

The Evolution Of Afghanistan's Borders Throughout History And Its Geopolitical Impacts

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the historical evolution of Afghanistan's borders and their geopolitical impacts. The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of changes in Afghanistan's borders on its security, economy, international relations, domestic politics, and its role in regional and global power dynamics. Afghanistan plays a crucial role in regional and global power dynamics. The country's borders have not only shaped its internal structure but have also had significant implications for international relations and regional security. To stabilize its borders and enhance overall stability, Afghanistan must engage in active diplomacy, foster regional economic cooperation, and implement effective border management strategies. These measures can help strengthen Afghanistan's position in regional and global power dynamics, contributing to long-term peace and development. The research uses a systematic review of historical sources, geopolitical analyses, and both qualitative and quantitative data. The sources include historical treaties, diplomatic documents, reports from international organizations, and academic studies published. The findings reveal that Afghanistan's borders have undergone significant changes throughout history, primarily influenced by colonial powers and regional rivalries. These border changes have had profound effects on Afghanistan's national and regional security, contributing to issues such as drug trafficking, terrorism, and illegal migration. Additionally, Afghanistan's economy has been heavily impacted by unstable borders and political tensions with neighboring countries. The creation of artificial borders, such as the Durand Line, has also led to ethnic and identity challenges within the country. Due to its strategic location.

Keywords: afghanistan's evolution at the border, border security, border economy, durand line, geopolitical impacts, regional rivalries.

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan, with its sensitive geopolitical position, has consistently been influenced by border changes and the rivalries of regional and global powers (Barfield, 2022). The country's borders have not only impacted its internal structure but have also affected foreign policy, regional security, and trade (Rashid, 2020). This article aims to examine the historical evolution of Afghanistan's borders and analyze the geopolitical, security, and economic consequences of these changes (Baidar & Yar, 2025). As one of the most strategically important countries in Central and South Asia, Afghanistan has played a pivotal role in regional and global geopolitical developments (Maley, 2023). Its geographical position as a bridge between East and West has made it a focal point for

international and regional powers (Baidar & Yar, 2025). Throughout history, Afghanistan's borders have undergone numerous changes, which have profoundly impacted not only its internal structure but also its international relations and regional security (Zarawar et al., 2024). Specifically, the evolution of Afghanistan's borders has significantly influenced its relations with neighboring countries, including Pakistan, Iran, China, and the Central Asian states (Akhtar & Ullah, 2024). Border changes in Afghanistan have consistently been accompanied by security, economic, and political challenges. On one hand, these changes have led to border tensions and military conflicts with neighboring countries (Hanifi, 2022). On the other hand, border changes have significantly impacted Afghanistan's economy, particularly in terms of trade and the transit of goods (Newman, 2022). Additionally, border evolution has influenced Afghanistan's domestic politics, contributing to ethnic and religious divisions within the country (Akhtar & Ullah, 2024; Wafa & Mazloun Yar, 2024).

Relevant previous research include research by Suryani and Syafarudin. (2021), which examined the influence of sales promotion on purchasing decisions, linking media engagement with public understanding of specific issues. Roberts (2023) also investigated the role of branding and networking approaches in micro-organizations, aligning with the use of mass media to strengthen democratic literacy. Additionally, a study by Rosenthal (2016) application of qualitative methods in pharmaceutical research can be applied to analyze the effects of mass media in citizenship education, illustrating how media functions as an agent of change in introducing and discussing significant issues, including democracy.

The novelty of this research lies in the use of mass media as a dynamic and up-to-date source of literature in learning about the dynamics of Indonesian democracy, a topic that has not been extensively explored in the context of citizenship education. Unlike previous studies that focused on traditional literacy, this research proposes a new approach to media-based education, aiming to enhance students' understanding of democracy by integrating information that is more relevant, current, and easily accessible.

The primary objective of this article is to examine the historical evolution of Afghanistan's borders and analyze the impacts of these changes on the country's security, economy, and politics. In this regard, the article aims to provide a comprehensive analytical framework for better understanding these developments and their consequences. The article also aims to examine the geopolitical implications of these changes for the region and the world.

METHOD

This research employs a variety of methods to investigate the evolution of Afghanistan's borders and their geopolitical impacts. The methodology, data sources, and analytical approaches are outlined as follows:

The research adopts a systematic review approach, drawing data from three primary sources: historical sources, academic studies, and quantitative data. Historical sources, including border treaties and diplomatic documents, provide valuable insights into the historical context of Afghanistan's border changes. Academic studies, particularly books and articles published after 2020, offer contemporary perspectives and analyses. Quantitative data, such as statistics from the World Bank and the United Nations on trade, security, and migration, are used to support the research with empirical evidence. Analytical methods encompass historical, geopolitical, qualitative, and quantitative

analyses, utilizing statistical data analysis software to examine economic and security trends.

