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MSc - Master's Thesis in International Development and Cultural Encounters

Photo of a Hazara girl in Bamiyan by: Rahmat Shahryar

Post-colonial Identities: How do ethnic Hazara asylum-seekers perceive their identities in the face of forced migration?

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the effects of internal colonization of ethnic minorities and the long-lasting effects of colonial violence in Afghanistan, a result of European Imperialism. It focuses on diasporas of ethnic Hazaras that have had to face forced migration again at the return of the Taliban in August 2021. Having been victims of persecution, slavery, and ethnic-cleansing, Hazaras were ordered to be killed by King Abdur Rahman Khan in the late 1890s resulting in the ethnic-cleansing of 62% of their population while others were either enslaved or migrated. This denying of political belonging was justified by a particular brand of Islam where he declared Hazaras as infidels and outsiders, which was further supported by Orientalist researchers concluding Hazaras as remnants of the Mongols, as 'outsiders'. The thesis explores how ethnic Hazaras today perceive their identities, in relation to living under cultural and political hegemony of the Pashtun ruling class of Afghanistan. Themes of education, gender equality and perseverance through generational poverty and colonial violence are those that research participants claim holds importance to their sense of identity, preferring to be represented as such. Through interviews and the use of narrative, ethnic Hazaras in asylum camps of Denmark, and diaspora communities of Denmark and France are allowed to self-identify and narrate their sense of belonging. This empirical data is then viewed through the theoretical approach of post-colonial theorists, namely Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Stuart Hall and Willem Schinkel.

Keywords: Hazara identity, Post-colonial identities, Multiculturealism, diaspora and migration.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are thousands of people in Afghanistan that would gladly stone someone like me to death, or shoot me in the head, just because I look the way I do. These are people that do not know me, but my 'almond-shaped eyes' and my 'flat Mongolian nose' is enough to get me killed. I am an ethnic Hazara. Add to that the fact that I am a woman, non-Muslim, and a student at a higher education institution. This intersectionality is what makes me, and many like me, the ultimate target of the Salafist Taliban, ruling Afghanistan since the return of the regime in August of 2021. As a part of the Hazara diaspora, I am forced to confront this form of hate that pushes the Taliban once again to go on a violent rampage against defenseless people in Afghanistan, especially showing the historical hatred they have for the Hazaras. The Hazaras are not the only group of people the Taliban target in abusing and killing as they criminalize the presence of women from public spaces, banning them from work and education. The Taliban is also known to discriminately attack the smaller minorities of Afghanistan, such as the Sikhs and Hindus. However, ethnic Hazaras have always been a special target of the Taliban and the Pashtun ruling class for more than a century as Hazaras are predominately Shia Muslims living in a predominantly Sunni country. The return of the Taliban has resulted in millions fleeing. This new wave of forced migrants travel into Iran and Pakistan, towards Australia, North America or Europe. The same journey my grandfather took into Pakistan and my father took to Canada.

'Ethnicity' is defined as "of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background" (Merriam-Webster, 2023). For this thesis, I add Stuart Hall's definition that ethnicity "acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 252), explaining situations of movements, migrations, and diaspora. While the scientific consensus about ethnicity reflects my own, in that these are social constructs, the empirical data received on this thesis show different perspectives, most holding a mixed stance of an essentialist and social constructivist regarding ethnicity. Ethnicity has been used as basis of discrimination, for the Hazaras, it has also become an important element of their identity, providing a sense of community through shared history of trauma.

I use the term 'asylum-seekers' to refer to all that seek asylum, avoiding terms that migrants have come to negatively view such as 'aliens' and 'refugees', while remaining technically true to all research participants (RPs). The term 'Diaspora' was first used for the Jewish people in exile after the destruction of the First Temple (Story, & Walker, 2016, p. 135) and then gained momentum after the Jewish Holocaust. This term is one that is also used amongst the Hazara communities dispersed around the globe as a way of describing the forced exile their own community has faced. It is the discourse Hazaras have been taking part in for several generations, as the persecution and oppression of ethnic Hazaras have been going on for more than a century

at the hands of the Pashtun ruling class of Afghanistan, both before and after Abdur Rahman Khan's orders that resulted in the death of 62% of the Hazaras of Afghanistan in 1890 (Dawlatabadi, 2009, in Paiman, 2020). The situation is only worsened with the return of the Taliban since "ethnically and demographically, the Taliban in Afghanistan are overwhelmingly Pashtun" (Malik, 2016, p. 22). Hazaras find similarities between the persecution they have faced with the persecution the Jewish people have faced as both are based on religion and as race/ethnicity. In the interviews, the RPs often mention *nasl-kushi* (genocide) as they view themselves as victims of a Genocidal campaign. Hazaras hope for the global community to recognize their persecution as Genocide as per the United Nation's Genocide Convention. Persecution and living in exile have become essential parts of Hazara identity.

Hazaras have passed down their histories in the form of oral history and almost all Hazaras have stories going back three to five generations, that include persecution by the Pashtun ruling class. It is part of oral history that Orientalists during British colonialism would associate ethnic Hazaras with the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan, giving Abdur Rahman, King of the land that later came to be known as Afghanistan, the justification to wage war over these 'infidels' and heretics (Gulzari, 2018, p. 27). In fact, Alessandro Monsutti writes that Afghanistan became a 'colonial trope' in the 19th century, with travelers and scholars visiting to study the tribal structures and social organizations of the Afghans; Monsutti states, "these authors were actors in the imperial rivalry of their time and thus were involved, in one way or another, in the colonial enterprise. The knowledge they produced went hand in hand with power. And indeed, these reports reflect not only the firsthand experiences of these men but also often their remarkably erudite understanding of the region" (Monsutti, 2012, pg. 271). While not a previous British colony, Afghanistan has been a protectorate of Imperial Britain and thus been controlled through foreign policy after the Treaty of Gandamak was signed in 1879 in Second Anglo-Afghan War until the signing of the Treaty of Rawalpindi was signed in 1919, giving Afghanistan complete independence (Agence France-Presse, August 19, 2017). After coming to power in 1880, Abdur Rahman "started a process that has been variously referred to as 'internal imperialism,' 'interior colonization,' 'Afghanization,' 'Pashtun colonization,' and 'Pashtunization'" (Bleuer, 2012, pg. 70). This form of "internal colonialism by a Pashtun ruling class over the country's many ethnic minorities" (Ibrahimi, 2022, pg. 89) continues to thrive. The Pashtun ruling class has continued a policy to 'homogenize' the peoples of Afghanistan by using "Pashtun nationalist ideology, land confiscation, discriminatory taxation policies and forced resettlement that favored the Pashtuns" (ibid). Norma Beatriz Chaloult and Yves Chaloult cite Gonzalez-Casanova to define Internal colonialism, and state "with the disappearance of the direct domination of foreigners over natives, the notion of domination and exploitation of natives by natives emerged… internal colonialism corresponds to a structure of social relations based on domination and exploitation among culturally heterogeneous, distinct groups" (Chaloult & Chaloult, 1979, pg. 85). For this thesis, I use the lens of Internal Colonization to look at the effects of cultural and political hegemony of the Pashtun ruling class (colonizer), their effects on the ethnic Hazara (colonized) in the form of post-colonial identities.

Escaping persecution, asylum-seekers seek refuge in lands of the colonizers. Asylum systems in the Global North are colonial structures that asylum-seekers must be processed through, that often re-traumatizes them, forcing them to question their identity. These colonial institutions are structured to remind asylum-seekers that they do not belong, and that almost criminalizes migrations, placing them in camps that were previously prisons, depleting them of energy and agency, often facing extended undetermined periods of wait and uncertainty before the impossible process of 'integration'. While it is easy for the global community to condemn the Taliban and Pashtun ruling class in the way they have treated other ethnic minorities, especially the Hazaras, the same Global community often has a blind spot in reflecting on elements of the same issues found in integration processes once these asylum-seekers arrive in the Global North.

The perspective of the study of immigration and integration in academia and policy in the Global North remain outdated. It is still ethnocentric in nature, while the Global South are the 'others'. Slave trade and forced migrations were major legacies of colonialism and the international refugee laws today reflect the same colonial perspective of the Global North (Odhiambo-Abuya, 2006), where asylum-seekers are still facing human rights violations in asylum camps (Barrett, March 31, 2022) and there exists a differential treatment towards asylum-seekers based on where they come from (Jaffarson, Harvey & Dzialowska, 2022). An example is the comparison of the Ukrainian asylum-seekers in Europe as Russia attacked Ukraine, and how Denmark fast-tracked the way they were processed, some never having to see an asylum camp while asylum-seekers of the war in Syrian still live in asylum camps, as rejected asylum-seekers (Hardman, March 16, 2022). Ukrainian asylum-seekers are already in schools and hold jobs, while many asylum-seekers from countries such as Syria, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan remain in asylum camps, waiting for years for their first interview with the Danish Asylum board (Rockwool Fonden, March 15, 2021). Thus, fittingly, I use the argument of Multiculturealism by Willem Schinkel (2018) to look at the contradictory nature of integration in the Global North. I apply this argument to the process of asylum-seeking, as expectations of integration start as soon as asylum-seekers arrive in the host country. I then examine the state of 'limbo' where asylum-seekers live such as temporary living accommodations for Asylum-seekers in Paris and Asylum centers in Denmark. I then explore this period of limbo as a form of 'Violence of uncertainty'. In Afghanistan, it is the Pashtun ruling class that have ultimate power to create this environment, while during forced migration, the host states and policy makers hold that authority.

1.1. Problem Area

Historically, Hazaras have been a target of oppression, enslavement and land-grabbing by the Pashtun ruling class, going back centuries (Saeed & Parmentier, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2021). Once constituting nearly two-thirds of the total population of Afghanistan before the 19th Century, the population of ethnic Hazaras have declined significantly due to forced migration, systematic persecution, and ancient land-grabbing (Emadi, 1997; Minority rights, 2021). Hazaras suffered tremendously under the rule of King Abdur Rahman that ordered the massacre and enslavement of the Hazaras, on the grounds of them being Mongol 'outsiders' as well as Shia Muslims, utilizing a particular brand of Islam where he instigated a Jihad against the Hazaras as 'infidels' (Khan, 2021). Some estimates suggest that more than half of the Hazara population were massacred during this genocidal campaign (Minority rights, 2021). While other estimates suggest that between 60% (Rosen, 2022) and up to 62% of the population was wiped out (Dawlatabadi, 2009 in Paiman, 2020). The complete humiliation through destruction of culture and slavery of Hazaras resulted in the ethnic group ending at the bottom of the country's social hierarchy (Emadi, 1997, pg. 363; Khan, 2021).

The ideology of 'Pashtunism' aims to destroy the history of Persian-speakers, mainly Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, and over-play Pashtun history in the history books of Afghanistan. Pashtunism is the name given to Afghanistan's form of Internal colonialism and refers to the ideology put forth by the Kings of Afghanistan; is still followed by the Pashtun ruling class that practice cultural and political hegemony over the heterogenous peoples of Afghanistan. The main goal of Pashtunism used to be to achieve a Pashtun country (Pashtunistan) during the partition of the sub-continent. One element of Pashtunism states that Pashtuns need to always unite in defending their culture first since ethnic loyalty comes before religious loyalty (Khalilzad, 1984). Based on this ideology, there were attempts made to re-write the history of Afghanistan by faking authenticity of Pashto poetry and history as being older than they were (Raofi, 2019), namely '*Patta Khazana*' (Hotak & Koshan, 1975), while the ethnic Hazaras are not mentioned in History textbooks; referred to as 'Shias' (Laeiq, 35 years; Taimur, 28 years). These books are still the curriculum in schools of Afghanistan, effectively wiping Hazara history out of Afghanistan's textbooks (Hasht-e-Subh Daily, 2022, December 17).

Cultural and linguistic loss was apparent years after the genocidal attacks and thousands sold as slaves at Kabul's markets (Emadi, 1997, pg. 367) resulting in stigma and shame where Hazaras were ashamed to acknowledge their ethnicity. While majority of the population in Afghanistan speaks Farsi, Pashto classes are compulsory. Therefore, other ethnic groups, as well as religious minorities such as Hindus, Sikhs, Ismailis and Christians face severe discrimination under these policies (Emadi, 2016; Al Jazeera, 2022, January 20). However, the discrimination and violence aimed at the Hazaras are unique in that they have been relentless over a century, and

only gets worse with the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan, causing them to be known as one of the most persecuted people in the world (Mohammadi & Askary, 2021).

After a century, and with the help of Hazara leaders such as Abdul Ali Mazari from the Hezb-e-Wahdat Political party, a new generation of Hazara children had been receiving cultural education. This was after more than a decade of educated political elites had started using Western ideology in ethnic recognition and movements of inclusion (Ibrahimi, 2022. pg. 177-178). The returnee migrant Hazaras from Pakistan and Iran brought with them higher standards of education and made it available to Hazaras in privately funded schools such as Aziz Royesh's Marefat School (Fung, April 14, 2015). This generation, in turn, raised an educated generation that protest discrimination and seek justice. While the International community have largely remained silent on recognizing the killings as Genocide, the coming together of the Hazara community globally is an important event in history as this unites Hazaras from different religious and geographical backgrounds, strengthening their sense of identity.

With the support of international forces (NATO, US, UK, etc.) post September 11, 2001 and up until 2022, Afghanistan had made developmental strides. Women were increasingly getting educated, participating in politics and were in fact drivers of modernity and activism. Young Hazara women were dominant in education and discourse (Jaffarson, 2022, November 19) within the country under the protection of the NATO forces and organizations such as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Systematic racism still prevalent across Afghanistan, Hazaras face daily challenges in all fields of life. A survey covering several years shows that ethnicity was a strong predicator of education and employment in women with ethnic Hazaras overwhelmingly in favour (Khan, 2020, pg. 34). A common narrative of discrimination is of a minimum height requirement for recruitment in the military and police forces that excludes a majority of Hazaras as Hazaras tend to be shorter in stature, while Pashtuns tend to be much taller. However, ethnic Hazaras have been under-represented in the police force, as well as in political posts (Khan, 2020, pg. 80) and with the return of the Taliban, there are no Hazaras in the Taliban's government. Hazaras feel they are specifically targeted by laws, for example, the movement of putting limitations on the number of seats given to Hazara students in universities as they tend to be the ethnic group most successful in reaching the entrance exams for higher education, as evident by the number of Hazara students dominating University entrance exams (Taimur, 28 years). Hazaras also tend to get the least out of International Aid (Mariam, 35 years), as corruptions ensures that humanitarian aid is mostly spent on Pashtun provinces.

