

CEID Seminar

*In service of dominant elites? Nation, Education and
Peacebuilding in Post (civil) War Tajikistan*

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Room 604, 5.30-7pm, January 16th 2019



#CEIDSeminars

In service of dominant elites? Nation, Education, and Peacebuilding in Post (civil) War Tajikistan

a case study of Gorno Badakshan, Tajikistan



A 21st century public street in Khorog

Three key parts

I. Mapping discourses of development:

- a. Hegemonic vs counter hegemonic
- b. Development & education as imperialism & violence

II. Historical pattern of imperialism

- a. The longue durée discursive discourse of education & refinement
- b. The Soviet discourse of education and development
- c. The War in Afghanistan & the Civil War – education

III. Tajikistan today:

- a. Offshore – development – education: *interconnections*
- b. Authoritarianism: *stability as 'peace'*
- c. Nationalism: *wider geopolitical interests*

Faith-based civil society – transnational / local

People



- The borders of Central Asia are subject to multiple definitions: e.g. the USSR; The 4 Republics 1992; UNESCO 1992
- A population of about 70 million: Uzbekistan (31 m); Kazakhstan (18 m); **Tajikistan (9 m)**; Kyrgyzstan (6m); Turkmenistan (6 m)

Soviet Union Administrative Divisions, 1984

The United States Government has not recognized the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Other boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.





Objectives

Specific:

- What are the dominant conceptions of 'education,' 'development' and 'peace' in Tajikistan?
- Whose interests do they serve?
- What implications these have for sustainable development and social cohesion?

Questions adapted from: Foucault *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality* Volume 1 (1976) (trans. R Hurley, 1998)

Broader questions:

- Why has development been so widely discussed in the 20th-century?
- What has been said about it?
- What are the effects of power generated by what is said?
- Who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak?
- What are the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said?
- How are people constituted by the development discourses?

Theoretical framework: 'Discourses' (Foucault, 1969, 1971)

- Our sense of who we are, and how we relate to the world is constructed through specific language of interpretation (knowledge paradigm), which structures how we think
 - 'Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority.' Pitsoe and Letseka (2012, p.24)
 - The disciplinary role of institutions & systems –rewards & punishments- docile subjectivities
-
- Resistance: destabilise the taken for granted meanings; reveal the ways in which dominant discourses excludes, marginalises and oppresses other ways of thinking & being
 - Poststructuralist, post colonial, post development

Mapping contemporary discourses of 'development', 'education' & 'peace'

Entrepreneurial (institutional weight after 1949 – USA, WB, IMF)

Liberal humanist (institutional weight in 1945 – UN)

Neither binaries
nor continuums,
but overlapping

Counter discourses

(emerge from many different
intellectual, ethical & political
locations - researchers, activists, social
movements, etc.)

Oppressive /
transformative /
none / synchronous
- subjective

Contextual

Entrepreneurial discourse

“[W]e must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas....Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas.”

“The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing. All countries, including our own, will greatly benefit from a constructive program for the better use of the world’s human and natural resources.”

(The US President Truman, 20 January, 1949)

1. Capitalism
2. Modernisation – cultural explanations
3. Human capital development
4. Positivist journey from ‘dark’ to the ‘light’, universal
5. Elevated role of the US
6. ‘Underdeveloped’ Other, as a threat

Major interventions: 1950s, structural adjustment in 1980s, and pro-market policies in 1990s

Liberal humanist discourses

"United Nations" (the name coined by United States President Roosevelt)

Preamble

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS

Liberal humanist discourses

1. Fundamental human rights
2. Being ‘good neighbours’, ‘practice tolerance
3. ‘Common interests’

Representations

1. Cultural assumptions of deficiency
2. Linear assumptions of progress
3. Elevated role of elites

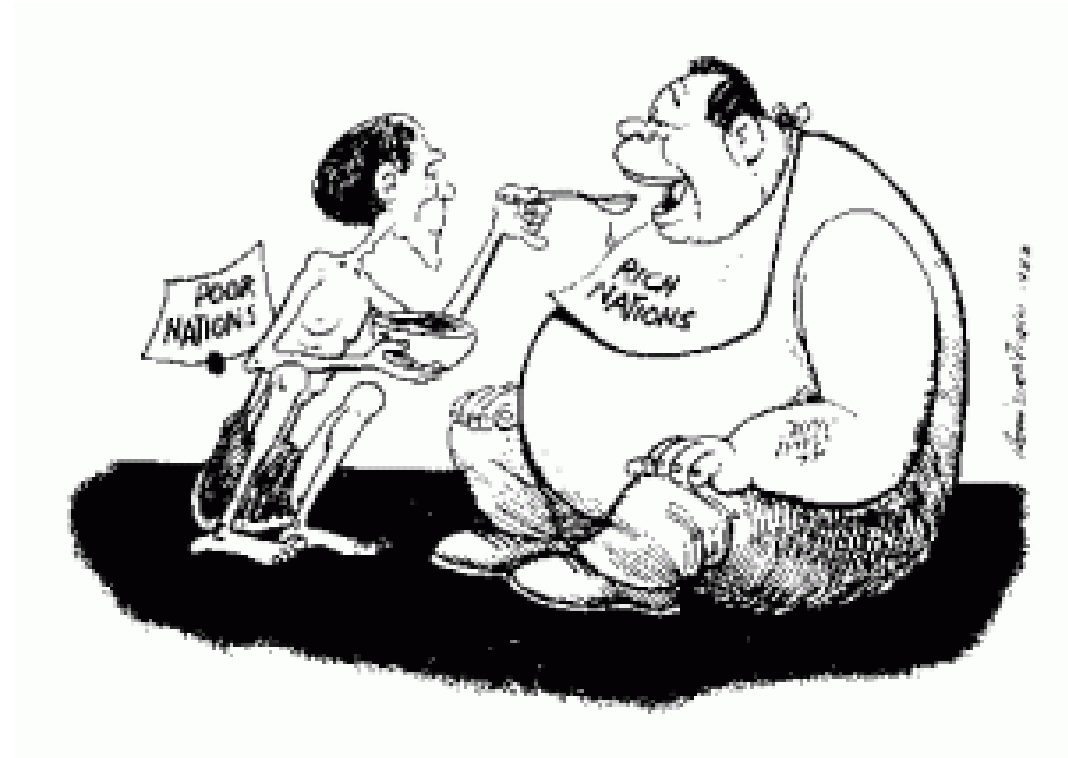
- United Nations 1951 Report:

