

Socialization of Non-State Armed Actors in Peace Processes

- A Study of Socialization Processes at an
Organizational Level Leading to Positive Change



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Summary

This thesis explores what ability third party actors have in inducing change in the normative orientation of a non-state armed actor in the context of a peace process. It does so by studying socialization processes at an organizational level, and to see if socialization can lead to more positive behavior.

The thesis shows examples of socialization efforts from three different third-party actors, a multilateral organization, a non-governmental organization, and a state representative, and they all applied either a coercion or a persuasion strategy to socialize the same non-state armed actor, The Taliban movement in Afghanistan, on the dimensions of violence and women's rights.

The example of the Taliban shows us that when applying socializing efforts towards a strong, coherent NSAA, third parties do have an ability to induce change in the NSAA's normative orientation.

The findings also suggest that the most successful approach is a persuasion strategy that relies on framing, and that it helps if the third-party share some common religious-moral-ethical ground as the NSAA it wants to influence and base the framing technique on these grounds, as the most successful approach of those treated, was the persuasion strategy carried out by the Indonesian Ulema Council. A take-out from this, is that resonance plays a role in what outcome a socialization strategy produces. When a new norm is framed in a way that resonate with the already existing norm, then the chance of norm internalization is higher. Although, when the norm sets are too far apart from each other, value conflict may hinder the norm socialization process. It is found to be even harder if the norm constitutes the backbone of the organization, as with violence in the case of the Taliban.

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1. Socialization, Non-State Armed Actors, and Peace Processes

“The only way to deal with these people is to bring them to justice. You can’t talk to them; you can’t negotiate with them.” President George W. Bush, 2003 (Office of the Press Secretary, 2003).

The world is experiencing a growth in non-state armed actors, and they “are acquiring increasing power at the expense of the state” (Felbab-Brown, 2021). Houthis in Yemen, various non-state armed actors in Colombia, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the Islamic State in the West Africa Province, are all examples of non-state armed actors (NSAA). It is estimated that 66 million people live under their authority worldwide, and it is affecting civilians’ well-being on a large scale (ICRC, 2020).

In international politics, the state is the de jure entity other actors are measured up against (Carvalho & Leira, 2020, p. 13). The conceptualization of a non-state armed actor is embedded in this state-centric framework, causing it to be perceived as an illegitimate actor in diplomacy and international relations (Schlichte & Schneckener, 2015, p. 419; Miller, 2011, p. 166; Rodgers & Muggah, 2009, p. 301). It is an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of actors operating outside of state control, and it includes both terrorists, guerilla soldiers, revolutionaries, liberation fighters, rebel groups, and insurgents (Rodgers & Muggah, 2009, p. 301; Berti, 2016, p. 6). Moreover, NSAA’s are often proscribed terrorist organizations because of their non-compliance to international liberal norms, and association with organized crime and terrorist tactics (Dudouet, 2011, p. 3; Briscoe, 2013, p. 1). To sum up, a state is regarded as a legitimate and expected party in a peace process, while an NSAA is not.

It has not always been like this. In the 1990’s, the international dominant norms on conflict resolution opened for engagement with NSAA’s. Liberal principles weighed heavily, and conflicts were to be settled through negotiations, not by outright victory (Howard & Stark, 2018, p. 127). With the war on terror, initiated following the 9/11 attacks, this were to change. The no-negotiation doctrine “we do not negotiate with terrorists” gained momentum, making it increasingly harder to engage in talks with NSAA’s (Toros, 2008, cited in Lanz, 2011, p. 284; Zartman, 2003, cited in Lanz, 2011, p. 284).

One of the main arguments for not engaging an NSAA in a peace process is that it will legitimize the actor and their actions, which in turn may lead to an increased level of violence and weaken the democratic quality of states (Toros, 2008). However, 18.4% of all intrastate conflicts ended with a peace agreement between 1990 and 2005 (Kreuz, 2010, p. 246). After this, fewer and fewer intrastate conflicts have been settled by a peace agreement. There has been a rise in the number of conflicts, but a decline in the number of negotiated settlements (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, *Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946-2019*, 2020, p. 24).

In 2019, the world experienced the highest number of state-based conflicts since 1946, with 54 recorded conflicts (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020, p. 7; Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, p. 597). The same year also represented the first decrease in the number of state-based conflicts since 2007, albeit “the total number of state-based conflicts stabilized at a higher level than ever before” (Palik, Rustad, Harpviken, & Nygård, 2020, p. 2).

The number of internationalized civil armed conflicts, where one or more external parties are actively supporting the government or the NSAA, reached an all-time high in 2018, with 22 out of 52 intrastate conflicts being internationalized (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, p. 599). The internationalized civil war in Afghanistan has been the world’s deadliest conflict since 2018 (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020, p. 8; Kishi & Pavlik, 2019, p. 6; Kishi, et al., 2021, p. 8). The conflict between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban has also been the main reason for a rise in battle-related deaths in Asia since 2016 (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020, p. 10). Globally, the number of battle-related deaths steadily decreased since its peak in 2014 to 2020 (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, p. 599).

18.4% of all intrastate conflicts ended with a peace agreement between 1990 and 2005 (Kreuz, 2010, p. 246). After this, fewer and fewer intrastate conflicts have been settled by a peace agreement. There has been a rise in the number of conflicts, but a decline in the number of negotiated settlements (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, *Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946-2019*, 2020, p. 24). This highlights the need to keep engaging with non-state armed actors to end suffering.

There are examples of NSAA’s being included in peace processes also after 2011. The most prominent and recent examples of NSAA’s participation in peace processes are the negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government that ended in a peace agreement in 2016, and the still ongoing intra-Afghan negotiations, between the Taliban movement in Afghanistan and the Afghan government (Ibrahimi & Forcada, 2019).

Peace processes consist of several stages, such as ceasefires, informal dialogue, substantive partial talks, formal, more comprehensive negotiations, and the implementation phase (Doyle & Hegele, 2021, p. 232; PRSP, 2021). The road from violence to peace is not linear between these stages. Talks may be started, experience breakdown, and be re-started. For example, one peace process can include several ceasefires – the average is 3. Then reach more comprehensive negotiations, experience a violent breakdown of talks, and therefore go back to substantive partial talks before it again moves in the direction of formal negotiations (PRSP, 2021). All the stages before the formal negotiations, can be considered pre-negotiations. Pre-negotiation is defined as “the discreet interactions that move conflict parties closer to initiating formal peace talks” (Doyle & Hegele, 2021, p. 231). The informal structure of this stage makes room for exploring options and sharing perspectives, making it the phase where most of the socialization takes place. Naturally following, when NSAA’s involved in peace processes, they are targets of socialization.

Socialization is the process where norm entrepreneurs – strategic actors who hold the belief that an NSAA who internalize the ‘correct, good norms’ will become a more peaceful entity - employ strategies such as coercion and persuasion to induce a change in another actor’s normative orientation (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 902; Sundstein, 1996, p. 929; Jinks & Goodman, 2004, p. 2). Coercion is a strategy that is used to foster compliance to a new norm through measures that affects the NSAA’s cost-benefit calculus, while persuasion as a strategy is employed to create acceptance of a new norm through the techniques of framing and cueing (Jinks & Goodman, 2004, pp. 10-14).

The strategic actors who carry out these strategies can be both states, multilateral organizations, private organizations, or formal or ad hoc groups of third parties. Eventual changes in an actor’s behavior, attitude, and beliefs, “can be observed in changes in speech acts, policy decisions, and the political culture” (Doyle & Hegele, 2021, p. 244).

Relevance and Contribution

The literature on socialization, where non-state armed actors are the socialization target, have mainly been concerned with socialization to violence, focusing on the socialization of the individual within a group. Wood (2008, p. 546) have looked at militant socialization, whereby combatants, both coerced recruits and volunteers, are socialized into the use of violence for group purposes. A special issue on socialization and violence, which included both quantitative and qualitative studies, was published in the *Journal of Peace Research* in 2017

(Checkel, 2017). All articles in this issue explore “group level dynamics and their role in producing violence” (Checkel, 2017, p. 592). The authors have looked at case studies of gangs in Nicaragua, paramilitary groups in Colombia, and rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to mention some. This thesis will go in the opposite direction and look at how strategies of socialization can lead to more positive behavior.

A few studies have treated socialization to more positive behavior. One of the most influential contributions to this date, is Stedman’s *Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes* (1997, p. 13). He treats socialization as a strategy that can be used to deal with spoilers, who seek to alter or destroy a process of peace in a civil war, by eliciting normatively acceptable behavior. Other contributions are a case study by Dionigi (2014) who shows that the gap between Hezbollah’s Islamist identity and the international society is narrowing due to the process international socialization “by which remunerations and sanctions induce political actors to adopt behavio[u]rs deemed appropriate within international society” (Dionigi, 2014, p. 287).

As we can see, there have been scholars looking at socialization of non-state armed actors in a positive direction, but few systematic studies have been carried out. This thesis aims to contribute to the field by looking at whether third parties in peace processes can induce change in a non-state armed actor’s normative orientation, and it does so by looking at socialization at an organizational level. Following, this study will be carried out through the research question:

What is the ability of third parties, in the context of a peace process, to induce change in the normative orientation of non-state armed actors?