The historical analysis focuses on tracing the evolution of Afghanistan's borders from ancient times to the modern era, aiming to understand the trajectory of border changes and their impact on the country's political and social structures. Geopolitical analysis applies theories such as Spykman's Rimland Theory and Mackinder's Heartland Theor (Mamadouh, 2023). To assess the influence of Afghanistan's borders on regional and global power dynamics. Qualitative analysis is employed to examine the impact of borders on Afghanistan's security, economy, and national identity, drawing on qualitative data from diverse sources. Quantitative analysis, on the other hand, utilizes data such as border trade statistics and drug trafficking figures to evaluate the economic impacts of border changes.

Despite the comprehensive approach, the research faces certain limitations. Data accessibility is a significant challenge, as insecurity in Afghanistan's border regions has limited access to accurate and up-to-date information in some cases. Additionally, rapid political changes in Afghanistan, especially after 2021, have rendered some data and analyses quickly outdated, posing challenges to maintaining the relevance of the findings. These limitations highlight the complexities of conducting research in a dynamic and unstable geopolitical environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Comparison of Study Results with Previous Research

This study indicates that border developments in Afghanistan have a direct impact on regional security, international relations, and economic development. The findings align with studies by Barfield (2022) and Maley (2023), which demonstrates that Afghanistan's borders serve not only as geographical lines but also as tools for determining the influence of foreign powers in the region. While earlier studies primarily focused on historical analysis, this research has attempted to explore the economic, security, and social dimensions of border developments.

Previous studies, such as Zarawar (2024) Focused mainly on the impact of the Durand Line on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, this research demonstrates that all of Afghanistan's borders, including the western border with Iran and the northern border with Central Asia, play significant roles in regional policies. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Akhtar's. (2024) Analyses state that border insecurities in Afghanistan have heightened geopolitical rivalries among Iran, Pakistan, China, and Russia.

B. Analysis of Border Developments in Afghanistan and Their Impacts

1. Geopolitical Impacts

The research findings suggest that Afghanistan's borders act as a buffer zone between major global and regional powers. This aligns with Saikal's (Hanifi, 2022) analysis, which states that regional rivalries between India and Pakistan, China's involvement in economic projects, and Iran's policies towards Afghanistan are all influenced by these borders. Notably, Afghanistan's eastern border, specifically the Durand Line, remains a primary source of geopolitical tension between Kabul and Islamabad (Rashid, 2020). Studies indicate that

Pakistan has consistently used this border to exert pressure on Afghanistan's internal policies, corroborating Maley's (2023) findings. Conversely, while Afghanistan's western borders with Iran have received less attention, they play a crucial role in energy supply and regional trade (Akhtar & Ullah, 2024).

2. Security Impacts

One of the most significant findings of this study is that Afghanistan's unstable borders have not only led to internal insecurity but have also threatened regional security. These findings align with Giustozzi's (Rathmell, 2020) Research highlights the key role of Afghanistan's borders in facilitating drug trafficking, illegal migration, and terrorist activities. Previous studies, such as Zarawar (2024), primarily focused on the Taliban's role in border security; however, this research reveals that other armed groups, such as ISIS-Khorasan, have also utilized eastern borders for terrorist operations (Rashid, 2020). Additionally, according to UNODC data (2023), over 65% of drug trafficking in the region occurs through Afghanistan's borders, underscoring their importance in regional security.

3. Economic Impacts

This study found that Afghanistan's borders play a crucial role in facilitating transit trade and promoting regional economic development. The findings are consistent with Newman's. (2022), who states that Afghanistan's trade routes are heavily dependent on border stability. In contrast, previous studies have paid less attention to the impact of neighboring countries' border policies on Afghanistan's economy. Research indicates that economic sanctions and the closure of borders with Iran and Pakistan at various times have severely reduced Afghanistan's transit revenues. (Hanifi, 2022). According to a World Bank report (2022), Afghanistan's trade has decreased by up to 35% in recent years due to border closures with Pakistan and Iran. These findings illustrate that, unlike previous studies that focused solely on the geographical role of Afghanistan's borders, this research has attempted to examine the impact of border developments on the national economy.