‘Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped, old institutions have to disintegrate, bonds have to burst, a large number of persons who can not keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated’. (cited in Escobar, 1995, p.4)



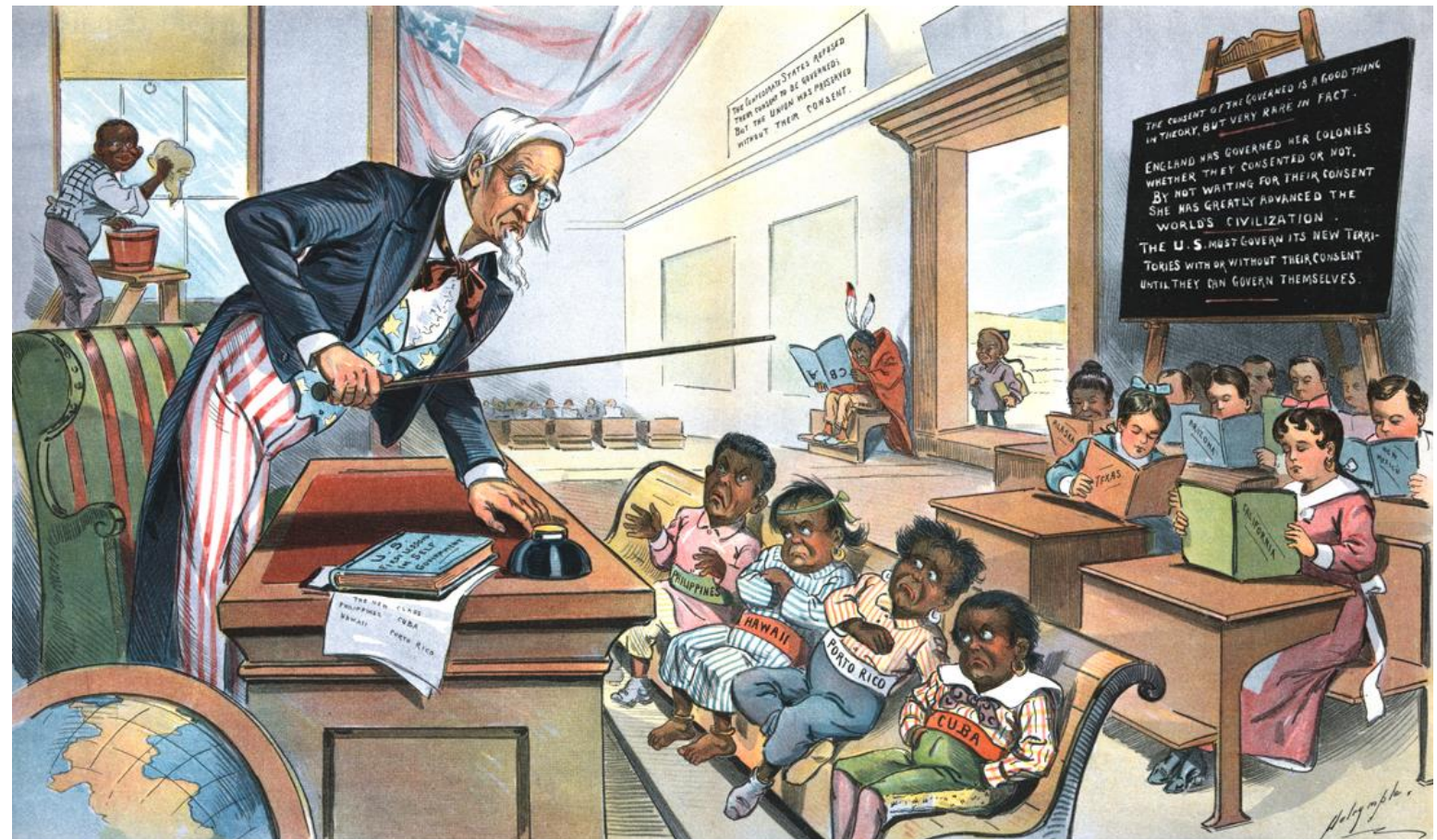
Resistance: counter discourses

- The voice pretending to be neutral, scientific & altruistic is not so. It does not serve universal interests.
- ‘Development’ as an ‘imperial outreach strategy’ to ‘preserve and extend the empire without much resistance’ (Said, 1993, p.76).
- **Context of decolonisation & the Cold War**



- By early 20th century, the Western powers had increasingly expanded their claim to approximately 85 percent of the Earth and had come to see the distant territories, people and their resources as their possession.
- This hold was sustained not only by political, economic and military might, but also through a cultural discourse.
- The latter normalised the view that the 'other' were inferior and destined to be governed and civilised by the colonisers.
- It is within these normalised assumptions the USA formulated the ideology of 'development'.

Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 1993, p.8.



SCHOOL BEGINS.

Uncle Sam (*to his new class in Civilization*).—
Now, children, you've got to learn these lessons
whether you want to or not!
But just take a look at the class ahead of you, and
remember that, in a little while, you will feel as
glad to be here as they are!

Manifest Destiny, USA



“Manifest Destiny” The idea that God has destined America to redeem & remake the world in the image of the United States. The virtue of American people & institutions must spread to "make the world safe for democracy".

Source: Stephanson, 1995. Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right, Hill and Wang Critical Issues. & Weeks, William Earl (1996).



American Progress (1872) by John Gast

- leading light, civilization & modernisation from the East into the West
- stringing telegraph wire, holding a school textbook that will instill the 'correct' knowledge
- shows a linear vision of 'progress' from the perspective of the conqueror

Blackboard: THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED IS A GOOD THING. IN THEORY, BUT VERY RARE IN FACT.

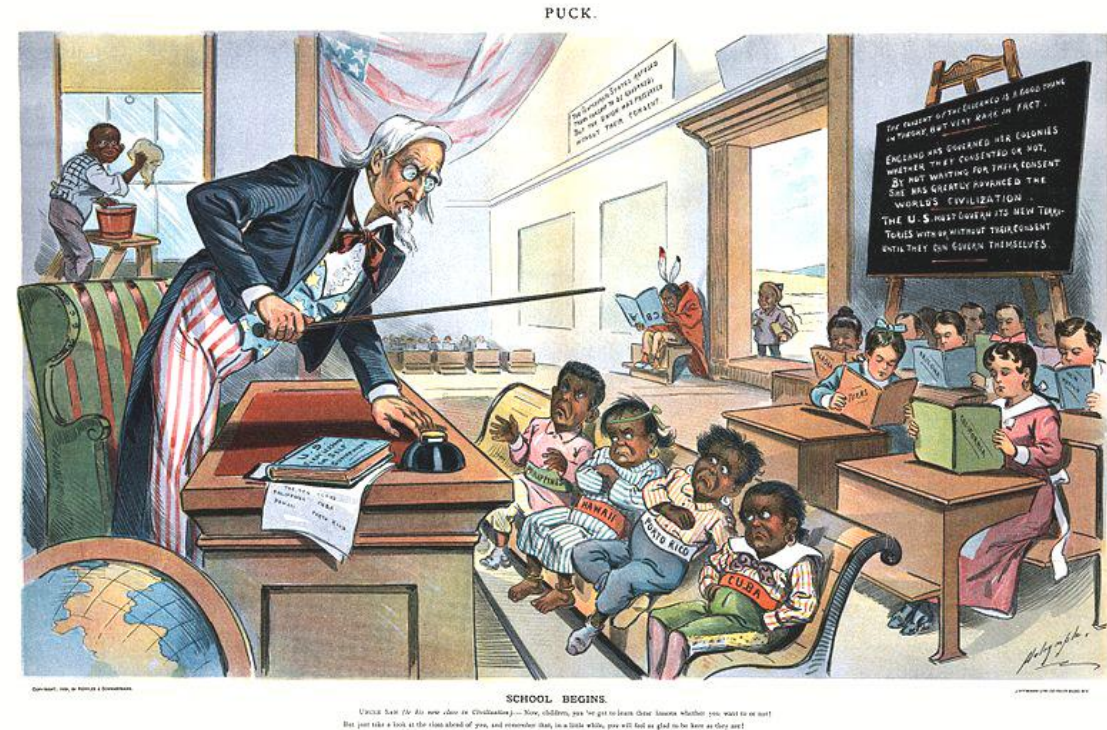
ENGLAND HAS GOVERNED HER COLONIES , WHETHER THEY CONSENTED OR NOT. BY NOT WAITING FOR THEIR CONSENT, SHE HAS GREATLY ADVANCED THE WORLD'S CIVILIZATION.

THE U.S. MUST GOVERN ITS NEW TERRITORIES WITH OR WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT UNTIL THEY CAN GOVERN THEMSELVES.

Poster:THE CONFEDERATED STATES REFUSED THEIR CONSENT TO BE GOVERNED; BUT THE UNION WAS PRESERVED WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT.

Book: (on table)U.S. FIRST LESSONS IN SELF GOVERNMENT

Source: [schoolingtheworld.org](http://www.schoolingtheworld.org) : http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/schooling_the_world_2010/



Context of decolonisation & the Cold War

“The US has about 50% of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3% of its population ... In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity.” (US Department of State [1948](#). *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*1 (2): 509–529., 524)

“...that the struggle to deter and contain the thrust for expanded communist power would be long; and that new concepts would be required to underpin U.S. foreign policy in the generation ahead, quite aside from the task of dealing directly with the communist world. We believed that a portion of academic talent should be devoted to generating these concepts.” (Rostow, 1985:12)

Major international development institutions, agencies, national governments and civil society organisations received generous US funding to normalise the US vision of ‘development’.