To examine this question, this thesis provides a qualitative case study analysis of third-party interaction with the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, focusing on two normative dimensions: violence, and women’s rights. We will look at examples with three types of third-party actors (norm entrepreneurs): a multilateral organization (the UN), a non-governmental organization (Indonesian Islamic Ulema), and a state (represented by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The reasons for choosing the Taliban movement in Afghanistan as the case of a non-state armed actor rests upon:

- The case represents a conflict between parties whose values are fundamentally at odds with each other. The distance between the norm set norm entrepreneurs try to induce and the normative orientation of the Taliban is large.
- Numerous third-party actors have been, and are still, involved in the peace process. “At its peak in 2014, the Afghan government was supported by 49 external states” (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020, p. 8).
- Many different third parties have been working normatively up against the Taliban movement with the intention of socializing it; and
- The civil war in Afghanistan has lasted for 20 years and has since 2018 been the world’s deadliest conflict (Kishi & Pavlik, 2019, p. 6).

Thesis Structure

In chapter 2, the concept of socialization will be presented; chapter 3 addresses the qualitative case study method applied; chapter 4 presents the chosen case by going into the Taliban movement in Afghanistan’s history and value orientation; chapter 5 treats the normative dimension of violence, and showcases how two different third parties have applied socialization strategies in attempts to make the Taliban curb its use of violence; chapter 6 is about the normative orientation on women’s rights, and treats a Norwegian third-party attempt to induce change in the Taliban’s normative orientation on women’s rights; while the last chapter presents us with a conclusion.

2. Understanding Socialization

While there has been paid limited attention to the role of socialization in studies of peace processes, the literature on socialization is vast. It includes theoretical contributions across multiple disciplines, as well as applications to specific topics, ranging from early childhood learning to military training.

This chapter provides insights into various theoretical contributions on the different topics, and it will be emphasized throughout how the material will be used in the further analysis. The theoretical contributions are chosen on the background of their related conceptual frameworks. First, we will look at what socialization is before we get a short presentation of what norms are. Thereafter, we continue with looking at the norm socialization process and

socialization outcomes. We end with a presentation of the two socialization strategies coercion and persuasion.

Socialization

Socialization is broadly understood as a process where an actor attempt to induce change in the normative orientation of another actor (Checkel, *Socialization and Violence: Introduction and Framework*, 2017; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Flockhart, 2006; Jinks & Goodman, 2004; Stedman, 1997; de Almagro, 2018). The process is layered in nature, meaning that multiple processes can be in play at the same time (Flockhart, 2006, p. 600). This can lead to a more robust socialization process. Additionally, a group can be affected simultaneously from within and from the outside (Checkel, 2017, p. 600). Focusing on the latter, the social environment¹ a non-state armed actor operates within may influence its norms and practices (Cohen, 2017, p. 705; Checkel, *Socialization and Violence: Introduction and Framework*, 2017, p. 596).

The actor applying the socialization strategies, the socializer, can be a state, a multilateral organization, a non-governmental organization, or a group, while the other actor, the socialization target, is a state, individuals, or a group of individuals. Examples of actor sets can be individuals in rebel groups being targeted by their rebel leaders (Rodgers, 2017), transnational advocacy networks targeting a state (de Almagro, 2018), and multilateral organizations, such as the UN, targeting a state or a non-state actor to make it change its behavior. In this thesis, the target of the socialization efforts is a non-state armed actor, while the socializers are third parties in relation to the conflict the NSAA is a part of. A third party is not party to the ongoing conflict, and it may be able to transform conflict to bring about a resolution through various measures, such as socialization (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011, p. 24). Moreover, this is a study of socialization processes at an organizational level.

The study follows an alteration of Checkel's (2017, p. 593) definition of socialization, saying that socialization is the process "through which actors [may] adopt the norms and rules of a given community." The alteration is still following the same line of thought as laid out by

¹ The "social environment" is named different things by different scholars. Social environment is Checkel's (2017) term, Stedman (1997) use the phrase international custodians of peace, while in the work of Finnemore & Sikkink (1998) we find the term norm entrepreneur. Jinks & Goodman talk about institutions. Different terms, closely related concepts. We will get to know these authors better throughout the chapter.

Checkel (2017) in his work on socialization and violence. The alteration, ‘may’, underscores the importance of remembering that the actor is not a clean slate where socialization processes will always have an impact. This goes for socialization processes driven by outsiders, and for socialization processes that run within the group.

Every individual member of a group, come with its own norms and practices that can align with, be close to, or far away from, the new normative orientations in a socialization process. Hence, the more a new norm resonate with the already existing normative framework of the socialization target, the higher the change of internalization (Jinks & Goodman, 2004, p. 11; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 897). We will have a closer look at resonance when we look at different socialization strategies.

In addition, actors are rational and have their own agency. Checkel (2017, pp. 596-597) outline three forms of agency. First, top-down, where focus lie on leaders and their efforts to socialize group members. Second, bottom-up, where the agent himself is also the socialization target and choose to comply with, or resist, the socializer’s message. The third, which is concerned with a more informal type of socialization where peer learning and imitation guides the spread of norms and practices. Consequently, similar socialization processes may shape very different outcomes when interacting with different actors. Some actor’s agency may be attenuated by exposure to new influences, and the actor may therefore change behavior, while others may resist changes. In addition, the influence it has on an individual’s behavior may also change over time (Flockhart, 2006, p. 599). What starts out as behavioral adaptation, can become internalized and lead to an institutional and cognitive lock in – where compliance to specific behavior, attitudes, wishes and demands, etc., are sustained (Checkel, 2017, p. 596). From this information we can conclude that socialization is a dynamic, two-way street. Both the actor’s own agency, and the socialization processes driven by outsiders, will affect the outcome of a socialization process.

There are nuances in the understanding of the process too. Some look at it as a one-way process (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998), and others say that it is a two-way street (Checkel, *Socialization and Violence: Introduction and Framework*, 2017; Cohen, 2017; Flockhart, 2006; Fujii, 2017; Green, 2017; Rodgers, Brodères in *Arms: Gangs and the Socialization of Violence in Nicaragua*, 2017). The process will be studied more closely later. Before we proceed, we now need to look at what norms and a normative orientation is.

What are Norms?

“Norms do not appear out of thin air; they are actively built by agents having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior in their community” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 896).

Norms have a quality of oughtness attached to them. From the vantage point of those who act in accordance with a specific norm, the norm is neither good nor bad – the norm the group live after is for them the correct one. However, if a norm is considered good by the norm holder, it may be considered bad by an outsider, bringing to the table the possibility of an outside actor wanting to intervene to impose, or influence, the inside actor to adopt a different norm or a fully different norm set (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 892).

In this thesis, the normative orientations the third parties attempt to make the NSAA to adhere to, are both rooted in the international liberal normative framework. These norms are closely linked to a Western view of values, principles, and human rights, and are related to the thought that liberal democracies are most peaceful.²

We will now look closer at the norm socialization process.

Norm Socialization Process

The article *Norm Dynamics and Political Change* by Finnemore and Sikkink was published in 1998. It addresses how a norm emerges, develops, is enforced, and how it becomes internalized. They describe an internalized norm as the standard “against which new norms emerge and compete for support” and the dominant mechanism for bringing this about in their model is socialization (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, pp. 895, 902). The possibility of a norm internalization being reversed is not addressed as in Checkel (2017).

The norm socialization process is split into three stages. In the first stage, norm entrepreneurs who shape the frames of how the new norms are to be understood by using specifically chosen language and by performing them “attempt to convince a critical mass of states to

² See R. Paris, 2010, *Saving Liberal Peacebuilding*. Review of International Studies, 36(2), pp. 337-365, doi:10.1017/S0260210510000057; D. Chandler, 2004, *The Responsibility to Protect*. Imposing the ‘Liberal Peace’, International Peacekeeping, 11(1), pp. 59-81, doi: 10.1080/1353331042000228454.

embrace new norms” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, pp. 895, 897). The main strategy applied in this stage is persuasion. It is used to change the “utility functions of other players to reflect some new normative commitment” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1997, p. 914).

Within the first two stages of the process there is a tipping point. In their model, the first tipping point is defined as the point where a norm entrepreneur has managed to socialize a critical mass of the chosen population to become norm leaders allowing for a norm cascade to take place (stage two). This leads the norm leaders – the critical mass that has internalized the new norms, to imitate and carry out the new norms attempting to socialize the rest of the population. This can be done through a mix of the first and third type of agency by Checkel (2017) presented above. A tipping point in relation to the elite level, will be expected to take place if the elite level signals that they will follow or take action to follow a new norm, and this is visible.

There is no scholarly consensus on when the critical tipping point in stage two occurs, but quantitative empirical support for the idea exists (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 901). In Finnemore & Sikkink’s Norm Life Cycle model, the second tipping point takes place when these norm leaders manage to further socialize their constituency, the norm followers (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 895). The premises for this to happen is that the one third of the critical mass has adopted the norm, that this critical mass is crucial to norm compliance, and that the critical mass is represented by an actor who formerly adhered to a different norm set. When this happens, the rest of the population is socialized into new normative commitments, and stage three, internalization, is reached. See figure below.

