretary of the Pakistan National Association, voiced his opposition to Pashtun separatism in a 1952 *Sacramento Bee* letter to the editor. Hostility to Pakistani sovereignty, Khan asserted, was confined to a "handful" of people "paid by the Afghan government to sabotage Pakistan." He concluded his editorial by stating, "I am a Pathan [Pashtun/Pakhtun] and never have heard of a physical country by the name of Pakhtoonistan."[250]

On August 25th, 1966, Aurang Shah was murdered by one of his patients, dealing Pakhtunistan activism in the United States a significant blow.[251] His burial reflected the fluid transnational identifications of his times. Aurang Shah, who was probably Pashtunistan's foremost champion in the United States, was buried in Afghanistan.[252] In

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[250] Sanchi Khan, "Pickets are Criticised," Editorial Page, *The Sacramento Bee*, June 21, 1952, Editorial Page, , Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

[251] For more on these events see, "Doctor Says Hallucinations Ruled Lovato," *The Sacramento Bee*, December 5, 1966, B2; "Murder Trial Recesses Until After 2 Witnesses Testify," *The Sacramento Bee*, November 24, 1966. Additional coverage of Shah's murder include "Bullets Slay Local Medic; Man is Held," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 25, 1966, A1. "Lovato Murder Trial Recesses Until Monday After 2 Witnesses Testify," *The Sacramento Bee*, November 24, 1966, C1. "Suspect Talked Pleasantly Before Medic's Slaying," *The Sacramento Bee*, August 25, 1966, A10. "Lovato Said He Acted Out Dream," *Sacramento Bee,* November 30, 1966, D1; "Doctor Says Hallucinations Ruled Lovato," *The Sacramento Bee*, December 5, 1966, B2. "Accused Slayer Charges Dr. Shah 'Killed Eyes,'" *Sacramento Bee,* November 28, 1966, B2. "Dr. Shah Killer Is Adjudged Sane By Jury," *Sacramento Bee,* December 8, 1966, B4. "Dr. Shah Slayer Will Get Second Trial Next Month, *The Sacramento Bee*, June 4, 1968, A6. "Manslaughter Is Believed Out In MD Killing," *The Sacramento Bee*, November 23, 1966, page B2, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

[252] "Dr Aurang Shah," Find A Grave, accessed August 2017, https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=128232028. "Slain Doctor's Funeral Will Be Held Today," *Sacramento Bee*, August 28, 1966, A2, Newsbank (Sacramento Public Library).

1971, his brother Dollha Khan, (father of the acclaimed ballet director Robert Joffrey) was buried in the Pakhtunistan Association's cemetery plot under a marker that cites Afghanistan as his country of birth. He was born in contemporary Pakistan before the Durand boundary agreement with the British.[253] Ethnic and national affinities and boundaries remained malleable or even overlapping for these pioneer generation immigrants, even in an age of post-colonial rivalries.

While some immigrants such as Aurang Shah highlighted a specific national affinity, other self-identified Afghans apparently sought to honor their regional heritage, but transcend or ignore national differences. This is exemplified in the life of Ataullah K. Ozai-Durrani.

Ozai-Durrani was born in Herat, Afghanistan, and immigrated to the United States in 1923.[254] There, he developed a method for creating fast-cooking rice and became a millionaire after selling the patent to General Foods Corporation in 1941. The method was later branded as "Minute Rice."[255] Upon his death, he bequeathed a large donation to sponsor the research and translation of poets, Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib

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[253] Anawalt, *The Joffrey Ballet*, 365. "Joseph 'Joe' Joffrey," Find A Grave, accessed January 2017, http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=128068737.

[254] *Petitions for Naturalization form the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1897-1944*, The National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Series: M1972, Roll: 913, Ancestry.com.

[255] "Ozai-Durrani, Ataullah K.," *Encyclopædia Iranica,* July 20, 2002, accessed January 2017, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ozai-durrani;Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature* (University of Arkansas Press, 2010), 256.
Joseph Lelyveld, "Inventor Leaves Half Million for Translation of 2 Persian Poets," *New York Times*, June 19, 1864, pg. 33. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (115836648).

and Meer Taqui Meer as "as a memorial" to his friend Syud Hossain.[256] Syud Hossian was an Indian Muslim who advocated on behalf of Indian independence in the United States and later became India's ambassador to Egypt.[257] Ozai-Durrani's donation made it possible for Harvard University to carry out the translations as well as create an Ozai-Durrani Chair of Indo-Pakistan Studies.[258]

Yet this seemingly uncontroversial bequest could not escape the politics of the time. The *New York Times* reported that both a librarian at the Indian consulate and professor of Iranian studies downplayed the poets' significance outside of Pakistan. These two individuals' references to Pakistan were in all likelihood due to the poets' usage (but not exclusive) of Urdu, a language commonly spoken in Pakistan. [259]

Ozai-Durrani, though, had not intended for his bequest to specifically honor Pakistan. He was born in Afghanistan and had made the donation in honor of an individual who had been an ambassador for India, Pakistan's political rival.[260] Ozai-Durrani's motives for picking the two poets are unknown. Notably, he did not feel constrained to sponsor a Pashtu or exclusively Dari (Persian) language "Afghan" poet to further the prestige of his native Afghanistan. Perhaps Ozai-Durrani assumed a broader regional or linguistic identity in the United States rather than one exclusive nationality,

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[256] For more on Ozai-Durrani's bequeathal, see ibid; Michael J. Arlen, "Comment," *The New Yorker*, July 11, 1964, accessed January 2017, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1964/07/11/comment-4930#ixzz2N3OLWvs1.
[257] Iftikhar H. Malik, *US-South Asian Relations 1940-47: American Attitudes Toward The Pakistan Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991).
[258] "Ozai-Durrani, Ataullah K." *Encyclopædia Iranica.*
[259] Joseph Lelyveld, "Inventor Leaves Half Million for Translation of 2 Persian Poets."
[260] Ibid.

but he could have simply chosen the two poets because he associated them with the friend he sought to honor in his bequeathal.

Regardless, Aurang Shah and Ataullah K. Ozai-Durrani's lives both demonstrate an enduring commitment to their perceived "homelands" in distinct manners. While Aurang Shah and his critics demonstrated the importance of the nation-state to many South Asian immigrants at this time, Ozai-Durrani's activism was more regional. Both, though, utilized their position in the United States to promote the cultures of their region of birth.

Afghans in the United States After 1947

As a whole, the U.S. Afghan immigrant population steadily grew during the post-colonial era and likely surpassed 1,000 people by 1974.[261] Migration during this era, though, was far different than it had been earlier in the century. Many of the early "pioneer" Afghan immigrants were workers who had previously resided in British imperial ports such as Hong Kong or the U.S.-controlled Philippines.[262] World War II and the sudden decolonization of British and U.S. territories (Philippines) in Asia, though, disrupted the old imperial labor migration circuit connecting South Asia labor to the Pacific coast of Asia.[263] After the British left India, there was almost certainly a reduced

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[261] All population estimates from Steve Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 6.0 (1980 U.S. Census 5% sample), University of Minnesota, 2015.

[262] "*Citizenship & Naturalization," Ancestry, accessed 2016-2017,* ancestrylibrary.com.

[263] Hoerder writes that this "After 1937, Japanese imperial warfare ended the century-long traditions of Asian migration forever." This study, instead finds "disrupts" to be a safer word, given the difficulty in determining whether post-1965 working-class immigrants from Asia has been a continuation from pre-1937 migration patterns or something new altogether. Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2002), 400-404.

pool of itinerant Afghan and Pashtun migrants in British-occupied ports in Asia with access to trans-Pacific travel.[264]

Restrictive U.S. immigration policies also severely limited Asian immigration until 1965. Even if one had legal approval to immigrate to the United States, costs associated with direct migration to the United States (as opposed to segmented trips to work destinations) would have likely been too steep for most laborers. These factors all made labor migration into the United States exceedingly difficult.

Affluent urbanites and students with sponsorships, however, were two groups able to afford these costs. Indeed Afghanistan's government sponsored a number of students for study at Western universities in hopes of fostering a new leadership class for the country.[265] Along with these advantages, students were generally exempt from U.S. immigration quotas, even during the era of the highly restrictive immigration.[266] As a result, increasing numbers of Afghan students arrived in the United States during the era while Asian labor migration to the United States faced severe obstacles.

Changes to U.S. immigration policy also benefited Afghan students and urban elites interested in pursuing opportunities in the United States. Indeed many Afghan immigrants came from Afghanistan's cities during this era.[267] Between 1940 and 1965,

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[264] Another route to immigration may have been closed after immigration from the Philippines to the United States was severely restricted after the nation was promised independence in 1934. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, Second edition (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 358.

[265] See chapter one, 94-95. Other students without government support also sought education in Western countries. Anonymous, interview with the author, June 2015.

[266] Immigration Act of 1924, 68th United States Congress, Charles University, accessed August 2017, http://tucnak.fsv.cuni.cz/~calda/Documents/1920s/ImmigAct1924.html.

[267] An examination of naturalization forms filed by Afghan immigrants who arrived between 1948 and 1977 in the most populous counties of California, Georgia, and Illinois revealed that 83.8 percent were from Kabul, Afghanistan. Unfortunately, naturalization forms from this era are largely un-digitalized, so it

Congress enacted successive laws that eliminated ethnic restrictions on immigration and naturalization. Rather than ethnic preferences, the new immigration laws (particularly that of 1965) prioritized family reunification, occupational or status, and certain types of refugees.[268] These new policies, along with developments in South Asia, transformed the U.S. Afghan community's demographic composition.

Extrapolations from the 5 percent sample of the 1980 U.S. Census offer a glimpse of this transformation.[269] To control for age and current students, this dissertation only examined individuals at least nineteen years old and not in school. Among this cohort, 45.3 percent of Afghanistan-born immigrants who arrived in the United States between 1948 and 1977 had obtained four or more years of college education.[270] Only 13.3 percent had acquired less than a 12th grade education.[271] These levels were high, even by U.S. standards.[272] Although the low sample size of these statistics make exact percentages unreliable, as does the fact that Census occurred after 1977, the overall picture is clear. Afghan immigrants in the United States were disproportionately from the most educated segments of Afghan society.[273]

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is unclear if Afghan immigrants in other parts of the United States were as disproportionately from Kabul. "Citizenship & Naturalization Records," Ancestry, accessed 2017, ancestrylibrary.com.

[268] Daniels, 341-347; Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-236, 79 Stat, 1965, University of Washington-Bothell, accessed August 2017, http://library.uwb.edu/Static/USimmigration/79%20stat%20911.pdf.

[269] As of this study's writing, it is difficult if not impossible to obtain census information about Afghan immigrants in the 1950, 1960, and 1970 U.S. censuses.

[270] IPUMS (1980 Census 5%).

[271] Ibid.

[272] 14.4 percent Individuals from the U.S. population overall, at least nineteen years old, and not in school had at least four years of college education. 33.1 percent had less than a twelfth grade education. Thus, even accounting for its small sample size (61), these numbers give an indication of the demographic transformation of the U.S. Afghan community. Ibid.

[273] The sample size of the 1948-1978 Afghan immigrant cohort in the 1980 5% sample survey of the U.S. Census was 73 total people. Ibid.

Afghans in the United States also tended to live in large metropolitan regions by the 1970s. The 5 percent survey of the 1980 U.S. Census indicates that the New York City metropolitan region had become the largest center of Afghan immigrants who arrived between 1948 and 1977.[274] Additionally, New York, New Jersey, and California constituted 54.8 percent of this immigration cohort's population, with the rest distributed throughout the country.[275] Most in California lived in major urban or suburban counties.[276] Again, this Census occurred after the era in question had passed, but suggests an overall trend towards urban and suburban locales.

The U.S. Afghan population grew more diverse during this era, and Afghan women likely constituted about a third of the 1948-1977 immigration cohort in 1980.[277] Religious diversity also increased with the arrival of significant numbers of Afghans Jews. On the eve of the 1978 coup in Afghanistan, their numbers were likely between 400 and 1000 people and they perhaps constituted a plurality of the total Afghan immigrant population.[278] Their population was concentrated in the Queens borough of New York City, where they formed a congregation in 1978.[279] The Holocaust, marginalization, fear of violence, belief in Zionism, and better economic prospects influenced over one

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[274] New York City, and state, were also the largest centers of Afghan immigrants in their respective categories in 1980 among all Afghan immigrants. Ibid.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Several dozen Afghan immigrants may have also lived in mixed rural/suburban settings such as Marin and San Bernardino counties in California, neither of which are known for much agriculture. Ibid.
[277] Women constituted 34.2 percent of the 1948 to 1977 immigration cohort that remained in the country in 1980. Ibid.
[278] Aharon quotes a *New York Times* article stating there were 1,000 Afghan Jews living in New York in 2001. Aharon also stated that her interviewees told her the majority of immigrants came during the 1960s, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society helped settle some 423 Afghan Jews in the United States between 1980-1991. The Afghanistan-born population of Queens County, the largest population center of Afghan Jews (but also home to an Afghan Muslim community) New York was 740. Aharon, 103-106.
[279] Aharon, 108; Frogel, 4.

million of Jews to leave Europe and broader Middle East for Israel and the United States.[280] Afghan Jews in the United States were part of this broader migration. By the mid-1960s, most of Afghanistan's Jewish community had also departed the country, primarily to Israel and the United States.[281]

By 1977, politics in the United States and South Asia had changed the demographics of the U.S. community. No longer a predominantly homogenous community that largely consisted of labor migrants, Afghans in the United States were diverse and disproportionately well educated.

U.S. Afghan Diaspora and the Cold War

Like many governments with modest economies during the era, Afghanistan's political leadership envisioned state-supported infrastructure projects kick-starting the country's economic development. Since at least the 1930s, Afghanistan's government had sent students to the United States and other countries in hopes of educating a leadership cadre to engineer Afghanistan's development.[282] Eager to assert its global influence, the United States subsidized education programs and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.[283]

Afghans who had previously studied in the United States were ideal for assisting with these U.S.-supported programs because of their technical expertise, English

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[280] Hoerder, 498.
[281] Esther Frogel, "Afghan Jews and their Children: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Lived Experiences and Psychological Impact of Acculturation on First and Second Generation Traditional Afghan Jewish Immigrants," (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2015), 3. For more on global Jewish migration after World War II and the Holocaust, see Hoerder, 497-498; Aharon.
[282] Poullada and Poullada 28-30. Ansary, 20-25
[283] For U.S. economic and educational assistance to Afghanistan, see Dupree, 507-518; Poullada and Poullada, 175-185.

fluency, and familiarity with U.S. culture. Mohammed Kabir Ludin, for instance, received an engineering degree at Cornell University in the 1930s before becoming president of the Helmand Valley Authority, the largest U.S.-sponsored development project in Afghanistan. He eventually became ambassador to the United States.[284]

The number of Afghan students in the United States was significant. Leon and Leila Poullada (occupations) stated in their work, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan & the United States, 1828-1973*, that 1,463 Afghans returned from USAID study abroad training in the United States between 1952 and 1976.[285] A 1964 U.S. Department of State memorandum prepared for national security adviser McGeorge Bundy stated that "some 200 Afghan students from various colleges and universities" were due to meet at the Afghan Students Association where the Afghan Ambassador would be speaking.[286]

Like so many other experiences of Afghans in the United States, students found themselves politicized by both the Afghan government and the U.S. politics. The U.S. government recognized that students from "third world" countries were to play influential roles in their respective countries' futures, and wanted to cultivate amiable relations with them. This was demonstrated in the memorandum for McGeorge Bundy that suggested, "a Presidential message to the convention would be very helpful in

[284] Ibid, 29; "Afghan students in the United States during the 1930s," Meridian International Center, accessed January 2018, http://www.meridian.org/insmallthingsremembered/afghan-students-in-the-united-states-during-the-1930s.
[285] Poullada and Poullada, 214-215.
[286] Memorandum, Benjamin H. Reed to McGeorge Bundy, August 11, 1964, #49a, "Afghanistan, Volume 1, 12/63-4/68 [2/2]," NSF, Box 116, LBJ Library.

impressing these future leaders with the continuing interest of the United States in Afghanistan's freedom and prosperity."[287] The request was approved.[288]

Other U.S. efforts to court Afghan students may have crossed ethical lines. In the 1960s, an Afghan who had attended college in the United States told a political magazine that the CIA had tried to recruit him six years prior, and that the U.S. officials created problems regarding his visa after he refused.[289] He further alleged that the student who had tried to recruit him had since become a high-ranking official in Afghanistan's government.[290] Afghanistan's government vehemently denied these accusations, and an embassy official stated that the student's visa issues were related to his completion of studies in the country.[291] Afghanistan's prime minister even attacked the source as a "defector."[292] The truth regarding the matter remains elusive.

Nation-building, the Cold War, and post-independence rivalries among South Asian countries added new dimensions to Afghan students' experiences in the United States. They could not simply be viewed as students hoping to get an education. Instead, the U.S. and Afghan governments invested national ambitions into them and hoped their experiences in the United States would further the national interest of their respective countries.

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[287] Ibid.
[288] Memorandum, McGeorge Bundy to Benjamin H. Reed, August 14, 1964, #49, "Afghanistan, Volume 1, 12/63-4/68 [2 of 2]," NSF, Box 116, LBJ Library.
[289] "Ramparts Says CIA Bids For Foreign Students," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 30, 1967, Central Intelligence Agency Electronic Reading Room, accessed August, 2017, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP75-00149R000400090002-0.pdf.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Ibid; Dupree, 612-614.
[292] Dupree, 613.

Conclusion

By the 1970s, the Afghan community in the United States was comprised of three basic groups. New arrivals tended to be highly educated and urban, constituting what can be termed as a “commercial-educated” diaspora.[293] They were often subsidized by Afghanistan’s government, or had ambitions to play a leading role in Afghanistan after their return. As such, they often held what Dufoix would refer to as a centroperipheral relationship with Afghanistan’s government, in which a country of origin’s government plays a highly influential role in “the existence and organization of a national community in a host country.”[294] Not all students, however, were subsidized.

Afghan Jews constituted a second group. Sara Y. Aharon found that although maintaining a specifically Afghan Jewish identity along with traditions were important to some, this distinctiveness was gradually integrated into a broader “Sephardic” or “Orthodox” Jewish identity in the United States. This, she found, was in large part due to the difficulty of maintaining a strictly Afghan Jewish identity with such a small community.[295]

Little is known about the Afghan pioneer generation of this time outside of a few prominent personalities. The case of Aurang Shah suggests that significant levels of “Pashtun” nationalism at times existed alongside an affiliation with Afghanistan. Yet, it remains undetermined how representative the Pashtunistan activists were of the overall community. After the prospects of Pashtunistan independence waned, it is conceivable

[293] For a brief discussion of students and professionals in diaspora, see Dufoix 103-104.
[294] Dufoix, 62.
[295] Aharon, 3.

that some may have returned to an Afghan identity. Other Pasthuns, presumably some who had at once identified as Afghan, almost certainly welcomed Pakistani identification shortly after Pakistan's creation. The diverse circumstances Afghan pioneers experienced likely nourished fluid and at times conflicting identities.

There was further room for mixed identities among the pioneer generation's children. Given the general absence of Afghan women in the United States for much of their time in the country, the pioneer generation's descendants in the United States were almost certainly of predominately mixed ethnic backgrounds. Unfortunately, like their parents, there is not enough information about pioneer generation's descendants to generalize about how they interpreted their identities.

Between 1947 and 1977, U.S. Afghans experienced shifts in the demographics and politics of their community, along with changes in who identified as Afghan. Had violence not engulfed Afghanistan after the coup of 1978, the early 1970s may have been the transformative moment of Afghan history in the United States. Instead, the existing Afghan community would be outnumbered and overshadowed by the substantial Afghan influx following the coup.

Chapter III: The PDPA Era (1978-1992)

Chapter Introduction

In April of 1978, the left wing People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew Afghanistan's government in a coup. Amidst high levels of political violence, the country destabilized and the Soviet Union invaded the following year. Three decades of war replaced the relative peace of the previous sixty years.

The ensuing conflicts in Afghanistan dramatically transformed the U.S. Afghan community. In 1970, the U.S. Census had not deemed the Afghanistan-born population in the country significant enough to tabulate. In 1980, though, the census counted 3,760 Afghan refugees and immigrants in the country and 28,444 in 1990. Most of these new migrants were refugees.[296]

This Afghan refugee migration to the United States was, in large-part, facilitated by U.S. policymakers' belief that their admission was in the national interest. The U.S. Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union also created a conducive environment for Afghan voluntary political activism in the United States. When offered opportunities by the U.S. government or private organizations to undermine the Soviet Union's policy or image, many Afghans were willing to participate, finding that the activities supported both the

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[296] "Region and Country or Area of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population: 1960 to 1990," U.S. Bureau of the Census, accessed November 26, 2015, https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab03.html?cssp=SERP. Between 1982 and 1994, 27,050 Afghans with refugee status arrived in the United States. David W. Haines, *Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Reference Handbook* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), 64.

United States and Afghanistan. The task of rebuilding individuals' lives, however, took precedence to activism.

Historical Overview

In 1973, Afghanistan experienced its first of several upheavals over a ten-year span. That year, Mohmmed Daud Khan overthrew his cousin King Zahir Shah, and subsequentially proclaimed Afghanistan a republic in a coup largely devoid of violence.[297] On April 27th, 1978, the Communist-inspired People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) launched a coup that overthrew Daud Khan's government. Although lacking much popular support, the PDPA had enough adherents in the Afghan military to enable it to attack the Presidential palace, kill the president, and seize political power.[298]

The PDPA government ordered radical changes in nearly all facets of life. It promoted land reform, women's rights, and challenged traditional policies a number of other spheres.[299] Opposition to human rights abuses and the government's policies triggered a large-scale rebellion against the government and military mutinies by 1979.[300] There were also substantial rifts between rival factions in the PDPA

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[297] Barfield, 214; Dupree, 759.
[298] Rubin and Barfield mention the arrests of PDPA members in short segments as precipitating the PDPA coup. These arrests of PDPA members came after protests over the murder of Mir Akbar Khan. Tomsen, however, cites a claim by PDPA leader and eventual president, Nur Mohammed Taraki, that the coup had already been planned before the murder of Mir Akbar Khyber, but was moved to an earlier date after these events. Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (Yale University Press, 2002), 104-105; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 225-233; Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 110-113.
[299] John F. Burns, "AFGHANS DISCLOSE DEATHS OF 11,000," *The New York Times*, November 9, 1989, sec. World, accessed January 24, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/11/09/world/afghans-disclose-deaths-of-11000.html.
[300] Barfield, 233. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 40, 45.

government. Political violence claimed the life of President Nur Muhammad Taraki shortly after then-Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin replaced him in 1979.[301]

As violence increased in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union became increasingly concerned about the situation. The Soviet leadership was already dissatisfied with President Hafizullah Amin's leadership and his inability to stabilize the country on their southern border. They become particularly alarmed after Amin met with U.S. diplomats, and feared that Amin, a former Columbia graduate student, was attempting to align Afghanistan with the United States.[302] On December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union launched an invasion of Afghanistan to ensure that the country's government remained communist-inspired and allied with the Soviet Union. Prime Minister Amin was killed after a Soviet assault on the Presidential palace, and Babrak Karmal of the rival Parchami faction of the PDPA took power. The Soviet intervention, however, did not stabilize the country, and resistance and fighting persisted.

Soviet troops and its pro-Soviet Afghan government forces continued to battle Afghan rebels for much of the next decade. Although the new regime released thousands of (presumably political) prisoners, government persecution continued.[303] According to a former official interviewed by Amnesty International, and cited by Afghanistan scholar Barnett Rubin, the Special Revolutionary Court executed 8,006 people between 1980 and 1988.[304]

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[301] Coll, 46-47; Barfield, 228.
[302] Barfield, 234-235.
[303] Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 123.
[304] Ibid, 137.

Violence in Afghanistan created a massive exodus out of the country. By 1980, there were an estimated 600,000 Afghan refugees, predominately in Pakistan and Iran.[305] This number would grow to over six million Afghan refugees in 1989, the year the last Soviet troops withdrew from the country.[306] At the time, Afghanistan shared a northern border with the Soviet Union, so the predominant share of refugees settled in Pakistan and Iran. Many lived in desperate conditions in refugee camps and only a handful were able to escape to Western countries.[307]

Leaving Afghanistan

As had been the case in the previous era, the first Afghans to re-settle in the United States after 1978 tended to come from the most educated sectors of Afghan society.[308] Afghan government violence particularly targeted Afghanistan's capital, and many families with members employed in politically sensitive positions understandably feared they would be associated with previous regimes and targeted by the new government.[309] In the latter years of the 1980s, Afghan immigrants were not as likely to have held college degrees as their predecessors.[310]

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[305] "UNHCR Afghan Refugee Statistics 10 Sep 2001,"UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *ReliefWeb*, (September 10, 2001), http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/unhcr-afghan-refugee-statistics-10-sep-2001.

[306] Ibid. Withdrawal date from Barfield, 240.

[307] "UNHCR Afghan Refugee Statistics 10 Sep 2001,"UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

[308] See pages, 143-145.

[309] Afghanistan scholar Barnett R. Rubin writes that "a representative of the Kabul government estimated in a 1990 interview that KhAD had arrested 150,000 people, mostly from Kabul city." Rubin, 137. See also J. Bruce Amstutz, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University, 1986), 273.

[310] See pages, 143-145.

Humaira Ghilzai was among the first to leave Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion. At the time of the 1978 coup, Ghilzai was ten years old, and her father was in the Ministry of Trade. Fearing imprisonment due to her father's ties to the previous regime, and believing that conditions in Afghanistan would become intolerable, her family made plans to leave Afghanistan. Ghilzai's family was not alone, and she recalled that most people from her family's class planned to exit the country.[311]

Members of Fahim Fazli's family also left Afghanistan during the first years of conflict. Although not Marxists, Fahim Fazli's mother had been a midwife to then Vice President Hafizullah Amin's family.[312] After Amin became president and was killed during the Soviet intervention, she was vulnerable to arrest. Fahim recalls that, "when the Russian[s] came…my mom couldn't have a chance to live one more day, she came over from work and she says, 'Fahim, Jamil, all my brothers and sisters we're all going to leave.'"[313] The family had heard from friends that she was on a Soviet target list.[314] Fazli's father, however, refused to leave Afghanistan, so Fahim, his father, and younger brother remained in the country.

Fazli's father, though, eventually concluded that they too, needed to leave Afghanistan. He was president of a bank and there were now rumors that his wife had fled to the United States. At school, fellow students harassed Fahim and his brother, calling them, "CIA kids, or Sons of Reagan." Fearing political persecution and the

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[311] Humaira Ghilzai, interview with the author, October 2015.
[312] Fahim Fazli and Michael Moffett, *Fahim Speaks: A Warrior-Actor's Odyssey from Afghanistan to Hollywood and Back* (North Hills: Warriors Publishing Group, 2012), 1-2.
[313] Fahim Fazli, interview with the author, June 2015.
[314] Fazli and Moffett, 2.

possibility that he and his brother would be sent to the Soviet Union for indoctrination, Fazli's family set out for Pakistan in 1983, hoping to contact Fahim's mother who they believed was in the United States, and relocate there.[315]

Tragically, many families were unable to escape the violence. Saima Wahab lived in Kabul during the time of the coup, where her father worked at a radio station before the PDPA takeover. Authorities came to her home and took her father away in 1979. After a few weeks, he vanished from prison. Unsure of her father's fate, Wahab recalled in her memoir that she and her brother spent the day standing at their home's window, hoping to be the first to see him return.[316] He was later presumed dead.

In many ways, Ghilzai, Fazli, and Wahab's accounts shared similarities. They, or loved ones in their family, were employed in politically sensitive occupations, and had to leave the country in the first years of the war. Fazli and Wahab's families also shared a fear that children in the family would be sent to the Soviet Union.[317]

These anxieties were not unfounded. Afghanistan scholar Barnett R. Rubin wrote that one Afghan government program, the Homeland Nursery, "placed young children, especially orphans, in special schools and sent them for long-term study in the Soviet Union."[318] While this program was supposedly intended for orphans and children who suffered the death of a parent, there were reports of official pressuring or that some

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[315] Ibid, 1-4; Fahim Fazli, interview.
[316] Saima Wahab, *In My Father's Country: An Afghan Woman Defies Her Fate* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 5-7.
[317] Fazli and Moffett, 2. Wahab, *In My Father's Country*, 7.
[318] Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 141.

children were “more or less rounded up” into enrollment.[319] Referring to a similar program, Rubin stated that

> As with the Homeland Nursery, the official beneficiaries were orphans of martyrs of the revolution, but many others were recruited as well: children of the poor, those orphaned by Soviet bombings, and some who were more or less rounded up from poor neighborhoods or from schools in Kabul and sent [to the Soviet Union] without the knowledge or consent of their parents.[320]

Nearly everyone that fled Afghanistan in those years endured hardships. Ghilzai, Fazli, and Wahab were no exceptions. Soldiers patrolled roads, footpaths went through dangerous terrain, and lives often had to be placed in the hands of guides.

Fahim Fazli recalled coming across a minefield at night during his exit from Afghanistan, “filled with destroyed vehicles and blown-up animals.”[321] Unsatisfied by a guide’s explanation that their bodies were too small to set off the mines intended for tanks, Fahim stepped only in the guide’s footprints in front of him.[322] After ascending 10,000 feet into the Hindu Kush Mountains along narrow paths on horseback, they headed down the mountain for the last stretch of their trip to the Pakistan border. By dawn of their third day, their guide approached some people in uniforms, spoke with them, and then informed Fazli and his family that they had arrived in Parachinar, Pakistan. As Fazli recalled, “It was the happiest day of my young life.”[323]

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[319] Ibid, 140-142.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Fazli and Moffett, 36.
[322] Ibid, 36.
[323] Ibid, 37-40.

After her father's disappearance, Saima Wahab's family eventually relocated to a village where her grandfather lived. This relocation was in part due to fears that Soviets or their allies would kidnap Saima's six-year-old brother.[324] Settling in the village, however, did not substantially improve their safety. A bomb dropped through the roof while Saima Wahab slept, but did not detonate.[325] After this, and other growing dangers in the area, her grandfather, who was the village mullah (religious expert), arranged for them to travel to Pakistan. Five-year old Wahab rode there on a donkey.[326]

Humaira Ghilzai's family went to great lengths to provide a safe passage by car to Pakistan, hiring what Ghilzai jokingly referred to as a "Bloomingdale's" smuggler, due to the cost of his services. Still, the driver ended up in a ditch. Ghilzai then spent a night in a fort overseen by someone who "made it clear that…he did not like us," and would point a gun at her mother. The next day, her great aunt suffered a stroke shortly after Soviet troops inspected the bus on which she was travelling.[327] Their troubles would not end at the border.