‘Peacekeeping’ in the ‘common interest’ = Militarisation of civilian life

- Arms sales were prioritised over investment in wellbeing and freedom everywhere
- ‘Aid’ has been geared towards serving their donors’ military and security interests
- Established global networks of unchallenged military power
- **Education** glorified conquests, military heroes and militarisation

Economic modernization- ‘growth’ = Retain the Westward flow of wealth

- Control over resources, market, and populations & offshore arrangements
- Poverty, hunger and illiteracy became lucrative industries for planners and experts
- **School** selectively funded and structured to ensure multigenerational advantages for the dominant groups
- 1980s: The World Bank/IMF policies of privatization

Political modernization - ‘freedom’ & ‘democracy’ = Retain compliant regimes

- Reward: ‘aid’, armed protection, & support to stay in power & Punishment: coup, assassination, war
- Undermined the labour unions and progressive social movements, rights of minorities & women’s rights
- **Schools** promoted loyalty & docility to the nation

Social modernisation: Occidentophillia as a soft power

- Retained Western-centric language, knowledge, norms, institutions, fields of knowledge
- Advanced essentialized identities rather than extraordinary interconnections, hybridity & fluidity

The dominant discourses do not address root causes of problems:

- The global poverty is produced by the wealthier states/actors
- The liberal humanist positions promote charity, rather than a more fundamental transformation

Promotes depoliticised orientation:

- Privilege largely depoliticized market-centric subjectivities, rather than activism

Ahistorical thinking & cultural explanations:

- It deliberately perpetuates assumptions that colonial exploitations have no relevance for the creation of the wealth of the 'First World' (Spivak, 2004).

Invisibilises violences

- Invisibilises modernity's 'dark' side that subsidises modernity (Mignolo, 2011)

Ethnocentric projections:

- Humanity of the governing elites is projected as superior and universal and humanity of the 'Other' is suspected, projected as perpetually underdeveloped and inferior (Andreotti, 2018)
- Upholds ethnocentric views of justice & change (Shiva, 1998)

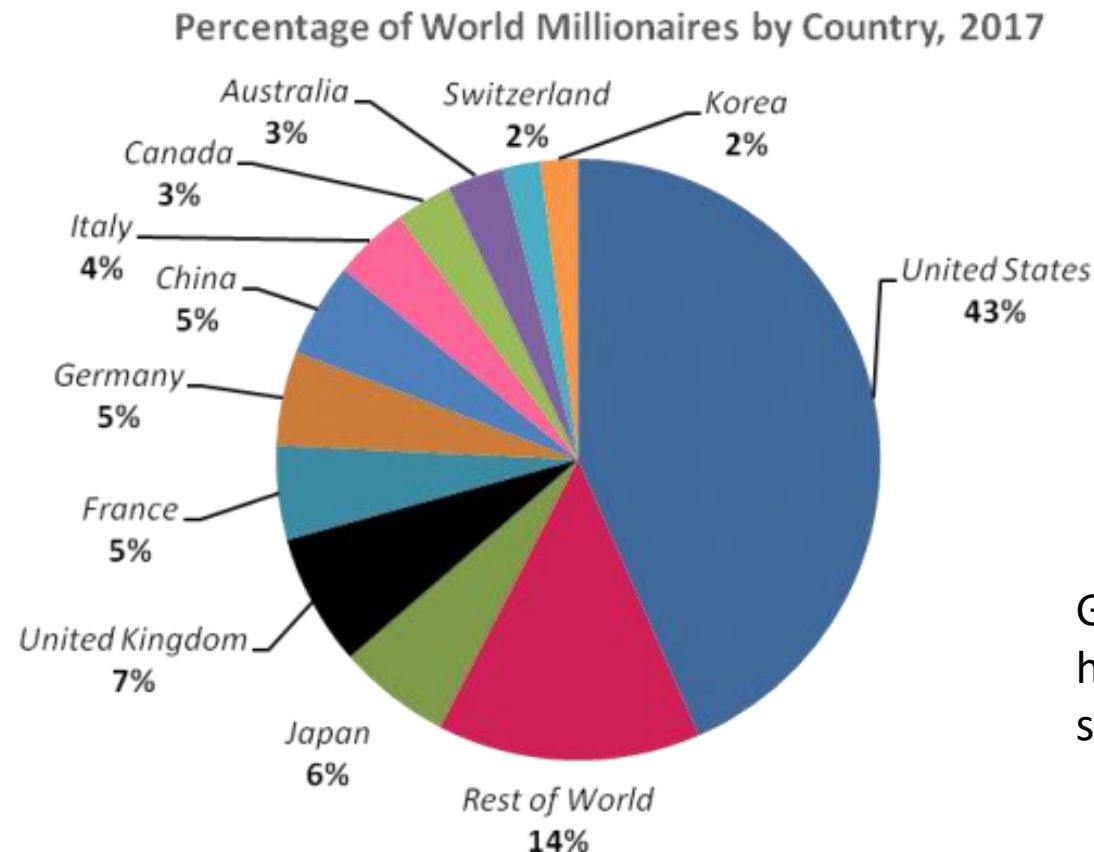
Paternalistic relationships:

- The powerful and wealthy countries (mainly in the Western states) are framed as benevolent and superior repositories of knowledge, skills, and enlightened values to communities that implicitly lack these (Khoo, 2011)
- Undermine that communities are capable of imagining their own solutions and futures (Andreotti, 2018)

International development to the 'Global governmentality':