In the August of 2021, the US and NATO forces left Afghanistan and the Taliban quickly took over Kabul. Not only were the airports closed as planes were not flying after international forces were evacuated, but the Taliban stopped people from leaving by closing borders. Within the year the Taliban took control of all levels of government, banned women from all public places, closed all women's public toilets and banned women from getting an education. Women are also only allowed to go places with male chaperones, and they are not allowed to work. During this chaos, there was a bomb blast at the Kaaj Institute (BBC, October 1, 2022), an educational institute

that prepared students to take the entrance exams for universities. The institute had been attacked before as it was located in a Hazara neighbourhood, with the latest attack resulting in 53 Hazara women killed, and many more students injured. This attack resulted in simultaneous protests in more than 100 cities around the world (Thames, October 31, 2022) on October 8 of 2022, and can be seen as the first simultaneous protest of such a large scale in the history of Hazara mobilization (Nimrokh media, October 4, 2022). In the context of the fall of Kabul, this thesis aims at focusing on individuals that were the ones that left in time, either to seek asylum in France or in Denmark.

1.2. Literature Review

Academic work written on the Hazaras is limited, especially in the English language. As the 1960's saw Hazaras getting educated in universities of Iran and Afghanistan, almost all Hazara academic work is written in Farsi/Dari.

Most of the earlier works on Hazaras tend to be ethnographic in nature, and their aim is in finding out the origins of the Hazaras, whether they are remnants of the Genghis Khan's Mongol soldiers, or an off-shoot Mongol group that resisted Genghis Khan's military (Bacon, 1951), whether they are a result of Turko-Mongol group or that Hazaras have always lived in the area that is now Central Afghanistan. Although there are misguided authors that write about the Hazaras as if they were outsiders and use the term 'Afghan' for the rest of the people of Afghanistan, without mentioning ethnicities (Canfield, 1973). Some of these works cover the Hazaras as part of other nomadic or tribal peoples (Bacon, 1958) and others are focused on the Hazaras themselves including Ismaili and Sunni Hazaras (Ferdinand, 1959). Much of this early work reflected the orientalist perspective of the time, ethnocentric in nature, often describing Hazaras as backwards and ignorant of their origins.

These earlier works may be in the form of focusing on Quetta's Hazaras (Monsutti, 2005) or Afghanistan as a whole, and are mostly written by Western anthropologists or historians and attempt at an ethnography. Monsutti's work on the Hazaras was the first in-depth academic work where the researcher learnt the Farsi language first and conducted extensive field-work, spanning Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan and included narratives of Hazara individuals, succeeding in exploring identities.

One of the earliest works on Hazaras written by a Hazara was that of the historian Faiz Muhammad Katib (1952) when the historian was commissioned by King Habib Ullah to write the history of Afghanistan. It is not an analytical nor academic writing but includes important documentation of the Hazaras and their struggles of the period. At a time when the King wanted to over-play the Pashtun ruling family's achievements and dismiss all others, ironically, it is this Farsi document that stands at the earliest official record of Hazara's struggle to defend their lands.

One of the earliest English language books written by an ethnic Hazara was written by Hassan Poladi (1989) and is considered an authoritative book by the Hazara community, entertaining several theories of the origins of the ethnic group. It is helpful as a handbook to the introduction to Hazara people, and the basics. However, since it was written before the rise of the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan, it lacks the analysis of different dimensions of violence Hazaras face today due to the involvement of the US and the creation of the Taliban.

A more detailed study of the Hazaras by was by Mousavi (1998), was structured to assess the origins of Hazaras as well as the identity re-formations, mobilization, and development of the Hazara people in contemporary Afghanistan. Mousavi's book is more descriptive than analytical as opposed to Poladi's anthropological introduction. However, since Mousavi states that the origin of the Hazaras are not as previously thought, from the remnants of the Mongol hordes of Changez Khan, nor of Turks, but as aboriginals of the Hazarajat area, he has become an important author in the discourse of Hazara study. Since Mousavi cites many Farsi sources, the English-speaking readers get a glimpse into sources that we would not have access to before. The book also covers the Hazaras of Quetta and talks in depth about the Hazara settlers in Pakistan (then British India). Mousavi's book provides light to current generations of Hazara from Quetta, in teaching about our own grandparents and the causes of their migrations. In fact, it includes many elements of my genealogy, and many others like me.

Gulzari's (2018) attempt included the gender element to show the contributions of women of historical Hazara Mongols to their tribes and culminates in a discussion of the Hazara genocide. Ibrahimi's book (2022) is the most analytical in nature, that deals with social and political complexities in which Hazaras saw themselves through history as well as deals with the difficulties of recognition of the Hazara identity under the Afghan state. Poladi, Mousavi, Gulzari and Ibrahimi are cited as authoritative and academic texts.

During the first rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001 (BBC, October 1, 2022) there was an extraordinary amount of academic attention given to the Taliban and where they had come from. As a result of this focus, and the help of Hazara interpreters in NATO forces and International Military presence, Hazaras were written about more than ever before. There were also the Migration specialists in the Global North that had to 'place' Hazara asylum-seekers, and these push and pull factors resulted in many journal articles written about forced migrations in the context of ethnic and religious violence, from Afghanistan. Hafizullah Emadi's paper (1997) includes a detailed political mobilization of Hazaras and succeeds in showing the constant struggle the Hazaras have gone through to hold on to their identity, be it ethnic or religious. The paper succeeds in showing that Hazaras were not only helpless victims as earlier Western authors had naively portrayed them, and have had agency, and despite the roadblocks created for them by the Pashtun ruling class as well as Tajik leaders such as Ahmad Shah Massoud, Hazaras had been constantly mobilizing through different political, religious and local parties. As a member of the Ismaili Hazara community of Afghanistan, the author gives insight into political uprisings as well as goes into a deep reflection on the Ismaili and Shia elements of being Hazara.

Justin Desautels-Stein's paper (2005) focuses on the legal coverage of the 2004's Constitution and how laws based on the Sharia Law would be implemented when citizens adhered to Shia Islam, as Sunni Muslim leaders consider Shia Muslims 'infidels'. It views the then newly-signed Constitution of Afghanistan from the perspective and fears of the Hazaras. The paper narrates how previously bought as slaves, Hazaras had been emancipated by King Amanullah, and while they were accepted as citizens of Afghanistan, in practice the laws were not applied as such. Thus, Desautels-Stein admits that his perspective is cynical since Hazaras have historically never been given their dues based on ethnic or religious elements of their identity.

Published around this time are many papers that focus on the Hazaras of Quetta as Hazara target-killing was at its peak, and after more than 500 deaths in Quetta at the time, not a single killer was caught. Niamatullah Ibrahimi's paper (2012) was one of the first of its kind, talking specifically about scales of Hazara identity and follows the evolution of ethnic Hazara consciousness amidst conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and then, migration. Ibrahimi points to elements of identity that Hazaras find unite them or their *Qawm* (tribe/ethnic identity), such as that of a low socio-economic status across Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. What is helpful in this paper is that Ibrahimi mentions the different trajectories the development of ethnic consciousness of Hazaras has taken separating the three countries, depending on the political environment of the country as well as the form of oppression and persecution the Hazara community has faced. Since Hazaras of Quetta live in a country full of ethnic identities (Sindhis, Balochis, Punjabis, Muhajirs, etc.) holding on to ethnic pride is the norm, while the rise in target-killing in Quetta has resulted in isolation and the continued waves of incoming migrants from Afghanistan keeps them connected to political mobilization.

Siddiqui & Mukhtar's research (2015) attempts at listening to how Hazara youth perceive the violence purported against the Hazara community in Quetta, and what that does to their sense of identity and belonging. They include narratives of Hazaras of different ages and educational backgrounds. This study is beneficial as it shows the effects of a community under persecution, and how trauma manifests into mental health issues, trust issues that lead to xenophobia, and increasing paranoia causing youth from a community that did not have a 'gun-culture' to start keeping weapons. The worst effect of the target-killing in Quetta is evident on the youth that dropped out of educational programs after increasing deaths as they had accepted their fate of eventually becoming a victim.

In their paper, Khan and Amin (2019) detail the limitations of Hazaras in Quetta, the ways in which they are denied legal help, including getting a National Identification Card, naming the first few Hazaras to be victims of Target-killing. It also mentions the reasons why many Hazaras attempt to flee to places like Australia, despite the perilous journey, often resulting in death at sea.

With many cases of Hazara asylum-seekers lost at sea enroute Australia and Europe, timely papers were published focusing on the life of the Hazara migrant. In a paper in the field of Memory Science, Denise Phillips (2019) writes about the way migrants remember and frame their memories

and she makes a non-ethnocentric decision to 'remove the frames' when interviewing a Hazara man named Abdul. Phillips conducts multiple interviews over the years, never pushing on a topic, making sure not to re-traumatize the asylum-seeker, and focuses on his narration at his rate, attentive to his pauses, his emotional state, his cultural metaphors and poetry as elements of handling trauma. This academic work of the use of emotional sensitivity during fieldwork shows in the data what this Hazara asylum-seeker feels are elements of his belonging (or denial of), his loss, and his identity. Phillips focuses on the human factor of migration and the human costs of war in Afghanistan.

Saidi (2019) provides a look into the lives of Hazara migrants that now live in Germany through a gendered lens. The author interviewed 66 female Hazara residents of Germany, and looked into their lives in Afghanistan, their journey and their lives in Germany in trying to find how Hazara women negotiate their changing identities through migration: of being a woman, a Hazara and a Muslim. The study includes some narratives that give insight into the inner circles of the mosque and the home, and supports these with her own narrative as a Farsi-speaking Shia Muslim living in Germany. Her religious bias is apparent in her description of women 'throwing away the veil, drinking alcohol that is forbidden in Islam' for example. However, having looked for women to interview in a mosque as her starting point (as opposed to a refugee center or a cultural community center) confirms that bias unfortunately.

Radford and Hetz (2020) focuses their research on the Hazara community in Australia and let the research participants show how they navigate elements of their identities: being Hazara, Afghan, Muslim and Australian. The study quotes directly from their interviews and lets ethnic Hazara migrants self-represent how they see themselves and talk about elements of belonging which is extremely useful for readers to understand. In the environment of Australia where currently there is more than just hesitancy by the local Anglo-Australians against more Asylum-seekers coming into the country and the policies would rather pay for Indonesia to house asylum-seekers than allow them to take the boat to Australia, studies like these humanize the hated and misunderstood 'Refugee'. The authors take their participants' suggestions of not wanting to be called 'Afghan' and goes into the background of why that is not something Hazaras identify with, but also talks about how fluid identity is, and that it often depends on the context of where and how the person is asked.

In her article, Fischer (2017) takes an analytic view on Afghan diaspora living in Germany and the UK. Based on a qualitative study, she goes back to basics by questioning what a diaspora is, and quotes Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' picking at the reasons for migration as well as the different ways people come together to form communities. She suggests that the constantly changing face of diasporas of an Afghan community, and the different dimensions of its' constantly changing membership means that the Diaspora communities are also ever-changing in how they see themselves.

Finally, Laurel Mackenzie's work on the Hazara diaspora in Australia is one of the best written, that I could find about elements of identity, ethnic consciousness, political awareness and belonging. She has written two journal articles regarding traumas Hazaras go through as forced migrants and how they negotiate different elements of their identity during migration as well as once they get to receive residency in Australia. Mackenzie writes in her paper with Guntarik (2015) about the forced Hazara migrants that have finally received permanent residency after years of 'transience' on Temporary Protection Visas and so would be going through a complex process of transition, both legally, nationally but also as an element of their identities, in Australia. It is an excelled analysis of the perceived versus self-representation in the environment of an increasingly hostile Global North, but also avoids victimizing the asylum-seekers. In her paper (2017), Mackenzie tries to compare the seemingly contradictory elements of Australian Hazaras in the community, simultaneously using older cultural forms alongside a newly developed element of the Australian Hazara, and states that the combination of the older and the newer gives the complex identity of the Hazara diaspora.

Hazaras need to self-identify elements of their being and self-represent within the context of academic understanding. As more Hazaras enter academia, the quality and depth of understanding Hazaras within the context of Afghanistan as a country going through centuries of war and ethnic conflict is evident. A thorough study of the Hazaras facing forced migration has yet to be conducted. This thesis hopes to acknowledge the gap and contribute a sample of the form of self-representation necessary. A study such as this also has value in comparing different asylum-seeking systems Hazaras face in different host countries effecting their self-perception.

1.3. Problem Formulation

The issue of the historical subjugation, ethnic cleansing, and slavery of ethnic Hazara is better understood when framed as an ethnic, cultural and religious minority being colonized by the hegemonic imperialist rulers of Afghanistan. While the 'colonial' era is a memory of excursions and racist perspectives that the West would rather forget about because that era is over, Internal colonialism is alive and well in many parts of the world. Often, they are a result of colonial rule and destruction that the 'West' caused, in places like Africa, Asia and the Americas. Therefore, Hazaras have been and continue to be negatively impacted by the effects of colonialism by the British rule in the colonial era, by the American and European forces post-September 11, and continuously by the Pashtun ruling class in the form of Internal colonization. Due to the history of stigma of slavery, facing subjugation and discrimination based on their ethnicity and religion, the Hazaras have historically refrained from political involvement and lived amongst their own ethnic groups to survive. The Pashtun ruling class has also created policies that further isolate the ethnic Hazara and that systematically oppress them as a people, including land-grabbing and gate-keeping careers that hold authority such as in governmental offices.

In coverages of Afghanistan in the media, the Hazaras are often left out which leads to under-representation of ethnic minorities and gives the image of ethnic homogeneity. Popular books such as 'The Kite Runner' (Hosseini, 2003) has limited Hazara representation, often one-dimensional as the Hazara characters have slave mentality and uneducated; they are the weak that the Pashtun protagonist rescues to become the Hero of the story, suggesting that this slave mentality needs ruling. This research then, is also a way to allow Hazaras to represent themselves. Using the concept of internal colonialism, the paper will historically contextualize the power imbalance in Afghanistan's state regarding its ethnic heterogeneity. In doing so, it explores elements of Hazara cultural identity and how these elements are shaped by colonialism and explores Western asylum systems as remnants of colonialism. This is done by allowing RPs to talk about their elements of identity such as ethnicity, education, gender, class, religion, and culture. In self-identifying, the RPs are asked about their feelings about migration, leaving their homeland, and about their future. The problem formulation takes special focus on the human element of the study of migration since there exists a gap in academia regarding self-representation of Hazara asylum-seekers in Europe. This longitudinal study fills part of that gap by answering the following questions.