In Pakistan, Ghilzai's mother spoke negatively of resistance leader Gulbuldin Hekmatyar to people who turned out to be members of his faction. They subsequentially detained Ghilzai and her family. After being interrogated for two days by people who Ghilzai recalls as "ISI (Pakistan's intelligence agency) agents and Guldbuldin [Hekmatyar]'s people," they were released. The faction, though, billed

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[324] Wahab, *In My Father's Country*, 7.
[325] Ibid,1-2.
[326] Ibid, 6-12, 22.
[327] Humaira Ghilzai, interview.

Ghilzai's family for the food and shelter during their detainment in what Ghilzai referred to as the "hotel prison."[328]

In Pakistan, countless Afghans refugees hoped to re-locate to another country with more opportunities. Many apparently held favorable views of the United States, and shared a desire to live there. Saima Wahab wrote of her experience,

> Like everyone else growing up in a poor and conflicted country, I dreamed about America before going there. I knew that there were freedoms there beyond my wildest imagination, and rights that would be mine, if I could get to that land of equality. America could rescue me from the cultural restrictions and ancient customs that threatened to define my fate-if I could only get there. But it all seemed like a fantasy. I never believed that my dreams could come true.[329]

Fahim Fazli also desired to relocate to the United States. His mother at that point lived in the country. After being assaulted by Pakistani police during what he described as "a riot which took on anti-Afghan" overtones," he resolved to join his mother in the United States [330] After obtaining a visa to leave for the United States, Fazli recalled boarding his flight to the United States. "I was 18, but I felt reborn."[331]

After enduring numerous hardships in Pakistan, and living in fear of being married at a young age, Saima Wahab's family in Pakistan arranged for her and her siblings to leave for the United States to live with an uncle. At the age of twelve, Saima Wahab was told to get her picture taken for a passport for the move. She later wrote in

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[328] Ibid.
[329] Wahab, *In My Father's Country*, 17. For another similar recollection see, Fahim, 47.
[330] Fazli and Moffett, 48.
[331] Ibid, 50. Humaira Ghilzai too, recalled wanting to live in the United States at an early age, where her father had gone to university and two siblings had resided. Humaira Ghilzai, interview.

her memoir that she yearned for a life in the United States so badly that she contemplated ending her life if she were unable to relocate there. Those who were able to make it to the United States were fortunate, but life would be extremely difficult for many in the coming years.

Refugee Policy and the Cold War

The 27,050 recorded Afghan refugees who arrived in the United States between 1982 and 1994 benefited from U.S. Cold War politics. During this era, many policy-makers believed that the United States had a responsibility to allow significant numbers of refugees fleeing from communist regimes to re-settle in the United States.[332] This sense of duty contained both ethical and ideological dimensions, but also made for pragmatic politics. Refugees in the United States held great symbolic value, both as reminders of communist-inspired governments' human rights abuses, and U.S. commitment to protect its allies after a communist takeover.[333]

The Refugee Act of 1980 had attempted to streamline refugee policy and open it to other countries beyond the United States' Cold War adversaries. Among other features, the legislation raised the annual refugee admission limits, and broadened the definition of a refugee to someone with a "well-founded fear of persecution."[334] Yet the

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[332] Statistic from Haines, *Refugees in America in the 1990s*, 64.
[333] For an overview of Cold War refugee politics, see Bon Tempo.
[334] "Refugee Act of 1980," National Archives Foundation, accessed January 21, 2018, https://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/refugee-act-1980/; Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 167.

president retained a large degree of authority in setting goals for annual admissions from each country after the act's passage.[335]

Indeed refugee admissions remained highly politicized during the subsequent Regan administration (1981-1989). Accepting refugees from Communist-inspired regimes resulted in fewer repercussions to U.S. foreign relations, and drew negative attention to these regimes' human rights records.

Refugee admissions during the 1980s were largely limited to Eastern Europe, Cambodia, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Iran, and Afghanistan, all countries with communist-inspired regimes or adversarial relations with the United States.[336] Between June 1983 and September 1990, only 2.6 percent of Salvadorans and 1.8 percent Guatemalan asylum applications were accepted. By contrast, Nicaraguans, at that time under a left-wing government, had a 25.2 percent acceptance rate.[337] In 1984, 40 percent of Afghan asylum cases were approved in the United States.[338]

The 2,200 Afghan refugee admissions in 1985 exceeded the total number of non-Cuban refugees admitted from North America, Central America and Caribbean from 1981 to 1985 combined. Their numbers were also more than double the number of all

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[335] Bon Tempo, 186-188. John Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978," *Marine Corps University Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring 2016).
[336] Statistics from this paragraph are from U.S. Department of Commerce (Bureau of the Census), *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 108th Edition (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 11-12. For more on the Reagan administration's refugee policies see Bon Tempo, 167-196.
[337] Maria Cristina Garcia, "Dangerous Times Call for Risky Responses": Latino Immigration and Sanctuary, 1981-2001,"in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*, ed. Gaston Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162.
[338] Susan Gzesh, "Central Americans and Asylum Policy in the Reagan Era," Migration Policy Institute, April 1, 2006, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/central-americans-and-asylum-policy-reagan-era.

South American refugees admitted during that period despite crises in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti, and a number of other South American countries.[339] Thus, Afghans' attempts to find refuge in the United States were almost certainly aided by U.S. Cold War objections.

Although the U.S. government may have re-settled Afghan refugees in the United States and granted Afghan refugees admission to the United States at higher rates than many other countries, re-locating to the United States was still a very difficult and rare process for Afghans. Some Afghan asylum seekers-who lacked legal documents (knowingly or not) were detained at airports with uncertain legal standing. In hope of obtaining legal status and avoiding deportation, these refugees took their cases to court and the U.S. public. There, the refugees and their advocates argued that they had been victims of Soviet persecution, and as such, deserved the protection of the United States.

In 1985, thirty-three Afghan refugees who had not arrived in the United States through pre-arranged refugee programs appealed deportation after being detained by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in New York.[340] Sensing a contradiction between the refugees' plight and expressed U.S. ideals, seventy-three member of Congress appealed to President Reagan on their behalf. The letter evoked the United States as "a refuge for the oppressed," and complained that, "when a small number of the individuals who have fought the Soviet occupation show up on our shores, we treat

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[339] U.S. Department of Commerce (Bureau of the Census), *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 107th Edition (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 12-13.

[340] "73 House Members Ask U.S. Asylum For Afghan Refugees," *Associated Press*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 5, 1985, p. 21, NewsBank.

them with contempt by jailing them for an indefinite period of time."[341] In January 1986, Immigration and Naturalization Service paroled thirty-two Afghan refugees, presumably from the same group.[342]

A similar situation had played out in Northern California in 1982. After landing in San Francisco, twenty-nine Afghan refugees with false passports were detained at Hamilton Air Force Base in Marin County. Thereafter, they faced deportation to India, from where they had departed to the United States. This case attracted significant local press coverage and garnered the attention of members of the Reagan administration.[343]

During the deportation proceedings, a number of the refugees spoke to the media, describing their desperation and disappointment with the U.S. government's handling of their case. Khaweni Alamzai, one of the twenty-nine refugees, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that, "It was necessary for us to leave whether we had the right papers or not." Alamzai continued, "Were the Russians going to give me papers after they had murdered so many of my friends? It was impossible to wait the two years it took to get the right American papers."[344] In another article, detained refugee Shazi Saif stated, "If I knew I would be in this situation when I came here, I would have stayed in

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[341] Ibid.
[342] The *Associated Press* reported that the detained refugees' parole provided for "permanent residence in the United States but no clear legal status." "Afghan Refugees Freed From Detention Center," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 11, 1986: 6, accessed January 25, 2017, NewsBank; "Some Refugees Held 18 Months - U.S. Will Parole 32 Afghans," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 10, 1986: 15, accessed January 25, 2017, NewsBank.
[343] Bill Soiffer, "Judge Disregards Fake Visas: Afghan Refugees Can Stay," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 11, 1982, 4, NewsBank (San Francisco Public Library).
[344] "Afghan Refugees May Be Deported," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 18, 1982, 16, NewsBank (San Francisco Public Library).

Kabul and let myself be shot by the Russians like most of my friends were."[345] Such accounts called the U.S. government to task, and exposed Soviet actions in Afghanistan as well.

The detained Afghans also recounted numerous accounts of Soviet human rights violations they had experienced. A headline in the *San Francisco Chronicle* read, "Afghan Fighting Deportation Tells of Communist Torture."[346] In a separate article, Abdul Hakin told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he left Afghanistan after an incident in which Soviet soldiers fired machine guns at people leaving a prayer session at his mosque.[347] Another of the twenty-nine refugees told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he had "been jailed for two months after participating in an anti-government riot in Kabul."[348] Such media coverage cast the detainees in a sympathetic light and clearly identified them as victims of the Soviet Union. This media coverage did not go unnoticed.

The organization, AFAR (Aid for Afghan Refugees), became heavily involved in the twenty-nine Afghan asylum seekers' case, raising a reported $40,000 on their behalf.[349] AFAR was founded in 1980, largely by former U.S. Peace Corps workers in Afghanistan and Afghans in the United States, to support Afghan refugees in Pakistan.[350]

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[345] Randy Shilts, "'We Are Here or We Are Dead:' Afghans Face Ouster by the U.S.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 18, 1982, Congressman Fortney H. Stark, Jr. to assistant to the President for congressional liaison Kenneth M. Duberstein, newspaper article, ID #079793, IM 079433-080097, WHORM: Immigration, box 7, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.
[346] Randy Shilts, "Afghan Fighting Deportation Tells of Communist Torture," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 15, 1982, ID#079793, IM079433-080097, WHORM: Immigration, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.
[347] "Afghan Refugees May Be Deported."
[348] Randy Shilts, "Baby Born Into Trouble," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 24, 1982, 14, NewsBank (San Francisco Public Library).
[349] Bill Soiffer, "Afghan Refugees Can Stay."
[350] Aid for Afghan Refugees to Congressman Fortney H. Stark, May 5, 1982, ID#079793, IM079433-080097, WHORM: Immigration, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; David Kleinberg, "Afghan Refugees

The organization also helped bring the case to the attention of Bay Area representative Congressman Fortney H. Stark Jr. (D) and the White House.

AFAR president John H. Schaecher's letter to Congressman Stark stated that they (presumably Afghans) were "the people in today's world who are most aggressively resisting Soviet expansionism" and asked "is this is the way we really wish to treat heroes?" The letter concluded by stating, "We feel that America, and the present Administration, must face both a private and public feeling of shame if the promises held out to these people in the recent past are denied so callously."[351] Framed this way, U.S. credibility was on the line.

Congressman Stark forwarded AFAR's appeal to White House congressional liaison Kenneth M. Duberstein and included local coverage of story, apparently sent to him by AFAR. In forwarding the appeal, the congressman wrote, "I am sending this directly to you rather than making inquiries at INS, since I suspect that INS is proceeding according to the rulebook- - but the net effect may not be in accordance with the President's view." Congressman Stark added, "I hope you can take a look at this file to see whether INS shouldn't be less zealous in this case."[352]

And the Bay Area Connection," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 17, 1980, 39; Tim Schreiner, "5 Years After Invasion; Bay Area's Afghan Refugees," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 27, 1984, 12, NewsBank (San Francisco Public Library).

[351] John H. Schaecher to Congressman Fortney H. Stark (forward to congressional liaison Kenneth M. Duberstein), ID #079793, IM 079433-080097, WHORM: Immigration, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

[352] Congressman Fortney H. Stark, Jr. to assistant to the President for congressional liaison Kenneth M. Duberstein, May 24, 1982, ID #079793, IM 079433-080097, WHORM: Immigration, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; "Steve" to William Barr, May 31, 1982, folder "Afghan Refugees (OA 9094)," William Barr Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

The AFAR organization also wrote to Michael Uhlman at the White House OPD (Office of Policy Development). The issue caught their interest. OPD Deputy Assistant Director for Legal Policy William Barr forwarded the appeal to a White House official identified only as "Steve." "Steve" requested staff at the OPD to examine the case, and suggested, "we should find out if INS is still taking a hard line against Afghan refugees, and help out if possible."[353] Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner Alan C. Nelson's response's response to Congressman Stark, however, appears to indicate that the White House would not intervene, but assured Representative Stark that the refugees would not be returned to Afghanistan.[354]

Regardless, the Afghan refugees eventually won their court case and were allowed to remain in the United States.[355] Although the White House apparently declined to intervene, senior ranking officials' concern about the case demonstrated the case's international implications.[356]

As refugees of a communist-inspired regime and Soviet ally, Afghans had higher rates of refugee and asylum admissions into the United States than many other nationalities. This is not to say U.S. politicians were pure realists devoid of ideology. Under the circumstances of the time, though, it made political sense to prioritize

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[353] "Steve" to William Barr, May 31, 1982, folder "Afghan Refugees (OA 9094)," William Barr Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?"
[354] Nelson also mentioned that the Department of State recommended returning the refugees to India, where they had resided before attempting to travel to the United States. Alan C. Nelson to Congressman Fortney H. Stark, Jr, July 20, 1982, ID #079793, IM 079433-080097, WHORM: Immigration, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?"
[355] Bill Soiffer, "Judge Disregards Fake Visas." Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?"
[356] Ibid.

refugees from U.S. adversaries. Still, the high rates of refused admissions for Central American and Caribbean refugees outside of Nicaragua and Cuba violated the spirit of the Refugee Act of 1980, and unduly politicized refugee admissions.

Regardless, the U.S. government demonstrated a commitment to transcend historical anxieties over admitting non-European immigrants and refugees by allowing refugees who were victims of Marxist-Leninist regimes in countries such as Afghanistan and Vietnam start lives in the United States.

New Beginnings

During the 1980s, Afghan enclaves emerged that would remain centers of Afghan life in the United States for decades. The San Francisco Bay Area became the largest such center, with the New York City metropolitan area and Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington D.C. home to significant Afghan populations as well.[357] Smaller concentrations of Afghans eventually developed in Southern California metropolitan areas. The east Francisco Bay suburb of Fremont and its surrounding communities became a particularly important center of the Afghan community, eventually featuring a section of town popularly known as "Little Kabul."

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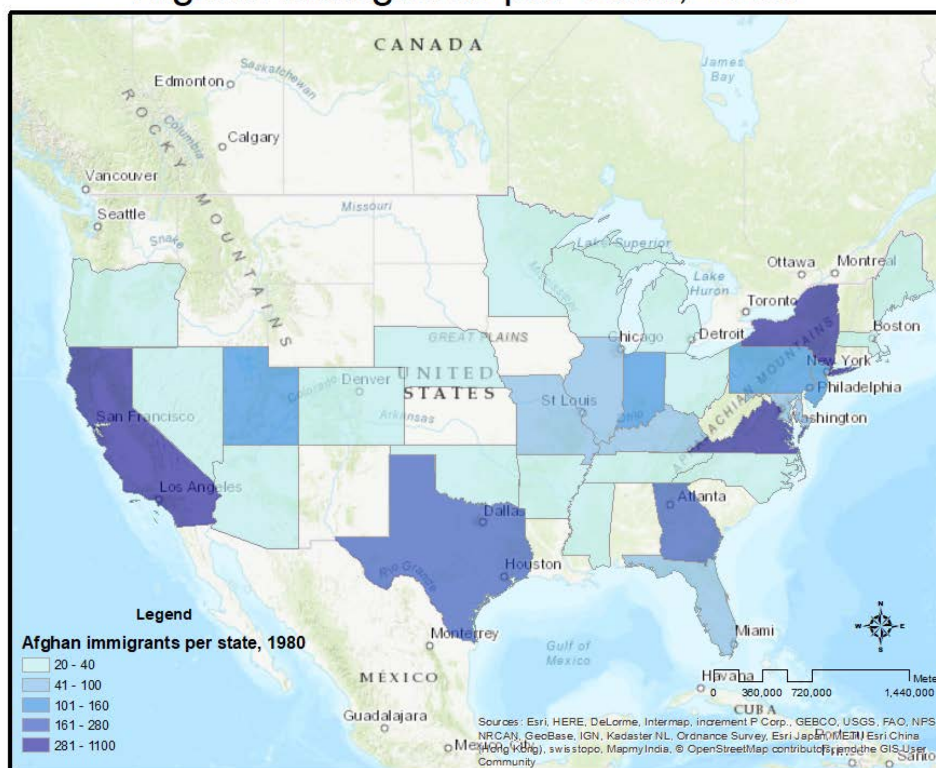
[357] Steve Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 6.0 (1980 U.S. Census 5%), University of Minnesota, 2015, http://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V6.0;IPUMS (1990 U.S. Census 5%). Data on exact locations in Virginia could not be obtained, however, it is generally known that Afghans in the state live in the Washington D.C. area.



Citations: Steve Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0 [1980 U.S. Census 5%], University of Minnesota, 2017. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0.

Figure 8 Afghanistan-born population in the United States per state in 1980. Citation: Steve Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 6.0 (1980 U.S. Census 5%), University of Minnesota, 2015, http://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V6.0, Map made with ArcMap.

Despite the common image of refugees as poor and perhaps uneducated, U.S. refugee communities have often featured prominent and highly educated individuals from the country of origin. For example, there have been substantial numbers of successful Cuban, Jewish (particularly before World War II), and Iranian refugees who have found homes in the United States.[358]

[358] For more see, Maria Cristina Garcia, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Maboud Ansari, "Iranian Immigrants," in *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor (ABC-CLIO, 2011), 1069-1110.

Many Afghan refugees who arrived in the United States after the PDPA takeover were also from elite backgrounds. As in previous decades, Afghan immigrants in the United States tended to be from the most educated classes of Afghanistan and enjoyed higher levels of education than most Americans. It appears that migrants from later in the decade had lower levels of college achievement than the first refugees and asylees. Nevertheless, post-1978 Afghan migrants still enjoyed higher levels of college achievement than the U.S. population overall.[359] High levels of education, however, did not necessarily translate to economic success in their first decade in the United States.

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[359] Among Afghan immigrants who arrived between 1979 and 1980, were nineteen years and older and not in school, an estimated 30.3 percent had attained at least four years of college. 7.9 percent of this cohort had eight years of college education or more. In comparison, only an estimated 14.4 percent of the U.S population of that age and not in school had four years of college education, and 1.5 percent had eight years or more of college. By 1990, an estimated 23.9 percent of all Afghanistan-born immigrants who arrived after 1978, were nineteen years and older, and not in school, had at least a bachelor's degree and 7.6 percent had obtained an advanced degree. In comparison, only an estimated 18.6 percent of the U.S population of that age and not in school had a bachelor's degree and 6.4 percent an advanced degree. IPUMS (1990 U.S. Census 5%).

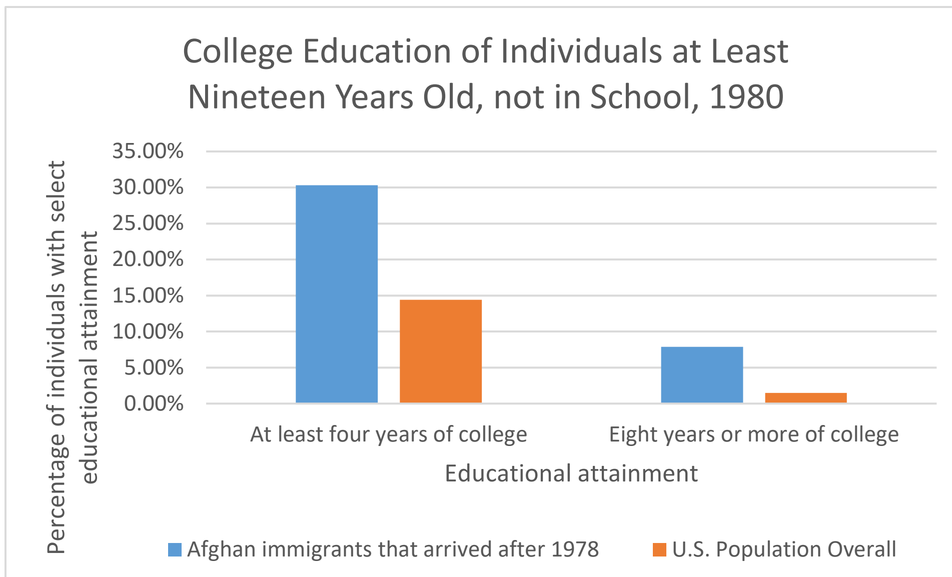

Table 5 College education levels among Afghan immigrants in 1980. Citations: Steven Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 6.0 (1990 U.S. Census 5%), University of Minnesota, 2015, http://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V6.0.

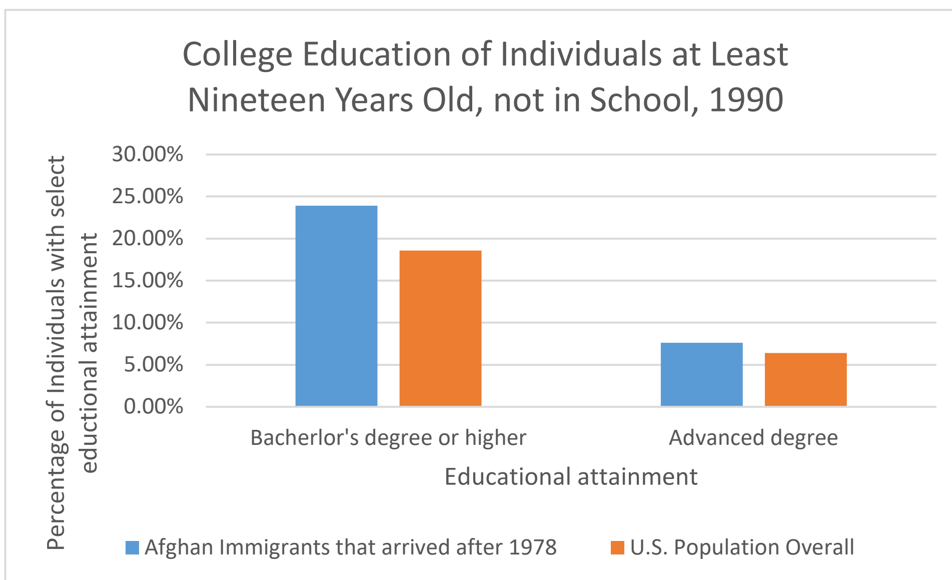

Table 6 College education levels among Afghan immigrants in 1990. Note that statistics for this chart indicates the level college degrees rather than years of college as was the case of the chart for 1980. Citations: IPUMS (1990 U.S. Census 5%), University of Minnesota, 2015, http://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V6.0.

Few of the credentials or skills that supported Afghan refugee and aslyees' families in Afghanistan ensured a living in the United States. Not all family members

were fluent in English. Customs were also different in the United States.[360] Carefully cultivated personal networks disintegrated and many Afghans found themselves lonely, vulnerable, and often reliant upon U.S. government relief for sustenance. One Afghan told the S*an Francisco Chronicle* in December of 1984, "Most Afghans here still are on welfare because they haven't mastered English."[361]

Tawab Wahab recalled both the economic displacement of the 1980s, and the desire to improve the situation. He recollected former doctors, people with doctorates, and others with prestigious educational accomplishments worked in jobs driving taxis, washing dishes, and painting buildings.[362] The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that a former professor at Kabul University who received a master's degree from Columbia University worked at a Church's Chicken in Oakland during the 1980s, before finding work counselling refugees for a Catholic refugee resettlement organization.[363]

Loss of status was almost assuredly common for Afghan immigrants. Despite having slightly higher levels of four year and advanced college degrees than Americans overall, Afghan immigrants did not earn as much as other Americans.[364] In 1990, the median income of women born in Afghanistan and working full-time (aged fifteen and older) was $15,000 and $20,770 for men. By contrast, median income for all female full-

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[360] For more on this, especially during the 1990s, see Zulfacar, *Afghan Immigrants in the USA and Germany*, 37.
[361] Tim Schreiner, "5 Years After Invasion; Bay Area's Afghan Refugees."
[362] "Tawab Wahab Interview," Little Kabul Stories, December 16, 2013, accessed January 2017, https://www.littlekabulstories.org/videos/.
[363] Tim Schreiner, "5 Years After Invasion; Bay Area's Afghan Refugees."
[364] For college degree statistics, see pages 143-145.

time workers in the United States in 1990 was $20,586 and $29,172 for males.[365] Given that this was at the decade's close and presumably after many had spent multiple years in the United States, the situation was in all likelihood more dire in the early 1980s.

In his novel *The Kite Runner*, novelist Khaled Hosseini captured many Afghans' circumstances in a scene occurring at a San Jose, California, flea market. There, the protagonist's father, "sauntered down the aisle, hands respectfully pressed to his chest, greeting people he knew from Kabul: mechanics and tailors selling hand-me-down wool coats and scraped bicycle helmets, alongside former ambassadors, out-of-work surgeons, and university professors."[366] To some, it must have felt as though an entire generation of educated professionals destined to guide Afghanistan had been cast aside by the war. Still, most persevered.

Afghans who grew up in the United States during the 1980s often felt the pressure of the family's circumstances. Many of their parents were from elite backgrounds in Afghanistan, but were now part of the U.S. "ethnic" working class struggling to make ends meet. Others came to the United States for its opportunities, and likely expected their family to make the most of them. Hard circumstances or not, children were often expected to succeed, and not jeopardize everything with youthful fads or longshot dreams.

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[365] IPUMS (1990 Census 5%); *Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1990*, U.S. Department of Commerce (Bureau of the Census), (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991) https://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-174.pdf, 106-107.
[366] Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*, In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, James Quay, and William E. Justice, eds., *California Uncovered: Stories for the 21st Century* (Berkeley, Calif: Heyday Books, 2004), 240. California Uncovered

Many felt heavy pressure to become doctors, engineers, or lawyers and stay out of "trouble." As the writer Khaled Hosseini recalls,

> …I felt, my parents told us, "Look, this is our life now. We're going to work, but you guys have to study. That's what you have to do. You have to make something of yourself. We came here because there is opportunity for you guys here, and we want you guys to make something of yourself."[367]

Similarly, Fahim Anwar wrote about his parents' apprehension over his desire to seek a creative profession during the early 2000s. "My parents were going to pay for college, but they were not going to pay for any of these [performance/arts] majors." Anwar continued,

> I understand where they were coming from though. They had come from Afghanistan to make a better life for their children, and I could seemingly be throwing it all away as a failed director/writer/actor. In hindsight, I'm glad they didn't let me go through with any of my initial choices.

Anwar graduated with a degree in engineering from the University of Washington, and eventually found success as a comedian, something he had taken up as a side-job in college.[368]

As desirable as children's success was, it could unintentionally highlight the enormous loss their parents experienced. Medical student Waheeda Samady wrote in the early 2000s that her father, a taxi-driver, would sometimes discuss the engineering building he attended in Afghanistan and wonder whether the building was still around. Samady recalled her father continuing, "You see, even your old-aged father was once

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[367] "Khaled Hosseini Interview - Academy of Achievement," Academy of Achievement, July 3, 2008, http://www.achievement.org/achiever/khaled-hosseini/#interview.

[368] Fahim Anwar, "Stand-Comedy," in Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2010), 142.

part of something important."[369] Samady sensed that because of her education and doctor's coat, people saw her positively, but feared that people viewed her father as "a brown man with a thick accent…*Another immigrant cab driver*."[370] Despite the hardships and pressures of rebuilding lives in a different culture, U.S. Afghans persevered in remarkable fashion. As Samady wrote of her father, "granted, the wealth is gone and the legacy unknown, but look at what bombs have not destroyed."[371]

During the 1980s, Afghans in the United States also managed to launch some of their first notable efforts to assist other Afghans, both in the United States and abroad. Tawab Wahab helped found Afghan Association to aid newly arrived Afghans in the United States.[372] Afghans also banded together to fulfill the community's spiritual needs, efforts that included founding what was to become the Masjid Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq mosque. The congregation began meeting at a storefront in Heyward, California, (in the East San Francisco Bay area near Fremont) in 1985, where they performed prayers.[373] Over the next two decades, the congregation grew and eventually constructed their own mosque.[374]

Afghans in the United States attempted to assist Afghans in refugee camps as well. Writer Tamim Ansary helped form an organization with Afghan friends to aid

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[369] Waheeda Samady, "The Cab Driver's Daughter," Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2010), 172-173.
[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.
[372] "Tawab Wahab Interview," Little Kabul Stories. Tawab Wahab, interview with author, January 2017.
[373] "Masjid History," Masjid Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, November 2011, accessed January 2017, http://www.masjidabubakralsiddiq.org/about-us/masjid-history/;
[374] Ibid.

refugees in Pakistan called the Afghan Refugee Aid Committee. The organization, however, was unable to sustain operations for long. In his memoir, Ansary recalled that other organizations with similar objectives felt threatened by the one he helped found. An attempt to host an appearance by Afghan resistance leader, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, at a fund-raiser was largely unsuccessful, in part due to cultural misunderstandings.[375] After the event, Ansary recognized the gulf between himself and "other [newly immigrated] Afghans" and determined that they "operated by rules I could not decipher."[376]

The realities of everyday life, however, complicated life for many Afghans. Ansary's colleagues were unable to keep up with work due to the pressures of supporting their family. "Their families were coming, and they couldn't spare time or energy for refugees in Pakistan. They had refugees of their own to worry about, right here in the United States: parents, siblings, cousins…."[377] These issues, along with limited capital and time stymied the growth of sustained formal organizations during the 1980s. Indeed, many of the organizations Afghans in the United States founded or assisted were localized and ad hoc, ending as abruptly as they began.

Families also had to decide whether the United States was a temporary site of refuge or a new home for the indefinite future. This question was not simply a matter of inner-contemplation. A commitment to long-term life the United States also required

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[375] Mojaddedi's visit did allow many Afghans in the United States to meet the resistance leader, but was unsuccessful in raising funds for refugees. Mir Tamim Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York: An Afghan American Story* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 223-238.
[376] Ibid, 237-8.
[377] Ansary.

permanent institutions in the United States. Otherwise, it was better to save money and direct efforts towards an eventual return.