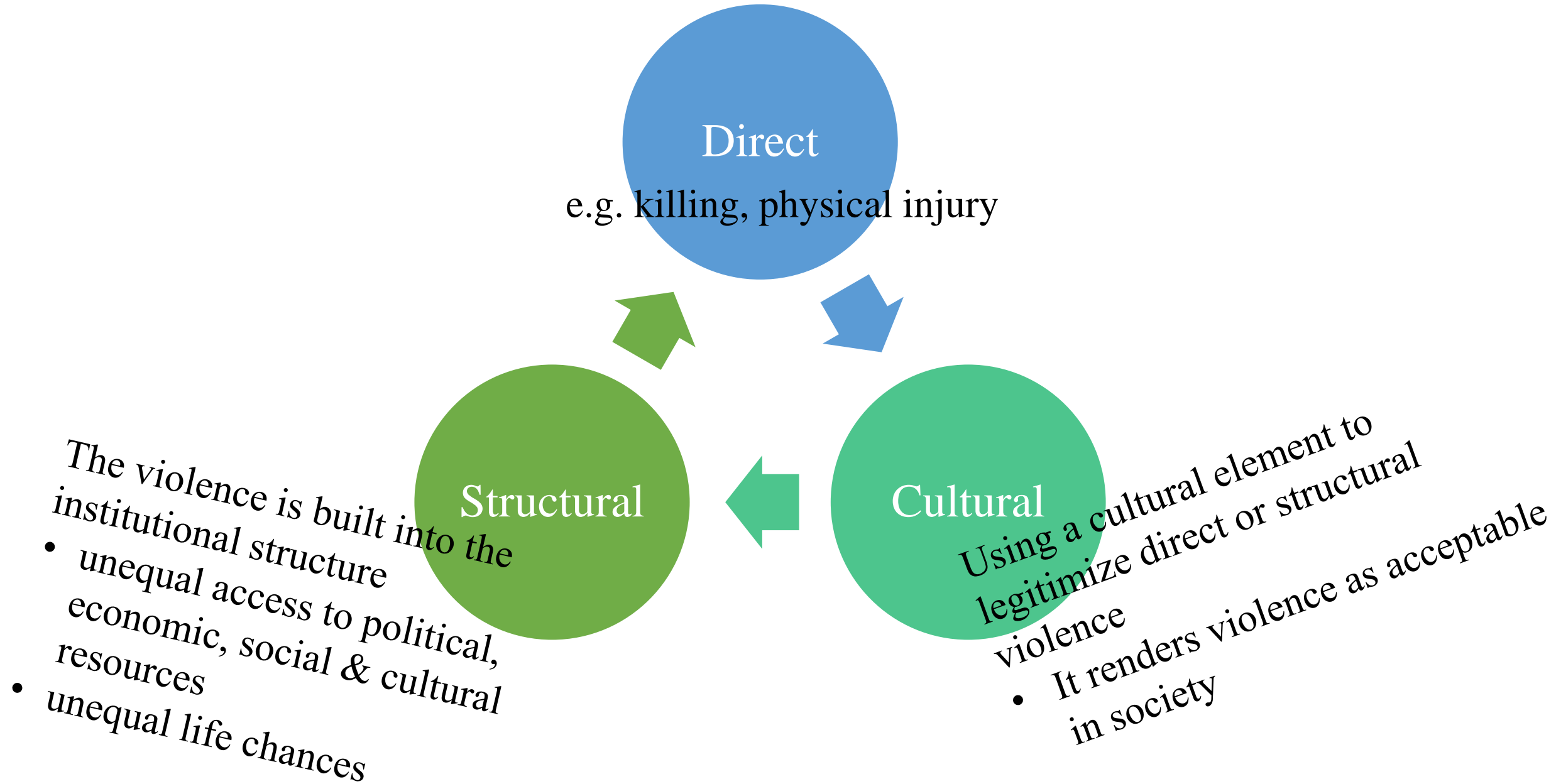
- Investments in stereotyping industry; ever-growing body of new concepts and sub-concepts to map, measure & govern the world - 'New imperialism' (Tikly, 2004)

Development is a refined cultural discourse that works alongside economic, military and political agendas to sustain the Western hegemony and serves to the advantage of elites in both the Global North and South.



Global Inequality, 2018 -
<https://inequality.org/facts/global-inequality/>

The dominant notions of 'education' and 'development' are drivers of violence



Dominant discourses of peace	Anti-oppressive discourse of peacebuilding
<p>Peace as:</p> <p>Security-first Stability Tolerance Living together Resilience Skills Life long learning</p>	<p>Peacebuilding as:</p> <p>Addressing the root causes of inequities and conflict</p>
<p>Cultural explanations: blame victims</p>	<p>Structural explanations</p>
<p>Solutions: more data, better communications, better policy options, more efficiency, more modernity, more education</p>	<p>Solutions: Political accountability for doing justice</p>

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Faith-based civil society – transnational / local

People



Tajikistan

A market in Khorog, 2008

A much older and wider experience of imperialism.

- The Silk road- a major crossroads of Eurasian trade
- Various kingdoms, waves of migrations
- Group Identification was based on such factors as area of origin, and sedentary/nomadic distinctions



Silk Road 2BC

	The Arab kingdoms	The Tsarist	The Soviet Union
Arrival	8 th century	1853	1920
Legitimation strategy	‘Trust custodians of faith’, differences over loyalty	Modernity & civilisation	Justice, equality, postcolonial, the Russians as ‘the elder brother and ‘the leading nation’
Education	A network of <i>maktab</i> (primary school) and <i>madrassah</i> (colleges) jurisprudence, logic, legal rulings, trade, theological legiti, philosophy, mathematics, physics	<i>Maktaba</i> & <i>madrasa</i> as subversive, ‘modern’ education as civilisation	aimed to create an economically useful ideal Soviet Communist citizen, who was expected to ‘serve the Soviet’
Soft power	Arabic alphabet, Arabic, Turkic & Persian literature	Russian language, literature	Russian language, literature
Teachers	Arabo-Persia centric	Russian teachers	The ‘correct’ interpretation was available only via the Soviet teacher, the only leader worth emulating was Lenin
Gorno-Badakshan	Loyalty to an Arab North African ruler, persecuted, the “Pamiri” identity	Initially enthusiastic, <i>jadidis</i>	Initially enthusiastic, the “Soviet citizens”, the “Tajik” nation