1.4. Research Questions

1) What are the effects of living as a marginalized ethnic minority in a state that operates as a form of internal colonialism and how does that effect Hazara identity in Afghanistan?

2) How do ethnic Hazaras show resistance to the hegemony and in what ways has that effected their ethnic and cultural identity?

3) How do ethnic Hazaras perceive their identities in asylum-seeking situations in France and Denmark after the return of the Taliban in August 2021?

1.5. Significance of Research

The focus on Hazaras being subjects of research is a relatively new one, yet mostly written by non-Hazaras with a single dimensional perspective. Hazaras have often been written about in the media as 'The Shia Hazara Minority' as victims of mass-killings in Afghanistan by the Taliban, and target-killings of Hazaras in Pakistan by the Lashkar-e-Jhangvia or Sipah-Sahaba terrorist groups. It is essential to humanize this image of Hazaras.

First, not all Hazaras are Shia, nor are all Hazaras Muslims. Studies like this is essential to allow Hazaras to describe how each of them identify themselves, and what they prioritize regarding their identities. Second, Hazaras are an ethnic minority in Afghanistan as much as the Pashtuns

and Tajiks are ethnic minorities, since the Pashtun ruling class have not allowed an independent census to be conducted. And even if any single census is taken as fact, no ethnicity within Afghanistan surpasses 38% (World Factbook CIA, 2019) and so, Afghanistan has been a land of minorities for centuries. Third, as is the case with most migrant groups, a desolate and inaccurate picture is portrayed in the media of Hazaras. Thus, this thesis is an attempt to show a representation of Hazaras from various backgrounds. The aim is to contribute to academia, as real a portrayal as there is of Hazaras dealing with identity issues and allowing their narratives in interviews with as little 'shaping' of answers as possible.

Finally, this is a study in the field of post-colonial identity within Identity politics. However, this thesis is also a post-colonial study of the migrants of the Global South being hesitantly accepted in the waves of migration towards Europe.

1.6. Outline

In the Introductory section (Chapter 1) I provided a short background and context, the Problem area, Literature review, Problem formulation, Research Questions, and Significance of Research. This is followed by Methodology of the thesis (Chapter 2) where I detail the Access to Research Participants, Core fieldwork components, Supplemental components, Researcher Positionality Ethical considerations, and Limitations of Research. Chapter 3 contains the Theoretical Framework for the thesis followed by Chapter 4 where analysis chapters are followed by chapter conclusions. In Chapter 5, I provide the Conclusion.

Photo by Rahmat Shahryar. Photo of Bamiyan mountains after the destruction of the Buddha statue by the Taliban. The Hazaras of Afghanistan consider themselves the caretakers of the statues that have become symbols of the Hazara identity and history. The mountains have many small caves where Hazaras continue to live in.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Access to Research Participants

The research for this thesis started a year earlier (November 2021) in working with Asylum United as a volunteer in Sandholm Asylum Centre in Denmark when I realized that people evacuated from Afghanistan were being received there. After meeting young women in that camp and reading about them in Danish media (Sander, 2021) it seemed as if Hazaras were not represented as an extra vulnerable ethnic minority. The asylum-seeking families were being moved to another camp making room for the Ukrainian asylum-seekers, making them feel under-valued. I asked some of them if they were interested in future research. However, they had moved to other countries as they had given up on the Danish asylum system. In meeting with the students evacuated from Afghanistan by Paris 8 University in April 2022, as part of the ERUA group through Roskilde University, I exchanged contacts once again with some of the students. I started reading Hazara-authored books about Hazara history and culture. I also planned on conducting interviews with asylum-seekers in France and in Denmark.

I had worked as an interpreter for the Immigration Museum as their researcher, Hannah Tendler was conducting interviews of interpreters evacuated from Afghanistan, and met some of my RPs in Danish asylum camps. I reached out to the three cultural associations of Hazara diaspora in Denmark for interviews. After returning from Paris, I kept in touch with some French students from Paris 8 University, and Sarah Carmoin (a social worker) helped contact the students of Afghanistan for interviews on my behalf as she was teaching them French language.

I visited Paris after making appointments for conducting the interviews. While visiting a local community center for French Afghans, called ‘Afrane’, I met with a. RP. Through snowball-sampling, I increased the list of possible RPs. I conducted 3 interviews in Paris and had to conduct the remaining interviews online when I returned to Denmark. During the transcription phase, I had to transcribe manually and interpret simultaneously. I chose first an Inductive coding style with a bottom-up approach, allowing the raw data to give me direction in the first phase, using open coding, and pattern-coding, and found themes. In the second phase of coding, I decided to use Deductive form of coding after having found my theoretical framework. This gave me the benefit of both coding styles and helped with organizing the big amount of empirical data I had accumulated. The choices of the countries focused (France, and Denmark) was solely based on the associations I had made due to the ERUA trip to Paris, and the fact that I live in Denmark.

2.2. Core Components

The Core Components of the fieldwork are 11 interviews conducted in person and over video conference calls, in Paris and in different parts of Denmark. There were 6 interviews of Hazara asylum-seekers that had newly transitioned to Europe: Samia, Ahmadi, Sajjad, Zakia, Taimur and Ali. There were 3 expert interviews: Habib, the chairperson of the Katib Hazara Cultural Association in Denmark; Mariam, that fled to Quetta, Pakistan, and lives in Denmark as part of the Hazara Diaspora; she works with Danish Refugee Council as a Diaspora Expert and had recently returned to Afghanistan as part of an internship and had been working with an NGO in the field of development; and Laeiq, a Tajik journalist that was recently evacuated from Afghanistan in 2021.

The interviews were semi-structured, starting from asking the participant to self-identify what they consider themselves to be. This allowed participants to choose their own ways of identifying and prioritizing elements of their identity. The questions were longitudinal in nature, going through questions about childhood, growing up, regarding ethnic consciousness, and the future, allowing for a narrative style of responses that allowed for flexibility. The questions aimed to ask about elements of their identities, some asking for more descriptive detail while others allowed for narratives and memories. Analysis of narratives as a methodology was used in this thesis, as narratives allow for researchers to understand how an interviewee view experiences. Using narratives as methodology provides a framework through which we can explore human experience (Rooney, Lawlor & Rohan, 2016, pg.147) and cites Webster and Mertova (2007, p.3) in suggesting that "narrative is not a reconstruction of life – it is a rendition of how life is perceived" (Rooney, Lawlor & Rohan, 2016, pg. 148). The use of narratives as an interview analysis is commonplace in studies of psychology and when dealing with self-perception and identity. The interviews lasted between 60 minutes and 120 minutes.

2.3. Supplemental Components

Also conducted were two further expert interviews in regards to the French language program by Paris 8, one is of the program manager of the Afghanistani evacuated students, Sophie Wauquier and of the teacher to these students, Sarah Carmoin. Further supplemental components were two days of seminars in Copenhagen (Oct 1st and Oct 2nd, 2022), hosted by Katib Cultural Association that focused on the Hazara Genocide and on the creation of a Genocide Archive online, followed by discussions about the discourse of Hazara identity where Hazara elites and academics were visiting from around the world. Finally, due to the timing of this thesis project coinciding with the 30th September 2022 bombing of the Kaaj Institute in Dasht-e-Barchi killing 54 young Hazara female students that led to protests, including in Copenhagen by DAHAF on October 8th, I attended conducted participant observation. These elements allowed for triangulation of empirical data.

2.4. Researcher Positionality

I come from a community of Hazara diaspora in Quetta, Pakistan. There are several elements of this thesis that I can personally relate to as my family has been affected by suicide attacks in Pakistan and forced migrations. My paternal grandfather migrated from Ghazni, Afghanistan to Quetta, Pakistan (British India then) in early 1920s. My grandfather was part of the first wave of Hazaras escaping ethnic cleansing at the hands of Abdur Rehman Khan in 1890s.

My grandfather joined the British Indian army, being a part of the famous Hazara Pioneers that were rewarded with some land after fighting in WW2. He married the daughter of another Hazara Pioneer soldier, who had fought in WW1 for the British Indian army. My father was brought up in poverty as my grandfather died while my father was young. He grew up in a Hazara community where his education was funded by a wealthy aunt, made extended networks of Pakistani friends and achieved social mobility. By the time all his five children were going to school, the Hazara target killings had just started in Pakistan, starting with the most influential Hazaras. There were summary executions, bombs blasts and assassinations. My father escaped Pakistan by migrating us to Canada. We grew up in different cities of Pakistan and Canada, both countries becoming strong elements of our identity.

While in Canada, we heard of our relatives being part of a religious 'Muharram' procession where there was a bomb blast. Later, my mother's brother was kidnapped. My paternal cousin's husband was shot forty times in the back as he was opening his factory early one morning. My mother's cousin was travelling to Iran in a van when a planted bomb exploded, aimed at Shia Hazaras going on pilgrimages, killing her daughter. Quetta continued to be a very violent place for Hazaras, and two decades later, most of our relatives have left for safer countries. The ones that have stayed have done so either because they lack the funds to leave or have been rejected asylum by the Global North. As a result, we have relatives spread across the globe, at different stages of achieving asylum. I am currently conducting research in a country I am not a citizen in, but where my children were born and raised. Thus, my status is of not only a third-generation migrant (both forced and based on reunification), but also as a member of Hazara Diasporic communities. These elements give me background knowledge of the effects of the Hazara persecution and the cultural understanding of what it means to be a Hazara in diaspora.

An important element of the fieldworks conducted has been the use of Hazaragi language, as most Hazara asylum-seekers from Afghanistan do not speak English, and the knowledge of speaking Dari, Farsi or Hazaragi is essential to get this data. I am aware this gives me an abundance of insider knowledge. When I meet with RPs, I often tell them who I am and what *Dai* (tribal) I belong to, which diaspora communities I have lived in and a little about how it feels to be a Hazara in exile. Cultural metaphors and jokes strengthen that bond and relieve stress, making way for a more relaxed environment for an interview. In Jean Conteh's book, Chisato Danjo cites Martin et al. (1998) in defining 'insider' as, "someone who identified themselves as a member of the

community and is in turn recognized as a member by the community (who shares) the community's culture which at surface level manifests as, for example, skin colour, language, neighbourhood, as well as at a more fundamental level, such as consciousness, belief and value systems" (Danjo, in Conteh, 2018, pg. 109). This makes me an insider of the community I am researching in. However, I find that some of my RPs felt at times that I was also an outsider: my researcher status, my unfamiliarity with daily life in Afghanistan, my unfamiliarity with local Hazara politicians/movements, my being a non-Muslim, and my unfamiliarity with certain Dari words. Citing Narayan, Danjo states, "given the multiplex nature of identity, there will inevitably be certain facets of self that join us up with the people we study, other facets that emphasize our difference" (Danjo, in Conteh, 2018, pg. 108). That is indeed true of my positionality as a researcher, in that I am an insider but also an outsider. Maxine Zinn explores the reasons behind the insider versus outsider controversy, citing the famous conclusion of Merton saying he, "concludes 'Insiders and outsiders in the domain of knowledge, unite. You have nothing to your claims. You have a world of understanding to win' (1972, 44)" (Zinn, 1979, pg. 210). This seems like an over-simplification of the problem of race divisions and the power imbalance in academia. I met some Hazara asylum-seekers in a Danish camp as an interpreter. The asylum-seekers seemed relieved to meet me, and having finished giving an interview, one man told me he did not know how this information was going to be used. My fellow researcher had been professional at every stage of the interview, following ethical rules of academia. What was inherently different was that I belonged to the same ethnic background as the RPs, while she was a Caucasian woman that spoke English and Danish. There was an element of power-imbalance that was making the research participant unable to refuse an interview. Having me there, someone he considered an insider, made him feel he could share his feelings. Having discussed with her his hesitancy, I suggested translating the consent form line-by-line in Farsi. Only then did he admit he did not want to sign the consent form as he had not clearly understood what the interview was for and was worried it would affect his asylum case. Still, he did not feel comfortable refusing her the interview, and asked for my help to refuse on his behalf. Like Zinn (1979, pg. 212), I do not suggest that 'white researchers' (or other outsiders) should give up studying racial minorities, but that ethnic minority researchers have a higher likelihood of getting a deeper level of trust, insider knowledge and higher chance of getting honest data as ethnic minorities would be less likely to give an answer that they think is expected of them. The insider issue is more of an issue regarding subjectivity, and it assumes that ethnic minority researchers do not go through the same vigorous levels of academic testing and schooling. Thus, the researchers from minority/majority backgrounds might simply get different forms of data, different answers based on different questions they would have prepared on the subject of Hazara ethnic identity than an ethnic Hazara researcher.

2.4.1. Oral history

While background knowledge through telling (his)stories has been the main way of passing on Hazara people's history, it is not considered scientific data. Yet, it has been the safest way of passing the histories of one's lineage to the next generation without the involvement of the Pashtun ruling class's attempt at controlling the narrative. In this research, all Hazara RPs remembered being told by their elders about who the Hazaras were and where they come from, and the horrors of the genocidal attacks against them by the Pashtun ruling class. The seminars attended allowed for me to hear Hazaras of different levels of education, background, and diaspora communities that spoke of similar stories told by their elders as they were growing up, for example. It succeeds in giving a story of one's lineage and making one proud of belonging to an ethnic group, as opposed to, historically, being ashamed of it due to stigma. Currently, the curriculum of no country's schooling system teaches about Hazaras and their history; Hazara children need an alternative, and these songs and telling of oral history cover that necessity.