Undoubtedly, many Afghans, but certainly not all, hoped that they would return to live in Afghanistan after the fighting subsided and a new regime was in power. The *Washington Post* quoted one Afghan who helped organize a protest against the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan, "We love this country, [the United States] but our culture is behind us and we will return to it [Afghanistan]."[378] This sentiment was not limited to a protester.[379]

Hoping for a return did not mean individuals refused to integrate into any U.S. institutions or aspects of culture. Nevertheless, the end goal for many was for a life in Afghanistan. Saima Wahab recalled the situation she dealt with her uncles:

> [they] made it abundantly clear that they'd gone to the trouble and expense of bringing us to America so we could learn English, become educated, and then go back to Afghanistan. This seemed like the noblest of goals, maybe a little overwhelming for six teenage children, but I still felt honored and privileged to be part of it. We were told as soon as we got to America that we were not like other kids our age, and were not to behave like them.[380]

Khaled Hosseini captured such a situation in his novel *The Kite Runner*, when a father who disapproved of a young Afghan American's pursuit of a teaching a career, complained,

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[378] Marc Fisher, "500 Exiled Afghans March in Northwest: Protest Marks 7th Anniversary; Protest Marks 7th Anniversary of Invasion," *Washington Post*, December 28, 1986, C1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (138722809).

[379] See also, the discussion in the next chapter regarding delayed returns after the start of the Afghan Civil War.

[380] Wahab, *In My Father's Country*, 26-27.

> An intelligent girl like you could become a lawyer, a political scientist. And, *Inshallah*, when Afghanistan is free, you could help write the new constitution. There would be a need for young talented Afghans like you. They might even offer you a ministry position, given your family name.[381]

Afghan families strove for success in the United States, but many hoped to channel it towards a future life in Afghanistan.

The years between 1978 and 1994 proved to be a pivotal era in the U.S. Afghan community's development. Over twenty thousand Afghan refugees arrived in the United States, far surpassing previous population totals. For many of these new arrivals, migration required them to abandon successful lives in Afghanistan in exchange for impoverished or humble ones in a new country. The task of obtaining sustenance for themselves and family in the United States, while providing what they could for family members in Afghanistan or neighboring countries, consumed many families. Afghans in the United States often wished to assist compatriots in both the United States and throughout the world, but often had limited means to continue such efforts indefinitely. Sustained formal humanitarian assistance efforts for Afghans would largely have to wait until they could obtain more economic capital and stability in the United States. For this to occur, many would have make difficult decisions regarding where their future lay.

Afghan Activism during the PDPA era

In modest ways, Afghans in the United States contributed to the struggle against Soviet political dominance of Afghanistan. For all practical purposes, Afghan refugees' escape from Afghanistan was itself an act of resistance. A few Afghans directly aided

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[381] Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2003), 181.

Afghan resistance fighters and some took part in protests against the Soviet Union in the United States.[382] Perhaps most importantly, though, a number of Afghans in the United States gave accounts of their experiences with Soviet and Afghan government human rights violations to U.S. media outlets. When combined with testimonials and activism of other refugees from Soviet-allied states, they helped lend a degree of authenticity to American Cold War anti-Marxist-Leninism.

Protests against the Soviet war effort in Afghanistan were the most conspicuous examples of Afghan activism in the United States during this era. During the 1980s, they appear to have been rather frequent. In one year, protests were held in New York City, Washington D.C., and Raleigh.[383] In 1986, over 500 people participated in a protest march in Washington D.C. to mark the anniversary of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. [384] These protests generally took place in front of Soviet diplomatic institutions such as a consulate or the embassy in the United States.

Such activism took place in a broader tradition of refugee anti-Communism activism in the United States. Determined to keep their countries of origin's plight in the

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[382] Notably, one activist quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* was reported as being the leader of a Bay Area branch of the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujaheddin, the alliance of major rebel groups fighting in Afghanistan and based in Peshawar, Pakistan. Katy Butler, "March on Soviet Consulate in S.F.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 28, 1987, A13, accessed January 2017, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/0EB4EFE1ADC95BFD?p=AMNEWS. NewsBank. See also Said Hyder Akbar and Susan Burton, *Come Back to Afghanistan: A California Teenager's Story*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), 14-15.

[383] "Afghan Invasion Anniversary: Big Protests at Soviet Embassies," *Associated Press, San Francisco Chronicle*, 13, December 28, 1982;""Protests Mark Day of Afghan Invasion," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 28, 1983, 13, NewsBank (San Francisco Public Library); Karlyn Barker and Sari Horwitz, "Lafayette Park Is Stage for Political Drama," *The Washington Post*, December 8, 1987, A34. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (139259226).

[384] Marc Fisher, "500 Exiled Afghans March in Northwest: Protest Marks 7th Anniversary of Invasion Exiled Afghans March On Invasion Anniversary," *The Washington Post*, December 28, 1986, C1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (138722809).

public conscience, ethnic organizations from various countries often organized under the rhetoric of "captive nations." Their activities aimed to both lobby the U.S. government and push public opinion through public protest and information campaigns. Immigrants and refugees from Soviet-style governments also waged propaganda and information campaigns in their countries of origin, both on their own initiative and through official U.S. channels such as *Voice of America*.[385]

Activists engaged in these causes often sought inter-diasporic cooperation with other activists whose countries of origin were under Marxist-Leninist control. This was notable in the Captive Nations Committee and Eastern European Federalist movements in the United States since at least the 1950s.[386] During the 1980s, Eastern European groups occasionally made common cause with Afghans in the United States. In 1982, Afghan and Polish activists spoke at a protest outside the United Nations marking the anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported 400 Afghan participants.[387] In another instance, Ukrainian Canadians provided clothing

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[385] For more on ethnic and exile anti-communist activism, see Ieva Zake (editor), *Anti-Communist Minorities in the U.S.: Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Anna Mazurkiewicz, "Political Exiles from East Central Europe in American Cold War Politics, 1948-1954," (English summary of her book, Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w Amerykańskiej Polityce Zimnowojennej, 1948-1954* (IPN, 2016) found on academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/30385031/_Uchod%C5%BAcy_polityczni_z_Europy_%C5%9Arodkowo-Wschodniej_w_ameryka%C5%84skiej_polityce_zimnowojennej_1948-1954_Political_Exiles_from_East_Central_Europe_in_American_Cold_War_Politics_1948-1954_ ;Anna Mazurkiewicz, "Political Emigration from East Central Europe During the Cold War," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. LXXII, No. 2 (Autumn 2015), University of Illinois. Anna Fiń, "Ethnic Mobilization of Immigrants: Case Studies of Ukrainian Political Emigration in the United States," in *The United States Immigration Policy and Immigrants' Responses*, ed. Dorota Praszałowicz and Agnieszka Małek (Berlin: Peter Lang Publishing, 2016), 107-125.

[386] Mazurkiewicz, "Political Exiles from East Central Europe in American Cold War Politics, 1948-1954," 483.

[387] "Afghan Invasion Anniversary: Big Protests at Soviet Embassies."

for the Afghan Community in America organization to distribute to Afghan refugees in Pakistan. *Ukrainian Weekly* reported that a speech by a Ukrainian Red Army defector who served in Afghanistan had motivated the volunteers to help.[388] In 1987, Afghan, Ukrainian, and other activists also participated in demonstrations in front of the White House in Lafayette Park in anticipation of a summit meeting between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and President Regan. [389] These examples demonstrate that Cold War diasporic activism was not confined to interest in a specific country, and constituted a collaborative political movement against U.S. reconciliation with the Soviet Union.

In addition to formal activism, media coverage was a powerful means that allowed Afghan refugees an opportunity to discuss their experiences with large U.S. audiences. For instance, Moustafa Mujaddedi, an adolescent at a San Francisco protest, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that Soviet forces "bombed our houses in Herat, they got one of my brothers, and they put one uncle in jail." Mujaddedi continued, "thirty-seven men from our family are in jail - that's why we had to leave Afghanistan."[390]

Testimonials about Soviet and Afghan government abuses were also present in articles on non-political topics such as food or suburban diversity. A 1986 *New York Times* article on Afghan food, for instance, featured a family-owned restaurant in New York City. One of the brothers who helped run the restaurant, Sultan Bayat (who was a

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[388] "Carleton students help Afghan refugees," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, January 19, 1986, Vol. LIV, No. 3., p. 8.
[389] Karlyn Barker and Sari Horwitz, "Lafayette Park Is Stage for Political Drama," *The Washington Post*, December 8, 1987, A34. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (139259226).
[390] Katy Butler, "March on Soviet Consulate in S.F.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 28, 1987, A13, accessed January 2017, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/0EB4EFE1ADC95BFD?p=AMNEWS.

trained pharmacist), explained that his family had come to the United States after his father was imprisoned and his business partners were executed by the PDPA government in Afghanistan. After his father escaped from prison, the family moved to New Jersey, and opened the restaurant.[391] In addition, a *Washington Post* article about an U.S. Afghan baker, Malal Nezam, described his family's escape from Afghanistan after being accused of working for the CIA.[392]

A *San Francisco Chronicle* article about Concord, California police officer seminars on "cross-cultural understanding" also featured an Afghan family's experiences. The article explained that police could not initially understand an Afghan family's concern over someone using a flashlight near their window. The police later learned, however, "that the last time the family had seen lights outside, they were shined by Communists in Afghanistan who broke down the door and killed several family members."[393]

It is an open question whether Afghan testimonials or acts of protest made a significant impact on the U.S. public by themselves. They were, however, part of a wide range of ethnic and refugee voices from numerous Soviet-style states. For instance, historian Anna Mazurkiewicz wrote that East Central European exiles' contributed to U.S. intelligence and "psychological" components of the Cold War between 1948 and

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[391] Craig Claiborne, "In New York, a Cabby Is the Key To Finding Flavors of Afghanistan: A Cabby Is the Key to Afghan Flavors," *New York Times*, February 26, 1986, C1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (110870168).
[392] Barbara Carton, "They Bake By Night: Demand Is Heavy For Afghan Bread Afghan Immigrant, Family Making Plenty of Bread," *The Washington Post*, November 17, 1984, B1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (138149709).
[393] Kathy Bodovitz, "Concord Cops Build Cultural Bridges," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 27, 1986, 4., accessed January 2017, Newsbank America's News.

1954. During this time, the exiles were not able to overthrow Soviet-supported governments and impose their will on the U.S. policy. Instead, they helped influence "the demeanor of an entire generation of Western leaders who found the *status quo* of Soviet domination in Europe unacceptable."[394] Likewise, Afghan refugees in the United States did not present a direct threat to the Soviet-supported Afghan government, but were part of a broader political movement to keep U.S. pressure on the Soviet Union. Together, refugees from Europe, Afghanistan, and other countries such as Cuba played an instrumental role in publicizing Soviet and Soviet-allied government human rights abuses and sustaining public awareness of these issues.[395]

Afghans' role in this movement occurred during the last stage of the Cold War, a particularly critical moment of the conflict. After McCarthyism, the Vietnam-era Pentagon Papers, and revelations of CIA overreach in previous decades, many Americans were skeptical of U.S. officials' warnings about the Soviet government and its allies.[396] An Afghan refugee's account of his father's imprisonment in a *New York Times* feature on food, though, likely appeared more authentic and devoid of an ulterior motive.[397] Thus, Afghans and other refugees from Soviet-style states helped sustain the ideological mission of the Cold War at a critical moment.

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[394] Mazurkiewicz, "Political Exiles from East Central Europe in American Cold War Politics, 1948-1954,"484-485; Mazurkiewicz, "Political Emigration from East Central Europe During the Cold War," 72.
[395] For more on ethnic and exile anti-communist activism, see Ibid.; Zake; Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?;" Anna Fiń, "Ethnic Mobilization of Immigrants: Case Studies of Ukrainian Political Emigration in the United States."
[396] For "CIA overreach," see Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2008).
[397] Craig Claiborne, "In New York, a Cabby Is the Key To Finding Flavors of Afghanistan: A Cabby Is the Key to Afghan Flavors."

U.S. policymakers appear to have realized refugee's political potential, and on occasion enlisted them to give moral validation to their policy aims. In 1982, an Afghan student in the United States, addressed the audience gathered at an event attended by President Reagan, designating March 21st (Persian New Year) as Afghanistan Day. She told the audience that she had "witnessed the killing of my friends…and we [Afghans] will continue our war." In his own speech, President Reagan linked the Afghan resistance with the wider global struggle against the Soviet Union and communism, stating "The Afghans, like the Poles, wish nothing more, as you've just been so eloquently told, than to live their lives in peace, to practice their religion in freedom, and to exercise their right to self-determination."[398]

Appearances by Afghan refugees at political events seem to have been rather rare. Nevertheless, they were part a broader government effort to articulate government policies with the U.S. public by using the voices and experiences of refugees and exiles. In a 1981 speech discussing the U.S. response to Polish authorities' repression of the Solidarity movement, President Reagan invoked a conversation with a former Polish ambassador who had been granted asylum in the United States. In the conversation, Ambassador Spasowski requested that a candle to be lit in a White House window as "a small but certain beacon of our solidarity with the Polish people."

[398] President Ronald Reagan, "Remarks on Signing the Afghanistan Day Proclamation, March 1982," The American Presidency Project, accessed November 27, 2015, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=42248. Baden, 82;"Afghan Gets Reagan Hug," *United Press*, undated, Afghan Refugees, folder "Afghan Refugees," box OA 9094, William Barr Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

President Reagan urged Americans to do likewise on Christmas Eve to demonstrate their support for "the brave people of Poland."[399]

Afghans also contributed to the *Voice of America*, an internationally prominent news organization sponsored by the United States. Afghan immigrants were especially important in the Dari (1980) and Pashtu (1982) services of *Voice of America* (VOA) established in wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.[400] When able to evade jamming efforts by the Afghan government and their allies, such services provided Afghans with news on current events in a tightly censored media environment.[401]

Afghan American participation in one additional Afghanistan-related anti-Soviet production also bears discussion. At least two Afghans assisted in the production of what was likely the first major U.S. film set in Afghanistan, *Rambo III*. Eager to ensure the accuracy of what was cited as the most violent film ever made at the time, the film's team employed the owner of an Afghan craft-store in Southern California as an "Afghanistan advisor."[402] *The Los Angeles Times* reported that Sadiq Tawfiq was tasked with providing authentic costumes for the film set in the Afghan-Soviet War, and travelled as far as Afghan refugee camps in Peshawar, Pakistan, to obtain them. There, he, the associate producer, and others associated with the film purchased, "7 ½ seven tons of used turbans, shirts, pants, boots, sandals, rugs, fabrics and enough village wares

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[399] "Reagan: 'Their Crime Will Cost Them Dearly,'" *Washington Post*, December 24, 1981, A8, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[400] See Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?". "History of VOA," *VOA*, accessed January 25, 2017, http://www.insidevoa.com/p/5829.html.
"VOA History," *Voice of America*, accessed January 2017, http://www.insidevoa.com/p/5829.html.
[401] *Voice of America* has historically avoided heavy-handed propaganda, in a similar tone as *BBC*.
[402] Most violent quote from Fazli and Moffett, 89, which cites the 1990 *Guinness World Records*.

to stock the entire 'Rambo III' prop shop – weapons not included."[403] Fearing that locals would hold negative views on films, Tawfiq was quoted as explaining, "we are buying clothing for a cultural exhibition to help Afghanistan people, which is the reality, is it not?"[404]

The film also marked the start of the acting career of Fahim Fazli, who had escaped Afghanistan with his father. Fazli was an extra during a scene in which Rambo participates in a *Buzkashi* match.[405] After 2001, cultural consulting work would hit high levels as the United States government sought to inform its military personnel deploying to Afghanistan about the country's society. An increasing number of production companies would also solicit Afghan Americans' consultations on their productions during the era.

From 1978 to 1994, Afghans in the United States may have not been a powerful political lobby, but they articulated a more-or-less unified message of resistance to Soviet policy in Afghanistan. When viewed in the broader context of ethnic anti-Soviet government activism, they were part of a powerful political movement that helped sustain U.S. public opposition to the Soviet government and other communist regimes. They often believed their anti-Soviet government activism benefited Afghanistan, and implicitly the United States as well.

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[403] Jan Herman, "7 1/2 Tons of Afghan Props, Clothes - 'Rambo III' Costumes Were Real," *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 9, 1988, E2, accessed January 25, 2017, NewsBank. http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/0EB4F08B6E2BA03B?p=AMNEWS.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Fazli and Moffett, 89-90.

Conclusion

While the U.S. Afghan community played an important role influencing U.S. perceptions regarding the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, it was the resistance in Afghanistan that ultimately ended that episode of the nation's history. Despite expectations that the Soviet Union would crush resistance in Afghanistan, anti-government fighters persisted through exhaustive military campaigns against them. With the support of international arms from the United States and other governments, the rebels became a particularly potent force, capable of resisting much of the Soviet Union's sophisticated weaponry.[406] By the late 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev began looking for a way out of the conflict. In 1988, Soviet troops began a withdrawal completed the following year.

Peace, however, was elusive and the war between Afghan rebels and the government continued. In December of 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved, and aid to the Afghan government halted. In April of 1992, Afghan President Najibullah's government collapsed.[407] For a brief moment, it appeared that the long, destructive war was ending, and refugees could return home. Conflict in Afghanistan, though, would not end with the regime's collapse.

From 1978 to 1992, the U.S. Afghan community underwent dramatic transformations. Before this time, Afghans had trickled into disparate enclaves

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[406] See Barfield, 243; Coll, 63-70, 147-153;George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of How the Wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of Our Times* (New York: Grove Press, 2007), Audible.
[407] Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 248. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 265-269.

throughout the United States. By 1990, however, the vast majority of Afghan residents in the United States had arrived in the country since 1978.[408] They were a markedly refugee community and had a significant presence in at least three metropolitan areas. Afghan life in the United States would be concentrated in these centers for decades to come.

Often driven from the country by the human rights abuses of the Afghan government and its Soviet allies, Afghans in the United States' relationship with that government was predominately what Dufoix would term, "antagonistic." Political activism in the United States against these regimes often focused on U.S. audiences and bolstered by a symbiotic relationship with U.S. objectives to curtail the global influence of Soviet Union.

The demands of surviving in a new country, though, took precedence over activism. Limited resources and uncertainty regarding their length of stay in United States appear to have limited the number of formal organizations sustained by Afghans in the United States. Activism regarding both Afghanistan and local issues was often fragmented, individualized, and ad-hoc within Afghan enclaves.

During this era, a young generation of Afghans formed their own conceptualizations of identity and relationships with Afghanistan as they came of age in the United States. Some would shed any traces of Afghan identity, while others would embrace it.

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[408] IPUMS (1990 Census 5%).

As a result of all of these historical developments in the United States and Afghanistan, Afghans in the United States constituted what Dufoix calls an "antagonistic" relationship or "exile polity" with Afghanistan's government and what this study proposes as a "victim-refugee" typology.[409] Nevertheless, their physical distance from Afghanistan, recent arrival, and relatively few numbers denied them the ability to play a major role in the conflict in Afghanistan. As a result, daily life closer resembled Dufoix's "enclaved mode" or "atopic" modes.

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[409] Recall this terminology was added to Robin Cohen's typologies in Robin Cohen and Nicholas Van Hear, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2008); Dufoix, 62-69.

Chapter IV: The Afghan Civil War (1992-2001)

Introduction

Afghanistan's civil war, waged between 1992 and 2001, was a turning point in the U.S. Afghan community's history. The conflict made it clear to most that a return to Afghanistan was unlikely in the foreseeable future. Rather than a large-scale return to Afghanistan, Afghan immigrants and refugees continued to arrive in the significant numbers, raising the overall Afghanistan-born population from 28,444 in 1990 to 45,195 in 2000.[410] As a whole, U.S. Afghans invested in long-term life in the United States and founded a number of lasting institutions. With this psychological and material investment, an increasing number began to see themselves not only as Afghan refugees in the United States, but also as Afghan Americans with an indefinite future in the new country.[411] As a whole, Afghans in the United States remained what this study terms a "victim-refugee" diaspora typology.[412]

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[410] "Table 3. Region and Country or Area of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population: 1960 to 1900," U.S. Bureau of the Census, March 9, 1999, access January 2017, https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab03.html; "Table FBP-1. Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 20, 2017, https://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf.

[411] This phrasing and conceptualization owes an intellectual debt to George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1993); For more on this. See also John Baden, "The Formation of an Afghan Community in the United States," *Studia Historica Gedanensia*, volume VIII, 2017: PARS IN TOTO, 15-24.

[412] As demonstrated in the following source, most Afghan immigrants in the United States were refugees. Note that numbers in the following source have missing years, and do not account for deaths. Still it is evident that most Afghan immigrants came to the United States as refugees prior to 2001. Ceri Oeppen, "Afghan Immigrants," in *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor (ABC-CLIO, 2011), 29.

With some notable exceptions, Afghans in the United States were seldom able to visit Afghanistan during the civil war. Still, diasporic relations appear to have changed significantly since the previous era. After the Soviet Union and the PDPA government fell, it was difficult for Afghans in the United States to reach consensus on a political agenda. Although they had generally opposed the Soviet-sponsored regime, Afghans in the United States did not necessarily agree on who should succeed it. As a result, the U.S. Afghan community's relations with Afghanistan shifted from what Dufoix would call "antagonistic" to "enclaved" or "atopic."[413] These conditions would largely remain until the U.S.-led intervention in 2001.

Civil War in Afghanistan

In April of 1992, Afghanistan's government teetered on the verge of collapse, but lacked a clear successor.[414] One of Afghanistan's largest rebel factions, Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar), was in a strong position to take Afghanistan's capital, but had alienated many people during the war. They had committed violence against other rebel factions during the war against the Soviet-backed government and had limited support outside of their organization.[415] In addition, many found their ideology extremist.

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[413] There has been little record of inter-diasporic relations between Afghans in the United States and other Afghans abroad, or even in Afghanistan during this era. Thus, incomplete data has uncovered to determine whether Afghans in the United States were more "atopic," or "enclaved."

[414] Although Afghanistan's government weathered the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and subsequent cessation of aid proved to be fatal. This account of the Afghan Civil War is largely from Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (Yale University Press, 2002); Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 248.

[415]Strong position, Rubin, 271. violence Ibid, 250-251, 215.

To pre-empt Hezb-i-Islami from taking power, troops from led by Ahmed Shah Massoud of the “rival” Jamiat-i-Islami-rebel organization seized Afghanistan’s capital later that month.[416] Hezb-i-Islami’s leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, rejected a power-sharing arrangement among rebel factions, and launched rock attacks on Kabul in a bid to take power.[417] Further attempts at mediation and power sharing failed to end the violence.[418] As the feeble Afghan government’s powers disintegrated and insecurity mounted, additional militias entered the fray, creating a multi-layered war of competing factions.

During their war against the Soviet Union, rebel factions tended to be regionally based, with one ethnic group predominating in each region. Consequentially, emerging conflicts between factions often took on ethnic dimensions.[419] As civil society broke down during the new conflict, Afghans increasingly had to rely on these militias for protection and some semblance of governance.[420]

These events had profound reverberations throughout the Afghan diaspora. The Soviet withdrawal and defeat of its allied government initially inspired hope that peace would return to Afghanistan. Reflecting this optimism, the estimated number of Afghan refugees dropped from approximately six million refugees, globally, in 1992 to about four and a half million in 1993. As the succeeding civil war intensified, Afghan refugee

[416] Barfield, 248; Rubin, 271.
[417] Rubin, 271-272.
[418] Rubin, 271-274. Barfield, 249-251
[419] Rubin, 273. Barfield, 248-249.
[420] Rubin, 273-280.

numbers stabilized at between 2.5 and 3 million for the remainder of the decade. [421] The on-going war and subsequent Taliban rule, though, would prevent anything resembling a full return of displaced people. Many in the diaspora would have to make difficult decisions whether their futures lay in Afghanistan or in their adopted countries.

Acculturation in the United States

During the 1990s, many Afghans in the United States cautiously sought various degrees of integration into U.S. society. Many sought to understand the rituals and expectations of U.S. society without necessarily sacrificing all of their identity and culture. Sociologist Maliha Zulfacar wrote in her 1998 work that, "Afghans would like to integrate but not to assimilate themselves."[422] Yet, there were differences among Afghans regarding how far acculturation should go. Some individuals wished to distance themselves entirely from Afghanistan and become as "American" as their peers. Others resisted or struggled acculturating into U.S. society.

Acculturation did occur. Young Afghans in the United States learned English, attended local schools, and became versed in "American" norms. By 2000, most Afghan-born residents in the United States were U.S. citizens, and a significant number had become economically successful.[423]

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[421] "The Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan and the Surrounding Region," Parliament.UK, 2001, January 13, 2017, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmintdev/300/30009.htm.
[422] Maliha Zulfacar, *Afghan Immigrants in the USA and Germany: A Comparative Analysis of the Use of Ethnic Social Capital* (Münster; New Brunswick, N.J.: LIT Verlag, 1998), 210.
[423] "FBP-1 Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed December 2016, http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf.

The Afghan Civil War almost certainly affected the pace of acculturation. After the Soviet withdrawal and eventual defeat of the government, many Afghans began planning returns to Afghanistan, only have these hopes dashed by the new conflicts. As journalist Fariba Nawa recalled, “when the Soviets pulled out, we exiles couldn’t wipe the smile off our faces. ‘We beat the Russians!’ became our universal greeting…Family friends packed their bags, ready to return home.” The outbreak of civil war, though, dashed most of these hopes of return. She recalled one Afghan woman who “had knitted sweaters as gifts to take her grandchildren in Kabul,” but after realizing that violence would prevent a reunion, unraveled them.[424] What were Afghan refugees who hoped to return do now?

Once common response was to make the most of life in the United States and invest in long-term life there. Writer Tamim Ansary recalled in his memoir,

> When Afghans first started moving to the United States in significant numbers, they came clothed in the raiment of the old customs...They tried to hold on to everything, because they thought they were going back…People had to fit into the clockwork schedules of America, and eventually they did.[425]

The path of acculturation did not always progress as expected and contained unanticipated challenges. Although Afghans who migrated to the United States were disproportionately from educated families and often had some familiarity with Western

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[424] Fariba Nawa, “Afghan Exiles – Grasping at a Thread of Hope,” *Pacific News Service*, July 30, 1996, Ctn. 24.15, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.
[425] Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York*, 267.

customs, the United States was often different from what they expected.[426] Humaira Ghilzai, whose escape out of Afghanistan shortly after the Soviet invasion, recalled,

> …our [her and her brother's] vision of America was from *National Geographic* where you would see pictures of the 50s and 60s were like these nice families, blonde kids you know ranch style home, lawn. And Queens was nothing like that. Neither was the subway system. [Laugh][427]

Learning about the country's diverse ethnic groups and culture would also prove a critical and memorable part of becoming culturally fluent in the United States. Fahim Fazli encountered surprises during his initial time in the United States as well. Soon after his arrival in New York City, Fahim, his father, and brother, went for a walk. Before long, drivers began sounding their horns at them, and a passing taxi driver admonished them in the Urdu language. As it turns out, Fazli's family did not understand prohibitions against jaywalking or what traffic lights were. Fazli recalls that the presence of an Urdu-speaking taxi driver was confusing, but "made me a bit more comfortable to be in the U.S."[428]

Fazli's family soon settled in Southern California, where Fahim found his first job at a gas station. There, he encountered another unexpected development. "I thought

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[426] For education figures, see chapter three. Baden, "The Formation of an Afghan Community in the United States;" "Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4) – Sample Data," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed 2015-2018, thttps://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?fpt=table; "FBP-1 Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics: 2000, People Born in Afghanistan;" "Table FBP-2. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000," accessed 2015-2018, https://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf.

[427] Humaira Ghilzai, interview with the author, October 2015.

[428] Fahim Fazli and Michael Moffett, *Fahim Speaks: A Warrior-Actor's Odyssey from Afghanistan to Hollywood and Back* (North Hills, CA: Warriors Publishing Group, 2012), 52.

working there would help me learn English, but it turned out I learned Spanish first. There seemed to be more Spanish speakers in California than English speakers."[429]

Although many Afghan refugees were familiar with Western culture, specifics could be surprising. A country's cultural geography could appear as a complete unknown. As refugees, there was often little time to immerse oneself in their destination's society or history.

Obaid Younossi, who came to the United States at age 18, recalled being "overwhelmed" by the United States at first. Yet, becoming "American" seemed achievable to him. Younossi explained that despite media portraits of Afghans as timeless people from the mountains, one could "dress up in jeans and t-shirts and suddenly you sort of blend in."[430] He recalled that once after someone said he looked American, "I remember[ed] being incredibly proud [laughs] when that person said that. It was like oh OK I can blend in."[431]

Other aspects of acculturation to U.S. society were less desirable. In addition to issues of cultural loss, some adopted aspects of U.S. culture were problematic. For example, Afghan gangs formed in the San Francisco Bay Area.[432] Another U.S. Afghan recalled adopting American concepts of class in schools. She wrote regrettably that,

> …at school I would brag about phantom shopping trips to Macy's and refuse to hang out with people who were decidedly poor. I remember that phase of my life as the first in

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[429] Ibid, 57.
[430] Obaid Younossi, interview with the author, September 2015.
[431] Ibid.
[432] These gangs are mentioned in Maryam Qudrat Aseel, *Torn Between Two Cultures: An Afghan-American Woman Speaks Out* (Capital Books, 2004), 73-74.

> which I actively tried to be an American. Internationalized classism is a prerequisite of Americanization.[433]

Although most families almost assuredly desired a basic level of cultural awareness about the United States to navigate the country, there was no consensus on how far acculturation should go. Throughout the 1990s, family and community engaged in spirited conversations over the correct response to living in a new county. Sociologist Maliha Zulfacar wrote in her 1998 work that,

> Afghan ethnic norms – family cohesiveness, respect for parents, collective interests, and sharing of benefits – are constantly reinforced by extended family members, as well as through the effective use of social sanctions, recognition, and rewards.[434]

Some families, though, prioritized integrating their children into U.S. "mainstream society." Obaid Younossi's mother decided to move them out of the Washington D.C. metropolitan region shortly after his arrival in the United States. As Younossi recalled, "she thought that if we moved to Pittsburgh [where a cousin lived] where there were hardly any Afghans it would be better for us it will keep us focused on our schooling…"[435]

Families encouraged acculturation in other ways as well. Many parents or guardians, for instance, discouraged displaying visible markers of Afghan or Muslim identity in public. Some encouraged these visible adaptations even if they had an unease with much of U.S. culture. For example, Saima Wahab, who had fled Afghanistan after the "disappearance" of her father, faced severe gender restrictions imposed by her

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[433] Khalida Sethi, "My Mother," 113-115.
[434] Zulfacar, 215.
[435] Omaid Younossi, interview.

uncles. Yet her uncles also did not want her standing out from other Americans. They "suggested" not wearing "the [Islamic] scarf" to Saima and her sisters, and had their tribal markings on their forehead removed.[436] Contemporary fashions did not automatically signify secular liberal beliefs, nor did veiling or Islamic dress necessarily reflect conservative values.