1920s:

- Many active creators of the Soviet system were *Jadidis*, who **actively promoted a socialist interpretation of Islam & helped create a sense of belonging to the big 'fatherland' USSR**
- The Soviets initiated a socialist revolution in the East; invested heavily in schools, hospitals, cultural centers, powerhouses, roads & airports



1930s- 'Militant Soviet atheism'

'We must make the young into a generation of Communists. ... We must rescue children from the harmful influence of the family... We must nationalise them.. To oblige the mother to give her child to the Soviet state-that is our task'. A theorist of Soviet education 1918

- Education aimed to create a “new Soviet people”-world socialism
- The message of God was to be replaced by the message of ‘facts’- the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism
- Universal schooling as a right-duty, gender equity
- Invention of nations as progress (docile boxes)



ПРИ КАПИТАЛИЗМЕ...



ПРИ СОЦИАЛИЗМЕ!

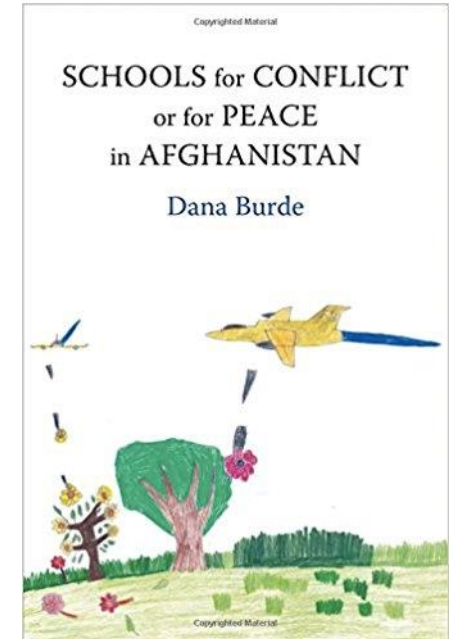
The 1980s: *The ABC's of Jihad Education*

- The revolution in Iran & the Soviet war in Afghanistan in 1979
- The **USAID** funded & published *Jihadi* textbooks in Pashto & Dari. CIA and ISI -Pakistan smuggled these into Afghanistan
- The US & Saudi channeled hundreds of millions of dollars & mobilised volunteers to support *mujahedeen* fighters (a young son of a Saudi billionaire, Osama volunteered)



"T" is for "topak" or gun.

How do you use the word? "My uncle has a gun. He does jihad with the gun."



Consequences:

- the collapse of the USSR
- catastrophic refugee crisis
- the fighters spread across the world with devastating effects for local populations
- Tajikistan were forced into “Independence” on the 9th Sep. 1991
- **CIVIL WAR:** Tajikistan experienced five-years’ of civil war (1992-1997)
 - killed 20,000 and 40,000
 - Internally displaced 500,000 to 600,000
 - 60,000 and 75,000 fled
 - hardly a small number for a small population of merely 5.4 million in 1991



The Geneva Summit 1985



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People

Post Soviet Tajikistan

1991



- Appx. 9 million citizens (median age 22)
- Mostly rural population (80%)
- Literacy rate- 99.5%
- Heavily dependent on remittance (apx. 49% of GDP)
- Apx 1 million young people every year migrate mainly to Russia looking for work (most work in construction industry)
- Heavily dependent on donor funding
- Diverse ethno-linguistic groups. Official figures: 79.9 percent Tajik, 15.3 percent Uzbek, 1.1 percent Russian and 3.7 percent other
- 98% Muslims (95% Sunni and around 4-5% are Shia)

The offshore, education and the World Bank



- Both the World Bank and the USAID are at the helm of ‘free trade’ market economy transitions
- Talco has been recast from an ‘aluminium exporter to a processor of aluminium and sub-contractor to the offshore trading company, CDH/TML’
- Some of the offshore monies are diverted towards ‘reputation laundering’ in the U.S.

TALCO

- ranks as the world’s fourth largest aluminium smelter. Rahmon is the head
- generates 20% of Tajikistan’s GDP; uses approximately 40% of the electricity supply of Tjk.
- partnership with com. registered in the British Virgin Islands and Norway’s Hydro Aluminium as a stakeholder
- Profit share: Tjk US\$15m / offshore apx US\$500m (in 2005 – 2007)
- During 2005-2008, the Tajik state, lost US\$1.145 billion in revenues (Tjk GDP was US\$3.7 billion in 2007)
- The multi-dimensional poverty in Tjk 64% in 2017
- London’s High Court verdict - ‘illegitimate and thus constitute fraud’.

The offshore, education and the World Bank

- The World Bank represents itself as the largest donor involved in educational **reform**
- Its reports and surveys diagnose the problem of Tajikistan' financial poverty as an issue of lack of market skills, technical assistance, poor wages, lack of resources, inappropriate textbooks, and of domestic corruption. Situates Western institutions as experts.

E.g. 'Skills development for poverty reduction', Wallenborn (2009, 550)

*A key to economic and social progress is the **training** of better-qualified individuals and skilled enterprise staff who will be more productive, improving goods, increasing incomes and adapting to changing markets. Experts from international cooperation agencies see VET projects as suitable instruments for poverty alleviation...*

- Rahmon views the 'Unemployed and idle youth' as 'a future threat to stability in Tajikistan'.