2.4.2. Entering the fieldwork

Entering the fieldwork or making first contact with RPs tends to be the most difficult part of fieldwork and this is what I was expecting going into the field. I visited asylum camps while researching for other projects at Roskilde University that gave me experience with interviewing asylum-seekers as an academic. I then started volunteering with Trampolinhuset (February, 2022) as I was interested in the field of Migration and wanted to acquaint myself with the Danish Asylum system and make contacts. These attempts made me realize that I felt like an insider as well as an outsider in these communities. I realized the Hazaragi language I spoke was called Quettagi/Koitagi and that it was a dialect of Farsi/Dari, that the Hazaras of Afghanistan spoke. I realized that all forms of oral history passed down from relatives start from Afghanistan, and so most of these oral histories were lost before they reached us in Pakistan. For example, the earliest oral histories my family has heard of starts from 'Your grandfather was very young when he left Afghanistan' but not much is mentioned about life in Afghanistan. These differences make me an outsider, but the intimate knowledge of these makes me an insider, that is re-learning about my identity. Having never lived in Afghanistan, I can only compare my life in Quetta, Pakistan and find similarities in narratives. Making fun of my own lack of vocabulary (often substituted by Urdu or English words) made my RPs at ease and I would learn that Hazaras from different provinces in Afghanistan also have different dialects. Sharing my family's stories of target-killing and bomb blast deaths bonded us as victims of the same forms of crime.

2.4.3. My Baba's daughter

Some RPs or other members of the Hazara Diaspora in Denmark that had lived in Quetta, Pakistan knew my family members and for them, I instantly became known as 'Daughter of Mumtaz Changezi' or 'Niece of Haji Barkat'. This was especially special to me as my father was well-loved in my community and did a lot for Hazara communities without telling his family. So, now that he has passed away, it is emotionally touching for me to hear Hazaras tell me stories about my father, and his best friend, my uncle. Often, these connections bring about a sense of trust in the community and they understand my intensions better. Hazaras of Quetta, in general, are known to be proud of their ethnicity and both my father and uncle were known to be activists in different ways. In the Hazara seminars in Copenhagen, during the break a few men approached me and asked me about my father's name since I had mentioned I was from Quetta. I could recognize their Quettagi Hazaragi dialect. At hearing my father's name, one of them showed surprise and then became visibly emotional. They had been close friends and he told several stories to the others around, as more people started to join our group. Others explained how they knew my father. Events such as these help in gaining access and make new members of the community feel a sense of belonging. I felt it was a way to find belonging to each other, using our migration trajectories and stories of exile, turning me from an 'outsider' to an 'insider'.

2.4.5. Exiting the field

Being informed of their individual trauma and struggles, especially stuck in the limbo of having to wait for their next dates of processing in their asylum-systems, I have actively stayed in touch with my RPs. Asylum-seekers in Danish Asylum-camps are in dire need of social connections. While these are chances of mutual gain, they become personal in nature, as they do not have other people that have reached out to them. In trying to give back to the time and stories they have shared with me, I am in the process of connecting asylum-seekers with the current Hazara diaspora communities in Denmark where they can connect with other Hazara families. While these new relationships are professional and ethical in nature, the lines blur when some RPs become members of the Hazara Diaspora communities once they receive residency.

In attempting to get RPs, I have contacted many asylum-seekers that often message day or night due to fears of being deported based on something they have read on the internet. They also need interpretation, and in some cases, help in finding lawyers. It can be overwhelming to have to take on these duties, sometimes causing mental exhaustion and stress. I have used a friend (fellow researcher) to talk to when feeling over-whelmed. I have also learned to have a list of lawyers and activists on hand that I can forward issues on to. During some especially stressful moments, I turn off my phone for the day and spend time with my family helping temporarily with the stress. Much of this stress is due to the lack of an 'exit' strategy of fieldwork, something I admittedly had not learnt about prior to starting fieldwork. Having learnt from this, I work on turning the researcher-participant relationships into that of acquaintances and friends as their asylum cases are processed.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

This field work was conducted by explaining several times to the RPs that they do not have to say yes to an interview. While this sounds counter-intuitive in the process of conducting interviews, the RPs' comfort and safety needs to be prioritized. In a setting where the researcher holds power, especially when the RPs are asylum-seekers, often there could be misunderstandings that answering questions would somehow help their asylum cases. I have explained that not only can they say no, but also that my connection with them will not be severed if they refuse. I aimed to read through and translate every single point in the Consent Forms. In cases where subjects have asked for their real names to be used, I have insisted they re-think and provide fake names. Special sensitivity needs to be employed towards asylum-seekers as anything they say could be used against them in processing their asylum cases. While some consent forms for this research were signed by RPs, others gave audio recorded consent.

While one position I hold is as a researcher in the field of Migrations and Asylum-seekers in Denmark as part of Bolaq Analysts Network, this information being available online on several platforms have brought about questions about how to get safely to Europe or North America. It could be highly damaging if students of International Developments give legal advice in asylum centers while conducting fieldwork. I advise my RPs to contact their lawyers, Refugees Welcome or the Danish Refugee Council.

2.6. Limitations of Research

There are several limitations to this study. First, the asylum-seekers that go through the Danish system are moved from one asylum camp to another, all far away from metropolitan cities such as Copenhagen or Aarhus, and thus difficult and costly to visit and the shared living space make it difficult to conduct an interview privately.

Secondly, asylum-seekers are often busy with time-sensitive issues that need to be dealt with. An example is that families in asylum camps often have other meetings with case workers and lawyers, and scheduling around that can be difficult for a single semester's work. In one case, between the first contact and second, the possible RPs had relocated to North America.

Thirdly, the sample size of the data I receive depends heavily on the residents in asylum camps in Denmark, and whether they understand the purpose of the research. There were possible RPs that refused on the grounds that what they say might affect their asylum cases, and I have taken the first refusal as the last.

Fourthly, most of the interviews were conducted in Hazaragi dialect of Farsi, and so transcription software was not a viable option to use. Most of the time spent was on transcribing the interviews and interpreting them as best I could, then confirming with interpreters from

Afghanistan my interpretations. The Hazaragi that I speak is Quettagi/Koitagi (Hazaras of Quetta speak this dialect) and so I needed help in interpretation for some of the metaphors, words and 'silent knowledge' that were being stated.

Finally, most of the Hazara academia write mainly in Farsi and my skills of reading Farsi is elementary at best and so I am limited to books and academic papers written in English. In my thesis, I will be relying on some data that is in Farsi, however, they are minimal and will be translated clearly.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis looks at the effects of cultural hegemony on an ethnically diverse society and focuses on the current day cultural and diasporic identity, and so I use the theory of colonialism as a starting point. Orientalism and colonialism have a hand in the ethno-religious violence in the 'sub-altern'. After the departure of the British colonizers, Afghanistan has been continuously ruled by Pashtun ruling class, in a form of Internal colonialism. As post-colonial identities due to the end of British colonialism, the post-colonial concepts help in shaping this thesis. The theoretical framework uses post-colonial theorists: Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Stuart Hall, and Willem Schinkel.

3.1. Frantz Fanon

The Wretched of the Earth: Fanon analyzes the nature of colonialism as a destructive force, both on society and the psyche. Fanon describes how in subjugating natives, intense mental health issues arise out of colonial violence. The aim of colonialism is to dehumanize the natives through physical and mental violence until there is no soul left and a servile mentality remains. This mentality needs to be challenged through education of the masses, and according to Fanon, the only way to get out of colonial subjugation is a violent overturn by the people that are being hurt the most, the peasants. Describing post-colonial nations, Fanon writes, "In the colonized territories, the bourgeois caste draws its strength after independence chiefly from agreements reached with the former colonial power. The national bourgeoisie has all the more opportunity to take over from the oppressor since it has been given time for a leisurely *tête-á-tête* with the ex-colonial power" (Fanon, 1966, chapter 3). Describing how internal colonialism gets its authority after the imperial rulers leave, Fanon explains how a certain ruling class is implicit in colonization of its own nation.

3.2. Edward Said

Orientalism: According to Said, "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said, 1979, pg. 2). It is a specific discourse about the East (Others) created by the colonial powers of Europe that describes anything that is not the 'West' as a whimsical yet dangerous, enchanting yet uncivilized imaginary place, and as a result, places the 'West' as the opposite to those descriptions. In the 19th century, most orientalist researchers studied people, the language and culture of which they did not speak or understand well. Thus, orientalism is the curtain of bias, the lack of self-reflection (reflexivity) and presence of ethnocentric views of the academics and writers of the time. This perception is prevalent today not just in the lack of in-depth understanding of cultures and religions (such as the Middle East and Muslims) but a purposefully repeated

narratives, apparent in foreign policy, justification for invasions, and media representations of these countries.

Taking on Gramsci's notion of 'cultural hegemony', Said explains that by describing and defining the orient as uncivilized, the European researchers of the nineteenth century had successfully placed itself as superior to the 'others', i.e., all others that are non-European (Said, 1979, pg. 5). Also borrowing the concept of 'consent' from Gramsci, Said explains that by speaking for the east, especially considering it is an imaginative geographical place, the European colonizers justify the the subjugation of the colonized. Said argues cultural hegemony is, "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness" (Said, 1979, pg. 7). These ideas in practice show how colonial rulers over-power the colonized (ruled), using force and ideology in relation to power. Suggesting these steps as intentional, Said states, "The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. (Said, 1979, pg. 5).

When referring to 'others', Said suggests that Europeans do not see individuals and their humanity, they see groups of religious, ethnic, or racial peoples that are different from them and therefore probably do not suffer like them. These caricatures of the Arab, for example, tends to be duplicated in the media as uncivilized, cunning, untrustworthy, and voiceless. The one-dimensional identity remains fixed. There is a need for decolonizing new departures (Said, 1979, pg. 326) as the main issue of orientalists is that they have failed to identify and relate to the human experience of the humans that they 'experience' and research (Said, 1979, pg. 328).

3.3. Stuart Hall

Cultural Identity: Following the social constructivist view of Cultural identity, Hall states that cultural identity "belongs to the future as much as to the past, it is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture…Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power…identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (Hall, et al., 2021, p. 225). Identities are ever evolving based on the context, time, and space. Hall looks at cultural identity as fluid based on how colonial rulers position the ruled and their history, and how one positions themselves and their history. Colonial identities are negotiated from history to during the rule and post-colonial rule. Using the Caribbean identity, there exists a common identity of transportation, history and colonization, but also instability, and displacement due to forced migration and slavery. In the context of this thesis, the positioning of cultural identity is applied to Hazara cultural identity. The trauma of colonialism

is that of subjugation and forced migrations. The enslaving of a people results in not just the 'othering of others' but also forces the enslaved and oppressed to begin to experience themselves as 'other' (Hall, et al., 2021, p. 225). Therefore, identities are shaped and changed based on how we are positioned by the hegemony.

Representation Theory: Cultural identity is influenced by language and symbols, but in the age of mass media, the construction of culture and identity is also influenced by media technology. For Hall, the media is used as a tool by the state to reinforce dominant ideologies, those of the state. He states, "communication between the production elites in broadcasting and their audiences is necessarily a form of 'systematically distorted communication'. This argument then has a direct bearing on 'cultural policies', especially those policies of education, etc. which might be directed towards 'helping the audience to receive the television communication better, more effectively'" (Hall, 1973, pg. 1). Mass media is used by the hegemony to not only present, but also create new realities. A vision of dominant ideology is presented and then repeatedly copied until it is accepted as "representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work... the media construct for us a definition of what race is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the 'problem of race' is understood to be" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 105). Hall explains how overt racism as well as inferential racism plays a role in creating these images and ideologies; overt racism is how media repeats images and racist policies and the public eventually accepts it is true, while inferential racism is more invisible and deeply intrenched in the very structure of institutions and their way of thinking (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 106). Hall refers to the images of 'primitivism': the 'familiar slave figure' and the 'savagery and barbarism of the natives' and how those racist caricatures, when repeated, become accepted forms of racism and the hegemonic representations of a race or culture that harms them as peoples (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 108). While there is no fix 'presentation', it is the media that decides the 'preferred' representation, and that tends to be problematic for the minorities.

Diaspora-isation: Stuart states two definitions of cultural identity, one is 'stable' and insists we all have a one true identity within layers of superficial elements of being, and that is the shared ancestry and history view (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 258). This essentialist view helps explain members of a diaspora wanting to return to a motherland to reconnect with culture and history. The other is 'unstable' and is helpful in the studies of diaspora, focusing on forced migrations and hybridity of identity. It relates events and experiences to shaping identity. Full of contradictions, it is focused on a mix of similarities and differences, constantly transforming (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 261). It explains diaspora-isation of identity.

3.4. Willem Schinkel

Multiculturealism: At the failure of multiculturlism as an idealist way of living, European nations change their stance instead towards 'Multicultu*real*ism', coined by Schinkel, where policies pretend to be *real*ist in nature, in dealing with difficult topics such as immigrant integration and Islam in the Western world. The problem with this stance is that "the discourse of multiculturealism has entailed a license to problematize migrant others, i.e., to forego the relational aspects of migration and to focus solely on the position and problems of immigrants and their children, many of whom actually born on European soil" (Schinkel, 2018, p.2). The conventional immigrant integration research, that is still in effect in European nations assumes that immigrants can be integrated in various degrees, and those that are unable to 'integrate' are 'misfits' because if a person does not become part of the society, then they must be against society. This problematizes and 'others' them. Any analysis of a person not integrated is applied to the bigger groups associated, such as religious groups or ethnic groups, in neoliberal ways of assuming group behaviours. This grouping into ethnic groups is done for classification and monitoring. The whole system of integration and the research on it is done using immigrants as subjects, and so the immigrants aim to be well-integrated to achieve a status that they can never achieve since 'native white' Europeans are never included in the data sets, and thus are out of the equation. Schinkel states, "what is always already decided, is that all ethnic groups are at a remove from 'society'. People may be well integrated, indeed they may be very well integrated, but that still means they are at the other side of the defining divide" (Schinkel, 2018, p. 4). Thus, in committing a petty crime might get an asylum-seeker deported while a white European might have to pay a fine. Taking these post-colonial flows of forced migrations from the global south to the global north, the odds are stacked against asylum-seekers since they face a system that does not have a clear goal post. Schinkel suggests the colonial framework is outdated, the way they think about integration is ethnocentric, and the 'other' is a problem that needs to be 'integrated/sanitized', suggesting cleansing the ethnicity out of people. It is an unachievable goal. The problem is not those that flee for their lives, but the outdated scope and definition of the immigration systems.