Advice on acculturation was not limited to family, but a topic of community concern. One contributor to an online Afghan American magazine offered that U.S. Afghans should acknowledge the flaws of both Afghan and U.S. culture, and "try to merge the two focusing on the positive aspects of each and shunning the negative ones."[437] Another wrote in the issue, "we must maintain the momentum that we are on now and continue being active in our communities so that younger Afghans could have resources to turn to for information and role models…Afghan culture must be taught and practiced in the home."[438] Reflecting on his own experiences, the engineering student-turned comedian, Fahim Anwar, reflected,

> I think because I grew up tucked away in Washington [state], I turned out a little different from Afghans born in Afghan epicenters…I've been told that I sound 'white' by other Afghans, which I always found to be a ridiculous insult. What's the alternative? Sound like Eminem? Or would they rather I sound like Borat?[439]

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[436] For more on Wahab's experiences, see page 173. Saima Wahab, *In My Father's Country: An Afghan Woman Defies Her Fate* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012).30-33

[437] Dr. G. Rauf Roashan, "Beauty Before Age: A Cultural Consideration," *Lemar-Aftaab (*Afghanmagazine.com), October-December, 1997. UC Berkeley Ctn. 24.15, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[438] Katrin Fakiri, "Afghan Bashing," *Lemar- Aftaab* (Afghanmagazine.com) October-December 1997, UC Berkeley Ctn. 24.15, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[439] Fahim Anwar, "Stand-Comedy," in Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2010).140-141.

Social pressure to acculturate also came from the non-Afghan U.S. population. It appears there may have been a particular uptick in prejudice against people of "Islamic World" heritage during the Gulf War in 1991. Maryam Qudrat Aseel recalled terrifying scenes as a high-school student wearing a *hijab* (Islamic veil) during the war. "At school, students would shout 'F- Islam!' after me. Others would call me the 'ninja lady' or 'camel jockey' after me."[440] An older white man even charged at her yelling obscenities while she walked to a post office.[441]

Ghulam Mohammadi and his family of Fairfax, Virginia, also experienced discrimination during the war. The *Washington Post* reported that in once instance, someone even wrote "'Iraqi [expletive] You!' on his cab and town house." After the story was reported, however, letters and calls of support poured in, along with $1,000. His family was even invited to the White House to meet Barbara and President George Bush.[442]

Late in the decade, ethnic tensions occasionally flared up between some Afghans and Mexicans at Kennedy High School in Fremont, California. Abobaker Mojadidi, who was president of the school's Islamic Student Union, explained to the *San Francisco Chronicle* that, "The fights in the past did not usually start as a racial thing, but they turned into that.'' He then helped create what the *San Francisco Chronicle* described as an, "informal peace treaty" between Afghan students and "one faction of the Mexican

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[440] Aseel, 78.
[441] Aseel, 80.
[442] Peter Baker, "After Closed Minds, Open Arms Greet Fairfax Immigrant Family," The Washington Post, April 9, 1991, p. D3. (ProQuest Historical Newspapers: 140537058).

Americans." After the agreement, problems were then taken to student leaders for resolution. [443]

Adjusting to U.S. gender norms was often more difficult to reconcile than other issues of assimilation. Saima Wahab wrote in her memoir that gender and sexual norms in the United States were at first astounding to her. She recalled thinking at first that boys "weren't harassing the girls like they should have been, considering how the girls were dressed."[444] After initially wondering if she would be better off in societies she more clearly understood, she eventually changed her views.

As a college student, she noticed that her brothers brought American girlfriends to family barbeques, while her uncles prohibited her from associating with males outside of school or work environments.[445] Wahab wrote, "I was living in America, receiving an American education, and taking courses in human rights and women's studies, while [her guardians] the Professor and Uncle A treated me no differently than if I stayed in the village in Afghanistan."[446]

Although instances such as this occurred, Afghan men in the United States were by no means all in favor of strict gender roles for women. Nor did all women who took on "traditional" gender roles do so because of a strict patriarch. Moreover, a strong sense of family obligation and care often sustained life in the United States. It often took countless hours of work to re-unite families in the United States. Individual ambitions,

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[443] "Ethnic Respect at Fremont School - Public conversion ceremony part of student peace plan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 8, 1995, NewsBank.
[444] Wahab, *In My Father's Country*, 35.
[445] Ibid, 45.
[446] Ibid, 47.

often shattered by Afghanistan's conflict, were often set aside and invested in younger family members. That innumerable Afghans in the United States found success was in no small part due to the efforts of their families. A contribution often noted by U.S. Afghans.[447]

In a sign of integration into U.S. society, 57.5 percent of Afghan immigrants in the United States had become naturalized U.S. citizens by 2000.[448] Political developments in Afghanistan likely had some limited effect on this process. After all, to obtain naturalization, Afghans needed to believe that there was at least a good chance they would not permanently return to Afghanistan in the near future.

Linear regression analysis, however, suggests that developments in the United States influenced naturalization rates more than events in Afghanistan. A linear regression analysis of the year-by-year naturalizations between 1978 and 2012 revealed a high R^2 rating of .8375 between Afghan-born naturalizations and the number of naturalizations among all immigrants in a given year.[449] This indicates a high correlation between the number of Afghan immigrant naturalizations and U.S. naturalizations

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[447] See Khalida Sethi, "My Mother," in Saed and Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories*, 114; Waheeda Samady, "The Cab Driver's Daughter," Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2010), 172-173.
[448] U.S. Census. "Table FBP-1: Profile of Selected Demographics and Social Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed January 2017.
[449] Oeppen, "Afghan Immigrants," 28; *1997 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, Immigration and Naturalization Service; "Annual Number of New U.S. Citizens, Fiscal Years 1910 to 2015," Migration Policy Institute, accessed August 2017, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/datahub/MPI-Data-Hub_US-New-Citizens_since1910_2015.xlsx; "United States Acquisition of U.S. Citizenship by Country of Birth, Fiscal Year 1999-Present," Migration Policy Institute, accessed August 2017, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/datahub/MPI-Data-Hub_NaturalizationbyCOB_2015.xlsx.

overall per year. Analysis of the relationship between naturalization rates and Afghan immigrants reaching five-year residency (from year of arrival) eligibility generally indicated a much weaker correlation.[450]

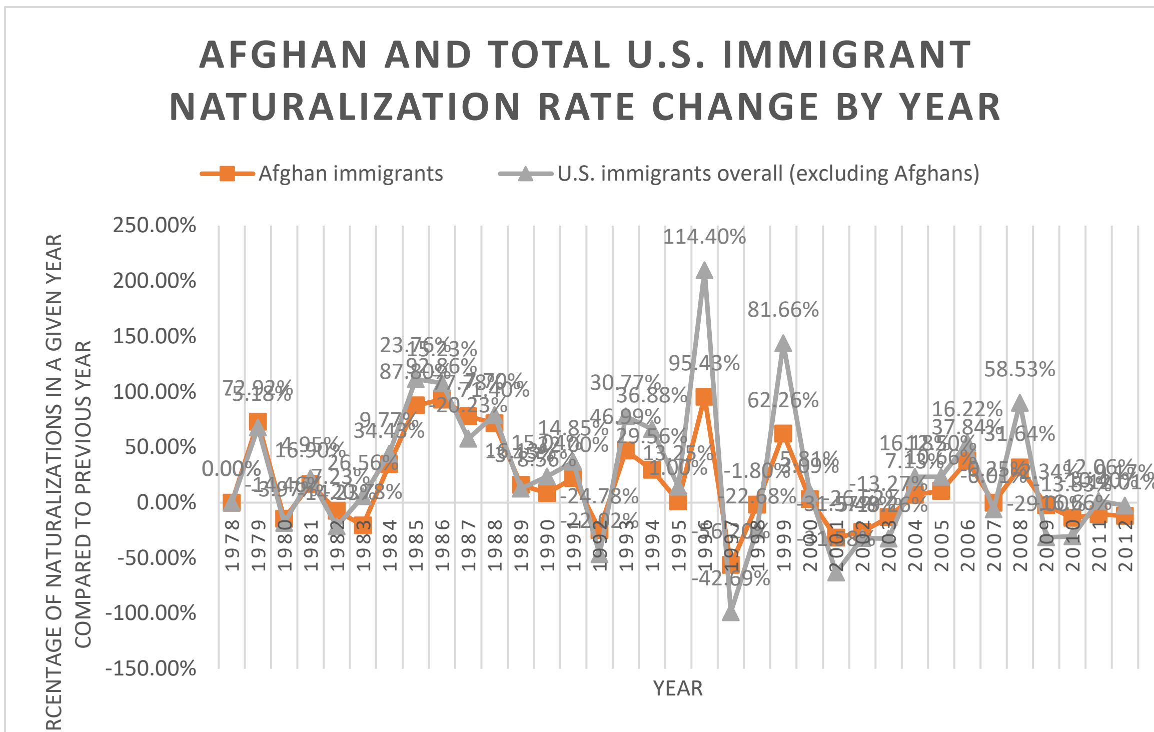

Table 7 Afghan and Total U.S. Immigrant Naturalization Rate Change by Year Note the strong correlation between overall U.S. annual naturalization fluctuations and that of Afghans, suggesting a strong relationship between the two.

Citation: Oeppen, "Afghan Immigrants," 28; 1997 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service; "Annual Number of New U.S. Citizens, Fiscal Years 1910 to 2015," Migration Policy Institute; "United States Acquisition of U.S. Citizenship by Country of Birth, Fiscal Year 1999-Present," Migration Policy Institute, accessed August 2017.

[450] For instance, a comparison between naturalizations and naturalization eligibility (number of arrivals five years prior) revealed only a .0784 R^2 rating between 1991 and 2005. Ibid.

A number of policies appear to have driven spikes and dips in naturalizations per

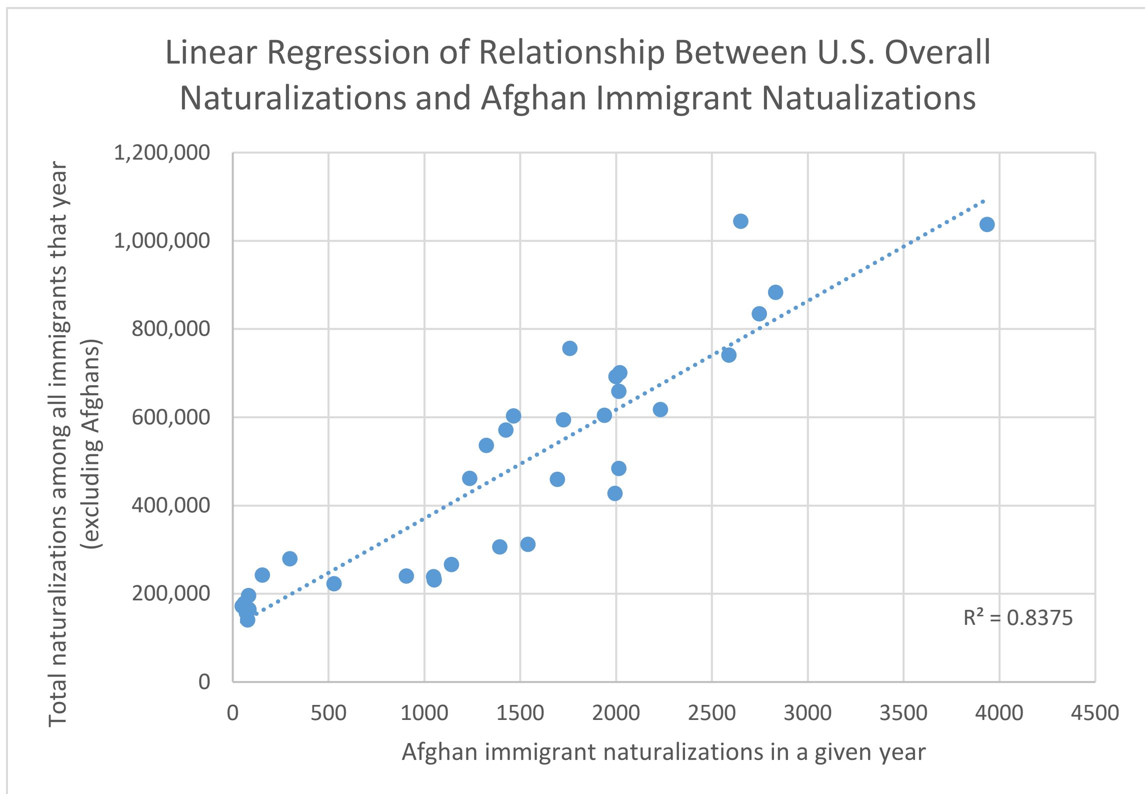

Table 8 Linear Regression of Relationship Between U.S. Overall Naturalizations and Afghan Immigrant Naturalizations The following graph displays actual statistics closely following a predictive line testing the relationship between U.S. naturalizations overall and Afghan immigrant naturalizations per year.

Citation: Oeppen, "Afghan Immigrants," 28; 1997 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service; "Annual Number of New U.S. Citizens, Fiscal Years 1910 to 2015," Migration Policy Institute; "United States Acquisition of U.S. Citizenship by Country of Birth, Fiscal Year 1999-Present," Migration Policy Institute, accessed August 2017.

year. Prominent among these was the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Although aimed in large-part at preventing unauthorized immigration, the act also provided a path to permanent residency and citizenship for many undocumented immigrants already in the country. This expanded the pool of people eligible for naturalization. To qualify, most individuals seeking citizenship had to be continuously in the country since the beginning of 1982.[451] This process was lengthy and involved

[451] There were also permanent residency options for certain agricultural workers under the 1986 act. Betsy Cooper and Kevin O'Neil, "Lessons From The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986,"

several steps.[452] As a result, naturalizations under the law did not peak until the next decade. This factor could have influenced the number of both Afghan and non-Afghan naturalization applicants in a given year.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 was a second piece of legislation that likely affected naturalization rates. That year, naturalizations rose 95 percent among Afghan immigrants and 114 percent among all immigrants.[453] This law made it easier for officials to deport non-citizens. Proposed sections of the bill, such as giving states the right to exclude undocumented immigrants from public education were not adopted. Regardless, the law may have prompted individuals to seek citizenship in order to secure their residency and rights in the United States.[454] Other laws, such as California's Proposition 187 (passed in 1994, eventually overturned), which sought to prohibit undocumented immigrants from accessing public

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Migration Policy Institute, August 1, 2005, accessed January 2017, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/PolicyBrief_No3_Aug05.pdf. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America (Second Edition): A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 392-393.

[452] Betsy Cooper and Kevin O'Neil, "Lessons From The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986;" Daniels, 391-397.

[453] "Annual Number of New U.S. Citizens, Fiscal Years 1910 to 2015," Migration Policy Institute; *1997 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, Immigration and Naturalization Service.

[454] Nancy Rytina, "IRCA Legalization Effects: Lawful Permanent Residence and Naturalization through 2001," U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, October 25, 2002, https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/irca0114int.pdf. See Emily Badger, "What happened to the millions of immigrants granted legal status under Ronald Reagan?," *Washington Post*, November 26, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/11/26/what-happened-to-the-millions-of-immigrants-granted-legal-status-under-ronald-reagan/?utm_term=.9abbb10b11b7; "Forced Apart: Families Separated and Immigrants Harmed by United States Deportation Policy: IV. Deportation Law Based on Criminal Convictions After 1996," 2007, accessed January 17, 2017, https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/us0707/5.htm.

services such as public schools may have also had a similar effect, particularly given the significant concentration of Afghans in California.[455]

The direct effect of these laws on Afghan naturalization is uncertain, as is the number of Afghan immigrants with undocumented or non-permanent status during the era. Indeed, most Afghans had immigrated after the 1981 deadline for "amnesty" under the 1986 act and were ineligible for the law's "amnesty" provisions. The harsh laws of the 1990s, however, could have encouraged Afghan immigrants to seek naturalization. Moreover, the legislation of the mid-1990s came at a time when peak levels of U.S. immigrants overall became eligible for naturalization under the 1986 act. This likely created a backlog of naturalization applicants at a time when Afghans were seriously considering a long-term future in the United States.[456] Thus, Afghan naturalizations followed the ebb and flow of a system taxed by new levels of naturalization applications nationwide.

Afghan efforts to integrate and thrive in the U.S. economy had mixed results during the 1990s. By the decade's close, Afghans had slightly higher levels of four-year degrees, slightly lower levels of family median individual, and high rates of poverty

[455] Daniels, 433-435.
[456] "Application backlog" from "Behind the Naturalization Backlog: Causes, Context, and Concerns," Migration Policy Institute, No. 21, February 2008, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/FS21_NaturalizationBacklog_022608.pdf; Nancy Rytina, "IRCA Legalization Effects: Lawful Permanent Residence and Naturalization through 2001," U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, October 25, 2002, https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/irca0114int.pdf; Marianna Sotomayor, "Naturalizations Backlog Could Keep Thousands of Immigrants From Voting," NBC News, October 16, 2016, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/naturalizations-backlog-could-keep-thousands-immigrants-voting-n661951.

compared to the overall U.S. population.[457] Overall, Afghans had higher levels of wealth income inequality amongst themselves than the overall U.S. population. Given the following statistics, this was likely due to their concentration in high-priced housing markets, fewer workers per family, and disparities regarding skill and ease of transition.

In 2000, Afghan immigrants in the United States had a poverty rate of 21.6 percent, approximately 77 percent greater than the U.S. national rate (12.2 percent).[458] Actual poverty was likely much higher than reported on official statistics because Afghan immigrants tended to live in areas with high housing-costs, a factor U.S. statistics do not account for.[459] Thus, Afghans' income tended to amount to far less than in typical housing areas.

On the other hand, rising housing prices benefitted homeowners, a significant demographic segment of the community.[460] In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated median value of Afghan-born owner-occupied homes in the United States to be

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[457] In 2000, among nineteen years and people born in Afghanistan, nineteen years and older, and not in school, 28.8 had a four-year degree or higher (6.4 had an associate's degree), while 22.7 of the overall U.S. population, nineteen years and older not in school had a 4 year degree or higher (5.8 had associate's degrees). IPUMS (2000 Census 5%). For economic statistics, see pages 180-181.

[458] "FBP-2 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000, People Born in Afghanistan," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed December 2016, http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf; Alemayehu Bishaw, "Poverty: 2000 to 2012: American Community Survey Briefs," U.S. Census Bureau, September 2013, accessed December 2016, https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/acsbr12-01.pdf. John Baden, "The Formation of an Afghan Community in the United States."

[459] "How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty," United States Census Bureau, August 11, 2017, https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html.

[460] Indeed, approximately 41 percent of Afghans lived in owner-occupied housing. "Table FBP-3: Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed December 2016, http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf. See John Baden, "The Formation of an Afghan Community in the United States."

$199,600, compared with national median of $119,600. [461] Thus, high housing costs contributed significantly to a sharp wealth divide among Afghan immigrants. Those able to acquire property saw their wealth rise to levels surpassing U.S. medians, but a disproportionate number of Afghan immigrants faced disadvantaged or impoverished circumstances. One reason Afghans tended to have lower family incomes was a higher percentage of people not in the workforce.[462] A slightly lower workforce participation rate was not necessarily detrimental, as it freed time for other activities such as school or tutoring children. Nevertheless, this came at the cost of decreased annual income. Partially as a result, Afghan immigrant family incomes lagged behind other Americans more than individual income levels.[463]

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[461] "Table FBP-3: FBP-3 Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed December 2016, http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf.

[462] In 2000, 42.4 percent of Afghan immigrants sixteen years or older were not in the workforce, compared to 36.1 percent of the country overall. Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 7.0* (2000 Census 5%), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0.

[463] "Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4) – Sample Data," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed July 2017, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?fpt=table. "Table FBP-2. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed December 2016, http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf; See also John Baden, "The Formation of an Afghan Community in the United States," 19-20.

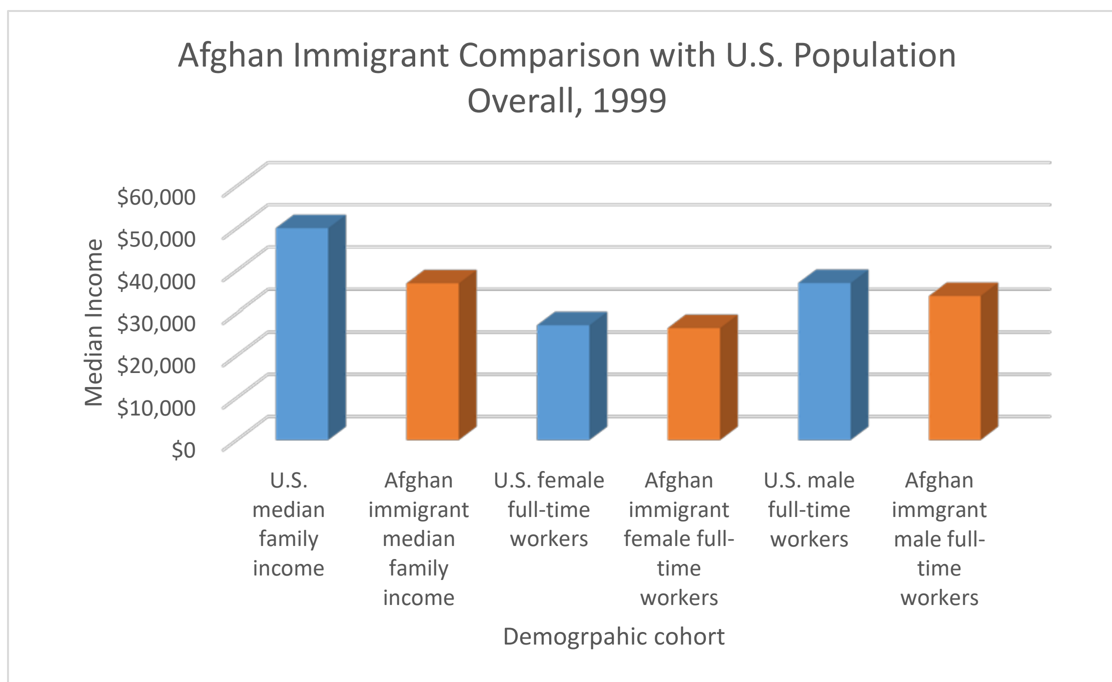

Table 9 Comparison of the Afghan immigrant median income statistics with U.S. population at-large.

Citations: "Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4) – Sample Data," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed July 2017, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?fpt=table (broken link); "Table FBP-2. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed December 2016, http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf(broken link).

Taken as a whole, Afghans achieved remarkable levels of economic integration considering what many had experienced and how recent their arrival in the United States was. Still, high poverty rates and housing costs indicate that significant economic socio-economic problems persisted.

Aside from economic advances during the 1990s, keyword searches of U.S. newspapers indicate that newspapers increasingly used terms that had implications of permanency such as "Afghan American" and "Afghan immigrant" rather than "Afghan refugee." The term "Afghan refugee" was still more common than the other two terms

combined until the next decade (2000-2010). Nonetheless, this could suggest a shifting viewpoint, one that saw Afghans as components of the nation rather than sojourners.[464]

Although this quantification only included terms used by journalists, it likely also represented a shift in self-identification as well. Economic integration, a longer-time horizon in the United States, naturalization, and as will be noted later, institution-building, all likely contributed to individuals gradually seeing themselves as "Afghan American." Indeed, the term has become a term frequently used by Afghans in the United States.[465]

Overall, the 1990s was a time of gradual acculturation into U.S. society and a diminution of ties with Afghanistan. The ongoing civil war made it clear to most U.S. Afghans that their stay in the United States would be indefinite. Furthermore, the conflict made travel to Afghanistan extremely difficult. Recognizing that their future lay in the United States, Afghans invested in their lives in the U.S., their children, and U.S.-based institutions.

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[464] A keyword search of newspapers featured in NewsBank revealed that the term "Afghan American" became more commonly used in the 1990s, and more common than "Afghan refugee" in the 2000s. To avoid articles about Afghan refugees located elsewhere, the term "Afghan refugee" was restricted to local and metro sections. "Search," America's News, NewsBank, accessed December 2016, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/easy-search?p=AMNEWS. Missing years of San Francisco Chronicle from NewsBank collection on the San Francisco Public Library's website, using a San Francisco Public Library card, accessed July 2017, infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.sfpl.org. San Francisco Chronicle Historical Archive, Newsbank (San Francisco Public Library). See also John Baden "The Formation of an Afghan Community in the United States," 17, 22.

[465] The term "Afghan American," for instance is used on Afghan American memoirs, books, at least one ethnic organizational websites, and the annual Afghan-American Conference. For examples see "About Us," Afghan Coalition, accessed March, 2018, http://www.afghancoalition.org/about-us.html; "The Conference," Afghan-American Conference, accessed March, 2018; Maryam Qudrat Aseel, *Torn Between Two Cultures: An Afghan-American Woman Speaks Out;* Mir Tamim Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York: An Afghan American Story* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002); Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature*.

Institution Building

Afghans established a number of institutions during the 1990s that would sustain operations through subsequent decades. These organizations addressed a number of issues relating to Afghans in the United States, to Afghanistan, and to Afghans still in refugee camps. Several factors led to this wave of institution building. Perhaps most importantly, an increasing number of Afghan immigrants had now established themselves in the United States, had come to envision an indefinite stay, and had obtained the social and economic capital to sustain institutions. Moreover, the Afghan Civil War rendered it difficult for the U.S. diaspora to rally behind a unified common political cause. Humanitarian efforts, however, could still find widespread support.

Professional associations were among the first long-lasting U.S. Afghan organizations. The Afghan Physicians Association in America (later renamed Afghan Medical Professionals Association of America) was established in 1989, and recognized in 1992 by the state of Massachusetts.[466] The Afghan Medical Association of America was founded in 1992.[467] In 1993, the Society of Afghan Engineers was established, and the more generalized Afghans4Tomorrow in 1999 (which as of 2017, had a multi-ethnic board of directors).[468] The early date of two of these organizations' founding suggests

[466] "About Us," Afghan Medical Professionals Association of America, Accessed January 2017, http://www.ampaa.org/About-Us.html.
[467] "AMAA," Afghan Medical Association of America, Accessed January 16, 2017, http://www.afghanmed.org/.
[468] For more on U.S. Afghan diasporic development and remittances, see Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Material and Social Remittances to Afghanistan," in *Converting Migration Drains Into Gains: Harnessing the Resource of Overseas Professionals*, ed. C. Wescott and J. Brinkerhoff (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2006), 98-126;Founding dates from Logo on homepage, The Society of Afghan Engineers, accessed

their creation was tied more to socio-economic grounding than the advent of the Afghan Civil War (1992).

Two of the longest lasting U.S. Afghan organizations to perform charitable work in Afghanistan began operations in 1993, one year after the start of the Afghan Civil War. The Children of War and Help the Afghan Children provided aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan during the decade.[469] In 1999, the World Bank and five non-government organizations established Virtual Nation to assist Afghans in the diaspora who wanted to help with charity and development in Afghanistan.[470]

Political and economic factors were not the only factors behind the establishment of these organizations. Personal experiences also motivated efforts to assist Afghanistan and the Afghan diaspora. Help the Afghan Children's founder, Suraya Sadeed, described the circumstances that led to her involvement in Afghan charitable causes in her memoir. She had been a successful realtor, owning six houses and other properties. After her husband's death, she faced severe depression, closed her business, and moved to an apartment. Then one night at a friend's house, Sadeed, found a new sense of purpose after catching a *CNN* news-story about Afghan refugees in Pakistan. As she recalled,

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September 2017, http://www.afghanengineers.org; "Mission Statement,"Afghans4Tomorrow, accessed September 2017, https://www.afghans4tomorrow.org/about/mission-statement.

[469] "Najib Aziz," The Children of War, accessed September 2017, http://thechildrenofwar.org/web2/about-us/1-about-us.html "About HTAC," Help the Afghan Children, accessed December 2017, http://htac.org.af/about-htac.

[470] "Afghans in the USA react to the onset of war," Traces, Transnational Communities Programme (University of Oxford), accessed December 2017, http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/traces/iss16pg1.htm#afghans.

> The scenes were horrifying, and as I watched those shocking images I was struck by how empty my life had become. During the decade that we had lived in America, I rarely followed the news from Afghanistan. It was too depressing, and I was far too focused on getting ahead. Now, staring at those TV images, I felt drawn to the suffering.[471]

With that, Sadeed and her friend Anisa Durrani founded Help the Afghan Children, an organization that as of 2017 (apparently now under new Afghanistan-based leadership), continued to carry out charitable work in Afghanistan.[472] Thus, the personal could intertwine with historical developments to launch diasporic action.

The success of these charitable organizations reflected both a continued commitment to Afghanistan and life in the United States. Obviously, dedicating resources and time to causes in Afghanistan required an ongoing level of commitment to its people. At the same time, these U.S.-based organizations required a degree of stability, financial resources, and sustained personnel to be successful in the United States.

U.S. Afghans also worked to preserve Afghan religion and culture within their communities during the 1990s. In 1996, the Masjid Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq mosque (founded 1985) began construction of a 1.6-million-dollar structure to replace the storefront they had used in the San Francisco Bay Area. The mosque served secular as well as religious needs of U.S. Afghans by offering instruction in Afghan topics and languages.[473]

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[471] Suraya Sadeed;, *Forbidden Lessons In A Kabul Guesthouse: The True Story of a Woman Who Risked Everything to Bring Hope to Afghanistan by Suraya Sadeed* (Great Britain: Virago, 2012), 24.
[472] Ibid, 24-25.
[473] "FAQ," November 2011, accessed January 2017, http://www.masjidabubakralsiddiq.org/about-us/faq/;"Masjid History," Masjid Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, November 2011, accessed January 2017, http://www.masjidabubakralsiddiq.org/about-us/masjid-history/.

In 1997, the Afghan-centered Islamic Center of Reseda opened in the Reseda neighborhood of Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the center was "spurred by Afghan immigrant families who wanted a place to teach youngsters their Muslim heritage."[474] The Afghan Community Islamic Center Inc. Taweed Mosque in San Diego was founded in 1994. Other Afghan Islamic institutions such as the Syed Jamaluddin Afghani Mosque in Flushing, New York had opened in the 1980s.