Norm Life Cycle

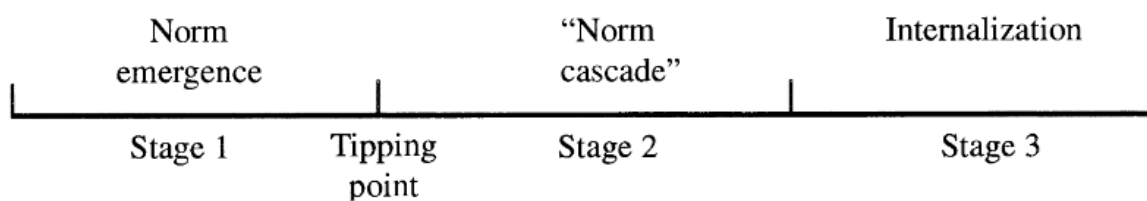


Figure 1. Source: Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 896.

Finnemore & Sikkink has provided a full model describing how a norm is socialized into a new population. Nevertheless, the process may come at a halt already within the first stage. If

the norm entrepreneurs fail to persuade the critical mass, the possibility of internalization of new norms is non-existent. The outcome of socialization processes is what we now turn to.

Socialization Process Outcomes

Checkel (2017, p. 597) operates with three distinct socialization outcomes: type 0, type 1, and type 2 - describing a scale ranging from no internalization of norms and practices to full internalization. This scale can be understood in relation to the norm life cycle just presented. Both norm leaders and norm followers in an NSAA can experience different strengths of internalization separately on a group level.

Type 1 socialization is the result of a process where the adoption of norms and practices is “entirely dependent on continued membership in the group” (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989, p. 195, cited in Checkel, 2017, p. 597). When the individual is learning a role, earlier values are brought into the process and new values are superimposed on them, meaning that they exhibit pro-group behavior and act in accordance with the new norm, but the old behaviors are still evident. This superimposed behavior will be left behind if they leave the group. This is what Rodgers (2017, p. 658) calls the desistance process - fighters that leave a violent group can become less violent.

The same desistance process is present in type 0 socialization – members leave the group including its norms and practices behind, “although some adherence to group norms might persist” (Checkel, *Socialization and Violence: Introduction and Framework*, 2017, p. 597). Type 0 differs from type 1 socialization when it comes to internalization. The socialization process in type 0 is purely based on “a rational calculation of the group member in response to incentives” both coercive and non-coercive – there is no internalization of norms and rules. Here we see, that in addition to being a dynamic process, an actor can be socialized and even de-socialized, depending on how far the internalization of norms have come, as the rational calculations of the NSAA can change.

Type 2 socialization is a deeper kind. It describes the state of full internalization of norms and values and “the behavior derived from this internalization ‘gradually becomes independent of the external source’” (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989, p. 109, cited in Checkel, 2017, p. 597). This stage is reached when the norm cascade has taken place.

An interesting aspect to add to Checkel’s (2017) understanding of socialization outcomes, is that there are cases of socialization where the intelligibility boundaries of the third party and

the NSAA are so impervious that internalization will not take place. In her study of how transnational advocacy networks impact the spread of norms to states, Almagro (de Almagro, 2018, p. 674) coin this as the rebound effect. It is an organizational level study, and the concept is therefore directly applicable to this thesis.

When the rebound effect takes place, it shows that the NSAA is not responsive to the attempts of socialization carried out by the third party – it falls on deaf ears. The reasons for this to happen, can be that the NSAA is strong enough to reject any attempts of socialization. It can also be that the NSAA’s constituency, and local areas under NSAA control, hold normative orientations that are non-compatible with the norms that the third party attempts to induce.

Socialization Strategies

Jinks & Goodman (2004, p. 3) look at how international regimes can socialize outlier states into international society, with the international society being understood as a society under the liberal normative order. Outlier states can be equated with non-state armed actors as they are also perceived as outliers in the international liberal order. They present three strategies of socialization: coercion, persuasion, and acculturation. In this thesis, we will be concerned with the first two.

Coercion

Coercion is an instrumentalist strategy that takes place when the norm entrepreneur attempts to influence the norm holder to change its cost/benefit calculations by making it perceive it is “in their material interest to do so” (Jinks & Goodman, 2004, p. 10). In other words, the norm entrepreneur uses a tactic of sticks-and carrots and makes it costly to not comply with a new norm, for instance through imposing sanctions, or offers material rewards to the non-state armed actor if it complies.

As the outcome of a coercion strategy is reliant upon the non-state armed actor’s rational calculation, it “does not necessarily involve any change in the” non-state armed “actor’s underlying preferences” (Jinks & Goodman, 2004, p. 9). This implies that a coercion strategy does not necessarily lead to a type 1 or 2 internalization. However, it may, if the measures are strong enough to make the NSAA change its behavior for a longer period, as sustained behavior can lead to a cognitive lock-in (Checkel, 2017, p. 596).

From this, we will bring with us that coercion is a strategy used in attempts to make the other actor change its behavior by using techniques such as threats and punishment (sticks), and material rewards (carrots). For the strategy to be successful, it must be applied in a way that affects the rational calculation of the non-state armed actor making it believe it is beneficial for it to change its behavior.

Persuasion

Persuasion is a strategy that can lead to full internalization of a new norm and is applied through the techniques of framing and cueing. It is said to be stronger than the coercion strategy, as it alone can lead to acceptance of a new norm, making the NSAA adjust their identities and interests accordingly (Jinks & Goodman, 2004, p. 11). Following, a persuasion strategy can lead to a type 2 internalization in Checkel's (2017) typology.

When applying a persuasion strategy, the norm entrepreneur strategically attempts to convince the NSAA to adopt the new norm(s) based on arguments of the norm(s) validity, appropriateness, and truth (Jinks & Goodman, 2004, p. 11). For these arguments to lead to a norm internalization, the norm entrepreneurs make use of two techniques. These are framing and cueing. The thinking behind it, is that behavior is influenced through social learning.

In framing, norm entrepreneurs create new cognitive frames through which the new norms are to be understood. The frames are attempted to be built around similar language, and justified on the same background, as the norms in the already existing normative frameworks of the NSAA. For instance, while the human rights framework, for example, is universally applicable, there are many situations where references to specific religious or cultural justifications could be more effective. The higher the resonance, the easier it is to persuade the NSAA to accept a new norm (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 897).

In cueing, the idea is that exposure to new information may make NSAA's "engage in a high intensity process of cognition, reflection[,] and argument about the content of the new information" (Johnston, 2001, p. 11). This reflection in turn makes the NSAA systematically defend and argue for their position, which may make them reach a new conclusion on the matter and change their behavior accordingly. It is the level of persuasiveness, i.e. if the cues have made the norm holders to think harder or not decides the outcome (Jinks & Goodman, 2004, p. 12). Compared to framing, cueing is like teaching. Moreover, it is most useful when an actor is uninformed about, and inadvertently adhere to, other standards than what is considered good practice by the international society.

This understanding of persuasion coincides with Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, also called co-optive power. "Co-optive power is the ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own. This power tends to arise from such resources as cultural or ideological attraction[,] as well as rules and institutions of international regimes" (Nye, 1990, p. 168).

In sum, a persuasion strategy can lead to full internalization of a new norm and is applied through the techniques of framing and cueing.

We will now look at the method used in this thesis.

3. The Applied Methods and a Critical View on Sources

This study is a qualitative case study analysis based upon several types of written sources. The thesis does not attempt to build theory, neither has generalization been the goal. The aim of this thesis has been to gain more knowledge about the studied phenomenon, and this is possible when a case is fitted between former knowledge on the topic (Stake, 1994, p. 42). As mentioned, the aim of this thesis has been to shed light on if third party actors can influence a change in a non-state armed actor's normative perception using socialization strategies during peace processes.

First now, we will see more what a case study can be used for, before we look further into what a document analysis is, how the data collection process has unfolded, and end with an overview over the different written sources used.

A Qualitative Case Study

Qualitative research is used to understand a specific phenomenon in a real-world setting, without the researcher attempting to "manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2001, cited in Golafshani (2003). It is done without the means of quantification, such as statistical procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 39, cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 600). The goal is to shed light on an issue, understand it better, and to be able to extrapolate from it (Hoepl, 1997, cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 600).

Using a case study analysis based on written sources is a great way of reaching depth on a topic. It allows the researcher to spend a lot of time reading large amounts of material reaching saturation. Depth is exactly what was needed to conduct this study, as some

materials have been classified, so triangulation of sources to get a full picture as possible has been important and this takes time. In addition, depth has also been needed in this study, as the area of interest has only been studied by a few. Even more data on the topic need to be created, as this can be of benefit to both qualitative and quantitative researchers.

The type of case study chosen is an instrumental type. It is defined as “a detailed, intensive study of a particular contextual, and bounded, phenomena” (Luck, Jackson, & Usher, 2006, p. 104). In such a study, the researcher is looking more closely at the phenomena itself through a case, rather than studying the case itself – it is of secondary interest and helps the researcher engage in an external interest. However, the choice of case is naturally still important, as it must be a good fit of what we want to cover.

The natural choice here, was to choose a non-state armed actor where the leadership – the elite level – was strong enough to also make decisions for their rank and file – the mass level. The logic behind this, was that to track how socialization processes possible influence an entity, it had to be an entity that one could be relatively easily studied, and that the elite had the means to control the mass level, meaning that internal coherency within the NSAA movement was important (Ruttig, 2021, p. 4). A non-state armed actor with low internal coherency would be more time-consuming to study, as it would have a less representative leadership, and changes within the different factions would be harder to track as the accounts of their behavior most likely would be fewer. However, the personal accounts of rank-and-file of the chosen NSAA was also a challenge to find. Not too many studies on that have been carried out.