Photo name: 'Under the Veil' by Hazara photographer Fatima Hosseini. The model represents cultural motif on red headscarf while wearing cultural jewelry. The woman pulls on her eyes, suggesting the essentialist way Hazaras have been mocked, re-positioning herself as the subject of the photograph. She is essentially re-framing her colonial identity and re-claiming Hazara-ness.

4. ANALYSIS

Most Hazaras perceive their individual identities using markers of identity some of which seem to be essentialist in nature, including ethnic origins, cultural heritage, nationality, gender, religion, class, age, tribal lineage, and culture; and through self-perceived views of their community: oppressed, victims of a genocide, persevering, educated, forward-thinkers, and liberal. Operating as a post-colonial state after independence from British colonialism, I frame the dominant and dominated cultures in Afghanistan as post-colonial identities. The analytical chapters are structured to answer the following questions: 1) What social strategies have Hazaras employed in facing colonial violence and persecution? And 2) How do these strategies shape the way Hazaras view themselves?

The chapters are organized as follows. In 'Reclaiming Hazara-ness', I argue that previously ascribed identity of inferior subjects of the King, the Hazaras of the recent generations have reclaimed this essentialist identity with an emancipated version of their own, using the Hazara aesthetic and being proud of their facial features. In 'Generational poverty', I argue that previously having been stuck in generational poverty, Hazaras have increasingly educated their children, resulting in the breaking of this colonial trap. In 'Culture of resistance', I argue that Hazaras have used education and gender equality as tools of ethnic mobilization and resistance, increasing representation in different offices of Afghanistan. In 'Colonial violence and Cultural diaspora-isation', I argue that centuries of persecution and colonial violence has resulted in good social navigation skills amongst Hazara diasporas.

4.1. Reclaiming Hazara-ness

Previously ascribed identity of inferior subjects of the King, the Hazaras of the recent generations have reclaimed this essentialist identity with an emancipated version of their own, starting with their facial features and skin colour. In fact, they believe they can be easily recognized amongst the many other ethnicities in Afghanistan due to having Mongoloid facial features. These include slanted 'oriental' eyes that Hazaras claim as 'almond-shaped', and 'flat Mongolian' noses. Facial features have not deviated much through the centuries because ethnic Hazaras marry almost always other Hazaras (Minority Rights, 2021) and when inter-ethnic marriages occur, the lives of the couple are threatened by both families (Pezhman, June 9, 2022; Murphy, May 12, 2019) as tensions rise based on ethno-religious differences. In fact, it is rare for inter-ethnic marriages to occur in Afghanistan, although attitudes seem to be shifting slightly. Hazaras believe the Mongoloid facial features make it easy to discriminate against them, reflected in the racist slurs aimed at them. In Afghanistan, ethnic groups have derogatory names for other ethnicities. However, the slurs that Hazaras experience relate to their ethnic origins (*Chim-thang*, meaning slant-eyed; *Qulfak-chappad*, meaning flat-nosed; *Zardai* meaning yellow-skinned), and some that compares them to

something that is not 'human' (*Sang-baqa*, meaning frog; *Maimoon*, meaning baboon), or to compare them to savages (*Mooshkhor*, meaning rat-eater). In describing how her teacher Aziz Royesh would try to enlighten students to study hard, Samia recalls him stating,

> 'You, girl. Do you understand that now that you have found your way into school, 100 years ago, your forefathers were called *Mooshkhor*, Hazaray *Qulfak-chappad*. Now you are not studying? You will go to a wedding instead? Now you want to pass the time? Study, Study. Go and show these people that Hazaras are capable. Hazara *Chim-thang*, Hazara *Qulfak-chappad*. Hazaray *mooshkhor*. Hazaray *sang-baqa*. Whatever they call you, just study. Study steadily. (Samia, 33 years).

Samia's response shows that the cultural education she received acknowledges racial slurs, and actively uses them in class to normalize essentialist name-calling, turning them into a basis for achievement and pride. It suggests that Hazaras find empowerment in facing and accepting essentialist slurs and use it to drive the youth to succeed. This dehumanizing through name-calling is similar to the slavery era of African slaves, through the use of Blackface in Minstrel shows (Smithsonian, November 22, 2017), the aim of which was in 'othering' them as well as sharing propaganda with the aim of denying them humanity. Both dominant cultures used skin colour, comparison to animals, and exaggerated physical features to suggest backwardness, unevolved, and savagery and therefore in need of domination. Both dominant cultures succeeded in enslaving, forcibly moving, and cultural destruction of the dominated cultures. Hall cites Brathwaite, "'it was in language that the slave was perhaps most successfully imprisoned by his master, and it was in his (mis-)use of it that he perhaps most effectively rebelled' (1971). The forms of this process of cultural imprisonment and subversion in language are worth noting" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 166). Hall uses this quote in referring to literal African languages that the colonial masters aimed to destroy. However, this quote refers also to the destruction of a colonized culture, by demeaning their historical origins, to destroy the spirit of the slave. In the Hazara context, these terms are caricatures made, using their own language. After all, these terms are all Dari/Hazaragi terms. In citing Fanon, Stuart Hall states, 'Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" (Hall, et al., 2021, p. 224). Hazaras are viewed as inferior based on their ascribed history of 'outsiders' and of subjugation (see Introduction), the origins concluded by Orientalist researchers (see Literature review), the basis that King Abdur Rehman gave a *fatwah* on, to kill these infidels. This history of raped mothers and daughters, and of poverty-stricken survivors that must eat rats to survive, further enforce Hazaras being infidels as eating rats is forbidden in Islam. Their features and yellow skin make them infidels, justified persecution, since they are not 'real' Muslims; they are heretics. After listening to this narrative for generations, it had become ingrained into the minds of Hazara children that saw evidence of their features, outing them as inferior. Internalizing an ascribed identity, essentialist and inferior, caused Hazaras to feel shame and stigma of being Hazara.

The colonial lens aims to benefit the dominant ideology, that of the colonizers. This 'yellow skin' is echoed by Hall speaking about the 'Shiny black skin', as well as in Said's Orientalism, "undifferentiated type called Oriental, African, yellow, brown, or Muslim. To such abstractions Orientalism had contributed its power of generalization, converting instances of a civilization into ideal bearers of its values, ideas and positions" (Said, 1979, pg. 252). Slurs based on physiognomy is used for Hazaras, since Pashtuns and Tajiks, for example, may be mistaken for each other, while Hazaras cannot be, due to their distinctive mongoloid features. A Tajik asylum-seeker I interviewed in Paris used to be a journalist for a leading news channel on TV and radio in Kabul. He was part of the Paris 8 university group. When asked about the first time he heard of who the Hazaras were, Laeiq recalled,

> In Afghanistan, the suppression of Hazaras started in 1883-1884 after Amir Rehman Khan took over. This was his policy to basically kill Hazaras, as Hitler would do the same with the Jews. I think from that onwards there was deliberate and intentional discrimination injected into society. Like as kids, I remember when we were taught, not intentionally, but we learned from outside when we were playing with the other kids, you know? Some very colloquial Proverbs or sayings for example '*Hazara Taghara, kallay moosha Mekhara*' (Hazara eats the heads of rats), '*Hazara Domba daara*' (Hazaras have buttocks), '*Hazaray puchuq*' (Hazara flat-nosed), '*Hazaray Mooshkhor*' (Hazara rat-eaters). (Laeiq, 35 years).

After the genocidal attacks of Abdul Rehman in 1890s, the population of the previously independent Hazara people of Hazaristan "was greatly reduced as a result of deaths caused by the war and the hunger and famine that followed it as well as slavery and forced migration" (Ibrahimi, 2022, pg. 81). Laeiq compares the historical discrimination and killings of Hazaras with that of the Jewish Holocaust, where pamphlets were spread as propaganda that would show rats, with exaggerated facial features, comparing Jews to rats, dehumanizing Jewish people (Philadelphia Holocaust Memorial, January 18, 2021) and justifying elimination. This is similar to Hazaras being compared to baboons, suggesting being under-evolved, in need of domestication and justifies domination and elimination. Laeiq's perspective was essential in that he provided with the 'external categorization' perspectives of the Hazara. He continued,

> There were a lot of rumors spreading around saying that they are kneeling on people's heads, '*Mekh mekova*' (Hammering a nail in people's heads). You know something called the 'dance of death'. A lot of negative stuff about Hazaras, they would cut off the breasts of women, these kind of things. As kids, we really were scared of facing a Hazara. And it was weird to face another ethnicity during Civil War because everybody will seek refuge at the place where he or she feels safe. (Laeiq, 35 years).

This imagery provokes caricatures of a people by the Orientalists. Hall talks about a period of colonialism where 'certain fixed negative attributes of the colonized' were widespread in the media. He writes that a "base-image is that of the 'native'. The good side of this figure is portrayed in a certain primitive nobility and simple dignity. The bad side is portrayed in terms of cheating

and cunning, and, further out, savagery and barbarism" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 109). This base-image does damage two-folds: first, the good side infantilizes an ethnic group and shows them as noble subjugated beings, in need to be ruled since they are incapable; second, the bad side creates distrust, and creates an image of a monster, a barbarian that is not human, and together they further dehumanize the colonized 'other'. An overt example of this is in the book 'A Vizier's Daughter', written by the British court physician to Abdur Rahman, starts, "Poor, heavy, dull Hazara! But he is patient and industrious, and not really devoid of intelligence, in spite of the subjection in which he is held, so his day may come yet, and then let his master beware, for he is fierce, revengeful, and cruel, if he ever does strike, he will strike hard" (Hamilton, 1900, Pg. 7). Another representation of which exists in the book 'The Kite Runner' (2003) by Pashtun author Khaled Hosseini, where a Pashtun upper class protagonist treats his Hazara servant as a slave while the 'slave' keeps promising to do anything for him, despite getting raped, showing slave mentality. The book is a story of the hero Pashtun protagonist that rescues the Hazara enslaved son of his former servant, a dancing boy-slave kept by a Taliban leader, suggesting that centuries of domination is not only justified due to the timid, effeminate ethnic Hazara, but also that a heroic act by a Pashtun is enough to 'solve' the problems of ethnic conflicts; the Hazara has thus, no agency, no conscience, and is content either way. Considering the book was just turned into a popular movie shows how these problematic caricatures are still accepted.

One of the aims of caricatures and racist representation is to frighten people of the other ethnic group, causing xenophobia. This causes division amongst the many ethnic groups, ensuring distrust, a remnant of British colonial strategy of divide-and-rule. A strategy so successful that even after generations, through the changing of the political structure of Afghanistan and evidence of higher levels of education in the country, ethnic groups still tend to stick to themselves. Malika and Zakia both mentioned ethnic groups in their schools remained stratified and would not speak to each other as soon as they left the school.

However, a major difference through the generations is that there is a clear ethnic consciousness amongst the Hazaras today, and the educated generations choose to re-claim these slurs. These facial features are claimed as Hazara-ness and accepted as beautiful features of a people and are mentioned in Hazara songs and poetry (Rezaei, August 15, 2021; H. Z, 2015). Hall mentions a shift he sees in the way blackness is reclaimed and represented. He writes, "Politically, this is the moment when the term 'black' was coined as a way of referencing the common experience of racism and marginalization in Britain and came to provide the organizing category of a new politics of resistance, amongst groups and communities with, in fact, very different histories, traditions and ethnic identities" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 246). Hall refers here to the way the blacks had been positioned after slavery and colonialism. Since identity is how one is positioned, depending on the time, place, and power structures (context), then the black man was positioned to be of inferior race, but still to be feared; to be an object rather than the subject of a topic. Blackness, culturally, was all that were positioned as 'others' when the dominant discourse is the 'white aesthetic' (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 247), and in the margins live all others on the

spectrum of black, including the dark browns (Arabs, South Asians, Afghans) and yellows (Asians, including the Hazaras). Contextually, 'emancipation' or the return of stigma is the moment in history when the colonial identity has achieved the right to position themselves in time and space. For ethnic Hazaras, this has been the rise of ethnic consciousness resulting in the 'breaking of mental chains' of slavery and stigma. Removing the mental shackles of stigma is possible through education and representation. Frantz Fanon writes, "To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean, making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too" (Fanon, 1966, pg. 197). This is reflected in the Hazara ethnic consciousness, with their strong focus on education and representation.

Conclusion: Hazaras have been objects in an internal colonial regime that supports the dominant ideology of the hegemony, through different attempts at dehumanizing, destroying culture and re-writing history. Orientalists are implicit in the colonization of ethnic Hazaras by the Pashtun ruling class and this colonial perspective remains in place, reflected in written history and media representations of the ethnic minorities that are positioned on the margins. Thus, previously ascribed identity of inferior subjects of the Pashtun King, the Hazaras of the recent generations have reclaimed this essentialist identity with an emancipated version of their own, through the use of the Hazara aesthetic and self-representation. This end of the stigma of being a subjugated people gives way to cultural-reframing and self-identification.

4.2. Generational poverty

Ending the stigma of belonging to a subjugated people gave way to re-framing poverty. Previously having been stuck in generational poverty as a tool of internal colonialism, Hazaras have increasingly educated their children, resulting in the breaking of this colonial trap. Generational poverty is defined as "a family having lived in poverty for at least two generations" (Urban Ventures, 2020) causing educational poverty and parental poverty, culminating in an inescapable state of hopelessness; it disproportionately impacts minority communities that face system-wide barriers (Georgia Center for Opportunity, May 26, 2021). Hazara families have often been victims of generational poverty as land-grabbing, persecution, and barriers to education and career opportunities are inherent in the framework of internal colonialism.

My RPs range from high school graduates to doctorate degree holders, and many spoke about Hazara students and their achievements. Assuming that these were Hazaras belonging to a higher class since they could afford to go to school, I found out that my RPs belonged from an upper middle class all the way down to poverty class. Historically, Hazaras have seen severe poverty because of the King's policies when he "redistributed extensive Hazara territories as

rewards to new Pashtun settlers" (Ibrahimi, 2022, pg. 83), and being sold as slaves, but also facing deaths due to famine and hunger (pg. 82) due to the high taxes imposed.