Afghans also founded organizations to empower the diasporic community in the United States during this era.[475] In 1996, activists founded Afghan Coalition, an organization that would become perhaps the most notable advocacy group for Afghan Americans. Based in Fremont California, Afghan Coalition helped connect Afghan immigrants to social services provided by the government and offered support for Afghan women who faced domestic violence.[476] Since at least 2008, the organization has also worked on political empowerment, providing election information and registering people to vote.[477]

Afghan periodicals and radio stations also emerged in the United States and frequently addressed Afghan political issues. Afghans in the United States also touched

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[474] John Dart, "New Reseda Center a Spiritual, Cultural Anchor for Muslims," *Los Angeles Times*, B, October 18, 1997. Proquest Newsstand (421241351).
[475] The previously mentioned, Afghan Association, which had served these purposes, has since ceased operations. Tawab Wahab, interview with author, January 2017. "Tawab Wahab Interview," Little Kabul Stories, December 16, 2013, accessed January 2017, http://littlekabulstories.org/portfolio-post/tawab-wahab.
[476] "About Us," Afghan Coalition, accessed 2017, http://www.afghancoalition.org/about-us.html.
[477] "Afghan Coalition: Annual Report 2008-2009," Afghan Coalition, accessed February 2018, http://www.afghancoalition.org/uploads/8/3/9/1/83910194/ac-annualreport0809final1-1.pdf.

on youth issues in "ethnic" media outlets. As one contributor to the online *Lemar-Aftab* magazine wrote in 1997,

> …in Northern California alone, Afghan youths are responsible for implementing a weekly TV program named *Dounya-ay-Jawanan*, an Islamic TV program run by Afghan youths, youth newsletter and newspapers, various organizations including Afghan clubs in almost all of the Bay Area high schools, colleges, and universities.[478]

Though many of these organizations were short-lived, Afghan American media continued to be a feature of Afghan life in the United States in the years that followed. By the next decade, Afghan American-operated media extended their broadcasts to Afghanistan and the world via satellite television and the expansion of the World Wide Web.

From 1992 to 2001, Afghans in the United States laid the economic and institutional foundations for long-term life in the United States. This reflected both increased resources to meet costs as well as acceptance of a longer time-horizon in the United States. The advent of the Afghan Civil War influenced this longer time-horizon. The organizations that emerged were by no means the first Afghan institutions in the United States, but tended to have a greater longevity and substantive infrastructure (both organization and structural) than their predecessors did in the 1980s.

The Taliban Era

The Taliban militia's capture of Afghanistan's capital in September of 1996, dramatically altered Afghanistan's history once more. For some Afghans, the Taliban

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[478] Katrin Fakiri, "Afghan Bashing."

initially seemed like a mixed blessing. They provided a measure of stability to a country that had suffered greatly during the civil war. With the Taliban takeover, the bombardment of Kabul finally ended and people could once again travel without fear of crossing factional boundaries.

War outside the major cities, however, persisted, and the Taliban imposed one of the most restrictive regimes anywhere. The Taliban banned activities ranging from kite flying to wrapping goods in paper.[479] They barred women from practically all occupations and schooling. Hazara minorities, largely Shi'a, suffered widespread violence and religious persecution. The Taliban also singled out homosexuals for violent punishment.[480]

The Taliban's relations with most of the word's governments were acrimonious at best. In 1996, Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda terrorist organization established bases in the country and eventually formed ties with the Taliban.[481] After Al Qaeda bombed U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the United States government retaliated by launching cruise missiles against targets in Afghanistan and Sudan believed to be linked to bin Laden.[482] In addition, the Taliban only narrowly avoided war with Iran in 1998 over the issue of hostage taking and their killing of Iranians in Afghanistan.[483] Only three countries (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates) ever

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[479] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005), 334.
[480] Ahmed Rashid, *Talban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene Press, Yale University Press, 2000), 67-75, 105-116.
[481] For more on the Taliban-Al Qaeda relationship, see Coll, *Ghost Wars*.
[482] For information regarding the choice of these targets, see Ibid., 411-413.
[483] Rashid, *Taliban*, 74-76.

recognized the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan.[484] After years of war, Afghanistan was now further isolated from the rest of the outside world.

A substantial majority of accessible written records by Afghans in the United States accessed for this study expressed disapproval of the Taliban. Yet opposition at the time ranged from those who wanted the Taliban to be overthrown to individuals who simply hoped they would step down or significantly reform their ideology and methods. Likewise, "support" ranged from those who saw them as the best of bad options, to a few who endorsed their ability to stabilize Afghanistan and perhaps their ideology as well.

The most prominent U.S. Afghan periodical, *Omaid Weekly* (founded 1992), was an adamant critic of the Taliban.[485] English-language articles from this time consistently characterized the Taliban as a Pakistani-controlled organization that was harmful to Afghanistan.[486] For example, a January 2000 article denounced a meeting between a high-ranking State department figure with the Taliban, stating,

> Such a meeting between a high-ranking official of the sole superpower and an official of a group best known for its barbarities - ethnic cleansing, religious extremism, terrorism,

[484] "Who are the Taliban?" *BBC News*, May 26, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11451718.
[485] Founding date from "Omaid Weekly Newspaper," Arab America, accessed February 2018, http://www.arabamerica.com/business-directory/19204/omaid-weekly-newspaper-4/.
[486] One edition in for February 28, 2000s, for example, had headlines that read "The Taliban: Pakistan's policy of deception," "Four Pak-Talib jets destroyed," and "Narrow US views fueled Afghan warfare, says snalyst." This latter article's interviewees is also Pakistan's role with the Taliban, and influence with the United States. The interviewee also suggests that United States "should consider….to give aid directly to the United Front [Northern Alliance]. *All headlines from Omaid Weekly collection at Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.*

> drug production and cultural and traditional genocide - serves only to legitimize the terrorist militia [the Taliban].[487]

Haron Amin, who had moved to the United States with his family in 1979, became a spokesperson for the main opposition group to the Taliban, the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (known in the West as the Northern Alliance).[488] The organization was an alliance of various former rebels leaders who had been active during the Soviet War and militia leaders opposed to the Taliban. After Al Qaeda assassinated the group's most prominent figure Ahmed Shah Massoud on September 9, 2001, thousands of U.S. Afghans were reported to have attended memorial services for him in California and Virginia.[489] The services, which took place in wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States, further suggest a significant level of American-based opposition to the Taliban.

On the other side of the political spectrum, some Afghans in the United States admired the Taliban's ability to stabilize the country and restore order. One person who had lived in the United States relocated to Afghanistan and became a high-ranking Taliban official.[490] Yet these instances were rather isolated amidst a historical record that is predominately oppositional.

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[487] "U.S. fiddle while Afghanistan burns," *Omaid Weekly*," Volume 8, Issue No. 406, January 31, 2000, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

[488] Anonymous, interview with the author, June 2015; "H.E. Haron Amin. Ambassador of Afghanistan to Japan," United Nations Institute for Training and Research, accessed March 2018, http://www.unitar.org/hiroshima/he-haron-amin-ambassador-of-afghanistan-to-japan.

[489] Rone Tempest, "Afghan Americans Mourn Lost Rebel; Crisis: Hundreds pay tribute to assassinated leader who opposed the Taliban," *Lost Angeles Times*, pg. B1, September 24, 2001. Proquest Historical Newspapers (421824139).

[490] Sadeed, 188.

Many U.S. Afghans do appear to have been skeptical about direct U.S. military intervention before September 11, 2001. For instance, the *New York Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle* each published an article that featured Afghan immigrants critical of the 1998 U.S. cruise missile strikes against Al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan and Sudan. *The New York Times* quoted an imam of the Afghan Immigrants Islamic Center in Flushing, Queens (New York) as saying, "You can't bombard one area, maybe kill hundreds of people, just for one person." Others questioned the timing of the attacks, which fell on the same day Monica Lewinsky testified about her affair with the President, or wished for more diplomacy.[491] The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that 200 protesters in Fremont "included a contingent of Afghan Americans and Muslims," but there was no indication of how large this "contingent" was.[492]

Afghans in the United States employed a variety of media to report and debate the issues affecting Afghanistan. A weekly Afghan radio show, Azadi Afghan Radio, managed to interview anti-Taliban leader Ahmed Shah Massoud in April of 2001.[493] *The San Francisco Chronicle* wrote that the station's founder, Omar Samad, tried to strike a balanced tone, and even "had regular interviews with Taliban leaders until…they started boycotting his program" over his "probing" questions.[494] War and distance had not entirely isolated Afghans in the United States from the affairs of their country of origin.

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[491] David W. Chen, "Afghan and Sudanese Immigrants Doubt Merit of Attacks," *New York Times*, pg. B4, August 21, 1998, Proquest Historical Newspapers.
[492] Ken Hoover, Stacy Finz, and Carolyne Zinko, "Hundreds in Bay Area Protest U.S. Attacks – Demonstrations in S.F. as well as in Fremont, Palo Altio, and San Jose," *San Francisco Chronicle*, A3, August 22, 1998, NewsBank.
[493] Jonathan Curiel, "News from home – Afghan media in U.S. mix reporting with rhetoric," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 5, 2001, A19, NewsBank.
[494] Ibid.

This was particularly true for those involved in humanitarian work inside Afghanistan. Suraya Sadeed of Help the Afghan Children found herself having to meet with Taliban officials in order to continue her organization's humanitarian efforts, while hiding her organization's support of activities such as girls' education from them.[495] In 1996, she testified before the U.S. Senate, advocating U.S. humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, warning that the unfolding humanitarian crisis would breed terrorism.[496] Still, U.S. Afghan (Afghan American) interactions in Afghanistan appear to have been low during the Taliban regime.

Some Afghans apparently felt ashamed or afraid to openly identify with Afghanistan and Islam. Writing in 1997, Sonia Rahel, who worked with Afghan youths in the United States, wrote in the U.S. Afghan magazine *Lemar-Aftaab*, "It hurts me to overhear our young Afghans declare shame on themselves and their parents for being Afghans." She urged readers, "Do not allow the Afghan politics and war overshadow the strength and warmth that so many of us carry within us." She concluded, "Love thyself and other fellow Afghans IGNORE THE POLTICS!"[497]

This difficult era for the American diaspora also saw the creation of what, perhaps, is the most acclaimed work about Afghanistan conceived in the United States. In 1999, an Afghan American practicing internist (medical) happened upon a television news-story about Taliban restrictions. Having heard that the Taliban banned kite

[495] Sadeed, 7-14, 183-192.
[496] Sadeed, 135-136.
[497] Sonia Rahel, "Striving for Inner Strength," *Lemar-Aftaab (*Afghanmagazine.com), October, 1997. UC Berkeley Ctn. 24.15, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.

fighting, an activity he had pursued in his youth, he began writing a short fictional story that featured two boys and their kites. His first attempt to have it published was unsuccessful. Two years later, his wife "found" his story in the garage. This prompted him to re-examine it. He eventually expanded the story into the book, *The Kite Runner* (published 2003).[498] The book would become a best-seller in the years following September 11th, 2001. Although not without controversy, the work introduced many common Afghan American experiences to wide audiences, such as the struggle to rebuild lives after fleeing Afghanistan.[499]

Years of fighting and violent rule had engulfed Afghans for two decades, putting it off limits to much of the country's U.S. diaspora. Yet, many retained emotional ties to the country and evinced concern about its future. Activism on behalf of Afghanistan appears to have been largely limited to discussion, non-partisan aid organizations, journalism, and public awareness campaigns. In the years to come, this would change dramatically.

Conclusion

The Afghan Civil War era (1992-2001) would prove to be one of the most pivotal decades for Afghans in the United States. Previously, many Afghans in the United States planned to wait out their time in the United States, anticipating an era of peace after the Soviet occupation. The outbreak of the 1992 civil war, however, changed most of

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[498] Publication date from Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner* (New York: Riverhead, 2003).
[499] Account from Noah Charney, "The Kite Runner," *The Daily Beast*, January 7, 2012, accessed January, 2017, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/11/07/khaled-hosseini-how-i-write.html; "Biography - Khaled Hosseini," khaledhosseini.com, accessed February 21, 2017, http://khaledhosseini.com/biography.

these expectations. Their stay in the United States now appeared indefinite, and that likely spurred efforts to foster a continuity of diasporic Afghan identity as well as connections with Afghanistan. It was an era of organization growth within the U.S.-based community, as well as one in which the community strengthened its bonds to Afghanistan through a variety of humanitarian missions. As many families began to achieve a measure of financial security and social mobility, they also began to view themselves and other members of the diasporic community as Afghan Americans rather than exiles.

Nevertheless, poverty rates remained high and many Afghans continued to work in occupations not commensurate with their levels of education. All of this took place at a time when the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan attracted international focus on their country of origin's problems.

After 1992, the sectarian and constantly evolving conflict in Afghanistan made unified political action incredibly difficult. Public political activism regarding Afghanistan appears to have decreased. Despite numerous examples of strident opposition to the Taliban regime, there were alternative views of the regime within the community. If anything, Afghans in the United States seemed more in character with what Dufoix would term an "enclaved" diaspora. On September 11, 2001, though, Afghanistan would experience another upheaval, and relations between the country and its U.S. diaspora would shift dramatically.

Chapter V: The Post-September 11th Era (2001-)

U.S. Afghan Overview

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, dramatically altered Afghan experiences in the United States. Afghanistan suddenly became a subject of intense media and public discussion. Before long, employment opportunities would arise for Afghans in the United States, offering good pay and a chance to travel to Afghanistan. These opportunities, along with increased public interest, fueled a revival in diasporic interactions between Afghanistan and its U.S. diaspora.

Numerous factors motivated Afghans to re-engage with Afghanistan. Some believed that service in Afghanistan would symbiotically benefit both the United States and Afghanistan and provide a sense of "giving back." Others simply wanted to visit their "homeland." More practically, the work often offered substantial financial incentives.

Beyond this re-engagement, the September 11th tragedies altered U.S. Afghans' lives in other ways. The country had become a subject of media and popular conversation that abruptly brought the country into many U.S. Afghans' consciousness. This attention forced many to confront the differences between their own lives in the United States and those still in Afghanistan or nearby refugee camps. Unfortunately,

attention to Afghanistan and the broader Middle East also brought about increased harassment and hate crimes directed at people associated with Islam.[500]

Like the Cold War, the post-September 11th conflicts heightened U.S. anxieties about the outside world, while also opening new opportunities for immigration. Most notably, individuals who had worked on behalf of the U.S. government became eligible for special immigrant visas. By the end of 2015, 19,916 special immigrant visas had been issued for former Afghan employees of the U.S. government and their immediate family members.[501] Once more, immigration policy altered the composition and diasporic relations of the U.S. Afghan community.

Afghanistan Historical Overview

In fall of 2001, Afghanistan experienced a dizzying sequence of events that dramatically upended Afghanistan's politics. During this time, the country transformed from an area largely beyond the reach of the outside world into a site of often competing international investments, deployments, and visions of the country's future.

On September 9, 2001, though, this transformation would have been difficult to foresee. That day, Al Qaeda assassins disguised as journalists exploded a bomb in a

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[500] Bill Dedman, Mike Brunker, and Monica Alba, "Hate Crime in America, by the Numbers," *NBC News*, June 18, 2015, June 5, 2017, http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/charleston-church-shooting/hate-crime-america-numbers-n81521.
Christopher Ingraham, "Anti-Muslim hate crimes are still five times more common today than before 9/11" *Washington Post*, February 11, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/02/11/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-are-still-five-times-more-common-today-than-before-911/?utm_term=.8f7bd2d15197.
[501] Andorra Bruno, "Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs," Congressional Research Service, 26 February 2016, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R43725.pdf, 17-19.

camera that killed anti-Taliban commander Ahmed Shah Massoud during an interview with him.[502] The Taliban, which had already been in control of nearly all of Afghanistan's territory, now no longer had to contend with their foremost opponent.

The Taliban's strength would prove fleeting. Two days after Massoud's assassination, Al Qaeda terrorists hijacked three airliners in the United States and crashed them into the World Trade Center in New York City and Pentagon near Washington D.C. A fourth hijacked airliner crashed in Pennsylvania as its passengers and crew struggled for control over the plane with its hijackers. In the following month, the U.S. government launched military action against the Taliban in Afghanistan after they refused to surrender Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. U.S. and British aerial strikes against Al Qaeda and Taliban positions devastated front-line Taliban forces, allowing Afghan anti-Taliban units to sweep through the country. By November of 2001, the Taliban had fled the country's capital.[503] U.S. troops and an international coalition remained in the country to provide security.

While the U.S. air campaign against the Taliban was still underway, notable anti-Taliban Afghans met in Bonn, Germany to discuss Afghanistan's future. The conference selected Hamid Karzai, a leader of the Popalzai Pashtun tribe, as Afghanistan's interim president.[504] In June 2002, a nation-wide *loya jirga* meeting of influential non-Taliban

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[502] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, Reprint edition (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004), 574-582.
[503] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 269.
[504] Unbeknownst to the participants at Bonn, though, an American B-52 was en-route that day which would mistakenly bomb Karzai's position. Karzai learned of his appointment as head of the interim government in a satellite call fifteen minutes after narrowly surviving the strike. Joshua Partlow, *A*

figures convened in Afghanistan and called for Hamid Karzai to head the interim government until scheduled elections in 2004.[505]

In the years to come, Afghanistan continued to face some of the highest poverty rates in the world. Yet, economic and security conditions in the country probably reached their highest points than at any time since the coup of 1978.[506] Millions of refugees, generally from neighboring countries, returned while others in the global diaspora re-established entrepreneurial connections in Afghanistan.[507]

In the early years of its post September 11th involvement, the United States attempted a minimalist approach in Afghanistan. Influential Bush administration officials wished to avoid entering into a long-term "nation-building" campaign, or repeat the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. As a result, the United States and international security forces (who were generally given limited peacekeeping authority from their respective countries) initially offered only a modicum of ground-troops and aid. Preparation for war in Iraq further stymied U.S. investment in Afghanistan.[508]

Kingdom of Their Own: The Family Karzai and the Afghan Disaster (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016), Kindle Edition, location 1006-1022.

[505] The United States government was accused throughout the process of favoring Karzai at the expense of other potential figures, most notably Afghanistan's former king. Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 284-300.

[506] Although the Taliban brought a measure of increased order to civil war-era Afghanistan, an active civil war still raged in the country. Furthermore, large skill reprisals attacks continued during the Taliban, not to mention the insecurity women and religious minorities faced from the regime. For a chart of Afghanistan's GDP per capita see, "GDP per capita (constant LCU)," The World Bank, accessed June 2017, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=AF&view=chart. While GDP per capita can be a flawed method of examining the well-being of country's population, the sharp increase strongly suggests economic growth.

[507] For returning refugees, Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 281.

[508] Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 109-133; Barfield, 313-316; Jones, 238-255; Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: The US*

Despite this relative U.S. neglect, schools re-opened and public health improved in Afghanistan.[509] Hamid Karzai won a virtually undisputed victory in the 2004 presidential election. The relative level of peace in the country was rather remarkable considering what Afghanistan had been through, and the fact that it had virtually no institutions to provide security, save for militias. The tide seemed to be turning towards economic progress and peace.

Media exposure

After September 11, 2001, media coverage of Afghanistan helped raise U.S. public interest in the country to unprecedented levels. This had many implications for Afghans in the United States. The increased coverage forced many Afghans in the United States to psychologically re-visit Afghanistan. Increased public attention also created a larger audience for Afghan American works of creative expression such as memoirs and literature. Afghan American charities often benefitted from higher levels of donations. Increased public attention to Afghanistan and the broader Middle East, however, exacerbated harassment and suspicion against Afghans in the United States. Desired or not, Afghanistan was to play a much more prominent role in many of the U.S. diaspora's lives.

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and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia (New York: Penguin, 2009), XLI.

[509] "Afghanistan: Before and after the Taliban," *BBC News*, April 2, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26747712; "Afghanistan: what has been achieved since 2001?," BBC News, December 7, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8377393.stm; Justin Sandefur, "Here's the Best Thing the U.S. Has Done in Afghanistan: With the help of foreign aid, the public healthcare system has vastly improved the Afghan life expectancy," *The Atlantic*, October, 10, 2013, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/10/heres-the-best-thing-the-us-has-done-in-afghanistan/280484/.

As media coverage of Afghanistan expanded after the September 11th attacks, many Afghans in the United States found themselves psychologically re-visiting a place they had seen little of over the last few decades of their lives. The images coming out of Afghanistan reminded many of the divergent paths their lives had taken from those who remained in Afghanistan refugee camps in neighboring countries.

In December 2001, Sonia Rahel captured some of these emotions in the Afghan American periodical *Lemar-Aftaab*. Rahel stated, "we [Afghans in the United States] are once again reminded of the pain, the suffering, the guilt related to helplessness and/or hopelessness."[510] Rahel wrote that like other Afghans in the United States, she suffered from grief after the attacks, and cried for "the first two weeks [straight]" after September 11th. She also evoked the symbiotic urge among Afghans in the United States to be of value to both of her "home" countries. As she expressed, "I feel split between wanting to go to New York, where I grew up, and help civilians and their families that have lost loved ones, or going to Pakistan and rescue the starving Afghan women and children, or both."[511]

Survivor's guilt appears to have been common among Afghans in the United States at this time. This guilt could be directly connected to the fate of loved ones, or more abstract understandings of suffering compatriots. In one instance, *The Los Angeles Times* reported of a one Afghan in the United States whose friends in Afghanistan called

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[510] Sonia Rahel, "Surviving the Guilt," *Lemar-Aftaab (*Afghanmagazine.com), January-December, 2001, UC Berkeley Ctn. 24.16, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.
[511] Sonia Rahel, "Surviving the Guilt."

asking for money to help them leave for Pakistan to escape the bombing. The newspaper quoted her stating, "I feel if I don't give them help, I will have their death on my hands."[512]

Some Afghans in the United States were also left wondering why they had been able to escape the suffering of their compatriots in Afghanistan and nearby refugee camps. Yasmine Delawari Johnson articulated these emotions in a piece about her relationship with the iconic 1984 photograph, "Afghan Girl," taken by Steve McCurry for *National Geographic*. When McCurry took the picture in a refugee camp in Pakistan, the photograph's twelve-year-old subject, Sharbat Gula, was the same age as Delawari Johnson. Throughout her years in the United States, the photograph was never far from Delawari Johnson's conscious. As she recalled,

> …with each year that passed, I tried to live my life. My American life, my ballet lessons, my yearbooks, my college years, Manhattan in my twenties, but she [the image of Gula] was always there. A reminder of what could have been just a random twist of fate. And the question that had been there so many years before remained unanswered. Why her and not me?[513]

Anxiety and guilt, though, were not the only emotions felt by Afghans in the United States. There was also increased hope for and interest in Afghanistan among the diaspora. For example, Farhad Azad, who founded the online *Afghan Magazine* in 1997, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that his periodical's "readership has at least doubled

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[512] Rone, Tempest, "Tense Afghans Predict More Suffering; Aftermath: Large community in the Bay Area condemns terrorist attacks but fears U.S. retaliation in their homeland," *Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 2001, B-1, ProQuest.
[513] Yasmine Delawari Johnson, "The Girl with the Green Eyes," in Zohra Saed and Sahar Muradi, *One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature* (University of Arkansas Press, 2010), 105.

and maybe tripled," in the two months since the September 11th attacks.[514] This increase in interest accompanied a high demand for travel to Afghanistan among Afghans in the United States.[515]

Increased attention to Afghanistan also spurred donations for charitable efforts. One Afghan woman whose family had been in the United States for decades, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* of her heightened sense of responsibility after September 11th, 2001. Previously, she stated, "I wanted to meld into the woodwork because I felt I would be judged." Watching the documentary, *Women Under the Veil* soon after the attacks, though, prompted a change. She recalled thinking, "'I've wasted so much time. I could have done so many things to help.' Now I've decided that the wealth we've made here is not going to go to my children. It's going to help all of those children in Afghanistan.'"[516]

Humaira Ghilzai experienced a particularly pronounced shift in her life after the September 11th attacks. Since settling in California, she had found economic success as director of international marketing at Sun Microsystem's software division and Oracle. In an interview for this study, she recalled that between her days in college and 2001, she was uninterested in her Afghan roots, and "stayed away from the Afghan

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[514] Rona Marech, "Online cultural 'zine takes off after Sept. 11," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 9, 2001, 2, NewsBank.
Said Hyder Akbar also recalled that "after September 11th the Afghan bulletin boards got pretty crowded." Said Hyder Akbar and Susan Burton, *Come Back to Afghanistan: A California Teenager's Story Hardcover October 13, 2005*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), 22.
[515] See pages 210-217.
[516] Joan Ryan, "Royal exiles of a sad land," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 14, 2001, D1, NewsBank.

community."[517] The attacks and new attention to Afghanistan, though, prompted her to ponder her identity and sense of obligation. After "survivor's guilt" set in, she explored ways to help out with Afghanistan issues at the prompting of her father. In 2015, Ghilzai reflected, "I call people like me 're-born' Afghans."[518]

She began by working on efforts to develop a sister-city relationship between San Francisco and Kabul. In the following months and years, she expanded her efforts, eventually culminating with the co-founding of Afghan Friends Network. As of 2016, Afghan Friends Network provided education for hundreds of Afghan students, including a gender equality program. Additionally, the organization offered financial support for students to attend universities in Afghanistan.[519]

Charities, though, were not the only means to assist Afghanistan. Obaid Younossi, whose journey to the United States and settlement in Pittsburgh was discussed in chapter three, also felt the urge to contribute to Afghanistan in the months after September 11th. At that time, Younossi worked for the RAND corporation think-tank in the Washington D.C. metropolitan region. On September 11, 2001, Younossi witnessed one of the hijacked planes descend from above his Pentagon City office before slamming into the nearby Pentagon.[520]

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[517] Humaira Ghilzai, interview with the author, October 2015.
[518] Ibid.
[519] See also John Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978," *Marine Corps University Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring 2016), 89-90.
[520] Obaid Younossi, interview with the author, September 2015.

Soon afterwards, Younossi recognized that his relationship with Afghanistan had changed. He recalled that Afghanistan, a country he had "for the most part, sort of, emotionally had detached myself from," was now part of his life. As Younossi recalled, "you're overcome by very conflicting emotions I mean you're trying to be at the same time a good American but at the same time you see what's happening."[521] Not wanting to upend his life in the United States by moving to Afghanistan or put his family through what that would entail, Younossi sought opportunities with his employer in Afghanistan. The new Afghan government needed help developing its security forces, and the RAND Corporation was involved with these efforts. This allowed Younossi to find work reforming Afghanistan's army.[522]

Other Afghans in the United States took action through writing. The most noticed of their works was an email by Tamim Ansary that circulated across the world. The day after the September 11th attacks, Ansary listened to callers vent their anger on talk-radio, with some callers even calling for punishing the people of Afghanistan. Shortly afterwards, Ansary penned an email to friends expressing his thoughts.[523]

Ansary cautioned, "When people speak of 'having the belly to do what needs to be done,' they're thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed, having the belly to overcome any moral qualms about killing innocent people." He argued that bin Laden was attempting to provoke a war between the West and Islam, and "what's

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[521] Ibid.

[522] Ibid; See also Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978," 87.

[523] Account from Mir Tamim Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York: An Afghan American Story* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 4-5.

actually on the table is Americans dying." If a war broke out between Islam and the West, "…the war would last for years and millions would die, not just theirs but ours."[524] In the years preceding user-generated content websites such as Facebook and YouTube, Ansary's email went viral. Media representatives from productions such *World News Tonight* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show* reached out to him.[525]

Ansary tapped his experiences as both an American and an Afghan to provide insight on issues relevant to both countries. As Ansary saw it, "I spoke for Afghanistan with my American voice, and while I was writing, my two selves were fused."[526] Ansary used his familiarity and affection for both societies for a purpose that would benefit each while reducing dissonance between a "divided" identity.

It is impossible to fully gauge the percentage of U.S. Afghans who re-engaged with their Afghanistan, but the available sources clearly indicate that the surge in U.S. attention affected the Afghan community in the United States as a whole. U.S. Afghans' urge to contribute to Afghanistan was common and undoubtedly increased the level of diasporic connections between the United States and Afghanistan. Willingly or not, their lives often became more directly linked to Afghanistan, but not necessarily at the expense of their affinities with the United States.

Xenophobia after September 11th

[524] Ibid, 291-292.
[525] Ibid, 7.
[526] Ibid, 282-283.

Afghans in the United States' experiences with prejudice varied in the months and years following the September 11th attacks. Studies show that there was a rise in harassment and violence in the United States against people perceived to be Muslim or "Middle Eastern."[527] Prior to 2001, reported hate crimes were lower against Muslims than against both Protestant and Catholic Christians.[528] By 2001, though, the FBI recorded that hate crimes against Muslims rose from less than 40 per year in the years preceding 2001 to over 400 in 2001. These numbers then leveled out between 100 and 200 a year through 2013.[529] These instances remained exceedingly rare, given that the United States had over 3.3 million Muslims as of 2015.[530] Of course, these crime statistics only included incidents recorded by FBI and classified as a hate crime. More casual prejudice, such as verbal bigotry, could also intimidating, forcing individuals to question whether they were safe displaying both their religious and ethnic identities.

Some Afghans in the United States spoke of placing U.S. flag decals on their automobiles to avoid harassment after the September 11th attacks. Others attempted to make their Muslim identity less conspicuous.[531] In September of 2001, the *New York*

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[527] Bill Dedman, Mike Brunker, and Monica Alba, "Hate Crime in America, by the Numbers," http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/charleston-church-shooting/hate-crime-america-numbers-n81521; see also John Baden, "The Formation of an Afghan Community in the United States," *Studia Historica Gedanensia*, volume VIII, (2017): PARS IN TOTO: 15-24.
[528] Bill Dedman, Mike Brunker, and Monica Alba, "Hate Crime in America, by the Numbers."
[529] Christopher Ingraham, "Anti-Muslim hate crimes are still five times more common today than before 9/11," *Washington Post*, February 11, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/02/11/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-are-still-five-times-more-common-today-than-before-911/?utm_term=.8f7bd2d15197.
[530] Besheer Mohsmed, "A new estimate of the U.S. Muslim population," Pew Research Center, January 6, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/06/a-new-estimate-of-the-u-s-muslim-population/.
[531] For more on post 9/11 anxiety see, Diana Walsh, "Making the grades - New tutoring program provides helping hand for refugee students," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 14, 2004, NewsBank; **"**Rona Marech,

Times reported on women in Fremont, California, who were afraid to go outside because of their Islamic clothing. They also reported that "young people are peeling off bumper stickers that say 'Allah.'"[532] The *Los Angeles Times* reported that in wake of September 11, 2001, "some high school students ripped scarves from the heads of Afghan girls" and that "mosques have been subjected to crude hate calls, and that a suspicious fire gutted an Afghan restaurant."[533]

Despite increased hostility towards the Muslim and Afghan community, there does not appear to have been any Afghan deaths directly attributed to prejudice between 2001 and 2006. Yet, the September 11th attacks and subsequent rash of anti-Islamic sentiment could have indirectly played a part in other incidents of violence.