Document Analysis

To dig deep around the issue of socialization processes, this qualitative, instrumental case study research has been carried out through a document analysis.

Documents can be used to capture different temporalities for a chosen case. Hence, they make it possible to carry out a “form of archeology” as we can use the documents to explore these temporalities (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020, p. 138) It can be like entering the jungle at first, but a good map of the state of the field stands out more clearly the longer time is spent working on the issue (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020, p.37). By reading through a chain of documents that address the same over a broader period, we can see how a cause or a statement changes over time – or if it has done so at all (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020, p. 133). This is of high relevance to this study, as it concerns a non-state armed actor’s normative perception of two dimensions

over time. Analyzing sub-units allows for a richer understanding of a case (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 550).

Utilizing sub-units is a powerful tool, as data can be analyzed within the subunits separately (within case analysis), between the different subunits (between case analysis), or across all the subunits (cross-case analysis) (ibid.). By doing this, it offers the researcher a greater and more thorough understanding for the case (s)he operates with. Originally, this thesis was also set out to explore secular education as a third dimension. The reason for not doing so, was the lack of material on pre-negotiations or formal negotiations that had addressed the topic. If it had been included, we could have had an even more substantial cross-case analysis, which in turn would have illuminated even more information about how socialization strategies affect a non-state armed actor.

Further, documents constitute an integrated part of its surroundings. They are not neutral, and they have the capacity to influence us – they contribute to shape our understanding of the world and our practices (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020, pp. 15-22). Openness towards, combined with a critical view of, what a text brings to the table, and an understanding of how documents are to be understood “in context with actors, contradictions, and intersecting interests that normally exist in any society” (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020, p. 105 [my translation]), can elevate our knowledge on a chosen topic.

Data Collection

An aim in this data collection has been to find texts where certain elements resonate with each other. The different texts may operate with completely different concepts. Nevertheless, dynamics from the different texts may still resonate with each other - making us aware of elements we maybe had not thought of that can inspire and guide us in our generalization, abstraction, and building of theory (Lund, 2014, p. 226).

As all other researchers, I have established inquiry frames through which I understand the world. The language I use has had implications for how I framed my search strings, what I look for and how I interpret scholar's and academics' work, and how other now will understand my written material (Lund, 2014, p. 226). Due to the topic being relatively poorly studied – the combination of socialization to something positive and non-state armed actors, my inquiry frames could not be very rigid. I have been open to documents which together has given me a great diversity, and instead of focusing on a single strain of research, I have rather opted to bring in as many related theoretical concepts as possible from different study fields to

reach a point of very good saturation before settling on those who would make up my theoretical framework. The decisions were made based on what concepts were most widely used, which concepts resonated with most other similar concepts when it came to their theoretical description, and naturally, which concepts fit what I wanted to explore.

Additionally, I have had to use socialization literature only concerning events where states have been the socialization target, due to a lack of literature concerning socialization of NSAA's in a positive direction in peace research.

The analytical process has been iterative, meaning that the analytical process has coincided with the data collection process, and that the study has been shaped throughout the course of finding material in order to develop analytical insights. The reasoning behind this has also to do with openness. When the process is iterative, it allows for old arguments to be replaced by new, and the theory have the possibility to go in new directions. In this iterative process it has also been important to keep files stored after file type and topic as the number of documents grow fast. Handwritten notes have also been conducted in a style that has made it possible to go back to sources written months earlier and understand their connection to the material – coding has been important. Loosely connected to this, has been the process of defining a conceptual framework that would be applicable to the case, and vice versa, as there is a danger that starting out with a clear conceptual framework limits the inductive approach when researching a new topic, and the research can become deductive (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 553). The used framework has continuously been revised throughout the field work as new knowledge have emerged.

The main task at the hands of a researcher, utilizing a case study approach, is to “ascertain whether evidence from different sources converges on a similar set of facts” (Yin, 1981, p. 105). This can be done through triangulation, which can be carried out through using different methods attacking the same problem, or as it is used here, combining documents from minimum two-three sources on the same matter to confirm or deny the validity of a conclusion or finding. The “fundamental purpose of triangulation is to confirm one's results and conclusion” (Knafl & Breitmayer, 2013, p. 3). The technique also helps to ascertain that the research is carried out in a good manner – to ensure validity and reliability and help overcome research bias. It can be used to “capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study” and [...] “to enrich our understanding by allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge” (Jick, 1979, pp. 603-604). For instance, if one newspaper has given a bold statement or other information that appears as relevant, the source

has been set up against at least two-three other news sources with a different bias, to help confirm whether a hypothesis, or idea I have had, holds (Golafshani, 2003, p. 603).

Types of Documents

To substantiate and bring nuance into the study, several types of documents have been used. They have also been triangulated, as mentioned earlier. Through the triangulation procedure differing point of views and bias may arise – giving the researcher more knowledge on a topic or making it discard a source (Daniels, 2010, p. 32).

Here, the different types of documents used will be presented, as it is one of a researcher's primary objectives to ensure that the sources used are credible.

Academic Sources

The number of peer reviewed articles read for this thesis is vast, and I therefore refer to the references list for examples.

The purpose behind peer reviewing articles is that the author(s) and readers of the article can establish more confidence in the findings, as they have been read by other scholars and academics with knowledge in the field.

News Sources

All news used in this thesis has been triangulated with either an academic paper or the same piece of news from other news papers with a different bias. This to ensure that the information stated has been accountable and could be used in this thesis.

The news sources used in this thesis are:

- Al Jazeera – an independent news source funded in part by the Qatari government
- Arab News – has its headquarters in Saudi Arabia
- Bistandsaktuelt – an independent magazine on development aid and international development
- NBC News – the news division of the American tv network NBC
- The Guardian – a British daily newspaper
- Voa News – “Voice of America”

They represent news sources from different parts of the world, and different biases. Following news from them simultaneously allows the researcher to establish greater confidence in the news presented. This is important as relying upon one article can give wrong information. When writing this thesis, I read some news about a meeting in Bogor, Indonesia, and one of

the news sources stated that Taliban representatives had been present at a conference, when all other sources said that they had not – including an academic source.

After spending a long time reading up on news on the topic, one starts to see which authors who publish in different news sources, and who has the most thorough analyzes and whose material resonate best with material from, for instance, academic articles. This is useful as one quickly can find more relevant info when trust in an author is established.

Statements from the Political Office of the Taliban

Statements from the Political Office of the Taliban have been collected from the movement's own web page, Voice of Jihad, found at alemarah.net.

The web page act as a mouthpiece for the spokesman, leadership, and political office of the movement. Its purpose is to bring news out to their rank-and-file soldiers, supporters, and non-supporters, about their interpretation of status quo in Afghanistan and Afghans lives. Additionally, weekly comments and statements are published with the intention of creating a sense of unity among, and motivate, rank and file-soldiers, including their leadership, to continue the fight against the American-backed government, which they see as a puppet regime (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 4).

The language of the webpage is not very analytically accessible, as it is filled with emotions and counterarguments against for instance published UN Security Council and UNAMA (United Nations Assisted Mission in Afghanistan) reports, without showing to statistics or other information to back up their statements. Nevertheless, it is still a page the Taliban's side of the story is published and one of the foremost sources of the movement's thinking, and for that reason published material on this homepage is chosen for inclusion in the analysis.

UN Sources

The UN sources used have mainly been annual reports, Resolutions, and statements from the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

The benefit of using UN sources is that the statistical material is reliable, and they provide annual statements which can be used as a ground to establish knowledge about a trend. However, also these sources should be triangulated and set up with information from opposing channels of information. This to show a fuller picture and offer more of a nuance. The reason for this is that UN sources, such as publications from the Secretary General and

the Security Council, are also political documents, meaning that the language in the documents have an agenda. This again requires the reader to look at the language used. For instance, the language of the last annual reports of the Sanctions Monitoring Committee on the Taliban have changed. In the last document from 2021 it is a little bit different, and it is not clear yet what this has to say.

We will now turn away from methods and look at the chosen non-state armed actor's history, actions, and beliefs.

4. The Afghan Taliban

In this chapter, we will gain greater knowledge about the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. We will see how the Taliban movement grew to become a strong, cohesive movement, and get a presentation of the Taliban's normative orientation.

The (Re-) Emergence of a Stronger Taliban

After the fall of the Soviet-backed communist regime in Kabul in 1992 and the departure of Soviet troops, great tensions and infighting took place between different groups of mujahedeen who could not agree on the distribution of power (Marsden, 2002, p. 35; Maley, *Afghanistan: An Historical and Geographical Appraisal*, 2010, pp. 868-869). In this vacuum, the militant leader Mullah Muhammad Omar gathered mujahedeen fighters who had withdrawn to their farm after Soviet withdrawal and 'talibs' (students from Madrasas) to form the movement that was to be known as the Taliban (Semple, 2014, p. 1).