The offshore, education and the World Bank

- On an average, half the populations of Tajikistan fall below the poverty line at least once a year, the World Bank (2018, 1) recommends, ‘an expanded role for the private sector in economy’, implying it as a ‘pro-poor’ policy
- A policy note on ‘Policy Eradication’ (see World Bank 2006, 2) laments that the delay in introducing ‘structural adjustment reforms’ due to the civil war has hindered efforts to alleviate poverty specifically in rural areas
- Tajikistan’s external debt has more than doubled over the past 10 years and is likely to have exceeded 70 percent of GDP by the end of 2017, bringing populations under the ‘debt regime’ controlled by rich private actors based mostly outside Tajikistan
- The WB documents represent Soviet education as ‘backward’ and outdated: considered replacement of textbooks inherited from Soviet times as the top priority while MoE considered access and affordability of textbooks as the top priorities
- The WB prioritised the role of education as preparation for roles in the ‘free-market’ and ‘knowledge-based economy’, whereas, the MOE document viewed schooling more in broader social, cultural or spiritual terms

Authoritarian stability as peace

- The dominant positions promote the discourse of ‘stability’ (absence of democratic processes) as peace rather than transforming structures that produce conflict
 - blames ordinary people for not understanding democracy
 - societal stability trumps right and freedoms for individuals
 - schools promote submissive subjectivities
- A ‘global performance state’:
 - statehood is strategically performed for domestic and international audiences more than it is exercised; democracy is ‘mimicked’, ‘nation-state as a narrative’
 - a ‘loyal opposition’:
 - in 2013 election, Rahmon ‘non-campaigned’ -opening new schools and factories and doing works of charity on the media
 - the opposition candidates ‘campaigned’ urging citizens to vote for ‘the most suitable candidate’, a slogan of the party of Rahmon
 - schools and media represent Rahmon as having transformed Tajikistan from ‘an undeveloped country’ into ‘a developing nation’; a ‘national hero’ & a peace warrior

Authoritarian stability as peace

- The role international aid:
 - International 'aid' is mainly diverted towards bolstering Rahmon's military and security capacities
 - The USA's 'aid' is linked with securitising Afghan borders and drug trafficking
 - China's agenda of security and stability is linked to securitising Uyghur populations bordering Tajikistan
- The UN-led Peace Agreement had prioritised security agenda and the truth and reconciliation commission for crimes committed does not exist
- The few programs that were introduced for supporting good governance, legal reform, and civil society have been closed due to lack of investment
- In 2007, The United Nation's Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding tasked with consolidating peace, disarmament and promoting democracy was also closed

Nationalism and geopolitics

- The broader geopolitical relations are reproduced also through Tajikistan's national ideology
- The textbooks portray the Arabs as invaders, who conquered and Islamised the country
- The Tajik national subject is represented as an 'Aryan'; Russians as the saviours, with whom they share 'racial and linguistic proximity' with 'white skin and beautiful facial features', without any 'wild blood in them'.

At the time when the Arabs conquered our lands from the West and the Turks from the East, we forgot the name of our nation – Aryan. However, we kept our understanding of the notions of superior race, purity, supremacy, aristocracy, and pure blood.

- The rise and fall of Iran in national narrative

Nationalism and geopolitics

- Tsarist conquest is justified as bringing progress and civilisation to a backward region
- Violence inflicted on the local peoples by Russians, is represented as due to pan-Turkist/pan-Uzbek propaganda, which made innocent Russians act violently towards their fellow Aryan Tajiks
- The Greek dominance is portrayed positively, and the Romans are seen as the ‘just’ empire
- The Samanid period has been elevated to a ‘Glorious Past,’ and portrayed as a native rebuttal of Arab influence. In this narrative, the fact that it was the Samanid rule that had built alliance with the Arab kingdoms and had brought Islam to the region is silenced
- The exalted Tajik national subject is modelled after the Sugd region, which has the lowest poverty rate among the provinces of Tajikistan (19%)
- This narrative undermines indigenous minorities such as the Uzbek, the Kyrgyz and other social groups, as the ‘other’

Nationalism and geopolitics

- Tajikistan securitises Muslim identities - ‘good Muslim/bad Muslim’
- The USAID was the largest national donor agency in Tajikistan promoting ‘community peacebuilding’ in 2007
- Several laws have been passed to ‘tailor religion’
- The state approves of the non-Arabic, non-Turkic, non-Salafi, and non-Wahabi Islam
- The specific ideology of development deliberately assumes a process of secularisation whereby local cultures and religions would eventually disappear, thus, reducing threats to the secular Western economies (Cordier, 2008)
- Rahmon’s words displayed at a public university in Khorog, ‘those who do not adhere to the national ideology, would never become perfect human beings and the worthy children of their time’ (fieldnotes)

Gorno Badakshan

- Revival of political & economic aspirations based on group identities
- Joined the opposition in the civil war
- Gorno-Badakshan had briefly declared its independence from Tajikistan
- ‘Ethnic cleansing’ of the Pamiris
- Immigrant minority usually choose to integrate, historically settled, and territorially concentrated minorities tend to resist
- “Autonomous status” of GBAO



- GB makes up 45% land area
- Over 95 percent of GB's population is represented as Shia Ismaili Muslim (3% population of the country - nearly 250,000)
- Most do not speak Tajik as their first language
- Autonomous region



The Aga Khan visited in 1995

Peace Accord in 1997

- Famine
- One of the most remote and rural regions in the world; a lack of agriculture & industrialisation; 98% of land is made up of high altitude mountains
- The AKDN launched a seven year relief programme 1993-2000
- Pamiri refugees in South Asia, Russia, Europe, & North America



Pluralism, progress and pragmatism

A richly diverse yet purposefully united citizenry is capable of making a critical contribution to social development in the struggle against poverty...The Ismaili Imamat stands shoulder to shoulder with the Government and people of Tajikistan as they seek to steer a way towards equitable and sustainable national development.