Anti-Muslim sentiment was a possible factor in the death of a U.S. Afghan woman in Fremont, California. On March 3, 2006, Alia Ansari, who was a mother of six children, was shot and killed in broad daylight while walking with her daughter to pick up two of her children from school.[534] Speculation that it was a hate crime arose because Ansari was wearing an Islamic hijab when her assailant jumped from a car to kill

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"Online cultural 'zine takes off after Sept. 11,"; Evelyn Nieves and Patricia Leigh Brown, "A NATION CHALLENGED: AFGHAN-AMERICANS; Group Struggling to Shed Association With Terrorism," *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/18/us/nation-challenged-afghan-americans-group-struggling-shed-association-with.html; Tempest, "Tense Afghans Predict More Suffering; Aftermath: Large community in the Bay Area condemns terrorist attacks but fears U.S. retaliation in their homeland."

[532] Evelyn Nieves and Patricia Leigh Brown, "A NATION CHALLENGED: AFGHAN-AMERICANS; Group Struggling to Shed Association With Terrorism."

[533] Tempest, "Tense Afghans Predict More Suffering; Aftermath: Large community in the Bay Area condemns terrorist attacks but fears U.S. retaliation in their homeland."

[534] Henry K. Lee, "FREMONT - Memorial service honors slain woman - Hundreds gather in park to remember mother of 6 who was shot in the head," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 28, 2006, B6, NewsBank.

her. Yet, authorities did not press hate crime charges. Instead, the prosecutor described the man convicted of Ansari's murder as "a methamphetamine addict who'd become obsessed with death."[535] The man had apparently been planning a random killing and Ansari was simply at the wrong place at the wrong time.[536]

Amidst tragedy and suspicion following September 11, 2001, many Afghans in the United States experienced acts of support and generosity from the outside community. Surya Sadeed of Help the Afghan Children recalled poignant examples of this during a time of great personal fear. After she first learned of the September 11th attacks, she had actually removed her organization's sign from its office in despair. Sadeed recalled thinking, "…I felt as hurt and angry as any American [about the September 11th attacks], but who would ever believe me if I tried to tell them?"[537] The organization, however, experienced an outpouring of donations from people wanting to help.

Despite occasional hate mail, Sadeed recalls a large number of emails and phone calls of support in her memoir.[538]

> I was stunned. I had honestly believed that HTAC was finished. Instead, funds started flooding in. In a way I fell more in love with my adopted country than ever before, and at a time when it was poised to attack the country of my birth. Those days were the

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[535] Ben Aguirre, "Urango gets 50 years for shooting mom in Fremont," *Alameda Times-Star*, April 16, 2008, NewsBank.
[536] Lisa Fernandez, "Ansari's husband weighing return," *The Argus* (Fremont-Newark, CA), March 17, 2008, NewsBank. For more on the Ansari tragedy, see Ben Aguirre Jr., "Gunshot residue was key to guilty verdict," March 11, 2008, NewsBank; Matthew Artz, "Fremont's story hits the big screen," *Alameda Times-Star*, February 1, 2009, NewsBank.
[537] Suraya Sadeed and Damien Lewis, *Forbidden Lessons in a Kabul Guesthouse: The True Story of a Woman Who Risked Everything to Bring Hope to Afghanistan* (London: Hachette Books, 2011), 229-330.
[538] Ibid., 233.

> most agonizing of my life. I was in love with America but so fearful that this great and powerful nation would fail to differentiate between the terrorists and the Afghan people, who'd been victimized for so long."[539]

The following year, Sadeed appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, and received a $250,000 donation to HTAC from her.[540]

In a similar incident, the owner of a California Afghan restaurant feared his business would suffer after the September 11th attacks. Instead, customers continued to patronize the establishment. Some brought balloons, handwritten notes, and flowers. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that dozens called daily offering support. One of the restaurant's owners, Bashir Ahmad, stated "'God bless the American people and the way they support us.'"[541]

The months and years following September 11, 2001, were an emotionally trying period for Afghans in the United States. The attacks thrust their country of origin into the U.S. spotlight, unleashing a wave of both suspicion and comradery from U.S. public. Individual Afghan experiences varied. What is certain, though, is that Afghan life in the United States persevered and flourished during these times. Prejudice and anxiety would not disconnect the Afghan community, as a whole, from Afghanistan. In fact, with a new regime in power and increased travel options, many were now experiencing renewed connections with their country of origin.

Diasporic Development

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[539] Ibid.
[540] Ibid, 260.
[541] Mark Simon, "Trust, friendship prevail – Support stuns restaurant's Afghan owners," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 25, 2001, A13, NewsBank.

After the Taliban regime's defeat in 2001, travel to Afghanistan became substantially more accessible. There was a surge in diasporic travel to Afghanistan from the United States after the defeat of the Taliban. In April of 2002, the *New York Times* reported that Pamir Travel Agency in Fremont, California "has booked more than 700 customers in the last few months."[542] Additionally, their waiting list for travel to Afghanistan was four weeks, with more than 500 people on it. This would mean that about 4 percent of California's self-identified Afghan population had booked travel or was on the waiting list of a single travel agency.[543]

A substantial number of trips to Afghanistan in the years following 2001 were for reconstruction efforts, broadly defined. Previously, under the Taliban regime, many charitable NGOs (non-government organization) had ceased work in Afghanistan. Now, the new regime allowed for Afghanistan-oriented organizations to expand their operations in the country, and for new organizations to begin providing services there. By 2002, the U.S. government was providing at least one million dollars in humanitarian aid on an annual basis.[544] Total international humanitarian aid rose from $174 million in 2000 to $890 million in 2002, then decreased to between $328 million and $508 million

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[542] Evelyn Nieves, "AFGHAN-AMERICANS: They Can Go Home Again, and Hundreds of Refugees Can't Wait," *New York Times*, April 14, 2002, ProQuest (92290122).
[543] Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 7.0* (2000 Census 5%), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0; Evelyn Nieves, "AFGHAN-AMERICANS: They Can Go Home Again, and Hundreds of Refugees Can't Wait."
[544] Catherine Lutz and Sujaya Desai, "US Reconstruction Aid for Afghanistan: The Dollars and Sense," Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, January 5, 2015, http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2015/US%20Reconstruction%20Aid%20for%20Afghanistan.pdf.

until 2008.[545] There were also many new opportunities for private sector work in Afghanistan. Afghans in the United States now had the desire, means, and economic incentives to visit their land of origin.

Both the United States and the broader international community envisioned a prominent role for the diaspora in Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts. In December of 2001, the inter-governmental International Organization for Migration launched the Return of Qualified Afghans Program. In the first five months after its founding, Return of Qualified Afghans Program received 300 applications from the United States towards its goal of placing 1,500 Afghans from the global diaspora in reconstruction efforts.[546] Additionally, the U.S. Afghanistan Freedom Support Act contained a section "encourage[ing] the return of Afghanistan citizens or nationals living abroad who have marketable and business-related skills" towards the goal of supporting "the establishment of a market economy" in Afghanistan.

Afghan American-headed non-profit organizations in the United States also engaged in efforts to mobilize talent for work in Afghanistan. Organizations founded in the 1990s, such as Afghans4Tomorrow, Afghan Medical Professionals Association of America, Afghan Medical Association of America, and the Society of Afghan Engineers,

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[545] Lydia Poole, "Afghanistan: Tracking major resource flows 2002-2010," Global Humanitarian Assistance, January 2011, 13, http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/gha-Afghanistan-2011-major-resource-flows.pdf.

[546] Evelyn Nieves, "AFGHAN-AMERICANS: They Can Go Home Again, and Hundreds of Refugees Can't Wait." For more on returning Afghans, see Robert F. Worth, "Back to Kabul, With a Queens Accent: Many Immigrants Returning to a Remade Afghanistan, Some to Stay," *New York Times*, *November* 3, 2003, B1, http://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/92551535/AB20730A0E2C44ADPQ/1?accountid=9920, ProQuest (92551535).

as well as newly founded organizations pooled talented individuals to contribute their expertise to humanitarian and development efforts in Afghanistan.[547] Organizations such as Help the Afghan Children, the Children of War, the Khaled Hosseini Foundation and Afghan Friends Network provided funds and services to Afghans. Such organizations allowed its staff and volunteers to contribute to Afghanistan while remaining U.S. citizens. Moreover, Afghan donors in the United States were able to contribute without costly and at times dangerous trips to Afghanistan.

Other Afghans in the United States, though, sought a more direct political role in Afghanistan's reconstruction. A number of Afghans from the United States joined the ranks of Afghanistan's new government. Among them was Ashraf Ghani, who had lived more than two decades in the United States. He served as Afghanistan's minister of finance from 2002 to 2004, before becoming president in 2014.[548] In 2002, Anwar Ul-Haq Ahady, who had been a Providence College professor, became governor of the Afghan Central Bank.[549] Afghan American, Noorullah Delawari, became director of

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[547] "Mission Statement," Afghans4Tomorrow, accessed May 2017, http://www.afghans4tomorrow.org/about/mission-statement/; "Our Mission," Afghan Medical Professionals Association of America, May 2017, http://www.ampaa.org/Our-Mission.html; "AMAA," Afghan Medical Association of America, accessed May 2017, http://www.afghanmed.org/; http://www.afghanengineers.org/about/; (website now unavailable). See also Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Material and Social Remittances to Afghanistan," in *Converting Migration Drains Into Gains: Harnessing the Resource of Overseas Professionals*, ed. C. Wescott and J. Brinkerhoff (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2006), 98-126, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/27967/converting-migration.pdf.

[548] George Packer, "Afghanistan's Theorist-in-Chief," *New Yorker*, July 4, 2016, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/04/ashraf-ghani-afghanistans-theorist-in-chief. David Loyn, "Profile: Ashraf Ghani," *BBC News*, September 21, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27142426.

[549] Katherine Leal Unmuth, "Mr. Ahady Goes to Kabul," *Northwestern* (magazine), 2002, http://www.northwestern.edu/magazine/northwestern/fall2003/features/ahady/.

Afghanistan's central bank in 2004.[550] San Francisco Bay Area resident and solar power businessman, Ishaq Shahryar was named Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States in 2002.[551] Said Tayeb Jawad, a San Francisco Bay Area financial consultant who had previously served as President Karzai's press secretary and chief of staff would later become ambassador to the United States.[552] Conversely, Bush administration official, and Afghan American, Zalmay Khalilzad, served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005 before serving as ambassador to Iraq.[553]

Many of the U.S. Afghans who joined Afghanistan's new government experienced a remarkably sudden change of lifestyle and priorities. Before returning to Afghanistan, Said Fazel Akbar had spent his days tending a hip-hop clothing store he owned in Oakland, California, in order to support himself and family in the United States. After the Taliban's overthrow, though, he was tapped to become the chief spokesman for President Karzai, and then governor of Kunar province.[554]

President Karzai also had siblings in the United States. Over the next ten years, many of them returned to Afghanistan. Brothers Ahmed Wali, Mahmoud, Qayum, and

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[550] For Noorullah Delawari, see "Noorullah Delawari named to head Afghan central bank," *BBC News*, November 24, 2011, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-15868031.
[551] Edward Epstein, "Capitol connection / Afghan native's success as U.S. businessman makes him logical choice to cultivate relations between war-ravaged country and its liberator," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 20, 2002, http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/Capitol-connection-Afghan-native-s-success-as-2752216.php.
[552] Edward Epstein, "Serving his country from afar / Afghan man leaves war-torn homeland to make a new life for himself -- and become U.S. ambassador," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 17, 2004, http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/Serving-his-country-from-afar-Afghan-man-leaves-2807736.php.
[553] "Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad, United States Ambassador to Iraq," The White House: President George W. Bush, accessed September 2017, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/government/khalilzad-bio.html.
[554] Said Hyder Akbar and Susan Burton, *Come Back to Afghanistan: A California Teenager's Story*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), 21.

Shah Wali would all serve prominent, and at times controversial, roles in Afghanistan's government and economy.[555]

In many ways, Afghan "expatriates" from the West were some of the best options for carrying out the tasks necessary to rebuild Afghanistan. They often possessed high levels of linguistic and technical expertise. Additionally, many possessed a zeal that allowed them to overcome threats to their security and discomforts of life in Afghanistan.

No longer approximating anything like what Dufoix would call an "enclaved" or "atopic" diaspora, the events since 2001 transformed U.S. Afghan diasporic relations. The efforts of many Afghans in the United States to contribute and shape Afghanistan's future demonstrate that collectively, they had entered what this study proposes to call a "collaborative" mode of diasporic relations. Although, some chose to work for the Afghan government, most Afghans maintained their autonomy from it. Independent, but willing to help, Afghans in the United States had entered a new phase of diasporic relations.

Returning

The experience of visiting or returning to Afghanistan often proved to be an exceptionally emotional experience. Individuals often had strikingly different experiences that often confronted them with both the changes in Afghanistan and in

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[555] Joshua Partlow, *A Kingdom of Their Own: The Family Karzai and the Afghan Disaster* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016), Kindle Edition; James Risen, "Another Karzai Forges Afghan Business Empire," New York Times, March 4, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/05/world/asia/05karzai.html.

themselves. One U.S.-born Afghan resident in the United States recalled that as their plane flew over Afghanistan, "dozens of people stood [in plane] and crowded around the tiny windows, eager for a first glance of their broken home." After the country's destruction came fully into view, though, the author sensed "excitement dropping." She noticed tears welling in her mother's eyes, and surmised "this was not the home she remembered."[556]

After travelling to Afghanistan on work with the RAND Corporation, Obaid Younossi, however, thought Afghanistan was much as he remembered it. As he recalled, "the country hadn't changed that much…there were no new highways, new high-rises, or no new construction at all so it was basically a 30-year-old version of what I had seen, that had gone through civil war and invasion and everything...the airport was the same, the airport was just falling apart."[557]

Then, while waiting in the car one day, he witnessed a rather mundane occurrence that had a profound personal meaning for him. Younossi recalled "a young man and his wife and two little kids … [wearing] their Friday best. The dad had a bicycle and…the road was completely in shambles and the buildings around them had fallen apart, but they sort of walked in with these bright, bright clothes…that image really hit me."[558]

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[556] Shamsia Razaqi, "I Know I'll Be Alright," A*fghan Journal*, volume 3, issue 1, date unknown, 9. UC Berkeley Ctn. 24.12, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.
[557] Younossi, interview.
[558] Ibid.

The experience forced Younossi to confront all that had occurred in his absence. He recalls that "this is sort of my people and they've gone through so much and there is this little tiny speckle of or spark of hope that you saw in this family."[559] Younossi recalled, "I just felt like I was a foreigner in my own country…that too was quite emotional, but I had separated…do what you can do, but I just had moved on in my life." Younossi returned several times afterwards to Afghanistan, but has been away from the country since 2011.

Many individuals' visits to Afghanistan included trips to their former neighborhood. Shamsia Razaqi, who had recalled the scene on an airline's arrival in Kabul, described her visit to her mother's neighborhood in the city.

> All I could think of were the stories of the old neighborhood, of the fruit trees she and my aunts stole from and the neighbors they taunted, but these tales were now far removed from the dark and barren home that stood before us. But even with the facade covered in bullet holes, the house remained stern and tall… We [her mother and she] took a few quick snapshots and were on our way—she couldn't bear [sic] to stay too long.[560]

Razaqi, though, ultimately determined that "going back to my broken home showed me I too could never be broken."[561]

The events triggered guilt among some. Upon seeing Afghanistan's poverty, Yama Rahimi recalled, "I felt a terrible guilt that I was spared this suffering. It was

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[559] Ibid.
[560] Shamsia Razaqi, "I Know I'll Be Alright," 8-9, 22.
[561] Ibid, "I Know I'll Be Alright,"22.

difficult to see the destruction, but I found it necessary to look even deeper within the chaos and to document it before it is forgotten."[562]

Returning or visiting Afghanistan for the first time seldom left the members of the U.S. diaspora unmoved. Yet the trips evoked a wide array of emotions. The stark contrast between returnees' lives and those living in Afghanistan could evoke some measure of closure for some people. They felt that they were Americans now and too far removed from the history of the people they now saw. Yet others who had never been to Afghanistan before felt a connection to the country and sense of belonging.[563] Regardless, the links between Afghanistan and the U.S. diaspora was as robust as it had ever been.

Between 2001 and 2006, diasporic interactions between Afghanistan and the United States reached levels un-seen since the coup of 1978. The larger spotlight cast on Afghanistan by the U.S. media and public prompted a number of U.S. Afghans to re-examine their country of origin and their relationship with it. The resumption of travel from the United States to Afghanistan was no small aspect of this development. Volunteer and work opportunities in Afghanistan's reconstruction also played a role in this revival. Overall, the U.S. Afghan community was transformed from what Dufoix would label an "enclaved" diasporic community to a "collaborative" one.

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[562] Yama Rahimi, "A Piece of Reflection," A*fghan Journal*, volume 3, issue 1, date unknown, 15, UC Berkeley Ctn. 24.12, Ronald T. Takaki papers, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.
[563] See Akbar.

Chapter Five: Part II

Introduction

Considering the obstacles to peace and economic development in Afghanistan, the years between 2001 and 2004 were reasonably successful for the new Afghan government and its allies. By 2006, though, a significant but largely Pashtun-manned rebellion had erupted under Taliban leadership. In response to the deteriorating security situation, the U.S. government increased troop levels on multiple occasions, reaching a high of 100,000 in 2010.[564]

This strengthened resistance to the U.S.-supported Afghan government influenced the course of U.S. Afghan history. The threat of terrorism and war in Afghanistan made the country a more forbidding travel destination for the diaspora and complicated humanitarian efforts.[565] Conversely, the increased U.S. presence in

[564] For evidence of escalated insurgency, see Adam Taylor, "149,000 people have died in war in Afghanistan and Pakistan since 2001, report says," *Washington Post*, June 3, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/06/03/149000-people-have-died-in-war-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan-since-2001-report-says/?utm_term=.c13059e4d182; Andrew Rafferty, "The War in Afghanistan: By The Numbers," *NBC News*, August 22, 2017, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/war-afghanistan-numbers-n794626. For troop levels, see *Associated Press*, "A timeline of U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan since 2001," *Military Times*, July 6, 2016, http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/07/06/timeline-us-troop-levels-afghanistan-since-2001/86755782/.

[565] For threats to humanitarian workers see, John Knefel, "No Country Is as Deadly for Aid Workers as Afghanistan," *HuffPost*, accessed February 2018, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/vocativ/no-country-is-as-deadly-f_b_8270512.html; Malaka Gharib, "In Their Own Words: Why Armed Fighters Attack Aid Workers," *NPR*, September 14, 2017, https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/09/14/550944946/in-their-own-words-why-armed-fighters-attack-aid-workers; Masood Saifullah, "Why are Afghan militants targeting aid workers?" *DW*, September 9, 2017, http://www.dw.com/en/why-are-afghan-militants-targeting-aid-workers/a-40558657.

Afghanistan opened an abundance of opportunities for employment in the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. These positions, such as interpreter, often paid very well and offered employees a chance to visit Afghanistan. The work also presented an opportunity to "give back" to both the United States and Afghanistan for those Afghans in the United States who supported the U.S. mission.

Finally, the intensified conflict in Afghanistan profoundly reshaped Afghan migration to the United States. In order to ensure the safety of its former employees, the U.S. government facilitated the relocation of thousands of threatened "local" Afghans who had worked on behalf of the U.S. government (along with their spouse and children) to the United States. These "special immigrant visa" holders would add to the numbers of Afghan immigrants in the United States and ensure that growth of the Afghan-born community in the United States.

Thus, the heightened conflict may have constituted a new era for Afghans in the United States after 2006. Yet, important aspects of U.S. Afghan diasporic relations remained similar to how they had been since the Taliban government's fall in 2001. Travel to Afghanistan remained possible and U.S. Afghans remained important to Afghanistan's reconstruction. As had been the case since September 11, 2001, Afghans in the United States faced the risk of other Americans associating them with terrorists or extremism. Furthermore, Afghans in the United States still largely traced their families' dispersal from Afghanistan to the country's conflicts and political violence.

Thus, it is unclear if a radical shift constituting a new era had occurred, or if the years between 2006 and 2017 are better encapsulated in a larger post-2001 context. This history is still unfolding, and it remains to be seen whether 2006, or any year thereafter, prove to be a definitive point of departure in the U.S Afghan communities' history.

The Escalating War in Afghanistan

In 2005, U.S. and pro-government Afghan forces were ill-equipped to deal with the mounting rebellion. By many accounts, the United States had not sent enough troops and financial support to ensure stability.[566] Furthermore, the new Afghan government did not have a large enough trained national army or security forces to meet its needs. As the rebellion gained momentum, relations between President Karzai's government and Washington also soured, particularly after the Obama administration took office in 2009. Many within the Obama administration saw President Karzai as ineffectual and overly tolerant of government malfeasance. President Karzai in turn viewed the U.S. government as arrogant, imperial, and out to replace him.[567] Making matters worse, widespread voter-fraud marred his 2009 re-election.[568]

[566]Barfield, 313-320; Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: The US and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Penguin, 2008),XLI; Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), xxii-xxiii.
[567] For a detailed account of President's Karzai's relationship with the United States see, Partlow, *A Kingdom of Their Own*.
[568] Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 332; Chandrasekaran, 93-94.

Under both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations, the United States responded to the mounting rebellion with troop increases. The increase perhaps bought time for the Afghan government to expand its security forces, but were unable to win a decisive victory. By 2011, U.S. efforts in Afghanistan were at an impasse. Withdrawing military and government aid threatened to cause massive unemployment, humanitarian catastrophes, and allow the country to slip back to the Taliban and its extremist allies. Increasing the U.S. humanitarian and military presence threatened to exacerbate inefficiency and corruption. Most troublesome of all for U.S. policymakers, a continued military presence in Afghanistan would force the United States to accept more casualties. Citing progress in Afghanistan in June 2011, President Obama announced that the 33,000 "surge" troops would leave Afghanistan over the next fifteen months.[569] In 2014, troop levels had decreased to about 34,000 and 8,400 in 2016, before rising to 15,000 in 2017 under President Trump.[570]

Afghanistan's 2014 Presidential election to choose a successor to the term-limited President Karzai also had mixed results. The first round of voting saw high turnout and a minimum of controversy. The run-off election won by Ashraf Ghani, however, was marked by accusations of fraud before rival candidates agreed to a power-sharing agreement with Ghani as president.

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[569] CNN Wire Staff, "Obama announces Afghanistan troop withdrawal plan," *CNN*, June 23, 2011, http://www.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/06/22/afghanistan.troops.drawdown/index.html.
[570] John Haltiwanger, "THE FOREVER WAR: U.S. MILITARY NOW HAS 15,000 TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN AND THA NUMBER COULD SOON INCREASE," *Newsweek*, November 9, 2017, http://www.newsweek.com/forever-war-us-military-now-has-15000-troops-afghanistan-706573; *Associated Press*, "A timeline of U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan since 2001;" Jeremy Herb, "Five key pieces of Trump's Afghanistan plan," *CNN*, August 22, 2017.

As of 2018, the Afghan government continues to face substantial armed-opposition, while the United States supports the government with a much-reduced force. The conflict appears once more to be at a stalemate, with the opposition controlling a number of towns, but unable to hold much beyond a rural district-level entity.[571]

Afghan American Service

As the United States stepped up military, diplomatic, and humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan to combat the rebellion, there was a much greater need for individuals fluent in Afghan languages and cultures. As some of the only U.S. citizens qualified to perform these tasks, Afghans in the United States played a significant role in the U.S. war effort.

Their contributions as linguists were particularly noteworthy. Although “local” Afghans filled most of these positions in Afghanistan, U.S. citizenship was a prerequisite for positions requiring secret or top-secret classification.[572] High salaries offered by U.S. government contractors ranging between $175,000 and $200,000 and intensive recruitment efforts in U.S. Afghan communities demonstrate the extremely high need for such employees. Furthermore, employers ran advertisements on Afghan satellite

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[571] For Taliban presence in Afghanistan in 2018, see Shoaib Sharifi and Louise Adamou, “Taliban threaten 70% of Afghanistan, BBC finds,” *BBC*, January 31, 0218, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42863116.
[572] For “Most of these positions were filled by “local” Afghans,” see Jesse Ellison, “LOST IN TRANSLATION: As War Nears An End, Our Afghan Translators Are Being Left Behind,” *Daily Beast*, October 21, 2012, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/10/21/as-war-nears-an-end-our-afghan-translators-are-being-left-behind; For secret or trop –secret, see Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Human Intelligence Collector Field Manual* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 214.

television programs watched in the United States to recruit employees.[573] In another notable effort to recruit linguists at an Afghan American soccer tournament, one defense contractor passed out 500 shirts that read in Pashtu, “If you can read this, we might have a job for you.”[574]

It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine how many Afghans joined the U.S. government and military efforts in Afghanistan in the years after 2006. In October of 2012, 1,080 of the 6,896 linguists for Mission Essential Personnel, the contractor that employed the predominant share of linguists in Afghanistan for the U.S. government at the time, were from the United States.[575] Afghan Americans, as well as some Americans of other Muslim-majority country origins apparently filled the predominate share of these positions.[576] Since personnel could leave the position after a deployment, many more people had served as linguists at one time than were listed as actively employed in any given year.

Afghans in the United States served in other Afghanistan-related positions than linguists, such as cultural advising or at the *Voice of America* news outlet. The 2011 ACS

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[573] Kevin Sieff, “At Afghan Cup in Virginia, recruiters offer big money for interpreters,” *Washington Post*, July 11, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/10/AR2010071002922.html?sid=ST2010071003264.

[574] Kevin Sieff, “At Afghan Cup in Virginia, recruiters offer big money for interpreters;” John Baden, “Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978,” 87-88.

[575] Statistic from Jesse Ellison, “As War Bears An End, Our Afghan Translators Are Being Left Behind,” *Daily Beast*, October 21, 2012, https://www.thedailybeast.com/as-war-nears-an-end-our-afghan-translators-are-being-left-behind; John Baden, “Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978,” 87-88.

[576] Fahim Fazli, email correspondence, 2018; Saima Wahab’s memoir also stated, “Most of the interpreters [she was with] were like me, Afghans who’d been forced to flee to Pakistan…” Saima Wahab, *In My Father’s Country: An Afghan Woman Defies Her Fate* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 201.

(American Community Survey) estimated that 7.7 percent (1,921) of full-time workers who listed Afghan first as their ancestry worked for the federal government.[577] This was a significant increase from 2001, when the ACS estimated that only .9 percent (168 people) of this demographic cohort worked for the federal government.[578] Federal government employment subsequentially receded after troop decreases.[579] Although not all of these new federal employees worked on Afghanistan issues, the statistics indicate a correlating increase in federal government employment after U.S. troop increases in Afghanistan. This, along with the previous statistics on linguists in Afghanistan, suggests that significant number of U.S. Afghans found work in Afghanistan-related work on behalf of the U.S. government after the U.S. intervention.

A *BBC Persian* article about the 2012 U.S. presidential election offered another anecdotal insight on the scale of Afghan American involvement in Afghanistan. In the article, an Afghan American working at a U.S. military base in California explained his support of presidential candidate Mitt Romney. He worried that President Obama's plans to withdraw troops after 2014 would be problematic for Afghanistan, but also that an Obama victory would result in massive layoffs of Afghan American personnel. He

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[577] Full time workers defined as those sixteen years or older who work at least 35 hours a week. Unlike the American Community Survey, this definition did not separate those who for 50-52 weeks in the past 12 months. "Work Status in the Past 12 Months," American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, accessed March 2018, http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/virtual_disk_library/index.cgi/4291881/FID1867/acs_html/html/meth_doc/datadef/work_st.htm; IPUMS (2011 American Community Survey).
[578] IPUMS (2001 American Community Survey). Although these American Community Surveys had low sample size, they are consistent with comparisons with preceding and subsequent years, and correspond with U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan. It is not entirely clear if these statistics for federal government employment includes individuals employed by contractors employed on behalf of the U.S. government. Since these entities were private organizations, they were unlikely to be included.
[579] IPUMS (American Community Surveys 20011-2016).

stated, "thousands of Afghans that worked in branches of the military will be unemployed."[580]

An array of factors motivated Afghans in the United States to seek work on behalf of the U.S. government in Afghanistan. The pay was usually high and many believed their work was in the interest of both the United States and Afghanistan. Moreover, it allowed many to visit and re-connect with Afghanistan. Mission Essential Personnel utilized these overlapping aspirations, airing television recruitment advertisements with the message, "For America, For Afghanistan, For me."[581]

Fahim Fazli was particularly eager to support the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan.[582] Fazli signed up to be a linguist and volunteered to serve with the U.S. Marines, knowing that such service carried the greatest burden of risk. Recalling his motivations to serve with the Marines, Fazli stated, "I didn't sign for this [to] go have a hot water, cold water, microwave. I signed [up] for it to go fight for both country[s] in the mountains. I signed for that, go pay my dues for both country[s] in the mountains, [and] in the village and with the Marines."[583]

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[580] Aref Ya'qubi, "افغان‌های آمریکا به چه کسی رای می دهند؟ (Who Will Afghan Americans Cast their Vote For)," *BBC Persian*, November 4, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/persian/mobile/afghanistan/2012/11/121104_usa2012_elections_afghans_california.shtml.

[581] Kevin Sieff, "At Afghan Cup in Virginia, recruiters offer big money for interpreters."

[582] For instance, Fazli recalled seeing an advertisement recruiting Afghan linguists, contemplating if there "might there be something extra I could do for America—beyond just paying taxes? Could I simultaneously help both my new country and my old?" Fahim Fazli and Michael Moffett, *Fahim Speaks: A Warrior-Actor's Odyssey from Afghanistan to Hollywood and Back* (North Hills, CA: Warriors Publishing Group, 2013), 114.

[583] Fahim Fazli, interview with the author, June 2015.

Ironically, Fazli had earned much of his living from playing terrorists on film and television prior to signing up as a linguist. His acting career included "bad-guy" roles in productions such as *24*, *Iron Man,* and *Hired Gun*.[584] Then in 2009, Fazli sought employment in the real "War on Terror," in service of the United States.

Fazli had an additional motivation for joining the Marines. When he was a young refugee in Pakistan, Marines at the U.S. embassy in Islamabad were among the first Americans he encountered. They, along with the embassy staff, helped locate his mother and reunite his family in the United States. Shortly after his arrival in the United States, he unsuccessfully attempted to enlist with the Marines. Now, in a reversal of roles, Fazli would be among the first Americans many Afghans in Helmand would encounter.