Prior to being labelled the Taliban, the movement consisted of predominantly Pashtun, Muslim fighters from the Kandahar area of southern Afghanistan. It managed to offer many Afghans a sense of security within short time. It succeeded in gaining support from locals, got access to weapons supply, and backing from Pakistan. The result was that the movement quickly grew to become a military force (Maley, *Afghanistan: An Historical and Geographical Appraisal*, 2010, pp. 869-870). The Taliban first took hold of the city of Kandahar in 1994 and managed to seize power in Kabul two years later.

The movement ruled under the name 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' from 1996 until they were toppled by US-led forces in 2001 (Associated Press, 2018). After the invasion, a conference was held in Bonn, between 27 November and 5 December 2001, to lay the grounds for a new Afghan state with democratic institutions. The Taliban had not given up at this point, but had retreated from most strongholds, surrendering Kandahar 7 December 2001

(Staff & Agencies, 2001). The Taliban was excluded from the conference, which resulted in the establishment of an interim government that the movement was to see as a foreign-imposed puppet government (Ruttig, “Nothing is Agreed Until Everything is Agreed”: First Steps in Afghan Peace Negotiations, 2019).

Two months earlier on the 7th of October 2001, in direct response to 9/11, the US initiated, together with Great Britain, their first attacks as a part of *Operation Enduring Freedom* (NOU 2016:8, 2016, p. 21). Although the initial strategy of President Bush was to have a light footprint, it became the start of the civil war that continues to this date (18.06.21). The war on terror – Operation Enduring Freedom – managed to successfully remove the Taliban regime, but the Taliban was not defeated (NOU 2016:8, 2016, p. 25).

In 2003, the Leadership Council was formed by the Commander of the Faithful (Amir-al-Mumineen) to gather new and re-emerged factions under the Taliban umbrella (Ruttig, 2021, p. 3). It was a challenge, and without government maladministration and military excesses it would not have been possible (Eide & Skaufjord, 2014, p. 367; Suhrke, 2011, p. 13; Maley, 2010, p. 871; Ruttig, 2021, p. 3). A few years later the Taliban became a strong force in the southern part of Afghanistan (Ruttig, 2021, p. 3). From 2009-2010, the movement started gaining influence amongst non-Pashtuns and managed to build up local structures with the ability to outperform other commanders in the north (Giustozzi & Reuter, 2011, p. 4) and they “elaborated their ideology, continued to build military institutions and structures, and began to position the movement as a shadow government” (Jackson & Amiri, 2019, p. 7). In the years following, the movement gained more territorial influence and continued sharpening and strengthening its structure. Although, it did experience a succession crisis in 2015, when it was leaked that Mullah Muhammad Omar had been dead for two years. Together with infighting and splinter groups this threatened the group’s cohesion. Since then, the leadership has prioritized curbing any such threat (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 15)

By 2017, the Taliban had grown to around 200,000 individuals, including “around 60,000 core fighters, another 90,000 members of local militias, and tens of thousands of facilitators and support elements” (Schroden, 2021, p. 20). In comparison, it was estimated that the movement had around 20,000 fighters in 2014. This shows the Taliban’s ability to both recruit and deploy new fighters and “withstand significant casualties” (p. 21). As head of the Taliban’s military commission in Laghman Province (east in Afghanistan), said to the New York Times: “We see this fight as worship. So if a brother is killed, the second brother won’t disappoint God’s wish — he’ll step into the brother’s shoes” (Mashal, 2020).

We will now look more closely at how the Taliban movement is organized.

Organization

Organizationally, the Taliban leadership has gradually built an organization that is robust, both on a vertical and a horizontal axis. Vertically, the movement consists of a command-and-control with the top leader, Commander of the Faithful, and his Leadership Council (the Quetta Shura). The leadership has control over the Ulema council, a Political Commission, a Military Commission, and several other commissions, “resembling the Afghan government’s ministries” (Ruttig, 2021, p. 4). Horizontally, there are networks led by local military commanders. These commanders need to be recognized by the Leadership Council to be accepted as a part of the movement. This implies that “any changes in approach over policy by the top Taliban leadership may not be translated fully or at all into a change in approach [on the ground]” (p. 5). This may have implications for how norms will be internalized within the movement. However, the Taliban leadership has over the last four years clearly demonstrated its ability to control its rank and file. It has successfully implemented three-day-ceasefires over Eid celebrations since 2018; it has managed to deal with threats from splinter groups; the movement has carried out a one week reduction in violence prior to the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan (hereafter: the US-Taliban deal) February 2020, and subsequently stopped attacks its attacks against larger cities and US-led forces (Ruttig, 2021, pp. 12-13; UN Security Council, 2020, p. 8). The movement’s ability to withstand the international coalition’s effort to defeat them over the past 20 years also shows its strength. The strong focus on cohesion, can also be a factor in explaining why we have never seen the Taliban agree to a mutual ceasefire.³

The Taliban is split into two groups in this study: the elite level and the mass level. The vertical axis is synonymous with the elite level, and this is also where representatives to the negotiation team of the Taliban come from. The horizontal axis is called the mass level. The latter often see “immediate military concerns, ideology, and local preferences as more important” than international recognition, which is a priority for the leadership (Jackson & Amiri, 2019, p. 2).

³ For more on this, see International Crisis Group (2020, pp. 26-27). *Taking Stock on the Taliban's Perspectives on Peace*. Doha/Kabul/Washington/Brussels: International Crisis Group. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/311-taking-stock-talibans-perspectives-peace>

We will now go deeper into the normative orientation of the Taliban.

Normative Orientation and Values

The Taliban regime was built on repression and prohibitions legitimized by a conservative, instrumental interpretation of Sharia that was heavily influenced by tribal values, Pashtun traditional ethical norms (Pashtunwali), and the Deobandi school of thought – a highly orthodox interpretation of Islam drawing on Sufi tradition (Roggio & Gutowski, 2020, p. 45; Misra, 2002, p. 581; Marsden, 2002, pp. 78-79). The interpretation of Sharia was instrumental in the way that the Taliban referred to sources of Islam strategically to justify their behavior and values (Maley, *The Foreign Policy of the Taliban*, 1999, p. 7; Ishfaq, 2019, p. 5; De Lauri, 2019, p. 16). This heavily reflects their normative orientation when it comes to the use of violence. For them, using violence is a legitimate means to achieve their goals. This stands in stark contrast to the liberal normative framework where it is rejected as a legitimate means of attaining goals (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011, p. 285).

There are few signs that the movement's normative perception and rulebook today is different from when they were in power, but the movement has shown that it has some capacity to change (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 35). As Ruttig (2021, p. 4) argues:

“Policymaking has been driven by military and political necessity.” Underlining this, deputy leader, Sirajuddin Haqqani, also said in an op-ed in the NYT that “We will remain committed to all international conventions as long as they are compatible with Islamic principles” (Haqqani, 2020).⁴

5. Violence

In this chapter, we will be concerned with motivations behind violent behavior in the light of peace processes. Further, we will look at violence in Afghanistan. Then we take a closer look at the Taliban's violent identity and who the movement target. To end with, we look deeper into two socialization efforts attempting to see if third-party actors have managed to induce change in the Taliban's normative orientation on violence. However, before we do that, a definition of violence is in order.

⁴ «In recent years, the Taliban have shown some flexibility in their understanding of an “Islamic system.” It should also be noted that they use the term “Islamic system” in more than one sense. At times, Taliban figures use this phrase when speaking broadly about cultural values and social norms. At other times, they use it more explicitly to suggest a governing structure that enforces Islamic law and gives political authority to the figures who interpret it” (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 7).

Violence is here understood as direct physical violence and includes terrorism tactics. Terrorism is defined as politically motivated and pre-mediated acts of violence, or the threat of violence, with the intention to instill fear in an audience beyond the immediate target (Hoffman, 2006, p. 40).

Violence During Peace Processes

“To date, the most powerful answer to the failure of many a peace settlement points to the emergence of actors who decide to spoil the peace process. Spoilers are leaders who believe that peace ‘threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it’” (Zahar M.-J. , 2003, p. 14).

Violence during peace processes is not unusual, and the motivations behind it are many. The main reason behind why NSAA’s use violence, is that it gives them political leverage. Hence, a ceasefire is not an attractive option for an NSAA, while it is for a government. In other words, NSAA’s will often continue carrying out violent attacks until a deal is signed (Hofmann & Schneckener, 2011, p. 605).

Other reasons may be that the violence was initiated before the peace process commenced, and that the peace process have sparked new forms of this already existing violence (Stepanova, 2006, p. 82). Recalling that socialization is a tool used to elicit normatively behavior, Stedman (1997) argue that violence can be a result of leaders and/or parties to the conflict not seeing peace as beneficial, and they therefore attempt to spoil it (Stedman, 1997, p. 7). Spoilers are “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it” (Stedman, 1997, p. 5). A signatory to a peace agreement may act as a spoiler in fear of what happens if they leave power over in the hands of their adversary. They may stall the implementation by using violence to try to get a deal that is better for them, or it may resort to violence as “holding back from commitments may be a way of strengthening its bargaining position in the result of losing an election” (Stedman, 1997, p. 17). Contrary to Stedman (1997), Zahar (2010, p. 268) argue that the NSAA’s resort to weapons is the result of a strategic calculation of costs, assessment of capabilities, and the opportunities available within which the actor acts.