I was introduced to Mariam at a Hazara community event in Denmark by DAHAF as someone that worked with the Danish Refugee Council's Diaspora program. Mariam was 35 years old, and being raised in Pakistan and Denmark, had briefly sought an internship to fund her stay in Afghanistan for a few years so she could re-connect with her relatives and find a sense of belonging. She was both an insider and an outsider in Afghanistan, as her employers were Danish INGOs but she spoke Hazaragi, and was welcomed as their own by the people she interacted with. When asked how she would self-identify, Mariam replied, "That's a tough question. Then I would describe myself as Afghan, you know, I'm Mariam, Afghan Danish. And then if you go even deeper into, I would actually state my identity that I am a Hazara from Afghanistan" (Mariam, 35 years). She returned to Afghanistan to re-connect and so her response reflected the two places she felt she belonged to, that contributed to her identity. Her earliest memory of realizing she was Hazara was in Quetta where she was living as a migrant, when the Hazara political and spiritual leader Abdul Mazari was killed by the Taliban in March of 1995 and she saw Hazaras mourn collectively, an event almost all Hazaras remember. In asking about class, Mariam remembered a conversation with her grandmother,

> My grandmother, who just recently passed away. I remember I asked her a question in 2015. I was like, '*Ajai* (grandmother) were the old days good or now?' And then, she really gave it a thought and she said, 'it's better now'. And I said why? And then she really think hard and then she told me 'There isn't hunger now'. It's still painful for me that, just imagine, you assess a whole life, she was old. She was 65. You would assess your whole life based on whether there was Hunger or not (Mariam, 35 years).

The times Mariam's grandmother would be talking about referred to the times that the Pashtun ruling class would block humanitarian aid from Hazara provinces and generations of families would be forced to eat grass. This kind of poverty shocks Mariam as the first generation out of poverty. However, with the return of the Taliban, poverty resurfaces as the main crisis affecting Afghanistan. Many of my RPs come from generational poverty, a trap of internal colonialism. Fanon writes, "Colonialism hardly ever exploits the whole of a country. It contents itself with bringing to light the natural resources, which it extracts, and exports to meet the needs of the mother country's industries, thereby allowing certain sectors of the colony to become relatively rich. But the rest of the colony follows its path of under-development and poverty, or at all events sinks into it more deeply" (Fanon, 1966, Chapter 3). Generational poverty includes stories of famine causing internal migration, and times of despair and hopelessness are alive in the Hazara oral history. Taimur's grandfather would take his animals to graze in a village that had no clean running water, and Samia stated that while her father owned a soap manufacturing factory, most of the Hazara students in her university had fathers that were poor farmers, and it took a year to return home since travelling back to their village cost money they did not have. Zakia went to school with girls that had torn slippers and tattered clothes, carrying their books in plastic bags.

Despite the advancements made in education and development in Afghanistan under the NATO and US forces, Hazaras belong predominantly to low class and social hierarchy.

While in Paris, Samia gave me the number of another PhD student, Ahmadi, that was in the process of opening the first museum and cultural center in Bamiyan before Afghanistan fell to the Taliban. His doctorate degree was in archaeology and his dream was to tell the story of the history of Hazaras through artifacts and the Buddhist statues of Bamiyan. When asked to self-identify, the 34 year old from Jaghatu replied, "I say I am from Afghanistan. In my experience, 80% of the time, they do not ask further. However, 20% of the people ask further, they ask, 'are you Hazara?' based on the anthropological face that I have. I believe becomes evident that I am Hazara" (Ahmadi, 34 years). In asking about oral history, he stated, "I would hear stories about Kochis forcibly taking Hazara lands, and they did not even see the point of complaining. This showed how oppressed Hazara people were, very poor and vulnerable that nobody asks about them" (Ahmadi, 34 years). While speaking about his childhood, Ahmadi told me that growing up, his family did not own land or a home, but instead lived in someone else's home in return for keeping it clean. They owned a cow that grazed on other people's land and his father was blind from before Ahmadi was born. Being the only son amongst many sisters, he helped his sisters weave carpets to sell. He stated,

> This finger of mine has just healed. When I wove carpets, it would shave off the top. It was a bit better for me, because I was a boy, I would be told to rest. But my sisters, they would be told to weave until midnight. The day arrived when, my father had a pair of pants, he went to sell it, to be able to buy wheat because we did not have any flour at home. There were times tougher than this, but. Sometimes I think, it's good that time goes on, because if it did not move and we got stuck at the same moment, it would be difficult, immensely difficult (Ahmadi, 34 years).

This very intimate view into his life shows not just what generational poverty looks like for Hazaras but is comparable to the oral history of my own ancestors, understood as colonial theft. Fanon writes, "The former colonial power increases its demands, accumulates concessions and guarantees and takes fewer and fewer pains to mask the hold it has over the national government. The people stagnate deplorably in unbearable poverty; slowly they awaken to the unutterable treason of their leaders" (Fanon, 1966, Chapter 3). This state of unbearable poverty maintains the status quo, despite the hard work and perseverance of the colonized, keeping the dominant order of hegemony in place because "the army and the police constitute the pillars of the regime" (ibid). Stuart Hall's concept of representation also applies to the under-representation of the colonized in areas that hold authority, such as politics and military forces. It is no wonder, then, that Hazaras view minimum height requirements for recruitment in the police and military forces of Afghanistan as discriminatory since it excludes most Hazaras, due to their 'ethnic' stature (height).

Ahmadi described *roghan* (clarified butter) that were sold in yellow plastic that his mother would save at home and then sew them together to make a school backpack for him as they could

not afford a school bag. He explained, "Yes, she had sewn them. Everyone that went to that school, about 1200, about 800 of them had bags like mine. The life of a Hazara is like that" (Ahmadi, 34 years). Hazara majority provinces in Afghanistan tend to be most poverty-stricken as generational poverty, land-grabbing and discriminatory laws make it difficult for Hazaras to get out of the cycle of poverty. Almost all Hazaras I have ever met with have shared trauma of poverty and hunger, that is a direct result of racist policies and higher taxation by the Pashtun ruling class. However, these collective memories are passed down and Hazaras accept these difficult times as a cause of perseverance in pursuing higher education, focusing on educating their daughters and aiming for jobs where ethnic representation might make a difference for all Hazaras.

Conclusion: Colonial policies are made to keep the dominant ideology of hegemony and oppress the dominated in multiple ways. One aim of colonialism is to extract resources and colonial theft, and replacing the previous economic structures of the natives with institutions that entrap the colonized in cycles of poverty, resulting in issues such as educational poverty, toxic stress, and parental poverty. These forms of poverty are accompanied by psychological trauma, a form of hopelessness, mentally chaining the colonized. In the context of the ethnic Hazara, the Pashtun ruling class achieves internal colonialism by land-grabbing, forcibly removing Hazaras from their ancestral land, and creating discriminatory policies to exclude Hazaras in meaningful positions of authority. Filling positions of authority with members of the dominant ethnic group ensures that dominated groups cannot escape these cycles of poverty. This results in the colonial rulers 'positioning' the colonized 'other' to the margins of society, as inactive, uneducated outsiders, out of sight. Previously having been stuck in generational poverty, Hazaras have increasingly educated their children, resulting in the breaking of this colonial trap.

4.3. Culture of Resistance

Educating not just their sons but also their daughters, Hazaras have been using education and gender equality as tools of cultural resistance to achieve representation in Afghanistan. In the early 1900's Hazaras of Afghanistan had no chance of upward mobility, development, or an education. Many had fled to Iran and British India, where they had a chance to get educated. Culturally isolated by external forces, as well as self-isolating to survive, Hazaras of Afghanistan depended on the tribal and family structures to survive. The Hazaras of Iran, on the other hand, were being educated in *madrassas* (Shia schools), resulting in a generation of Iranian educated Hazaras that were responsible for the beginning of the Hazara ethnic awareness (Ibrahimi, 2012, p. 8). Academic works were written about the Hazaras in Farsi, and it is these institutions that were responsible for the literacy of Hazaras, inspiring many early Hazara authors and spiritual leaders, leading to the first ever recognition of Hazaras having a united ethnic identity (Marie, 2013, p. 97). Hall refers to the "complicated interplay between the 'cultures of dominance' and 'cultures of resistance' (defined as) the extent to which they preserve, borrow, alter and transpose elements in

order that the historically developing and emergent trajectory of the asses and classes in struggle can find articulation" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 162). This image of a 'culture of resistance' through education and gender equality, has become central to the Hazara identity.

I met Taimur in Afrane, a Parisian library dedicated to Afghanistan that hosts students of Afghanistan and helps them with the French language (Afrane, 2022). At 28 years old, Taimur originated from Daikundi, and had finished his Master's degree in Kabul before achieving a 'foreign' job, on the basis of which the French organizations helped evacuate him. In asking him who Taimur was, he self-identified as "I am from Afghanistan, from the province of Daikundi, and belong to Hazarajat. I actually enjoy explaining in detail to people that are interested. So I would like to start telling people, people that know, that I am from Hazarajat" (Taimur, 28 years). Taimur was not just aware of his Tribe and lineage, but was highly interested in topics of ethnic identity and political student mobilization. When he did not find Hazaras in his history books at school, he started to search bookstores and universities, and it is here where he found the history of Hazaras. In asking about where Hazara children get their 'ethnic education' from, he stated,

> I have studied history and the history of Hazara on my own behest, as I felt it was a need, history of our culture, of ancient history, of early historical mentions of hazaras, and also of non-hazaras writing about hazaras. It is because I have studied the history of Hazaras so much that I have learnt that for so many years Hazaras have been silenced and the history of Hazaras were hidden, that is why I like being recognized by my ethnic identity (Taimur, 28 years).

As Hazaras were wiped out of their own history in Afghanistan, and since traditionally, Hazaras pass their oral history down in the form of stories, and historically have searched for mentions of their people in historical documents. As "only an Occidental could speak of Orientals, for example, just as it was the White Man who could designate and name the coloreds, or nonwhites. Every statement made by Orientalists… conveyed a sense of the irreducible distance separating white from colored, or Occidental from Oriental" (Said, 1979, pg. 228). Citing Fanon, Hall describes the result of being defined and expropriated as "individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, a race of angels (1963, 176)" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 260). It was this knowledge Hazaras found, inaccurate and orientalist in nature, for decades before Hazaras began publishing about their own people. In attempting to represent themselves in research, the pursuit of education became a major element of Hazara identity.

As a student in Kabul, Taimur was faced with discrimination for the first time, since he came from a Hazara dominated area and had to learn to face discrimination as well as abuse. Taimur lost many fellow students during a popular Hazara student movements rally in Kabul that saw 80 dead and wounded 230, a bomb attack that was set up by the Islamic State (BBC, July 23, 2016). However, instead of seeking revenge, Hazara students take it upon themselves to use education as a form of emancipation and resistance. Fanon believes that education, and especially political education, is integral to 'enlightenment', writing, "political education means opening their

minds, awakening them, and allowing the birth of their intelligence; as Cesaire said, it is 'to invent souls'" (Fanon, 1966, Chapter 3). Hazaras have gone through this 'inventing of souls' and have similarly understood that "to hold a responsible position in an under-developed country is to know that in the end everything depends on the education of the masses, on the raising of the level of thought, and on what we are too quick to call 'political teaching'" (ibid). Educational institutions have become battlegrounds in Afghanistan (Afghanistan International, October 13, 2022), with the Pashtun elite making policies to reverse this increase in education amongst the ethnic Hazaras (Rahim, July 19, 2013). Speaking of this rise in number of Hazara students entering universities and topping entrance exams, Taimur states, "in Hazara dominant areas like Daikundi and Bamiyan, I can say that about 70% of the people are educated. Around the time I got graduated from school, in 2010-2011, I was the first in my area to have graduated university. Only 30 of us graduated. In the year 2001-2002, in our village, you could not find 5 people that had graduated grade 12" (Taimur, 28 years). Sending their sons and daughters to get educated has become a major element of Hazara identity, not just in Afghanistan but also in Diaspora communities. Globally, Hazaras view themselves as a culture of resistance, and they resist, using their pens. Taimur concludes, "Hazaras are associated with being students of universities, with science, their daughters go to school. Their daughters go to universities. Because of all the advancements they have achieved in the fields of science, education, sports and culture, these are the Hazaras" (Taimur, 28 years).

While ethnic Hazara men have succeeded in their pursuit of education, it is a more difficult journey for Hazara women as societal pressures and cultural expectations shift more slowly. Thus, Hazara women get discriminated on based on their religious affiliation, ethnic origins, but also based on their gender. In fact, there is no consensus in the Hazara community as to which element of their identity is being attacked when massacres occur at a girls school (Ochab, November 8, 2022) or a maternity ward (MSF, August 21, 2020), or whether it is even possible to separate the hatred for the ethnic minority, the gender, or the Shia minority. Yet, after every attack, or acts of violence, the group of people that take the hit the hardest tend to be the women of Afghanistan as often they are left with children to raise in extreme poverty after losing the breadwinners of the family. Ethnic Hazaras are one of the most persecuted people in Afghanistan, and Hazara women stand even lower on the social hierarchy.

Zakia was just 17 when I first met with her in a Danish Asylum camp. That day, she would not speak but I knew she had a lot to say because I could see her standing right next to the door, listening to the discussions of identity, and belonging her male family members were taking part in while she was busy preparing tea, food, snacks and was helping take care of the young children in the family. As is cultural in Hazara families, the young women are trained to cook, clean, be hospitable and help raise the children of the family. When she finally got a chance to give me an interview almost a year later, it was full of interruptions, people asking her for help, and young children wanting her attention. She remained undeterred. I asked her who Zakia was, and she stated, "Zakia is an 18 year old girl that comes from Afghanistan, was born in Kabul. And she belongs to the proud Hazara ethnic group. That's it" (Zakia, 18 years). A student belonging to a

lower middle class of society, Zakia lived in Kabul when the Taliban took over. In asking if she wanted to return to Afghanistan one day, she states,

> Not to live there. I would value living here rather than living in Afghanistan. Being Hazara means I have no value. Second, being a woman has no value, as she does not even count. When I look around here, women can do everything, they are capable. In Afghanistan, a girl is not able to work. In order to work, she will have to deal with so many difficulties, starting with people talking bad about her, discouraging her, it is extremely difficult. When I was in Afghanistan, I always thought about how difficult it would be to be the first female Hazara journalist since there never has been one. There were times that I could not construct a sentence explaining what I wanted to do (become). Often, people would make fun of me, saying, 'But you're a girl from *our* ethnicity!' since that has not yet happened (Zakia, 18 years).