Obviously, some aspects of Fazli's example were exceptional. He recalls that only one other person in his cadre of interpreters in training chose to deploy with the Marines. Yet Fazli was not alone in wanting to do something for the United States and Afghanistan.

Author Gayle Tzemach, wrote that Nadia Sultan, an Afghan American, signed up to be an interpreter because she "was energized by the idea that she could make good money doing a job she believed in while also serving the nation that had given refuge to

[584] Ibid, 89-102; "Fahim Fazli," IMDb, accessed June 2017, http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2390252/?ref_=nv_sr_1.

her own family when it was too dangerous to stay in Kandahar."[585] Sultan was seriously wounded in service as an interpreter for an Army Female Engagement Team during a mission that killed her unit's leader and two other service-members.[586]

Saima Wahab also signed up as an interpreter, and later as a research manager for the Human Terrain System program.[587] She recalled being attracted to the work by opportunities it presented to visit "regular Afghans from all walks of life." In her words, travelling to Afghanistan might present her with the opportunity to "find out what inspired my father [who had been killed during the PDPA era] to give up his life to preserve the way of Pashtuns."[588]

Afghan Americans worked in a variety of other occupations on behalf of the U.S. government. Afghans in the United States gave talks about Afghanistan on behalf of the Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace program to military officers deploying to the country. Other U.S. Afghans (and other immigrants of Islamic-world heritage) provided language instruction to the U.S. military or ROTC global officer programs. San Diego State University's Afghanistan Language and Culture Program also prepared online cultural and history lessons about Afghanistan for the U.S. Marine

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[585] Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, *Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015), 172. John Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978," 89.
[586] For an account of Sultan's service see, Lemmon, *Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield*;
[587] Wahab, 265.
[588] Ibid, 66.

Corps. Afghan Americans even role-played as “locals” at infantry immersion training sites used to prepare U.S. forces for deployments in Afghanistan.[589]

As noted in the introduction, there have been criticism of some of the programs that employed Afghan Americans, as well as at some of their employees’ qualifications for the work.[590] It is beyond this dissertation’s scope to accurately weigh these criticisms. Certainly, there have been instances of ineffective work carried at levels of society, by all population. It is apparent, though, that many Afghan Americans did contribute to the war effort and indeed, as in Nadia Sultan’s case, suffer wounds towards that cause. Their contributions should be recognized.[591]

Indeed, Afghan American contributions to the military side of Afghanistan’s future, was only one component of a broader history of service. Some Afghan Americans contributed to U.S.-Afghan relations through their efforts to expose U.S. abuses in the U.S. war against terrorists. Said Hyder Akbar, who came to Afghanistan

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[589] John Baden, “Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978,” 87; Information about Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace program from Robert Tomasovic, interview with the author, September 2015; Tony Perry, “Mock Afghan Village at Camp Pendleton Aims to Prepare Troops for Combat,” *L.A. Now* (blog), *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 2010, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2010/11/my-entry.html; “FAQs,” Project Go, accessed 2015-2017, http://www.rotcprojectgo.org/faqs; “About Us,” Afghanistan Language and Culture Program – San Diego State University,” December 2017, https://larc.sdsu.edu/alcp/about-us/; Carl Nasman, “Marines Get Crash Course in Afghan Culture in California Model Village,” *PBS NewsHour*, March 6, 2012, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military-jan-june12-afghanvillage_03-06/. John Baden, “Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978,” 88.

[590] See Morwari Zafar, “COIN-operated anthropology: Cultural knowledge, American counterinsurgency and the rise of the Afghan diaspora,” (PhD diss., Linacre College, University of Oxford, 2016).

[591] See John Baden, “Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978.”

after his father was appointed governor of Kunar province, testified in a case against a CIA contractor accused of beating a prisoner so severely that it resulted in his death.[592]

Mahvish Rukhsana Khan, a U.S. born Pashtun who was of Afghan heritage, helped interpret and provide legal counsel to Pashto-speaking Guantanamo detainees, and travelled to Afghanistan to collect evidence supporting their innocence. Like many other Afghans, Khan described her actions in terms symbiotic to “Americanness” and Afghan heritage. She recalled,

> I was young and idealistic. But so were the framers of our constitution when they tried to establish the rights and responsibilities of a young nation…As an American, I felt the pain of September 11, and I understood the need to invade Afghanistan and destroy the Taliban and al-Qaeda. But I also felt the suffering of the Afghans as their country was bombed. And when hundreds of men were rounded up and thrust into a black hole of detention, many apparently with no proof that they had any terrorist connections, I felt my own country had taken a wrong turn.[593]

A host of factors motivated Afghans in the United States to become more involved in their country of origin. After the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan, some Afghans in the United States felt compelled to “do something” or that their absence from Afghanistan had left a void in their life. Many felt a sense of survivor’s guilt regarding Afghanistan and/or a desire to “give back” to the United States. Moreover, opportunities abounded to earn money and achieve a measure of fulfillment. Whether working on behalf of detainees in Guantanamo Bay or as an interpreter with the U.S. Marines, Afghans often believed their service was in line with the “best” American traditions or mutually beneficial to the United States and Afghanistan.

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[592] “Detainee death: CIA officer testifies,” *Al Jazeera*, August 9, 2006, http://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2006/08/200849152858211293.html; For Akbar’s account, see Said Akbar and Burton, *Come Back to Afghanistan*.
[593] Ibid.

Unwilling to view themselves merely spectators of history, many of these individuals wanted it known that they had done their part.

Afghan Immigration 2005-2016

The events of September 11, 2001, and subsequent U.S. response influenced national conversations regarding immigration from Muslim-majority countries. On one hand, there was a call for stricter visa monitoring of immigration and border enforcement to prevent additional terrorist attacks. On the other, many military and government leaders, as well as veterans, recognized the contributions of thousands of Muslims who had supported the U.S. missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and feared for their safety.

Providing for the safety of allies proved to be an exceptionally difficult task. The United States government had hired large numbers of local residents to facilitate U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In October of 2012, for example, there were 5,816 "local" linguists for the government contractor Essential Personnel in Afghanistan.[594] Others were employed at the U.S. embassy or reconstruction projects. Maintaining local personnel in both Afghanistan and Iraq proved to be problematic for U.S. operations. They were vital to the U.S. missions, but especially susceptible to reprisal attacks against them and their families. Unlike, U.S. service members, they could not return to safety in

[594] Jesse Ellison, "LOST IN TRANSLATION: As War Nears An End, Our Afghan Translators Are Being Left Behind,"

the United States.[595] To address these problems, the U.S. government implemented Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) programs for Afghans and Iraqis.[596]

The U.S. Congress first enacted special immigrant visas for Iraqi and Afghan allies in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006. The legislation provided for 50 principal special immigrant visas for Afghan and Iraqi "translators." Among other requirements, individuals were required to have served with U.S. armed forces for at least one year. Applicants also needed to obtain a letter of recommendation from a superior.[597] Spouses and young children of these "principal" applicants were eligible for special immigrant visas that would not count against the program's annual visa limit.

Over the years, the U.S. Congress implemented numerous modifications to special immigrant visa eligibility and admissions.[598] Notable among these changes were implementing programs that extended eligibility to individuals who worked in all occupations on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq (2008) and Afghanistan (2009).[599] These programs, unlike the one solely for interpreters, were not permanent. As a result, the programs frequently faced the threat of expiring.

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[595] Reliable casualty statistics are difficult to obtain or non-existent.
[596] Although using special immigrant visas for resettlement purposes was fairly novel, they had been granted to employees of the Panama Canal Zone Government and Panama Canal Company to provide security for families after the U.S. withdrew from the Canal Zone. Bruno, "Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs," 2-3.
[597] Bruno, "Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs,"3-4.
[598] Ibid.
[599] Applicants needed a satisfactory twelve-month (eventually changed to two years) work record and Chief of Mission approval which included a letter of recommendation from a U.S. supervisor and statements of threats they had received because of their employment. Bruno, "Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs," 4-6.

Unfortunately, problems vexed special immigrant visa programs, most of which involved the screening process. The need for a thorough vetting process was understandable, given the ongoing hostilities in both Iraq and Afghanistan and the continuing threat of terrorism to the United States. Yet in its early years, the program's screening process became nearly impossible for Afghan applicants, particularly the program for Afghans who had worked on behalf of the U.S. government. After awarding 461 principal visas between 2008 and 2009, the program slowed to issuing 10 principal special immigrants visas over the next two years and 63 in 2012. This despite having authorization to grant at least 1,500 principal visas a year, with unused visas carrying over into the next year.[600]

Special Immigrant Visa activist, Matt Zeller, a former U.S. soldier in Afghanistan, attributed many of the program's initial troubles to bureaucratic problems at the U.S. Department of State. For example, the department was not legally required to render a decision on an application, and often did not inform applicants of their status. Furthermore, one of the most common reasons for rejection was simply an inconsistent transliteration of an applicant's name on official documents. There is no universal way to spell Afghan names using the English-Latin alphabet, so different spellings over time are common. U.S. officials, though, apparently thought such inconsistences were signs of fraud.[601]

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[600] This does not include the 64 visas given to Afghan Translators and Interpreters under the separate program. Bruno, "Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs," 5, 18-19.
[601] Matt Zeller, interview with the author, September 2015.

There were consequences for these bureaucratic problems. As visa applications languished in the bureaucratic process, applicants' lives remained in danger. Unable to wait indefinitely for the hope of a visa, some Afghans joined the refugee stream out of Afghanistan.[602] Additionally, media outlets learned of the program's failings and ran features on the SIV program in a variety of media genres. The programs' failings became an international liability.[603]

U.S. veterans were often among the most dedicated advocates of SIV applicants and immigrants.[604] Many had served in combat alongside their interpreters and feared for their colleagues' lives after their own deployments ended. Perhaps the most notable of these veterans was Matt Zeller. While in Afghanistan, Zeller's interpreter Mohammad Janis Shinwari had saved his life in combat. After Zeller returned to the United States,

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[602] John Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?: Afghan American Contributions to U.S. National Defense since 1978," 92-93; Perry Chiaramonte, "Don't let me down': Afghan who risked life helping US Marines dodges death in European refugee wave," Fox News, November 23, 2016, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/11/19/no-direction-home-afghan-translator-and-family-forced-into-migrant-life-while.html.

[603] For examples of coverage see, رویا زمانی (Roya Zamani), "شکلات ترجمان های افغان در امریکا (Afghan Interpreter Problems in America)," Voice of America Dari, April 15, 2015, https://www.darivoa.com/a/afghan-siv-translators-problems-in-usa/2745698.html; "Translators," John Oliver Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, *HBO*, YouTube, October 19, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QplQL5eAxlY&feature=youtu.be; "The Afghan Interpreters (Full-Length)," *VICE News*, December 28, 2014, https://news.vice.com/video/the-afghan-interpreters-full-length; Bethany Matta, "Afghan interpreters demand promised US visas," *Al Jazeera America*, October 1, 2014, http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/10/1/afghan-translatorsprotest.html; Perry Chiaramonte, "'Don't Let Me Down:' Afghan Who Risked Life Helping U.S. Marines Dodges Death in European Refugee Wave," *Fox News*, November 23, 2015, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/11/19/no-direction-home-afghan-translator-and-family-forced-into-migrant-life-while.html; Aaron E. Fleming, "My Afghan Battle Partner Deserves a U.S. Visa," *Washington Post*, November 27, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/my-afghan-battle-partner-deserves-a-us-visa/2015/11/27/98b00ab6-912d-11e5-a2d6-f57908580b1f_story.html.

[604] For examples, see Aaron E. Fleming, "My Afghan Battle Partner Deserves a U.S. Visa;" "Advocates: U.S. has 'moral responsibility' to fix interpreter visa blunder," *MilitaryTimes*, November 10, 2013, http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/archives/2013/11/10/advocates-u-s-has-moral-responsibility-to-fix-interpreter-visa/78543546/.

Shinwari and his immediate family were granted a special immigrant visa after being in the application process for two years.[605]

The U.S. government, however, revoked his visa, shortly after he received it. Apparently, someone sent an anonymous tip, falsely claiming he had insurgent connections.[606] Shinwari's troubles did not end there. The Taliban scratched a message on Shinwari's car threating to kill him (apparently after his visa revocation).[607] After learning about Shinwari's situation, Zeller mounted a lobbying effort on his friend's behalf, and was eventually able to get Shinwari's visa re-instated after directly appealing to officials at the U.S. Department of State and Congress.

After arriving in the United States, Shinwari and Zeller founded No One Left Behind in 2013. The organization assists former special immigrant visa holders' resettlement in the United States, advocates on their behalf, and supports other initiatives on behalf of SIV applicants and holders.[608] Shortly after its founding, No One Left Behind contributed to efforts to reform the special immigrant visa application process.[609]

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[605] Ernesto Londoño, "State Department's revocation of visa dashes hopes of Afghan interpreter," *Washington Post*, September 24, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/state-departments-revocation-of-visa-dashes-hopes-of-afghan-interpreter/2013/09/24/33e7b5ae-254e-11e3-b75d-5b7f66349852_story.html?utm_term=.35f564b3d499

[606] Ibid.

[607] "Advocates: U.S. has 'moral responsibility' to fix interpreter visa blunder," *Military Times*, November 10, 2013, http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/archives/2013/11/10/advocates-u-s-has-moral-responsibility-to-fix-interpreter-visa/78543546/.

[608] "Who We Are: About," No One Left Behind, Accessed December 2017, http://nooneleft.org/who-we-are/about-us/; Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?"

[609] Zeller, interview.

Reforms to the special immigrant visa programs significantly increased the number of visas issued. In 2013, the Afghanistan program issued 652 principal SIV visas, a noticeable increase from the 63 visas issued in the previous year. In 2014, the number rose once again, with the U.S. government issuing 3,441 principal visas.[610] Although application problems persisted, significant numbers of Iraqis and Afghans immigrated to the United States on special immigrant visas. By the end of 2015, 7,489 principal Afghan applicants and 12,427 immediate family members had received visas under the program.[611]

The special immigrant visa program also set an international precedent. Canada, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and other countries have also enacted similar provisions for their former interpreters.[612] Still, the U.S. program did not award enough to visas to fill demand. In March 2017, only 1,437 principal visas remained undistributed, while over 15,000 Afghans remained in the application process, although in May an additional 2,500 principal visas were allocated that year.[613]

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[610] Bruno, "Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs," 19.
[611] Ibid.
[612] Samantha Stainburn, "UK, Denmark to give Afghan interpreters visas," GlobalPost, *PRI*, May 22, 2013, https://www.pri.org/stories/2013-05-22/uk-denmark-give-afghan-interpreters-visas; Karlos Zurutuza, "Spain's hunted Afghan interpreters," January 15, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/01/spain-hunted-afghan-interpreters-201411311214818244.html; Michelle Shephard, "For Canada's Afghan interpreters, the battle never ends," April 28, 2014, https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/04/28/for_canadas_afghan_interpreters_the_battle_never_ends.html.
[613] "The Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program," Human Rights First, April 25, 2017, http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/afghan-special-immigrant-visa-program; Yeganeh Torbati, "Afghan applicants for special visas far exceed supply: U.S. State Dept.," *Reuters*, March 10, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-visas-statedepartment/afghan-applicants-for-special-visas-far-exceed-supply-u-s-state-dept-idUSKBN16H2OB?il=0.

Obtaining a visa was by no means the end of most Afghan special immigrant visa applicants' hardships. Relocation was expensive and government support insufficient. Although Afghan special immigrant visas holders were eligible for refugee benefits, the aid was extremely limited. For example, they were entitled to "welcome" assistance of about $925-$1,125 per person that could be distributed over a course of up to 90 days.[614] Housing and furnishing, though, exhausted much of this initial assistance. Like other refugees, the U.S. government expected them to begin paying back the loan for airfare from their country of origin within six months of arrival in the United States.[615] The lack of a credit history, vehicle, cash, and easily verified educational record made finding housing or even the most entry-level work difficult.[616]

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[614] Stephen Magagnini, "Q&A: How do agencies manages refugees?" *Sacramento Bee*, June 26, 2016, http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/afghan-refugees/article85920292.html; "Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans- Who Were Employed by/on Behalf of the U.S. Government," U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs, https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/immigrate/afghans-work-for-us.html; Stephen Magagnini, "Far from Kabul: A step-by-step guide to resettlement," *Sacramento Bee*, June 26, 2016, http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/afghan-refugees/article85862052.html; Zeller interview.

Special immigrant visa holders were also eligible for government "welfare" programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income, and food assistance. For the most part, though, they had to meet the same qualifications and time restrictions as U.S. citizens. If the refugee did not qualify for TANF, they could seek Refugee Cash Assistance. "Financial Assistance for Refugees," Santa Clara County Social Services Agency, April 26, 2017, https://www.sccgov.org/sites/ssa/debs/calworks/Pages/refugees.aspx;"Refugee Cash Assistance," Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, accessed June 2017, https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/refugee-cash-assistance;"How to Qualify," Utah Department Workforce Services, accessed June 2017, https://jobs.utah.gov/customereducation/services/financialhelp/refugee/qualify.html; "Refugee Cash/Medical Assistance," Arlington, Virginia Public Assistance, accessed June 2017, https://publicassistance.arlingtonva.us/refugee-cash-medical-assistance/.

[615] Stephen Magagnini, "Far from Kabul: A step-by-step guide to resettlement," *Sacramento Bee*, June 26, 2016, http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/afghan-refugees/article85862052.html.

[616] Many SIV immigrants' problems were compounded by a glitch that marked many of their first names as "FNU" (first name unknown) on their Permeant Resident Cards ("Green Cards"), their full name on passports, and a blank space for their first name on their social security cards**.** This complicated processes such as obtaining a driver's license. Zeller, interview.

Afghan special immigrant visa holders often had to live in less than ideal locations. A 2016 article by the *Sacramento Bee*, discussed problems such as cockroach infestations in and crime in the vicinity local apartment Afghan SIV families resided. In August 2015, one resident, Faisal Razmal of Sacramento, California, was blinded in his left eye after being shot in the eye in the face by a someone with a flare gun.[617] Despite asking to settle in Virginia or California, special immigrant holder Hassan Etemadi was settled in the outskirts of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, requiring him to commute 45 minutes to an hour each day to the refugee office. Eventually, his family moved to a hotel in the San Francisco area. After he became ill with food poisoning, family friends and people from the local community stepped up to provide housing and to drive Etemadi to job interviews. As of October 2015, Etemadi had found full time employment, was a part-time student, and was helping his family adjust to life in the United States.

Echoing the problems of previous generations, many Afghan special immigrant visa holders had difficulty finding work anywhere near commensurate with their levels of education and experience. Fahim Pirzada, who was an emergency room doctor and protocol officer in the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, told the *Sacramento Bee*, "We have very skilled SIV holders who were in great positions back in their country, especially working

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Ibid; Serene Fang, "Resettled in the US, Afghan interpreters plead for help," *Al Jazeera America*, May 13, 2015, http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/articles/2015/5/13/us-afghan-translators.html; Stephen Magagnini, "Stripped of their names, refugees head to court," *Sacramento Bee*, June 26, 2016, http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/afghan-refugees/article85861507.html.

[617] Stephen Magagnini, "He escaped Afghan violence, only to be attacked in a Sacramento parking lot," *Sacramento Bee*, June 26, 2016, http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/afghan-refugees/article85869262.html.

for the U.S. government, but they are now just fixing iPhones."[618] One family returned to Afghanistan after becoming homeless and having difficulty finding a shelter that would take them as a family. Shortly after their return to Afghanistan, anti-government forces threatened and then murdered them.[619]

"Dependents" of the "principal" SIV holders were particularly vulnerable in the United States. They often did not have the same level of English skills and familiarity with U.S. culture as the principal visa holder. One woman found herself homeless after her husband left her. Shortly, afterwards, one of her daughters was hospitalized after a girl at her high school dragged her by the hair and beat her. The victim suspected her hijab triggered the fight. Her school expelled the assailant, though, concluded the assault was not a hate crime.[620]

Not all SIV families, though, have found their situation hopeless. Hassan Etemadi, for example, spoke in 2015 of his aspiration of working for the U.S. government and returning to Afghanistan one day to help with the country's development. As he stated, "This feeling exists still in my head. That I have to somehow I have to help back the country…" He felt thought that he first needed to get an education in the United States and take care of his family. As he stated in an interview, "It's hard because I have to be financially stable first, I have responsibility for the family, and then those dreams come next."

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[618] Stephen Magagnini, "Afghan doctor volunteers as a lifeline for new arrivals," *Sacramento Bee*, June 19, 2016, http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/afghan-refugees/article85859977.html.
[619] Zeller, interview.
[620] It is unclear if the woman was the dependent or principal, although, the cited article seems to imply that it was the husband. Stephen Magagnini, "Afghan doctor volunteers as a lifeline for new arrivals;"

Sher Ali, an Afghan SIV holder who came to the United States in August of 2014, stated in 2015 that “I also had come with a very high expectation, but landing here…I found that life is challenging here and you have to you have to work hard in order to stand on your own feet.” He appreciated the opportunities in the United States, though, and that “I live in a very peaceful environment my son goes to school and I’m very, I have a peace of mind in here that he is safe.”[621]

Special immigrant visa holders were not the only immigrants from Afghanistan during this era. In 2015, 536 Afghans arrived as relatives of U.S. citizens, 198 as “family-sponsored preferences,” and 185 already in the United States were granted refugee and asylum status.[622] There were also significant numbers of highly skilled Afghans that resettled in the United States, either through direct immigration or after temporary stays as students or diplomats. In 2012, *BBC Persian* reported that hundreds of diplomats, athletes, and reporters had permanently left Afghanistan during or following official trips, apparently to Western countries.[623]

Post-2001 immigration substantially influenced the U.S. Afghan community’s evolution. The arrival of over 25,000 Afghan immigrants between 2002 and 2015 was a significant development for the U.S. Afghan community that only numbered 45,195

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[621] Sher Ali, interview with the author, October 2015.

[622] “PERSONS OBTAINING LAWFUL EPRMANENT RESIDENT STATUS BY TYPE AND BROAD CLASS OF ADMISSIONS AND REGION AND COUNTRY OF LAST RESIDENCE: FISCAL YEAR 2015,” Department of Homeland Security, accessed 2016-2017, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/fy2015_tables8-11newadj_d_0.xlsx.

[623] Malir Sadegh Azad, “ (“One Way Trips by Afghans Abroad) سفرهای بی بازگشت افغانها به خارج,” *BBC Persian*, December 31, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2012/12/121227_zs_afghans_not_returning_from_abroad.shtml.

immigrants in 2000.[624] Without the influx of special immigrant visa immigrants, Afghanistan-born population growth may have eventually stagnated or even declined. Thus, the new immigrants ensured that the U.S. Afghan community did not become a predominately second and third generation ethnic community.

U.S. Afghan Community, 2010-2015

By 2015, the U.S. Afghan community had grown in population, geographic breadth, and in many cases, socio-economic standing. That year, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimated that 96,089 people in the United States claimed Afghan ancestry (and 123,947 the following year).[625] The largest centers of Afghan population remained similar to what they had been in the 1990s, with California as the main hub, and Virginia and New York as secondary centers. Emerging Afghan centers, however, began to develop in Sacramento, California and states such as Texas, Georgia, and Washington. Despite these generalizations, many factors such as length of time in the United States continued to divide Afghan experiences.

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[624] Bruno, "Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs;" Ceri Oeppen, "Afghan Immigrants," in *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor (ABC-CLIO, 2011), 29. "Table FBP-1. Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics: 2000," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 20, 2017, https://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf.

[625] "SELECTED POPULATION PROFILE IN THE UNITED STATES – 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," American Factfinder, U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 2017, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_S0201&prodType=table; "SELECTED POPULATION PROFILE IN THE UNITED STATES – 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," American Factfinder, U.S. Census Bureau, accessed April 2017, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_1YR_S0201&prodType=table.

Despite high rates of poverty (28.9 percent of families), there were many signs of Afghan socio-economic mobility in 2015. Although household median income trailed U.S. population overall, ($43,838 versus $55,775 for the U.S. population at large), median earned income levels for individuals were near parity. Individual full-time year round workers of Afghan ancestry was $48,592 for men and $39,116 for women. This compared fairly well with the overall U.S. population in which men earned a median of $49,938 and women earning $39,940.[626] This suggests income levels were on par with the national norms, but with fewer workers per household.[627] Once again, though, these relatively high levels of income were often earned in states with high cost of living such as California, where rents were higher and median income for a household was $64,500 a year.[628]

As was the case during the 1990s, higher than average living expenses benefitted those who owned homes, but made home ownership itself more difficult. As a result, the 42.3 percent of U.S. Afghans who lived in owner-occupied housing inhabited homes worth a median of $412,400. In comparison, the estimated 63 percent of all U.S. Americans who lived in owner-occupied housing lived in housing worth a median of

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[626] "SELECTED POPULATION PROFILE IN THE UNITED STATES – 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," American Factfinder, U.S. Census Bureau.
[627] Ibid.
[628] "SELECTED POPULATION PROFILE IN THE UNITED STATES: 2015 American Community 1-Year Estimates," American FactFinder, U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 2017, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_S0201&prodType=table.

$194,500.[629] Thus, U.S. Afghans experienced wider wealth disparities than the U.S. population at-large in no small part due to the locations they tended to reside in.

Examining the statistics of the overall "Afghan community," though, is of limited value. During this era, there was no single Afghan community, but rather a collection of subgroups that shared a common country of origin and could be divided along ethnic, gender, geographic, and other demographic features. Time in the United States and historical experience, though, was perhaps the most prominent socio-economic divide.

As of 2015, the 2002-2015 immigration cohort accounted for 49 percent of the Afghanistan-born population in the United States.[630] Twelve percent immigrated during the Afghan Civil War (1993-2000), 30 percent immigrated during the PDPA (Soviet-allied government, 1979-1991) era, four percent had immigrated during the post-colonial era (1947-1977), and less than one percent before 1947.[631] Unsurprisingly, Afghan

[629] Ibid.
[630] For further details, IPUMS was employed. These numbers did not always add up the American FactFinder, yet give us basic approximations of the Afghan community. IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey)
[631] Note that transition years between eras, such as 1978, were not included. IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey)

immigrants who had been in the country the longest had attained the highest levels of socio-economic achievement.

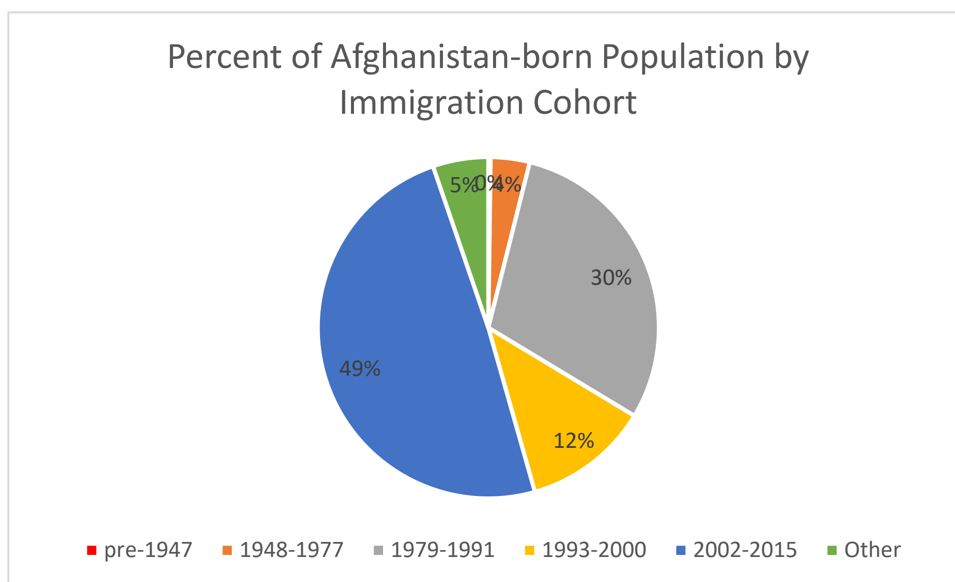

Table 10 Percent of Afghanistan-born Population by Immigration Cohort Citation: IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey)

American Community Survey data for 2015 demonstrates this. Individuals from this immigration cohort (pre-1992) who were at least sixteen years old and typically worked 35 hours or more a week, had a median earned income of $53,000 a year ($50,000 for the 1979-1991 cohort). By comparison, the U.S. population at large from similar demographic cohort had a median income of $40,000.[632]

[632] IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).

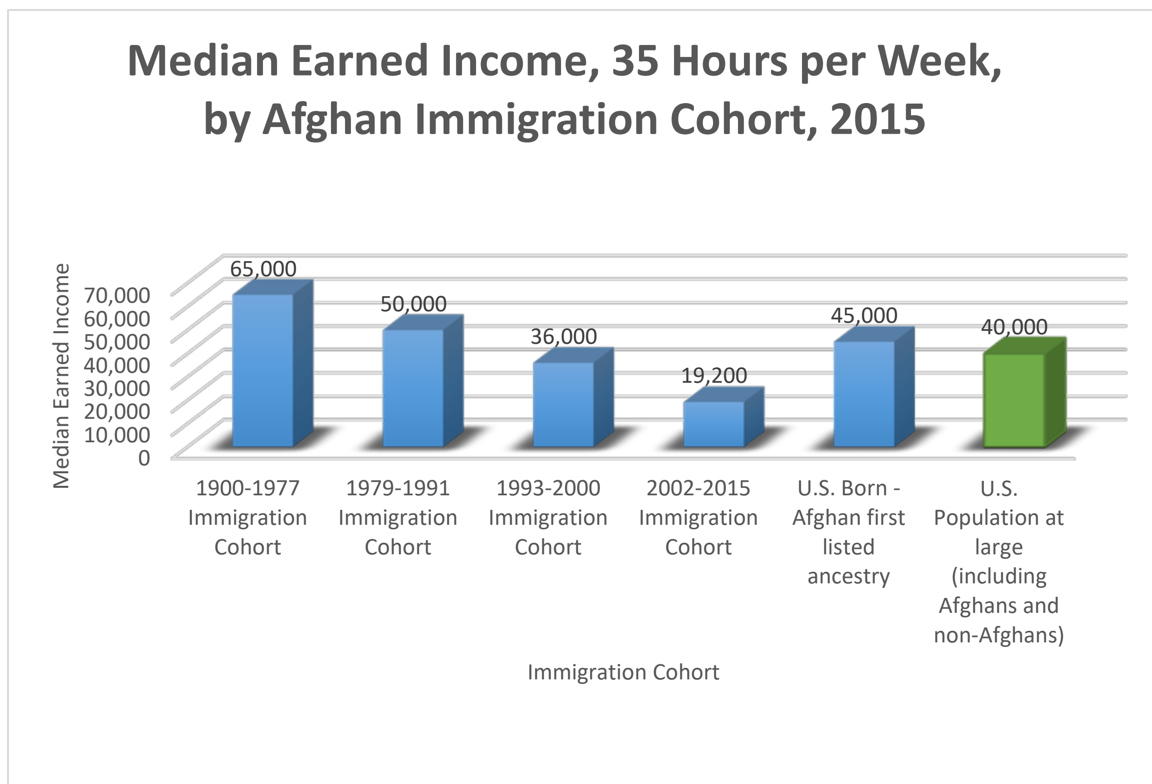

Table 11 Median Earned Income by Afghan Immigration Cohort, 2015. Citations: IPUMS, American Community Survey, 2015.