In addition, the motivations behind the use of violence are not static – non-state armed actors are rational, and their motivations, goals, and tactics may change over the course of peace processes, e.g., the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) “threatened to boycott

elections and return to war. In the end, however, RENAMO joined parliamentary politics, accepted losing an election, and disarmed, thus ending a civil war that had taken 800,000 lives” (Stedman, 1997 p. 6).

Use of violence in a peace process by the non-state armed actor do not mean that socialization has not reached the elite and/or mass level of the NSAA. It is not so that a strategy of violence always is successful.

Violence in Afghanistan

For more than four decades, Afghanistan has been the scene for wars driven by outside, strategic interest. The latest being the still ongoing US-led NATO operation, waged in 2001, as a part of the ‘war on terror’ (Eide & Skaufjord, 2014, p. 278; Naim, 2019). This invasion has now lasted for almost 20 years, and the conflict has ranked as the most lethal conflict in the world the last three years (Kishi, et al., 2021, p. 8). The numbers of civilians killed in the conflict since 2010 surpassed 100 000 in 2019, which means that “almost no civilian in Afghanistan has escaped being personally affected in some way by the ongoing violence (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 2020).” Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) reported that 40% of all fatalities from organized violence world-wide in 2019 were counted in Afghanistan (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, p. 597).

A Violent Movement

“We did not choose our war with the foreign coalition led by the United States. We were forced to defend ourselves”, Sirajuddin Haqqani, deputy leader of the Taliban (Haqqani, 2020).

As mentioned, the Taliban is a military force. Its members are heavily socialized to be violent and non-democratic and hold strong anti-Western sentiments (International Crisis Group, 2020, pp. ii, 4; Ruttig, 2019, p. 6). In addition, they are wary of anything that can affect their identity (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2018, p. 67).

The Taliban waged a defensive jihad inside Afghanistan after 2001, as it meant that it is its “religious obligation to wage a ‘holy war’, against the ‘infidel’ forces who are physically occupying Muslim land” (Rassler, 2012, p. 2).

The movement uses terrorist tactics as a part of their repertoire of violence to achieve their goals (Harpviken, 2019). It started to employ terrorist tactics between 2006 and 2009, as a response to air raids and direct military confrontation with coalition forces (Gopal, Mahsud, & Fishman, 2013, p. 4; Bijlert, 2013, p. 115). All their violent efforts are domestically focused.

Targets of Taliban Violence

"While claiming not to kill civilians, they basically redefine civilians to suit their own purposes," she said, noting that those targeted have tended to be people whom Taliban commanders associate with the government. "They've long said that people who work for the government are no longer civilians" (Smith & Mengli, 2021).

In 2020, the number of security incidents, including targeted killings, and Taliban operations against Afghan forces, reached a record high (UN Secretary-General, 2021, p. 4; International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 1)⁵. It was the highest number of recorded incidents since the documenting process carried out by the UN commenced in 2007, and the increase is continuing into 2021 (UN Secretary-General, 2021, p. 5).

It is of special concern that there has been a 38% increase in civilian casualties since the beginning of the intra-Afghan negotiations September 2020 (UNAMA, 2021, p. 1). In a brief to the Security Council December 2020, special representative Deborah Lyons reported that "improvised explosive devices caused over 60 per cent more civilian casualties and child casualties rose 25 per cent over previous periods" (UN Security Council, 2020).

The Taliban has claimed to not target civilians, but it is believed that the Taliban is behind 45% of all civilian casualties in 2020 (UN Secretary-General, 2021, p. 7). Moreover, there has been a sharp increase in targeted killings of people in prominent positions, including women journalists, female radio hosts, and female human rights activists, government employees, and other progressives since the last quarter of 2020 (UN Secretary-General, 2021, p. 8; UNAMA, 2021, p. 1). Among the victims were children's rights activist and journalist Malala Maiwand, killed December 2020 (UN Security Council, 2020). The trend of targeted killings of women in prominent positions is especially worrying, and it is held in a normatively weak regard by the international society.

Since the signing of the US-Taliban deal, the movement has claimed to not have carried out acts of violence against American led forces (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, 2021). The annual report from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Committee confirms that the Taliban did refrain from attacks against international forces between May 2020 and April 2021 (UN Security Council, 2021, p. 6). Additionally, the International Crisis Group also

⁵ See Mujib Mushal and Fahim Abed, "From maternity ward to cemetery, a morning of murder in Afghanistan", The New York Times, 12 May 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/world/asia/afghanistan-violence-kabul-nangarhar.html>

came to the same conclusion after interviews with both US and UN representatives (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 22).

Two third parties who have attempted to induce change in the Taliban's normative orientation on violence, and make them adhere to a norm of non-violence, are the United Nations and the Islamic Ulema Council (MUI). We will now turn to these two socialization efforts.

Socialization Efforts by Third Parties

The UN and its members states applies a strategy of coercion in form of sanctions and represent a multilateral organization. The MUI applies a strategy of persuasion and represent a non-governmental organization. Both third parties want to change the Taliban's view of violence as a legitimate means of attaining its goals.

A Coercion Strategy by the United Nations

When the UN imposes sanctions, the objective is to respond to the break of an internationally recognized norm (Ruys, 2017, p. 19). Recalling that coercion is a strategy employed by norm entrepreneurs to make a norm holder change its cost-benefit calculations by making it believe it is in its material interest to do so, we will now look at how the UN imposed sanctions on the Taliban to make it adhere to a norm of non-violent behavior through a coercion strategy built on punishment and rewards, and to what degree it has been successful.

The UN imposed an individualized sanctions regime more than twenty years ago, 17 June 1999, targeting Afghan Taliban and its affiliates. In the beginning, the regime targeted the decision-making elite level of the movement who held de facto control in Afghanistan at the time. The objective of the sanctions committee is to use all means to combat the threat the situation in Afghanistan poses to international peace and security, and to support "a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan" (UN Security Council, 2020, p. 1).

The regime required all member states to freeze funding, financial assets, or other economic resources to the Taliban, enforce a travel ban for all designated individuals, and put in place an arms embargo which also included technical advice, assistance, or training related to military activities (UN Security Council, 1999). The regime is still in place today (UN Security Council, 2021). As we see, the scope of the sanctions is broad, targeting both the horizontal and vertical axis of the Taliban movement simultaneously, as well as imposing sanctions on all the Taliban's activities. This is an example of a punishment technique – it represents a 'stick'. It has had some impact.

The Monitoring Team's report, responsible for assessing the impact of the sanctions regime, released in 2020 said that "...requests by sanctioned Taliban members for the removal of their names from the sanctions list as a precursor to engaging in dialogue with the government as part of a peace process indicates that the sanctions do have some impact" (Al-Qaida Sanctions Monitoring Team, 2020, p. 42). Additionally, last month, May 2021, the Taliban released a weekly comment on their website, Voice of Jihad, strengthening this conclusion:

"When an individual is placed in a blacklist, a myriad of sanctions are imposed and rewards are announced against him, yet at the same time, he or that group is called towards a settlement is not only unreasonable but no expectations must be held for results because the first step towards any understanding and settlement is mutual trust which can never be built so long as such lists exist" (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, 2021).

By publishing a weekly statement on the issue, the Taliban showcase that the punishment technique impacts on the movement. Taliban shows clearly that they are uncomfortable with the limitation sanctions pose on them. Not only is it uncomfortable, but delisting is also one of the movement's key demands in order to proceed with peace negotiations (Gul, 2021).

Further, Resolution 2513 (2020), highlight that the Security Council will review the use of sanctions, given that the Taliban reduces its level of violence during the intra-Afghan negotiations. This represents a material reward – a 'carrot' - for the Taliban. As we have seen, the Taliban is affected by the sanctions and want do want the sanctions to be removed, but we have not seen a change in the level of violence carried out by the movement. It has only increased since the adoption of this resolution.

The sanctions do impact the rational cost-benefit calculations of the Taliban, but there is not seen any change in the underlying preferences of violence as a legitimate means of achieving aims. Therefore, so far, the socialization attempt has only reached type 0 – there is no internalization of the norm of non-violence.

We must remember that the Taliban justifies its use of violence by referring to Islam, and that they see themselves as obligated to ensure that people act in accordance with their narrow interpretation of the Quran. Changing what is the backbone of the movement and make them lay down arms can prove to be a never-ending challenge. If the Taliban elite level do not deliver on its commitments to its rank-and-file, it risks splintering and attacks from spoilers. We have seen this before, for instance when fighters pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015 in the turmoil after the death of Mullah Muhammad Omar (Rasmussen, 2015).

In addition, the sanctions implemented by the UN are perceived as illegitimate from the Taliban's normative viewpoint. The movement see the sanctions as rooted in a liberal normative framework which it does not support. In a figurative sense, this means that there is no resonance between the sanctions and the normative orientation of the Taliban. Neither do the UN attempt to use framing techniques to make this happen.

So there is no resonance between the old and the new norm set, neither do the UN attempt to use framing techniques to make this happen.

The response to the coercive measures may also be the result of a rational calculation made by the Taliban, meaning that they play by the rules of the game to get what they want.

We will now turn over to look at the example of the Indonesian Ulema Council – an example of a non-governmental organization carrying out a socialization strategy in form of persuasion.