(Aga Khan, Dushanbe, 1995)

- Normalises a politically docile, global market-based, pluralistic, Western-centric, securitised ‘good Muslim’ identity
- Peace education (being a peaceful ambassador of Islam), market-based education, English language education, Western centric education

Dominated dominator - Refugee coloniality

- A combination of historical and contemporary violence, vulnerability, and surveillance has disciplining effect on (re)constituting faith sensibilities.
 - Historically, many ancestors of the Aga Khan were persecuted over the question of authority
 - The entire Ismaili communities were annihilated in certain locations in different historical periods over the issue of loyalty.
 - Even today the Ismaili community's position is sometimes challenged within Islam
- The experience is shaped by a series of refugee crisis, displacement and persecution: the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet religious purges, the partition of British India, the war in Bangladesh, the war in Myanmar, decolonisation in East Africa, Iranian revolution, the war in Afghanistan, the civil war in Tajikistan, the war in Iraq and more recently, the war in Syria
- As ethnolinguistic minorities they experience highly uneven access to freedom, dignity, and wellbeing in many parts of the world (e.g. in Gilgit-Baltistan they're not considered as full citizens, Xinxiang)
- In Tajikistan, the Pamiri fighters dissenting against Rahmon are viewed as 'terrorists' and 'militants'. In Parts of Tajikistan, Ismailis are portrayed as 'Shia extremists'
- State surveillance

- Experts and consultants, mainly educated in the West, are employed to lead the process of development, reinforcing the global division of the ‘core’ and ‘peripheries’:

The Westernised ‘Exalted subjects’ / People as receivers of exalted wisdom

‘The implication is that their salvation lies, as always, in philanthropy, in being saved from the out- side’. Mamdani, 2002, p.767

- Reconstruction of identity from the Pamiris to a member of transnational Ismaili community
- Not an entirely a ‘zero-sum-game’ for all Ismailis although they may benefit from it highly unequally
 - New forms of solidarity
 - Access to education, health, micro credit, social welfare
 - Perceptions of peace, wellbeing, redistribution & support are owned by people

The Pamiri peoples: a contested and contextual negotiation

- Demonstrated a highly affective sense of belonging to their Pamiri identification
- In general, participants wanted transformation of the structures that produced inequities:
 - Political: people do not believe that the interest of Dushanbe and Khorog overlap
 - Economic: a growing dissatisfaction with the normative market economy discourse
 - Military: the participants did not feel protected by the current military

One of the graduates said:

I don't love Tajikistan. It is hard to say. Even I don't like Pamir. I would love if I am a Pamirian in other part of the world, I don't have chance, opportunity, place is too small, may be people have bad influence on each other...I can't feel happy for my country.

- long-term unemployment
- the market economy has reduced women's agency in private and public sphere
- teachers were choosing to become traders due to impoverishment
- severe economic deprivation, difficulties in accessing markets and being competitive in world trade, unprecedented migration
- concern for food sovereignty, fuel, lighting
- adverse impacts of climate change, deforestation
- crumbling physical and social infrastructure in the form of roads and schools
- valuing profit over relations sometimes incurs high social and moral costs
- more profitable opium production has grown in areas bordering GBAO integrating the region into the global narcotic economy
- the opium addiction has also risen due to a lack of access to medicine, the harsh winter, and lack of employment

- In retrospect, the Soviet rule is recalled as the ‘golden age’:
 - many viewed present situation as economically and culturally ‘backward’ in relation to their ‘modern’ past
 - they measured positive merits of the Soviet rule in terms of literacy levels, life expectancy, and gender equality
 - female vendors preferred to continue their previous Soviet occupations, which was directly related to security of income and better working conditions

- Participants also seemed pragmatic about their options. A majority wanted peace over any further crisis.

I do not feel happy about independence. But, the past never comes! That flag is over! We have to live under this flag.’

- The acute economic and political hardship appear to strengthen the authority of the Aga Khan among the local peoples as the ‘savior’- (a new form of dependency?)



Other civil society actors

- USAID projections:
 - claims an 'inefficient' teacher training system, use of local language instruction, and diminishing 'culture of literacy' as the root causes of poverty and misery
- Other actors: Asian Development Bank, Islamic Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, GTZ, GIZ, Saudi Arabia Development Fund, German Development Bank, Catalytic Fund, Aga Khan Fund, Open Society Institute of 'Soros Foundation', Save the Children Fund, ACCELS, Operation Mercy, Red Cross, World Food Program, Mercy Corps and Microsoft, and Cisco Systems among others
- Overall, within the global, national and local discourses of mainstream development, the fundamental structural aspects of inequities and drivers of conflict remain unaddressed

Solutions

1. Political obligation for doing justice

They will have to face up to the relationship between their own policies and contemporary terrorism. It is the refusal to address issues that must count as the first major hurdle in our search for peace. Mamdani p.774

2. Trade justice, debt relief, micro credits, safety networks, health & education
3. 'Unlearning' (Spivak, 2004) ; 'imagine ourselves as planetary accidents rather than global agents' (Spivak, 2012, p.229)
4. Learn from grassroots resistance, including from landless, peasant, and women and vulnerabilities produced by intersectional systems of oppression
5. View historically marginalised people and communities as capable of imagining their own solutions, futures rather than as suspects, passive or infants (Doctor Who 'Rosa Parks')
6. Greater understandings of our personal complicity in the problems we are trying to address
 - The extraordinary role of social scientists