In many cases, equity gains from housing set the pre-1992 immigration cohort apart from other Afghans in the United States. Those who had owned homes, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern Virginia, saw substantial increases in household wealth. The 2015 American Community Surveys estimated that 66.9 percent of Afghanistan-born individuals in the United States from the pre-1992 immigration cohort lived in owner-occupied homes.[633] These homes housed a median of four people and were worth a median of $470,000.[634]

In 2015, Afghans who immigrated to the United States during the Afghan Civil War period between 1993 and 2000 appear to have experienced some socio-economic

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[633] IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).
[634] Ibid.

mobility, but trailed the levels of income exhibited by the preceding generations of immigrants. The median earned income for these individuals over age sixteen who worked full-time was $36,000.[635] 54.5 percent of individuals from the 1993-2000 immigration cohort lived in owner-occupied housing, worth a remarkable median of $400,000. A median of four people lived in such households.

Educational attainment in 2015 for the 1993-2000 immigration cohort was roughly similar to the pre-1992 cohort. About 28.2 percent of women and 26.5 of men (who were nineteen years or older and not enrolled in school) had obtained at least a bachelor's degree. 10.9 percent of women and 3.6 of men nineteen years or older from this immigration cohort, though, had not completed any schooling.[636]

Afghan immigrants who arrived after 2002 faced high levels of adversity in 2015. The American Community Survey of that year estimated that full-time workers over sixteen years of age from the 2002-2015 immigration cohort had a median earned income of $19,200, far below the national median.[637] 31.9 percent lived in owner-occupied housing, valued at a median of $350,000 with a median of six people living in one household.[638]

Substantial numbers of these individuals had little or no formal education. Indeed, 11.1 percent of those nineteen years or older from the 2002-2015 immigration

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[635] IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey) Earned income includes wages and income earned from farms and businesses. "INCEARN," IPUMS USA, accessed March 2018, https://sda.usa.ipums.org/us2001a/Doc/nes.htm.
[636] Ibid.
[637] Ibid.
[638] Ibid.

cohort had not completed any schooling.[639] Still, a remarkable 33.4 percent of men and 13.8 percent of women nineteen years or older not in school had a bachelor's degree or higher. Despite gender gaps in education, a roughly equal percentage of women and men nineteen years or older (16.20 percent of the women and 16.03 percent of men) were enrolled in school.[640] These are impressive levels of educational attainment given the circumstances. Educational institutions in Afghanistan, after all, were limited during much of the 1990s and 2000s, and women of this immigration cohort had often experienced Taliban rule that forbid them from attending school.

Roohullah Sharifi is an example of one individual who immigrated between 2002 and 2015, and had went to great lengths to obtain his education. As a youth during the Afghan Civil War, he walked an hour and a half to his school which was attacked at one point during the war. Like many Shia Hazaras, Sharifi's family fled to Quetta, Pakistan, after the Taliban takeover. There, he worked on his English language and computer skills that would provide a start for his subsequent career in information technology. After returning to Afghanistan once again after the fall of the Taliban regime, he continued studying English at home. Eventually he was able to travel to Karachi, Pakistan, to study English at the Pakistan American Cultural center. After receiving his English certification there, he returned to Afghanistan. There, he worked on a number of information technology projects on behalf of organizations such as USAid and Afghanistan's Supreme Court, before obtaining a special immigrant visa to the United States. In 2015,

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[639] Ibid.
[640] Ibid.

he hoped to eventually start a business in the computer industry where his expertise lies.[641]

In addition to the many immigrants cohorts, there was also a sizable U.S.-born Afghan population in the United States in 2015. Constituting about 31 percent of the Afghan community, U.S.-born individuals often reached high levels of socio-economic achievement.[642] Although derived from a small survey sample, the 2015 American Community Survey estimated that U.S.-born Afghan full-time workers at least sixteen years old had a median earned income of $45,000.[643] Of those who first listed “Afghan” as their ancestry, were U.S.-born, at least nineteen years of age or older and were not in school, 50.3 percent of individuals had at least a bachelor’s degree.[644]

[641] Roohullah Sharifi, interview with the author, October 2015.

[642] This statistic only includes those who first listed Afghan as their ancestry. IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).

[643] Author was unable to combine individuals who listed their “first” or “second” ancestry as Afghans. This study generally uses those who listed Afghan as their first ancestry because of its larger sample size. The one-year 2015 American Community Survey for instance recorded 822 individuals who listed first listed Afghan as their ancestry and 52 respondents who listed Afghan ancestry second. The census then weighed these results to estimate the total population of “first” and “second” listed Afghan ancestry to be 98,216 (Note that this figure is slightly different than the five-year estimate given at the beginning of chapter) and 5,882 respectively. IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).

[644] Given the small sample size of the survey, statistics were compared with “secondary” ancestry Afghans and statistics from the larger five-year American Community Survey. All controls for age, school status, and U.S. nativity were retained. Statistics for “second” ancestry Afghans indicated a 30.9 percent had at least bachelor’s degree, but similarly high school graduation and about 46 percent enrolled in school. These numbers were also cross-checked with the for “first ancestry” Afghans in the five-year American Community Survey, which revealed 48.3 percent had at least a bachelor’s degree and about 57 percent were in school. 42.6 of “second ancestry” Afghans had at least a bachelor’s degree, and about 58 percent were enrolled in school. IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).

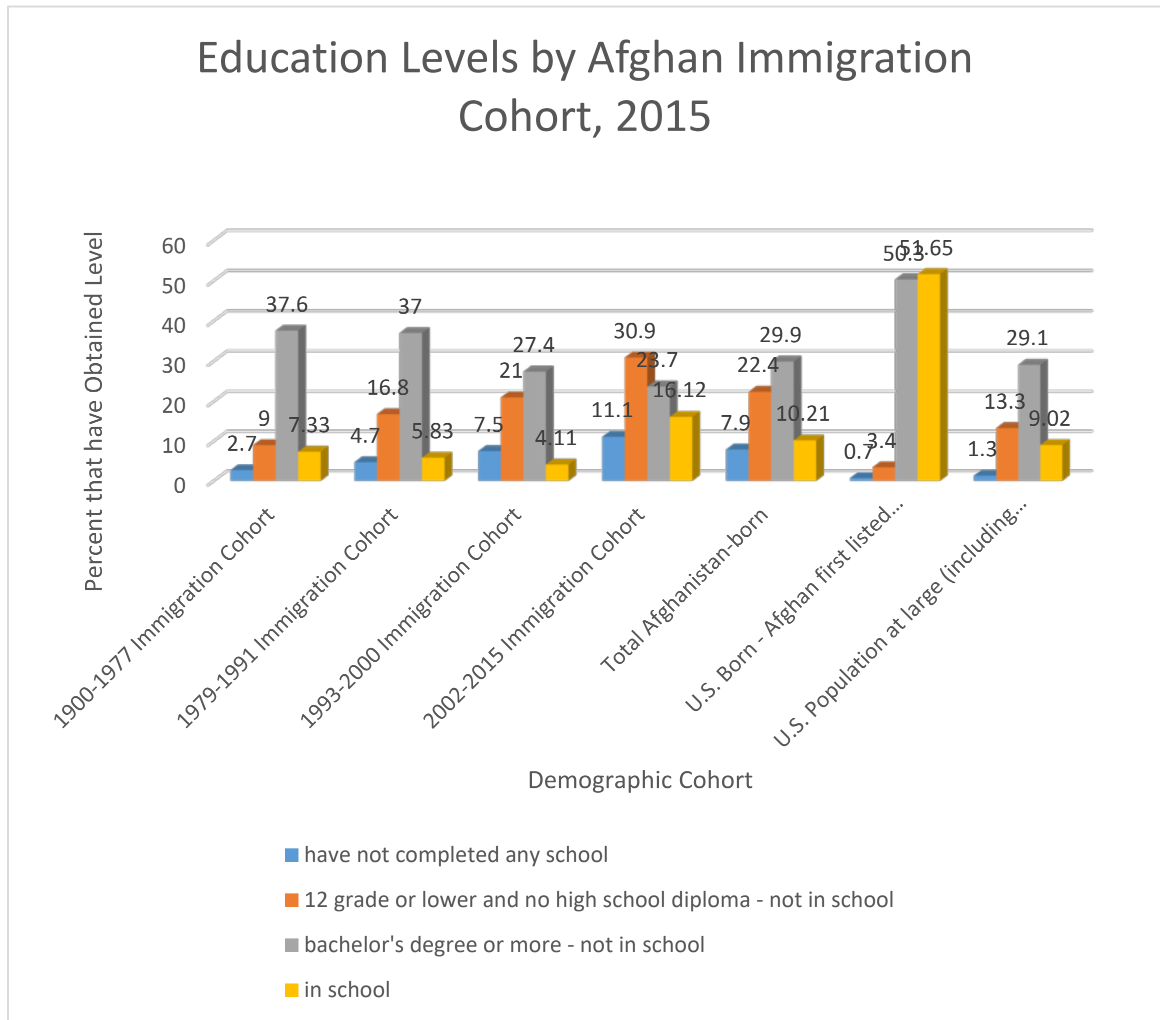

Table 12 Percentages of education levels of Afghan immigration cohorts. Citation: IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).

Despite facing generations of obstacles, Afghan immigrants in the United States achieved a remarkable level socio-economic integration and mobility. Although often enduring low wages and status reduction upon entering the United States, many managed to build lives for their families. Many Afghans born in the United States have also found success, often surpassing typical levels of education in the United States.

Politicization Once More

Beginning in 2015, international events and national politics interrupted U.S. Afghan diasporic experiences once more. Islamic-inspired terrorism again became a major political topic driven by the advancing momentum of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and terrorist attacks carried out in its name. Seizing upon these tragedies, U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump called for a "temporary" ban on Muslims entering the United States.[645]

The situation became particularly tense for Afghans in the United States after Omar Mateen, an American of Afghan descent, killed 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, on June 12, 2016.[646] In wake of the attack, Donald Trump attempted to blame Muslim immigration for the tragedy, responding that Mateen "was born an Afghan, of Afghan parents who immigrated to the United States" and "the bottom line is that the only reason the killer was in America in the first place was because we allowed his family to come here."[647] As the *San Francisco Chronicle*, pointed out, Mateen was in fact born in the same county as Donald Trump.[648] Trump's attempt to blame immigration for the acts of an American-born citizen demonstrated how Muslims could remain "foreign" in the eyes of many Americans.

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[645] Jeremy Diamond, "Donald Trump: Ban all Muslim travel to U.S." *CNN*, December 8, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/07/politics/donald-trump-muslim-ban-immigration/.
[646] Hannah Bloch, Rebecca Hersher, Camila Domonoske, Merrit Kennedy, Colin Dwyer, "'They Were So Beautiful': Remembering Those Murdered In Orlando," *NPR*, June 13, 2016.
[647] Joe Garofoli, "Trump ramps up call for Muslim ban in speech called 'incoherent,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 13, 2015, http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/Trump-s-post-Orlando-call-to-defeat-ISIS-8110528.php.
[648] Joe Garofoli, "Trump ramps up call for Muslim ban in speech called 'incoherent;'" Angela Matua, "Orlando shooter who killed 49 people on Sunday was born in Queens," *QNS*, June 13, 2016, http://qns.com/story/2016/06/13/orlando-shooter-who-killed-49-was-born-in-queens/.

Some Afghan Americans interpreted the Orlando tragedy as a failure to sufficiently tackle issues such a homophobia within their community. Fariba Nawa wrote in *Public Radio International*,

> This was the first time a man of Afghan heritage took so many lives on American soil. And it must be the last. One way we can prevent more members of our community from becoming gun-toting killers is to confront our demons of homophobia and religious intolerance.
>
> The other is obviously to lobby for gun control.[649]

Mizgon Zahir Darby published an opinion piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that stated "not enough" had been done within the U.S. Afghan community to address issues such as homophobia and mental health. She noted, though, "Many Afghan American grassroots community organizations, including the Afghan Coalition in Fremont, already have started talking about education and acceptance."[650] Such inward soul-searching, of course, is a common reaction after tragedies, and reflected more of a call to action than an admission of collective guilt along the lines of what Donald Trump had implied on the campaign trail.

Despite the tendency of Americans to view people of broader Middle Eastern heritage as threats, there was little evidence that they were any more violent than any other Americans.[651] In 2011, sociologist Charles Kuzman found that only about 33 of the

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[649] Fariba Nawa, "Omar Mateen was Afghan American. Our community needs to own that," *PRI*, June 13, 2016, https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-06-13/omar-mateen-was-afghan-american-our-community-needs-own.

[650] Mizgon Zahir Darby, "Afghan American community reaching out after Orlando massacre," San Francisco Chronicle, June 13, 2016, http://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/Afghan-American-community-reaching-out-after-8090494.php.

[651] It might be added that communities with large Islamic-world populations such as Fremont, Dearborn, Irvine, and Beverly Hills are hardly known as havens of crime.

approximately 147,000 murders and "nonnegligent manslaughters" in the United States between 2002 and 2010 came from terrorist attacks by Muslim Americans.[652] At least prior to 2015, right-wing inspired terrorism apparently took more lives than Islamic inspired acts.[653] Although Islamic-inspired terrorism grew in 2015, the worst mass killing in the United States and Western Europe of the year was the now largely forgotten downing of a GermanWings airliner by its white copilot.[654] Terrorism's political shock-value, media coverage, and possibility of a "foreign" threat tended to obscure the statistical sources of violence. Therefore, more Americans associated Muslim Americans with terrorism, while not associating violence with other ethnic or religious communities.

Thus, at a time when some policymakers saw a need to admit Afghan special immigrant visa immigrants into the United States for their safety, some other Americans viewed Afghan immigrants as a national security threat. Either way, both sides of the debate over Afghan immigration, (and to some extent Muslim immigration) tied their arguments to broader national security and foreign policy issues. The specifics of these

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[652] Charles Kurzman, *Muslim-American Terrorism Since 9/11: An Accounting* (Chapel Hill, NC: Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, 2011), Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, February 2, 2011, http://kurzman.unc.edu/files/2011/06/Kurzman_Muslim-American_Terrorism_Since_911_An_Accounting.pdf; "Table 1. Crime in the United States," Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed June 2017, https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/tables/10tbl01.xls; John Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?," 91.

[653] Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer, *Law Enforcement Assessment of the Violent Extremism Threat* (Chapel Hill, NC: Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, 2015), https://sites.duke.edu/tcths/files/2013/06/Kurzman_Schanzer_Law_Enforcement_Assessment_of_the_Violent_Extremist_Threat_final.pdf, 7; John Baden, "Can Refugees Be National Security Assets?"

[654] "Germanwings Crash: Co-Pilot Lubitz 'Practised Rapid Descent'," *BBC News*, 6 May 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32604552.

debates were largely unique to the post September 11th United States. Yet the concerns over immigration from Asia, and politicization of refugees, was far from new.

What did being “Afghan” Mean in 2015?

This study’s narrative began with an examination of how self-identified Afghans understood their identity in the early twentieth century, as well as how the broader U.S. public made sense of it. At that time, “Afghan” was a highly ambiguous term, often more of an indicator of Pashtun (Afghan) ethnicity than a reference to a country with borders. By 2015, “Afghan” had become much more tied to the country of Afghanistan. Still, 6.6 percent of those who listed Afghan first as their ancestry 2015 were from a country other than the United States or Afghanistan.[655] It remains unclear, though, whether they identified as such out of an “ethnic” Pashtun understanding of the term or because they were part of an immigrant, refugee, or exiled family that still identified as “Afghan.”

By 2016, the Afghan diaspora in the United States had become so diverse and with so many different historical experiences that any sort of shared mythology of the past would be extremely difficult to construct. For some, Afghanistan was the land of where they came of age, and a place they dreamed of guiding into a more modern and developed country, before it descended into conflict. For others, it was a place without “golden years” or much opportunity and fond memories. For younger Afghans, often

[655] IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).

born in the United States, Afghanistan has often been a place colored by the nostalgic stories of family elders or conversely an awkward cultural obstacle to full assimilation.

Despite more than a century of change in diasporic relations, contemporary self-identified Afghans share some of the same dilemmas as their early twentieth century predecessors. Balancing "Afghan" community expectations with broader U.S. expectations has remained a daunting task. Indeed, one young Afghan American, Arzo Wardak, told *Voice of America Dari*, that she helped organize an Afghan American conference to help prompt discussion of problems facing the community. Wardak cited "loss of identity" as one major problem facing Afghan Americans, who sometimes "consider themselves neither Afghan nor American."[656]

The generations-old dilemma of "racial" identification also remained unresolved in 2016. The 2015 American Community Survey indicated that about 91 percent of "first-ancestry" Afghans in the United States viewed themselves as at least partially white.[657] Yet, there was somewhat of a split between those who identified only as white, and those as both white and something else. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether the non-Afghan public shares a similar view of their racial identification.

Whether most Afghans regarded "white" as an identification of skin color, an anthropological explanation, cultural, or simply the only potentially acceptable option of

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[656] میرویس رحمانی(Miris Rohani), "بحران هویت - مشکل عمده جوانان افغان مقیم امریکا (Identity Crisis – Major Problem for Young Afghans in America)," *Voice of America Dari*, April 27, 2015, https://www.darivoa.com/a/afghan-american-identity-crisis/2761806.html.
[657] IPUMS (2015 American Community Survey).

those available on the survey form remains open for interpretation. The *Los Angeles Times* stated that one immigrant from Afghanistan chose “white” on a census form because she understood it to be “synonymous with American, with belonging, with fitting in.”[658]

Conclusion

From 2001 to 2016, Afghans residents in the United States had established a sense of permanent affiliation with both Afghanistan and the United States. The unprecedented mobilization of the Afghan diaspora in the United States for travel and collaborative projects in their country of origin demonstrated that diasporic relations had endured decades of physical separation.

This surge of diasporic activity occurred after most Afghan immigrants in the United States had spent decades integrating and acculturating into U.S. society.[659] In fact, by 2000, 57.5 percent of Afghanistan-born residents recorded by the census were U.S. citizens.[660] Thus, integration into a country’s society did not necessarily come at the expense of one’s relationship with their land of origin, nor their “ethnic” identity. Integration or “Americanization” was not antithetical to the continuity of an Afghan diaspora.

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[658] Solomon Moore and Robin Fields, “The Great ‘White’ Influx; Regardless of color, two-thirds of immigrants choose that designation on census replies. For some, it’s synonymous with America.” *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 2002, A.1, ProQuest.

[659] “FBP-1 Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics: 2000, People Born in Afghanistan,” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 2017, http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-afghanistan.pdf.

[660] Ibid.

As a largely refugee community, it was often not entirely certain if a sizable Afghan population in the United States marked a transitional stage or a permanent feature of American society for the foreseeable future. From the vantage point of 2017, the latter seems almost certain. The influx of thousands of special immigrant visa holders has also ensured that for the near future, Afghans in the United States will not be a predominately second and third generation community.

The politicization of Afghans' presence in the United States did not appear to be receding. Afghans' ability to immigrate or find asylum in the United States continued to be tied to evolving political considerations.[661] In the era of the "Global War on Terror," the U.S. government gave priority to U.S. allies in this conflict, while notable restrictionists such as President Trump have advocated for halting immigration from Muslim-majority countries imagined as a threats.

Furthermore, the rise in Islamaphobia in the United States following the September 11th attacks, and advocacy of discriminatory immigration policies by a U.S. president have caused great levels of uncertainty among immigrants from Muslim-majority countries. It is uncertain how these developments will affect Afghans' ability or desirability to integrate into the United States, and grow as a community. As of this

[661] Once more, this is not to claim insensitivity or callousness on the part of policy makers, but in an age of restricted immigration, policy makers had to choose the most "desirable," needing, and advantageous of the hundreds of millions yearning to come to the United States. This process will likely never be divorced from political consideration.

writing, the continuation of immigration from Islamic-majority countries such as Afghanistan is more uncertain than at any time since 1965 and perhaps World War II.

Obaid Younossi, who had worked in Afghanistan for the RAND Corporation, noticed changes and continuities in his own lifetime. In 2015, the specter of over one million refugees fleeing to Europe prompted Younossi to pen a poignant article about the unfolding refugee crisis. For him, the scene was all too familiar.[662] Under the title, "I was a political refugee (from Afghanistan) and I found new life in America," Younossi described his family's flight out of Afghanistan some three decades prior. This included the tragedy of his cousin, a medical student, who suffocated to death in the back of truck while being smuggled out of the country.[663] He had left the country after his father was shot at an anti-government protest. Tying his own family's history to the present, Younossi wrote,

> When I see news photographs of bodies of refugees that have washed up on the shores of Europe, I often think of the stunning loss of my amazing cousin, whose dreams died along with him in that container truck. How much more air would he have needed to be able to continue his journey of hope? His siblings who made it to the United States became a physician, computer scientist, businessman and a public servant.[664]

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[662] "Number of refugees reaching Europe plunged in 2016," *Al Jazeera*, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/number-refugees-reaching-europe-plunged-2016-170106132732972.html; "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," *BBC News*, March 4, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911.

[663] Obaid Younossi, "I was a political refugee (from Afghanistan) and I found new life in America," Fox New (Opinion), September 15, 2015, http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/09/15/was-political-refugee-from-afghanistan-and-found-new-life-in-america.html.

[664] Obaid Younossi, "I was a political refugee (from Afghanistan) and I found new life in America," Fox News Opinion, September 15, 2015, http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/09/15/was-political-refugee-from-afghanistan-and-found-new-life-in-america.html.

Yet, not everything was the same. During an interview for this study in 2015, Younossi expressed his regret over the increased suspicion or hostility towards Islam that had festered in recent decades. In his words, “I am sorta really sorry to see this trend that’s going on right now and the dialogue about Islam and all this stuff.” He added “None of it was there thirty-five years ago…I mean I’m sure that the vast majority of most people in the U.S don’t believe that, but there’s still a large majority that think negatively of people like me. So I see that now much more than I did then.” Younossi reflected, “…And I don’t know just I mean it’s a different world.”[665]

[665] Younossi, interview.

Epilogue

On January 27, 2017, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13769, prohibiting travel from seven Muslim-majority countries, excluding diplomats, for ninety days and suspending refugee admissions in the United States for 120 days.[666] After learning that citizens from the seven countries, including U.S. permanent residents, were being detained at airports, opponents of the order quickly mounted large-scale protests throughout the country.[667]

Hameed Khalid Darweesh, an Iraqi special immigrant visa holder resettling in the United States with his family, was among those detained. He had served with U.S. forces for nearly ten years in Iraq and survived assassination attempts.[668] During his detention of over eighteen hours at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, authorities separated him from his family, hand-cuffed him, and threatened to send him back to Iraq. The next day, he was released before a crowd of supporters, volunteer

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[666] "Trump's executive order: Who does travel ban affect?," *BBC News*, February 10, 2017, accessed July 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38781302. President Donald J. Trump, "Executive Order: Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States," whitehouse.org, March 6, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states-2/.

[667] Michael D. Shear, Nicholas Kulish, and Alan Feur, "Judge Blocks Trump Order on Refugees Amid Chaos and Outcry Worldwide," *New York Times*, January 28, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/28/us/refugees-detained-at-us-airports-prompting-legal-challenges-to-trumps-immigration-order.html.

[668] Hameed Darweesh, "I risked my life for the U.S. Army in Iraq. But when I came here, I was nearly sent back," *Washington Post*, February 10, 2017, accessed July 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/02/10/i-worked-for-the-u-s-army-in-iraq-but-when-i-landed-in-america-i-was-detained/?utm_term=.9b1248eaeac8; Traci Tong, "One of the first men stopped by Trump's immigration ban will attend president's address," PRI, February 28, 2017, accessed July 2017, https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-02-28/one-first-men-stopped-trumps-immigration-ban-will-attend-presidents-address; Nicholas Kulish, "Iraqi Immigrant, Caught in a Trump in a Trump Policy Tangle, Is Allowed to Stay," *New York Times*, January 28, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/28/us/iraqi-immigrant-donald-trump-airport-detention.html.

lawyers, and two members of the U.S. House of Representatives.[669] As soon as Darweesh's set foot in the United States, his new country had stridently politicized his presence there.

While President Trump's executive order may have been audacious, and likely a violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, it was not unprecedented. Indeed, it was a continuation of at least two common strains of U.S. policy. One was the U.S. government's precedent of admitting immigrants on the basis of their desirability or lack of desirability due to their country of origin or religion. This had been national policy between 1921 and 1965.

This consideration influenced Afghanistan's place in the United States' immigration hierarchy at several points in history. During the early twentieth century, opponents of immigration had largely prohibited immigration from Afghanistan due to the country's association with Asia. In 2017, President Trump clearly did not see Afghanistan as a "desirable" source of immigrants. Indeed, he had called for a "temporary" travel ban on all Muslims during his presidential campaign. He also blamed immigration from Afghanistan for the 2016 shooting in Orlando carried out by a U.S.-born citizen of Afghan descent.

The second strain of continuity in President Trump's actions was U.S. policymakers' willingness to alter or shape immigration admissions due to foreign policy considerations. Notably, Afghanistan was not included in the travel ban affecting seven countries, or any subsequent travel ban as of June 2018. Afghanistan's strategic

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[669] Nicholas Kulish, "Iraqi Immigrant, Caught in a Trump in a Trump Policy Tangle, Is Allowed to Stay."

importance to the War on Terror, and the U.S. government's need to maintain positive relations with Afghanistan almost certainly contributed to this omission. Indeed, President Trump also removed Iraq (where the U.S. was involved with the struggle against ISIS) from the countries included in his second travel ban issued in March.

This pragmatic "leniency" or "liberalism" on immigration issues also had historical precedence. The U.S. government had repealed previous immigration restrictions, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and National Origins system in the context of World War II and the Cold War. The U.S. government had also prioritized refugees from rival regimes during that time

Although President Trump omitted Afghanistan from the travel ban, and not all Afghan immigrants have been Muslim, his actions once again politicized Afghans' presence in the country. Indeed, to many Americans, President Trump's attempts to prohibit Muslim immigration were more important than a supposedly temporary travel ban. Large numbers of Americans feared that the Muslim immigration, or immigration from Muslim-majority countries, threatened the nation's security and "traditional" national culture. On the other side of the issue, many feared that religion or country-based travel restrictions threatened the progress achieved by the Civil Rights Movement and their country's heritage as a nation of refuge. The right of Afghans, Somalis, Syrians, and eventually Venezuelans to immigrate had become a focus of competing political visions.[670] Airports were not simply a port of entry for immigrants, but a stage that

[670] In October of 2017, Chad, Venezuela, and North Korea were added to the travel ban, and Sudan was removed. "Donald Trump's travel ban heads back to the Supreme Court," *The Economist*, January 23, 2018, https://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2018/01/travelling-ban.

encompassed multiple visions of the nation's past and its future. For Afghans in the United States, this was another manifestation of politicization that had been part of their experiences in the United States for over a century.

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Images, Graphics, and Multimedia Resources

1910 County-level concentration of Afghanistan-born population in the United States (2017 county boundaries). Citation: Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920. Ancestry.com. Map made with ArcMap.

1920 County-level concentration of Afghanistan-born population in the United States (2017 county boundaries) 1920 County-level concentration of Afghanistan-born population in the United States (2017 county boundaries). Citation: *Fourteenth* Census of the United States, 1920. Ancestry.com. Map Made with ArcMap.

Aberdeen, Washington circa 1915. Image courtesy of Jones Photo Historical Collection. Photograph Copyright Anderson & Middleton Company. Citation: "View of Chehalis River at Aberdeen – circa 1915 - #L400400_1." Jones Photo Historical Collection, Anderson & Middleton Company. Accessed August 2017. http://www.jonesphotocollection.com/Obj16279?sid=163278&x=2322347.

Afghanistan-born population in the United States per state in 1980. Citation: Steve Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 6.0 (1980 U.S. Census 5%), University of Minnesota, 2015, http://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V6.0, Map made with ArcMap.

ArcMap.

County-level concentration of Afghanistan-born population in the United States in 1940 (2017 county boundaries). Citation: *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Bureau of the Census, National Archives and Records Administration,* Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com. Accessed 2016-2017. https://ancestrylibrary.com. Map made with ArcMap.

Passenger manifest from Hong Kong to Honolulu. Citation: National Archives and Records Administration, Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Honolulu, Hawaii, National Archives Microfilm Publication, A3422, 019, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787-2004; RG 85, Ancestry. Accessed August 2017. https://ancestrylibrary.com.

"Men near sawmill and long pond – circa 1907 - #G1259_1." Jones Photo Historical Collection, Anderson & Middleton Company. Accessed August 2017. http://www.jonesphotocollection.com/Obj16279?sid=163278&x=2322347.

South Asian American Digital Archive.

State location of People of Afghan Ancestry 2015. Citation: Steven Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS): Version 7.0 [2015 American Community Survey], Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0.

"The Yard Gang," photograph of employees of the New Idria Quicksilver Mining Company, circa 1910s in Idria, California. The man with the turban in the first row is likely Pashtun as his turban is similar to that worn by Pashtuns in Southern Afghanistan and Pashtun regions of Pakistan region. Citation: Solaiman Fazel and Alam Payind provided consultation as to the probable ethnic origins of the turban wearer. Image courtesy of California State Library. Citation: "The yard gang," California State Library, Collection: Mines and mining: Quicksilver: New Idria Mines, image caption: The yard gang. N.I.Q.M. Co., Idria, CA, call number: 1998-0442. Accessed August 2017. http://catalog.library.ca.gov/F/N8UJ6T29XJ9IFNYM9JRXBAQUS3Y8YCQ563ACIYU1XNXFCHK71G-50395?func=full-set-set&set_number=005924&set_entry=000002&format=999.