A Persuasion Strategy by Indonesian Clerics

Persuasion is a strategy employed by a norm entrepreneur to change the utility functions of the norm holder to reflect a new normative commitment. This strategy has been used by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) targeting the Taliban movement. In order to create resonance between the new cognitive frames and the existing normative orientation on violence, the main technique applied was framing. We will now look further into how this strategy was carried out and see to what degree the MUI have been able to induce a change in the normative orientation of the Taliban regarding violence.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), supported by clerics from Pakistan, and the Afghan government, met May 2018 for a one-day conference in Bogor, Indonesia (Associated Press, 2018). The conference addressed that Islam was a religion of peace. It resulted in the release of an edict saying:

“We reaffirm that violence and terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, as violent extremism and terrorism in all its forms and manifestation including violence against civilians and suicide attacks are against the holy principles of Islam” (Associated Press, 2018).

The MUI has always had close ties with the Indonesian government. It is both established and funded by it (Lindsey, 2012, p. 253), and the conference was a part of Indonesia's strategy to promote peace in Afghanistan. The Indonesian government believed that through encouraging

the role of Islamic Ulema, they could reach the Taliban and start a constructive dialogue with the movement (Associated Press, 2018).

The Taliban's response to the conference plans was not positive. The leadership of the Taliban "urged Islamic clerics to boycott the Bogor conference and warned Afghan clerics: 'Do not afford an opportunity to the invading infidels in Afghanistan to misuse your name and participation in this conference as means of attaining their malicious objective'" (Associated Press, 2018).

As far as we know, the Taliban had no representatives at the Bogor conference, but the movement have been said to have taken part in an unofficial closed-door meeting with former vice President of Indonesia, Jusuf Kalla, MUI, and the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulema, July the following year (Tisnadibrata, 2020). According to Yunahar Ilyas, vice-chair of the MUI: "They [the Taliban] said the U.S. is ready to leave. So the Taliban intends to make peace with the Afghan government and ask for Indonesian support" (Golazi, 2019). Moreover, head of international relations in MUI, Muhyiddin Junaini, said that they had offered to house Afghan students at Indonesia's Islamic boarding schools and universities, as well as assistance on "how to issue fatwas in response to the various social, economic, and cultural problems that Muslims face" (Tisnadibrata, 2019). The MUI and the Taliban came to an agreement that the Council would "assist with peace-making efforts between the Afghan government and the Taliban and help advice on ways to address various problems in Islamic society" (ibid.).

The norm entrepreneur is the MUI, and they targeted the elite level of the Taliban with their socialization effort. The Taliban was willing to participate in talks with the Indonesian Ulema. According to Ilyas (quote above), the Taliban movement itself asked for Indonesian support. This gives the indication that the elite level of the movement is susceptible to socialization strategies carried out by the MUI.

The shared Islamic identity was strategically used as a basis for a persuasion strategy carried out through the technique of framing. The language used in the talks was built around and justified on the moral-ethical-religious perspective the actors share. Doing this allowed the MUI to create higher resonance between the existing normative orientation of the Taliban and the thoughts and ideas presented, making the talks between the actors flow more easily and have a tangible result in form of cooperation plans both when it comes to peace-making and problems of Islamic societies.

Another interesting aspect with the talks between the Taliban and the MUI is that the Taliban most likely also cares about how the MUI view them, as the MUI has a high standing in the Sunni-Islamic society (Saat, 2016, p. 551).

In the former socialization case, with the UN as a third party also targeting the Taliban's normative orientation on violence, there were made only weak attempts to make resonance between the new norm and the existing normative framework. If we compare these two cases, we can draw the preliminary conclusion that resonance may be necessary for a socialization strategy to work. This is also in line with theory presented in the theory chapter, saying that persuasion can be a stronger socialization technique than coercion.

From this, we can determine that creating resonance do matter for the outcome of a socialization strategy, as the Taliban was partly receptive to the socialization efforts carried out by the Indonesian Ulema Council.

However, we have yet to see a change in the beliefs and actions of the Taliban when it comes to violence.

We will now continue with looking closer at the Taliban and its normative orientation on women's rights.

6. Women's Rights

“Women hold up half the sky”, Afghan adage.

In this chapter, we will get to know the history behind how women's rights were put at the forefront of the international agenda, look at the state of women's rights in Afghanistan, before we finish off with looking at a long-term socialization effort carried out by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs targeting the Taliban's normative orientation on women's rights.

Relevance

Through the combined campaign effort of a strong lobby over several years, women's rights were put at the forefront of the peace and security agenda of the Security Council. The three key groups making this happen were a group of UN member states – later known as Friends of Women, Peace, and Security, an interagency network of women's advocates initiated by the UN, and “a transnational advocacy network of women's and human rights NGO's”

(Tryggestad, 2009, pp. 539-540). The pressure, and the discussion it sparked within the UN, resulted in the unanimous adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 (Res. 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security in year 2000 (UN Security Council, 2020). With this, the UN took a clear stand on issues concerning women's roles and experiences in armed conflict (Tryggestad, 2009, p. 539), i.e. Res. 1325 is a policy document reflecting the international normative orientation on the issue of gender equality.

Empirical research carried out after the adoption of Res. 1325, confirm that there is a strong link between inclusion of women in peace processes and peace agreements, and that the inclusion increases the probability of durable peace compared to if they are not included (Adjei, 2019, p. 1).⁶

A prerequisite for inclusion of women to increase the probability of sustainable peace, is that they have agency and can participate efficiently, i.e. they must hold power and have the possibility to raise their voice (Heyzer, 2004; Myrntinen, 2016, p. 2). Another key point is that the earlier in a peace process women are included, the lower the chance of women's rights being pushed away in the implementation phase. In this final phase, the focus often narrows down to NSAA's and a renegotiation of core commitments and women's rights and civil society demands may be pushed out as what is viewed as more substantial matters are discussed first (PSRP, 2021, p. 3).

A rise in the percentage of gender provisions in peace agreements compared to before the implementation year is seen. In 2019, 29% of all peace agreements included some provisions regarding women and their rights. However, this is a smaller share of agreements compared to the peak in 2013, when 45% of all agreements were gender sensitive (Christien, 2020).

Women's Rights in Afghanistan

Afghanistan scores low on gender equality. The country's women came out second last (166/167) in the Women, Peace, and Security index in 2019, measured across 11 factors, such as employment, financial inclusion, intimate partner violence, community safety, and parliamentary representation (GIWPS & PRIO, 2019, p. 1). Only 30% of women above the age of 15 were literate in 2018 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020), and threats and violence are tactics faced by female politicians and their families to discourage them from participating in public life (UN Secretary-General, 2015, p. 11).

⁶ See <https://www.politicalsettlements.org/key-findings/gender/> for more research on women in all stages of peace processes.

The Afghan society is organized through patrilineal lines, where kinship and family ties influence what role a person has in the community. The strongly patriarchal social structures are posing a challenge for women's participation and influence (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, 2019, p. 1; Strand, Borchgrevink, & Harpviken, *Afghanistan: A Political Economy Analysis*, 2017, p. 21; Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2018, p. 64). Advocating for women's rights and gender equality in Afghanistan, means working against "a cultural orientation and an entrenched social and political power structure that" privilege men (Suhrke, 2015, p. 32).

Under the Taliban regime, most women were excluded from political participation, banned from working and studying, and had to be escorted by a close male relative (mahram), i.e. a father, brother, son, or husband, and wear a burka, if they wanted to leave the confines of their homes (Reuters in Kabul, 2021). Some moderate elements of the Taliban allowed women to work in the health sectors, allowed their daughters to be homeschooled or go to girls' schools - until they hit puberty (Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2018, p. 67; Ruttig, 2021, p. 7). Since 2001, the Taliban "has lacked much in the way of formal policy on women's rights [...] a stance that has enabled commanders and local elders to restrict rights in places where the Taliban exert influence" (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 32). It must be noted, however, that there are also strict norms regarding dress codes, as well as women's movement, in much of rural Afghanistan – including areas where the Taliban do not hold control (Human Rights Watch, 2020; Ruttig, 2021, p. 6).

"If the world thinks we give the women the rights America or the West gives to them, this is not congruent with the culture and tradition and our religion", Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanakzai, Taliban chief negotiator, February 2019 (Ruttig, 2021, p. 7).

The Taliban's normative orientation towards women is rooted in their interpretation of Islamic law, as well as the cultural and traditional heritage of the Afghan society (Moghadam, 2002). The distance from the liberal normative framework orientation, which they see as Western concepts, is large. There is great tension between the Taliban's normative orientation and the liberal normative framework. The Taliban mean that "secular rules must be subordinate to those which they see as divinely ordained" (Maley, 1999, p. 12). However, the movement's position on women's rights is not as rigid as its relationship with violence. Some change in the public rhetoric from the elite level is observed. In a closing speech at a conference in Moscow 2019, the Taliban chief negotiator Mullah Sher Muhammad Abbas

Stanakzai, told media that “Islam has given women all fundamental rights, such as business and ownership, inheritance, education, work, choosing one’s husband, security, health and right to good life” (The Guardian, 2019).

The rhetorical shift may be a result of a genuine change at the leadership level, stemming from internal or external socialization processes, or a pure rational calculation. Shukria Barakzai, female Afghan politician, and former parliamentarian running underground girls’ schools under Taliban rule, has said that: “They have not changed. They want women to stay at home” (Noorzai & Khadem, 2020). Habiba Sarabi, one out of four female delegates at the intra-Afghan Doha dialogue September 2020, on the other hand, reported after the first rounds of negotiation that: “From my point of view, their mentality hasn’t changed. But some of them, they recognize that the world and the situation has changed” (Swoger & Mahboob, 2020). However, no change is observed on the ground (Ruttig, 2021, p. 6). A Human Rights Report, from June 2020, report that extreme restrictions are still in place in Taliban-controlled areas (Noorzai & Khadem, 2020).