C. Research Gaps and Future Research Suggestions

Despite extensive research on border developments in Afghanistan, several research gaps remain that require further exploration:

1. **Lack of Comprehensive Analysis of Climate Change Impacts:** There is a need for more studies on how climate change affects water resources and food security in Afghanistan's border regions (Akhtar & Ullah, 2024).
2. **Shortage of Quantitative Data and Statistical Analyses on Border Trade:** Most previous studies have conducted qualitative analyses, with less attention given to precise data regarding the economic impacts of border developments (Newman, 2022).
3. **Absence of Comparative Analysis Between Afghanistan's Borders and Other Global Disputed Areas:** A comparative study of Afghanistan's situation with regions like Kashmir, Israel-Palestine, and the North-South Korea border could enhance understanding of the consequences of unstable borders (Hanifi, 2022).

The analysis of Afghanistan's border developments reveals that these borders are utilized not only from a geographical perspective but also as geopolitical, security, and economic tools (Barfield, 2022). This research suggests that, contrary

to previous studies, Afghanistan's borders should be examined within a multidimensional framework that encompasses security, economy, regional competition, and social developments (Akhtar & Ullah, 2024). Future studies are encouraged to focus on the impacts of climate change, statistical data on border trade, and comparative analyses with other critical regions (Newman, 2022).

D. Historical Context of Afghanistan's Borders

Afghanistan's borders have undergone significant changes throughout history, profoundly impacting its security, economy, and national identity. Key border developments include:

1. The Durand Line was established by Britain in 1893.
2. The Rawalpindi Treaty in 1919.
3. Post-2001 border developments (Barfield, 2022).

These changes have had deep implications for:

1. Security: Afghanistan's unstable borders contribute to challenges such as drug trafficking, terrorism, and illegal migration, threatening both national and regional stability (Rashid, 2020).
2. Economy: Borders play a crucial role in trade and economic activity; however, insecurity and political tensions have led to reduced transit trade and increased commercial costs (Akhtar & Ullah, 2024).
3. National Identity: Artificial borders drawn by colonial powers have created ethnic and religious challenges, fostering feelings of alienation among various groups (Hanifi, 2022).

E. Future Outlook: Stabilizing Afghanistan's Borders

To stabilize its borders, Afghanistan must engage in active diplomacy and regional cooperation:

1. Active Diplomacy: Afghanistan should collaborate with neighboring countries and international organizations to resolve border disputes. This can include bilateral and multilateral dialogues, signing new treaties, and implementing international laws (Maley, 2023).
2. Regional Cooperation: Participation in regional projects, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and regional railways, can enhance trade and investment, thereby bolstering Afghanistan's economic stability.

F. Potential Future Scenarios for Afghanistan's Borders

1. Continued Instability Scenario: The Taliban may continue facing security and economic challenges, with borders remaining hotspots for ethnic conflict, terrorism, and trafficking (Hanifi, 2022).
2. Improvement and Regional Cooperation Scenario: If Afghanistan adopts a constructive diplomatic approach through organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or bilateral agreements with Iran, China, and Pakistan, there may be a reduction in border tensions and an increase in economic cooperation.

3. Foreign Power Intervention Scenario: The growing influence of China and Russia in Afghanistan could transform border management into a significant geopolitical challenge, potentially escalating regional tensions.

G. Policy Recommendations

1. Active Diplomacy: Engage in bilateral and multilateral dialogues to address border tensions.
2. Enhanced Economic Cooperation: Develop transit trade and participate in regional projects.
3. Border Security Management: Utilize surveillance technologies and collaborate with neighboring countries to reduce trafficking and terrorism.

CONCLUSION

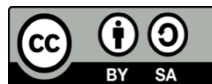
The findings of this study emphasize the critical role of mass media-based learning in enhancing students' understanding of democracy in Indonesia. By integrating real-time information from mass media, students can develop a more relevant and contextualized comprehension of democratic dynamics, addressing gaps in traditional teaching materials that may be outdated. Media literacy not only enhances students' knowledge but also cultivates democratic attitudes, critical thinking, and social awareness, enabling them to analyze real-world challenges and actively participate in democratic discourse. Unlike previous research, which has primarily focused on traditional pedagogical methods in civic education, this study introduces a novel approach by incorporating mass media as a dynamic and interactive learning tool.

The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on using media as a primary reference source, enabling students to engage with current democratic developments while fostering digital literacy and civic engagement. As a concrete recommendation, educators should integrate news analysis, documentary reviews, and digital discussions into classroom activities, encouraging students to engage with mass media platforms, participate in debates, and critically assess political narratives to enhance their democratic awareness. Additionally, the structured inclusion of mass media in educational curricula can contribute to a more participatory and informed student body, ultimately strengthening Indonesia's democratic landscape. Future research may explore the long-term impacts of media-based learning on students' civic engagement and its broader implications for democratic development.

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