Zakia dreamed of becoming the first female Hazara journalist, and she has had to face barriers, both from the ethno-sectarian violence prevalent in Afghanistan, but also from within her own community. The social norms of Afghanistan are difficult to break through, even with the support of her family. Relatives and others within the community would often discourage Hazara women from attempting to achieve a goal they seem unachievable, both based on their ethnicity and their gender. Getting Hazara girls educated has been the goal of Hazara spiritual and political leaders such as Abdul Mazari and Aziz Royesh, among others. Thus, exists a duality of perspective on higher education for Hazara women; families want to send their daughters to universities, but fear this freedom might cause rumours and issues for their futures. The return of the Taliban brought along the end of life as it was for women in Afghanistan, especially those that were students and had jobs. When asked about the worst thing she had gone through, Zakia lamented,

> The day Kabul fell was an extremely difficult day for me. That day, all the dreams and hopes of young girls were buried. From the day that different provinces started falling to the Taliban, we would go to school and people would say they will come take Hazara girls away again. How would we survive? Then came the day when Kabul fell, we were taking exams in school. (cries) I can never forget that day. It was such a horrible day, that girls were so frightened of the Taliban. We grew up hearing about the Taliban. The teachers told us to wear big *chadar* (headcovers), girls that had folded their pant cuffs up, to unfold them. 'Fix your clothes, tie your hair and cover your head, and look towards the ground to avoid showing your face as you go home'. I looked at the exam papers and froze. I was in shock. The teacher said instead of one exam, you all will have to give 3 exams so at least you will be done with your papers. I had forgotten everything. I said, 'What should I write? The Taliban are here. What is the point of all this now? Whether we pass or fail, the result does not matter' Because everyone kept saying, the Taliban will not let you study anymore. In previous times they had stopped women from going to school and it had been a very difficult life. We can never forget that. That day, I can never forget. I realized all Afghans felt that, especially the Hazara. (Zakia, 18 years).

The paralyzing fear of the return of the Taliban is over-whelming for Hazaras as they know the basic freedoms that they have worked hard for is going to be taken away. Fanon writes, "Black Africa is looked on as a region that is inert, brutal, uncivilized — in a word, savage. There, all day long you may hear unpleasant remarks about veiled women, polygamy and the supposed disdain the Arabs have for the feminine sex" (Fanon, 1966, Chapter 3). The colonial view infantilizes, sexualizes or 'fetishzes' the colonized (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 344), and portrays the natives as sex-obsessed people in Arabia and in our context, Afghanistan. Internal colonization continues those perspectives when imperialism gives way to the regime of the dominant class. The Pashtun ruling class continues to hold similar views of women's rights and women holding place (and space) in education, work and politics. In fact, Pashtun women suffer greatly as they have often the lowest enrolment numbers in educational institutions, partially due to the 'codes of conduct of Pashtun culture' that states that the only place for a woman is the *kor* (home) or the *gor* (grave) (Jamal, 2016) and the lack of protective policies for minorities under the dominant ideology. Colonial domination of a race is accompanied by sexual domination as the structure depends on authoritative 'masculine' power and 'feminine' subjugation. If dominated men are forcibly subjugated and humiliated through feminization in the orient, then women are viewed lower on that hierarchy. Thus, educating the women is seen as a waste. This perspective is resisted by women like Samia, a 33-year-old PhD student that worked in a governmental ministry regarding Violence against women. When asked about who Samia is, she stated proudly,

> Samia is a Hazara girl from Afghanistan. Life played with me in such a way that I had to leave my family behind and become a refugee in another country. Samia is a person that gave her best to Afghanistan to fight to prove that a girl is also capable, to study and get educated, to compete, to struggle. Samia is someone that was the first in her relatives to go abroad to do her Master's. The first girl in her relatives to go do her PhD. The first girl that had many trips outside of Afghanistan. The first Hazara girl that got a job in an office. The first girl that wanted to prove that gender does not determine weakness, that being a girl is not the weaker gender (Samia, 33 years).

Like Zakia, in self-identifying, Samia states being a Hazara and a girl first. She seemed proud while describing her achievements, determined not to allow her gender to hold her back. With the return of the Taliban, her life was in danger not simply on ethnic and religious basis but also that she was a female researcher that had published against the Taliban. She was part of the group of students that were helped out of Afghanistan by Paris 8 university. In trying to get her passport, Samia describes her experience at the passport office, "I also had trouble getting my passport because the agent wanted commission. It was supposed to be one week but ended up being 1.5 months. I found another person to get my passport from the passport office in Kabul. The person that was the passport agent, instead asked for sexual favours. Sex." (Samia, 33 years).

Samia describes the working environment for a woman in Afghanistan, where men touch women in the markets, and anyone can accuse her of having loose morals based on the work trips she made in and outside of Afghanistan with co-workers that were men. Elements of sexual

violence are prevalent in society and gets worse as the desperation to leave the country increases. In fact, Samia and Zakia were still in Afghanistan when the Taliban announced the ban of women in public places and from attending school and work, effectively criminalizing women's presence in public places. Samia describes the day the Taliban took over Kabul,

> I was in the office the day the Taliban took over. I was wearing the shortest outfit I had. I had a headache and was lying down. My colleague called me, go home, get out, the Taliban are here. I looked down, and wondered if I could go out with this outfit. My colleague said I'll bring around my car and will drop you off on the way. The route that we take in 15 minutes, took 1.5 hours. Women were in panic, men in panic. People were sick, crying, running around in shock. When they took over, I would stay home, not go anywhere, and even if I did, I wore a very long dress, a full hijab, my face and hair hidden. We were under house arrest. I was a worker of the government for several years, worked hard for the government. Those 8 months were like hell for me. They were difficult days (cries). It was beyond what I could handle (Samia, 33 years).

A major part of Samia's identity was her educational achievements and career. They defined her as she was proud of her achievements. The return of the Taliban symbolically took away her achievements, denying her parts of her identity, leaves her struggling to find what remains of her. Hall writes about the colonial view, "the field of visual representation is foregrounded here because of the constitutive role of the 'look' as a site of power-knowledge, of the sexualization of the gaze, and its fantasmatic fetishization of the body and the skin as signifiers of racial difference (Hall, 2021, et al., pg. 345). The colonial gaze denies her her 'personhood' based on her sex (woman), her ethnicity (skin) and her pursuit of education (power-knowledge). In Samia's situation, the Taliban takes the role of denying her belonging to the public space, to the working space, and as an equal citizen of Afghanistan. Currently learning French while completing her PhD in France, the drive for education remains strong in many Hazara men and women like her.

When asked about which ethnic group was represented most in education, Laeiq, my Tajik research participant stated, "I would say, I'll put Hazaras as the most civilized people of Afghanistan. And then I would say, Tajiks and Uzbeks and Pashtuns. And, if it comes to conservativeness, then it's the other way" (Laeiq, 35 years). His wife, Malika chimed in,

> For example, twenty years ago, before the return of the Taliban, the way my mother would tell me stories. Hazaras were people that worked. They worked in the homes. The rich in them were very few. But in the past twenty years, they worked very hard and worked a lot. Because they are hard-workers, they have raised themselves up. Even now when we would see them outside, they were interested and worked hard to get ahead. Then came a time that Tajiks got poorer too. Uzbeks got poorer too. Everyone was poor. In recent years, from all that I saw and heard, people that helped everyone (humanitarian work) were all Hazaras, nobody else. Now everyone is poor again. From the north too. People work. Uzbek people work too. Pashtuns, not so much (Malika, 23 years).

Malika's comment showed a gendered outsider perspective. She had previously explained how Hazaras in her schools seemed to be the poorer students based on their clothes but always were ahead in school while her Tajik friends were not as focused on the lessons. Her response describes the development and advancement of Hazara women through education and activism, something that she respected.

At the end of our interview, Samia found out that I have children and she seemed shocked. She started to ask me a few questions about my marriage, my brothers, their education and jobs and I patiently answered. Finally, she stated, "That's good. Just make sure you do not achieve less than your brothers. That is great" (Samia, 33 years).

Conclusion: Hazaras use education and gender equality as tools of cultural resistance, to achieve representation in Afghanistan. Identifying as that culture of resistance, Hazaras view the Pashtun ruling class as the culture of dominance, living under the structure of internal colonialism, as structural remnants of British imperialism. Women of Afghanistan struggle under the patriarchal society and will suffer further under the Taliban. Yet, the drive to get educated has become a dominant characteristic of the way Hazaras are viewed externally and how they view themselves. Hazara women have had to fight several battles and have achieved so much despite discrimination. They see themselves as equals of all men and work hard to 'prove' it to the global community.

4.4. Colonial violence and Cultural diaspora-isation

Hazaras have also had to prove themselves to the global community through migration and integration. Facing more than a century of colonial violence, Hazaras use their social navigation skills in negotiating identities in migration. Social navigation is how "people act in difficult or uncertain circumstances…[as] they disentangle themselves from confining structures" (Wall, 2019, pg. 300). The forms of violence that Hazaras have experienced can be better understood as violence of colonialism and post-colonial institutions, such as systemic racism in the form of state-endorsed limitations, and violent killings perpetrated in all spheres of life: maternity wards, sports clubs, schools, places of worship and student protests. What makes these forms of violence even more paralyzing is the constant fear of violence, becoming a form of violence in itself. I met Sajjad in a Danish Asylum Camp with his young family when I was an interpreter for Immigration Museum's researcher. When I introduced myself as a Hazara, Sajjad was overwhelmed, explaining, 'she knows everything about my situation, she is just like me!' This emotional connection was better understood later as Sajjad had lived in Quetta for several years where he received his education before returning to Afghanistan. The 36-year-old from Behsud self-identified saying, "I am from Afghanistan. And my ethnicity is Hazara. My identity starts from Hazara onwards. After that, we can create branches of where I am from, what faith I have or don't. Religion is not that important in this. For me, identity comes from my blood, and that is being

Hazara" (Sajjad, 36 years). Sajjad lived in Quetta through the peak of Hazara target-killing by Wahabi extremist groups such as the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. When I asked him about the worst day of his life, he replied,

> Ah there were many bad days. All of them had to do with the oppression and violence against Hazaras. I have experienced this in Quetta, when there were bomb blasts, I would go to collect their body parts. There were Hazaras that were victims of target-killing, a man who was shot in the head, the pieces of the skull and remains I picked up. I went to the hospital to donate blood to the survivors. These events I will never forget. All of them have individually become a part of me, like tattoos on my body. All these days has to do with the fact that they kill Hazaras (Sajjad, 36 years).

Like Sajjad, Hazaras have seen too much of violence. For Sajjad, it has become a part of his identity, a permanence of trauma. Mariam and Taimur spoke thoroughly of generational trauma that is a result of colonialism: of colonial trauma (Mitchell, 2019). Generational trauma is a "concept developed to help explain years of generational challenges within families and is the transmission of the oppressive or traumatic effects of a historical event" (Duke University, 2023) These families deal with trauma by minimizing or denial of the effects, and struggle with emotions that effects their mental health. Fanon analyzes the psychological impacts of imperialism and its violence on the psyche. He writes, "Imperialism leaves behind germs of rot which we must clinically detect and remove from our land but from our minds as well" (Fanon, 1966, chapter 6). Halls echoes Fanon in the effects of colonial trauma on the 'internal' as well as the 'external'. Many Hazaras do not believe that ethnic based violence and killings of Hazaras would ever end in Afghanistan as the residue of colonization protects the status quo of the stratification of society. Samia described a conversation with her fiancé where he asks why she feels the need to prove herself as 'capable' to 'others' since the past 100 years had not change the perspectives of others.

Habib, a 50-year-old from Jaghori grew up in a political family. His elder brother was assassinated, and he was imprisoned, so his family had to pay a *mullah* (an imam) to retrieve him from prison to be present for his brother's burial. His brother's killers were waiting to kill him, so he escaped Afghanistan, and ended up in Denmark. In self-identifying, Habib was,

> A landless(stateless) man who lost everything in Afghanistan and flee as a refugee from Afghanistan first to Pakistan and back to Afghanistan again, and from Afghanistan to Europe to Denmark. A man who has always been in limbo between the cultures, between the people, to learn new things. I have no feeling with the country itself, called Afghanistan, but with my own people" (Habib, 50 years).

Feeling no sense of belonging to Afghanistan, Habib has a strong sense of belonging to his ethnic group. He registered the oldest Hazara diaspora organization in Europe, Katib Kultur Forening and is very active in hosting events and discussions of Hazara identity. He feels for all victims of the Pashtun ruling class, including the many Pashtun women that never get the chance to get an education. However, self-identifying as a 'Danish Hazara', Habib's identity has been re-shaped by

his migration and diaspora identity. Hall calls this the 'diaspora-isation' of a colonized people. He writes, "the diaspora experience is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 269). Diaspora identities, like my RPs are constantly producing and reproducing themselves through transformations and movements (ibid). Samia and Ali are Iranian Hazara returnees before the Taliban returned. Sajjad, Habib and Mariam have lived in Pakistan long enough to understand 'Quettagi' Hazaragi; in fact, as soon as Hazaras flee Afghanistan, they become Hazara diasporas. Many Hazaras have faced different forms of violence during these migrations and have dealt with stigma that turns into generational trauma. I asked Habib about the cause of stigma amongst Hazaras, and he explained,

> Not today. But before the civil war in Afghanistan, many Hazara people had this feeling. Some people criticize them that they are not human. And use very dirty words to them without studying and thinking, 'why this people have this feeling? In which situation they were born and grown up? What have they seen? What is their experience in the daily life?' If as a child, I can see that my mother get raped many times in week in the front of my eyes. How can I get this pride feeling as a nation, when I grown up and get older? How? This is the thing that the people should think about. Why Abdul Ali Mazari come with this statement, 'being Hazara should not be shame, should not be a crime?' Forget the past you people had, try to make your future (Habib, 50 years).