When it comes to peace processes, the international community and the Afghan government have given Afghan women limited opportunities for participation (Strand, Borchgrevink, & Harpviken, *Afghanistan: A Political Economy Analysis*, 2017, p. 31). According to an Oxfam report from 2020, Afghan women have been present in only 15 out of 67 formal or informal exploratory meetings since 2005 (Kamminga, Boswinkel, & Göth, 2020, p. 3). Women’s rights have been on the agenda in only few of these (Swoger & Mahboob, 2020). In the still ongoing intra-Afghan negotiations, four women, out of 21 negotiators in total, have been present as part of the Afghan government’s negotiation team (Noorzai & Khadem, 2020). The Taliban have no female representation at all; there are no women at the frontlines, no female involvement in the shadow government structure, and no women on the negotiating team (Ruttig, 2021, p. 7).

We will now look closer at an example of a third party attempting to induce change in the Taliban’s normative orientation on women’s rights.

[A Long-Term Socialization Effort by The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has carried out a long-term socialization effort targeting the Taliban’s normative orientation on women’s rights since 2012. Meetings between Taliban representatives and MFA diplomats and Foreign Ministers have been carried

out, with the aim of making the Taliban adhere to a liberal normative orientation on women's rights, assuring and respecting gender equality. Afghan women have been present at some of the meetings.

Meetings may have been carried out before the one in 2012 too, but due to a lack of information - the result of a closed-door strategy by the MFA, resulting in official meetings records being few and material classified - it is not possible to know exactly how many meetings have been conducted, with whom, and at what time (Strand, Suhrke, Wimpelmann, & Hamidi, 2017, p. 7). However, we do hold some information about a few meetings since the one conducted in 2012, and from this information we will try to see how the socialization efforts have been carried out and what impact it may have had.

Norway wished to be at the forefront in the global implementation of Res. 1325, including in NATO missions. This desire was, and is still today, a result of the Norwegian foreign policy approach that is heavily focused on gender equality, and peace-promotion through international peace diplomacy (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2019, pp. 307-308). In 2011, the Norwegian government decided to place women's rights at the top of their agenda in their engagement with the Taliban in Afghanistan (NOU 2016:8, 2016, p. 153).

As a result of this decision, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) have facilitated and participated in informal and formal meetings with the Taliban where the topic of women's rights have been the focus. As mentioned, the official meetings records have been few, and material classified. This approach of discretion and confidentiality has been found to be one of the reasons why the Taliban's political commission chose to engage with Norwegian diplomats (NOU 2016:8, 2016, p. 153). Another reason, according to Arne Strand, a researcher at Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway, is that Norway "is probably also perceived as relatively neutral even though Norwegian soldiers are and have been in Afghanistan" (Bolle, 2020).

The first publicly known meeting took place in 2012 and was a private meeting between the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide, and a Taliban delegation. It was dedicated to an informal presentation of women's social role in the Norwegian society (NOU 2016:8, 2016, p. 152). Recalling that a persuasion strategy can be carried out through a cueing technique, that may make the NSAA engage in a high intensity process of cognition, reflection, and argument, after exposure to new information, this informal presentation may have been an example of such a teaching moment.

The second publicly recognized meeting took place two years later May 2014. Here, representatives of the MFA met with the Taliban's political wing for more strategic talks. The Norwegian delegation had three focus areas: international humanitarian law, the Afghan constitution, and most importantly to the Norwegian delegation, women's rights (NOU 2016:8, 2016, p. 153). Still no Afghan women were present, even though it is their future being discussed in these meetings.

The next two meetings we know of took place in June 2015. First, there were informal meetings in Oslo, Norway, 3-4 June. Here, Afghan female parliamentarians, female representatives of the Afghan High Peace Council (HPC⁷) and higher ranked Taliban officials met. This was reportedly the first time a Taliban delegation met with an Afghan delegation with a female majority, and the first time women's presence had more than a symbolic role (NTB, 2015; Oxfam, 2014, p. 16). According to different news sources, the names of the women were women's rights advocates Shukria Barakzai and Fawzia Koofi, who both attended as independent Afghan government representatives, other female advocates Farkhunda Naderi, Suraya Dalil, and Nilofar Ibrahim, one female women's education activist – the head of Afghan Women's Education Council, Hasina Safi, and minimum three female members of the HPC, named Gulalai Noor Safi, Siddiqa Balkhi, and Awa Alam Nuristani (O'Donnell, 2015; RFE/RL, 2015). Having Afghan women at the table in these meetings, may have helped with framing the issue in a way that resonates more with the Taliban's normative frame, compared to if only the Norwegian diplomats were present, as the women know the culture and the country. This application of a persuasion strategy through framing may have had an impact on the Taliban representatives present. In other words, applying socialization strategies in form of a framing technique may prove challenging for a Western actor. It may be that the intelligibility boundaries between the liberal normative framework and the Taliban's normative framework are so impervious that the norm of gender equality will not be internalized.

The second June 2015 meeting took place mid-June during the Oslo Forum - an annual global event, where parties to a conflict can, amongst other activities and actions, advance their negotiations (Dziatkowicz, Buchhold, Harlander, & Verri, 2015, pp. 6, 32). At this meeting, the MFA, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, brought together the former Afghan Minister of Women Affairs, five other female representatives, and Taliban envoys, with the

⁷ Established by former President Hamid Karzai to negotiate with elements of the Taliban as a step toward creating durable peace in Afghanistan (Jarvenpaa, 2011, p. 5).

intention of discussing possible “modalities of comprehensive peace negotiations” (Athayi, 2015, p. 13).

September 2020, another meeting took place. It was a part of the intra-Afghan negotiations. Here, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Ine Eriksen Søreide, met digitally with Taliban top leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. He was one of the founding members of the movement (Bolle, 2020). In the meeting, Søreide emphasized the importance of human rights, and the inclusion of women and other minorities in the peace process.

Identifying precisely whether – or to what extent – the Taliban has changed its positions on women’s rights, as a result of external socialization efforts, is challenging due to the lack of publicly available data surrounding MFA’s engagement with the Taliban.

It is also methodologically problematic to attribute change in the Taliban’s public rhetoric on women’s rights to one single third-party actor. Several third-party actors have carried out socialization efforts directed at the Taliban’s normative orientation on women’s rights. One of the latest examples being the United States, who in March this year applied a coercion strategy in form of strong threats affecting the cost-benefit calculus of the Taliban:

“Any agreement must preserve their [women and girls] gains if Afghanistan wants to ensure the international community’s continued political and financial support, [...] “We will not give an inch on this point” (Barnes, Gibbons-Neff, & Schmitt, 2021).

As we know, multiple processes can be in play at the same time.

In the attempt of inducing a change in the Taliban’s normative orientation on women’s rights, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has applied a long-term socialization effort. From the information we have, we know that a strategy of persuasion, through the techniques of framing and cueing have been used. We can not rule out that other socialization strategies also have been used by the MFA due to a lack of information. There has been a change in the Taliban’s public rhetoric on women’s rights, but we cannot attribute this change to socialization efforts from this single third-party actor alone.

However, it shows that the Taliban leadership have understood that Afghanistan has changed since they held power, and that women’s rights will be protected in harmony with Islam. This is still relatively general and non-binding but it shows that the elite level has admitted to having to adjust from its 90’s practices.

Moreover, there is great variation among Taliban-controlled areas. In some areas girls do have access to schooling, and are allowed, and able to, participate in working life. While in others the restrictions are extremely strict. In general, there seems to be a variation amongst Taliban regarding female participation in the Afghan society, but the distance between the spoken ideal of the Afghan government and its allies and the Taliban is still large.

Conclusion

We have now seen examples of socialization efforts from three different third-party actors, a multilateral organization, a non-governmental organization, and a state representative, and they all applied either a coercion or a persuasion strategy to socialize the same non-state armed actor, namely the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. The aim of the socialization strategy was to induce change in the normative orientation of the NSAA on the dimensions of violence. More closely, the attempts were aimed at curb the Taliban's use of violence, and to make the Taliban internalize the norm of gender equality.

The example of the Taliban shows us that when applying socialization efforts towards a strong, coherent NSAA, third parties do have the ability to induce change in the NSAA's normative orientation, albeit to varying degrees.

The most successful approach of those treated, was the persuasion strategy carried out by the Indonesian Ulema Council. A take-out from this, is that resonance plays a role in what outcome a socialization strategy produces. When a new norm is framed in a way that resonate with the already existing norm, then the chance of norm internalization is higher. However, when the norm sets are too far apart from each other, value conflict may hinder the norm socialization process. It is found to be even harder if the norm constitutes the backbone of the organization, as with violence in the case of the Taliban.

These findings have policy implications for third parties who engage in talks with non-state armed actors, as they show the critical need for deep understanding of local culture, language, and religion when attempting to induce a normative change through socialization. It also indicates that it is possible to socialize a non-state armed actor to adopt more positive behavior.

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