This intimately tragic insight into his life shows how sexual violence and poverty, as forms of colonial violence, can deplete a 'people' of their pride and identity, and how difficult it becomes to then revive that identity as a community. Generational poverty results in the cycle of poverty where Hazara women were forced to work in Pashtun households, and the extreme imbalance of power provides for opportunities of sexual violence such as that of Habib's mother. Sexual violence and slavery are a "total society of domination: that its impact upon the culture of slaves was to actively 'deculturalise' them" (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 169). The colonial structure of dominance ensures victims get no retribution, while simultaneously producing cycles of poverty and dependence, ensuring a victim of sexual violence returns to the colonial master in order to feed her children. The popularity of Mazari was because of the words he chose in his speeches, a famous speech started with him stating that being Hazara was not a crime. Similar to Martin Luther King Junior's 'I have a dream' speech, Mazari's followers were freed of their chains, chains of generational trauma, violence and slavery. It continues to be the words Hazara youth of today connect with in shaping their identity after such a violent history. Habib's story is not unique. In asking about the worst day of their lives, eight out of the nine RPs replied with 'there were many bad days' followed by traumatic events filled with violence and uncertainty.

While violent attacks end when Hazaras flee Afghanistan, the journeys they take are often filled with uncertainties, even after arriving at the host countries in Europe. This happens in the form of outdated and racist asylum policies that need re-visiting, often re-traumatizing asylum-seekers in host countries. Two of the RPs were currently seeking asylum in Denmark, while five

were seeking asylum in Paris. Currently in a state of limbo, these seven RPs were waiting for the processing of their cases, all having left families and friends behind in Afghanistan and once again, facing uncertainty.

Ali was a part of the Paris 8 university group and described the many days of waiting and uncertainty in Afghanistan, awaiting his visa while his family closed their businesses, move to a different province and he had to leave the university where he was studying archaeology and teaching English language. In self-identifying as Afghan, I asked about whether he identifies as a Hazara and the 22-year-old replied,

> I remember a day in Saint-Denis, I had a problem with my bike. I had to take this to a workshop to repair it and there were two workers that were Afghans. So, I talked to him in French, but, when he saw my name and when I called to my uncle and spoke Persian or Dari with him, then he told me 'Are you Afghan, brother?' And I told 'Ya I am, you too?' Then we started conversation in Persian. I didn't say no, Afghan is something else, Afghan is Pashtun, I am not Pashtun. I'm not the person that says these kinds of ethnicity names or things like that. I always say I'm from Afghanistan, I'm Afghan (Ali, 22 years)

In asking about ethnicity, Ali is clear about his position and relates to belonging to Afghanistan more than his ethnicity. Ethnic Hazaras do not identify as Afghans since the word Afghan comes from the word ‘Augho/Ogho’ which means Pashtuns (thus Afghanistan meaning the land of Pashtuns). Hazaras instead prefer to be referred to as ‘Hazara of Afghanistan’. Thus, Hazaras are accused of wanting to be separatist and it is this discourse that Ali is referring to here. He insists it is not important to get ‘deeper’ into such issues as he has friends from all ethnicities. Ali is the only one of my RPs that did not speak passionately about being Hazara, but it was clear he missed Afghanistan and his family terribly. When asked whether felt ashamed of being Hazara, he replied,

> I don't say I have never felt but I have never got that in mind. Why I'm a Hazara? It's bad. I'm not Pashtun. It's also bad. So what should I be? Human or Hazara? This is why I don't usually get into it. It takes a lot of time, takes a lot of courage and effort, and then in the end when you going deeper, you understand nothing. This is kind of misunderstanding. We all just inhabitants, we're citizens in simple area. For example, here I am Hazara. My next-door neighbor is Tajik from Herat and both of us are Shia. So the difference, where, in ethnic, or in sect or in religion, religion is strong. Everybody's Muslim. So, whenever you're trying to go deeper inside you find the differences. You would face a lot of closed doors, opening them takes you a lot of time and effort that we are not able to. This is what I think (Ali, 22 years).

Ali’s responses to self-identification is filled with nuances, as are all issues of identity. After all, ethnic discussions are not going to end in a place like Afghanistan, rife with ethnic violence and a volatile history. He preferred focusing on similarities instead of differences, a discourse suggested by Tajik and Pashtun leaders whenever ethnic Hazaras protest discrimination. Hazaras seek Transitional Justice while the Pashtun ruling class have suggested Hazaras forget about the past.

Ali is not alone in his way of thought, but he is in the minority of Hazaras. However, avoiding discussions of discrimination is a right provided to him as he gets a second chance at life in Paris, a privilege not available to millions of Hazaras facing discrimination on the basis of their identity in Afghanistan. Yet, Ali's perspective is essential to the understanding of the study of Hazara identity as it is by no means a blanket statement applied to all Hazaras. Born in Iran, Ali relates more to the Shia faith, as a marker of identity than my other RPs. Part of the Paris 8 university group were also two Hazara sisters that were raised in Iran, that refused to take part in the interview. In discussing further possible interviews, Samia had stated that the two sisters would not be interested, as Hazaras in Iran are forced to give up their ethnic identities and hold tighter to their religious ones due to the stigmas attached to them being refugees. Herself having lived in Iran for a few years, Samia said if she had not returned to Afghanistan, she would have lost her ethnic identity as Iran enforces ethnic homogeneity as a form of 'integration'. Sajjad explained that the Hazaras of Quetta live in isolation and therefore show pride in their ethnicity, while Hazaras of Afghanistan have learned the intricacies of identity politics, and the nuances of social navigation. These discussions all support Stuart Hall's notion of fluidity, hybridity and transformations of identity in the diaspora-isation of colonial identities. Having faced over a century of violence and oppression, Hazaras have had to learn to negotiate different elements of their identity in order to survive and 'integrate'.

This is clearly not isolated to Hazaras of Pakistan and Iran, as the Global North continues to push notions of integration that are outdated. Ali had been waiting for months to hear about his family's reunification papers and seemed depressed. He mentioned not being able to enjoy Paris or the food as he wondered if his family had proper bedding and food to eat that night. Taimur and Laeiq were waiting for their papers, unable to work, while Samia wanted to reunite with her fiancé. In the Danish camps, Zakia described the difficult living conditions in which they lived. Away from Danish society, she was not entitled to an education, nor language classes. She had had no visitors and cried while discussing being isolated in the camps, living with uncertainty about their asylum cases. Needing permission to leave the camp, and receiving just enough money to eat, the asylum-seekers often live in a state of limbo, defined in migration studies as "an intermediate and indeterminate state of confinement, abandonment and oblivion" (Jacobsen, et al., 2021, pg. 5) while theologians use the word limbo to describe "a state or place in the afterlife for souls who deserved neither salvation nor damnation" (ibid) I argue that the state of limbo is another form of colonial violence, 'the violence of uncertainty' that is perpetuated by colonial structures of the dominant ideologies upon the dominated. Zakia spoke of her future,

> It has been more than a year, being moved from one camp to another. When I think about that, I just can't. (Wipes tears). It is very difficult. Because a life like this, stuck for more than a year now. It has been the most difficult part of our lives. People say, 'well, your food and your shelter is free'. But life is not just food and sustenance. People need to nourish their minds and their souls. If you don't have that, then it does not matter what you eat. If

> you don't have peace in your life, then there is no difference between eating stones and eating bread. (Zakia, 18 years).

The state of limbo Zakia finds herself in is overwhelming and damaging to her mental health. She is stuck in time and space, apart from society, stopping the identity-making process. In speaking about the future, it is unsure when that 'future' even starts (Jacobsen, et al., 2021, pg. 58). While asylum-seekers live in these camps for extended periods of time, they are not provided with mental health counselors, education, socialization projects, nor allowed to learn the local language. Thus, this form of waiting is specific to migration and is also referred to as 'chronic waiting' and is central to the post-colonial experience as such (Jacobsen, et al., 2021, pg. 3). Asylum-seekers that get residency, get a 2-year limited residence that needs to be renewed, every two years having to face uncertainty again (Bendixen, 2022) thereby extending the state of limbo and uncertainty outside of the camps. They begin to go to school but are not permitted to attend regular school until they learn Danish even though English-speaking schools exist. Zakia will be expected to be a model citizen despite not receiving citizenship and to speak Danish comparable to 'ethnic' Danes. She will also have to soon start working along with her family and keep up a 'Danish' lifestyle. In trying to get 'freedom', she will have to surrender her identity: become deculturalised.

The expectations of the asylum system of Denmark are unrealistic of someone like Zakia, where she needs to prove herself worthy of permanent residency, the process of which does not currently exist for asylum-seekers from Afghanistan. In effect, ethnic Hazaras flee internal colonialism, into Europe where a contemporary form of colonialism is alive and well. Once again, they are judged by the colonial gaze, deemed unimportant enough to stagnate in camps, judged based upon unrealistic expectations, based on the epistemologically ethnocentric perspectives of colonialism. Schinkel discusses this unrealistic expectation stating, "immigrant integration monitoring is a neocolonial form of knowledge intricately bound up with the contemporary workings of power" (Schinkel, 2018, p. 1). I argue that ethnic Hazara asylum-seekers that flee the Pashtun ruling class are twice colonized: in Afghanistan, and in the Global North.

Understanding this big imbalance of power, Schinkel focuses on the integration process and how any mistake can undo their processes of 'acceptance'. Any process that forces people to change or suppress elements of their identity in order to survive is colonial and thus problematic in nature. Similar to Zakia, Sajjad had been living in a camp for more than a year with two children under the age of 3. Sajjad was told that if he decided to find work somewhere while living in the camp, that would disqualify his whole family from receiving health coverage. In arguing with the staff at the camp, he is in the process of contestation over what it means to be 'Danish' (Hall, et al., 2021, pg. 253); thus, the culture of domination and the culture of dominated has nuance in the asylum system, and one asylum-seekers find themselves trying to navigate. Sajjad felt grateful for the interview because he felt his mental state deteriorating.

In Paris, the Hazara asylum-seekers were living in apartments borrowed from French activists until their cases were processed as France does not have asylum-camps. However, the

French state does not provide housing for asylum-seekers going through the process of waiting for residency. While Samia had been provided by the university with a student room by Paris 8 university, other asylum-seekers I met lived in shared apartments. Ali awaited owning utensils, while Taimur needed privacy, to write in silence and be able to show his emotions at home. They face the same uncertainties and state of limbo the Danish camps provides. This constant uncertainty becomes a form of violence in itself; I call it the 'violence of uncertainty'.

Despite asylum-seekers attempting to belong to the host country in their individual ways, there is no guarantee that these asylum-seekers will receive residency or will be rejected to be deported. There are no clear requirements of migrants available globally to people. In fact, according to a camp-coordinator in Kara Tepe (Greek asylum camp) as part of ERUA 'migrations' study group in Greece, the thing that asylum-seekers need the most was information regarding the safest journeys, the countries accepting asylum-seekers, the friendliest countries towards Muslim migrants and the processing times for asylum cases. This withholding of information and production of biased knowledge is a basic structure of colonialism. Despite the lack of information, Hazara asylum-seekers are forced to gamble with their lives in becoming forced migrants as any life in the 'west', according to Habib, is multiple times better than living under the rule of the Taliban and the Pashtun ruling class. While identities are fluid, and asylum-seekers go through changes of identity in any form of migration, they need not be traumatized in the process.

Conclusion: I argue that Migration systems are remnants of European colonialism that views asylum-seekers as marginalized 'others' as they were created by European imperialism and to accommodate the slave trades. Therefore, they are structurally colonial in nature, designed to dehumanize and traumatize others, not to support inclusion and integration. However, fleeing internal colonialism by the Pashtun ruling class, ethnic Hazaras facing diaspora-isation use their social navigation skills learnt through centuries of colonial violence in Afghanistan.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to explore how ethnic Hazara asylum-seekers perceive their identities in the face of forced migration. I viewed the case of the centuries-long persecution of ethnic Hazaras using the lens of colonialism by European imperialism and using the lens of internal colonialism by the Pashtun ruling class, viewing the two actors as post-colonial identities: the culture of dominance and the culture of resistance.

Using empirical data from interviews conducted amongst recently evacuated Hazaras from Afghanistan awaiting asylum processes in France and Danish asylum camps, supported by expert interviews, I structured the narrative style interviews in seeking to answer the following questions: 1) What are the effects of living as a marginalized ethnic minority in a state that operates as a form of internal colonialism and how does that effect Hazara identity in Afghanistan? 2) How do ethnic Hazaras show resistance to the hegemony and in what ways has that effected their ethnic and cultural identity? And 3) How do ethnic Hazaras perceive their identities in asylum-seeking situations in France and Denmark after the return of the Taliban in August 2021?

In applying the conceptual framework of post-colonial theorists Fanon, Said, and Hall, and Schinkel, I aimed to explore the social strategies Hazaras have employed in facing colonial violence and persecution, and how these strategies shape the way Hazaras view themselves. I found that previously ascribed identity of inferior subjects of the King, and due to being subjects victims of genocidal attacks, slavery, and subjugation, the Hazaras had internalized shame and stigma. However, the Hazaras of the recent generation have reclaimed this essentialist identity, often focused on their physical attributes, with an emancipated version of their own, using the Hazara aesthetic and being proud of their facial features: reclaiming Hazara-ness.

I also found that previously having been stuck in generational poverty, Hazaras have increasingly educated their children, resulting in the breaking of this colonial trap. Hazaras view their ethnic community as a people that prioritizes education and liberal thought. In fact, Hazaras have used education and gender equality as tools of ethnic mobilization and resistance, to be represented in different offices of Afghanistan. Hazaras view themselves as champions of gender equality in Afghanistan as Hazara women are well-represented in schools and universities, despite policies they view as aiming to limit their ethnic representation. In educating their sons and daughters, Hazaras hope to be better represented in all offices of Afghanistan while currently, they are excluded from all governmental offices under the Taliban, and thus view themselves as a culture of resistance.

Finally, I found that centuries of persecution and colonial violence has resulted in good social navigation skills amongst Hazaras as they are faced with internal and external migrations. The Hazaras view themselves as highly adaptable to different integration systems of the Global North, despite the outdated ethnocentric policies that make it difficult, because it is better than the

Taliban. Hazaras view themselves as victims of genocide, and people in perpetual exile. However, Hazaras also view themselves as a people that persevere and overcome, that resist and adapt.

As migration from Afghanistan and other countries from the Global South is not a topic that is coming to an end any time soon, the way migrants are treated in the Global North needs to be reviewed and re-framed. Criminalizing existence, punishing an attempt to seek freedom and differential treatment based on race and ethnicity were the basic elements of colonialism. It is clearly problematic when these elements are found in asylum systems of countries like Denmark and France. While migration is full of uncertainties, it need not be traumatizing.

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