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## The relationship between the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban and Leviathan

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### Abstract

With their resurgence in Afghanistan, the Taliban has adopted the term "Islamic Emirate" instead of "Islamic State." After capturing Kabul, the Taliban formally introduced their interim government and requested the United Nations to recognize their representation. The Taliban regime, which can be described as an "Ethnic-Religious Leviathan," does not adhere to the conventional norms of legitimacy in international law. Instead, it bases its principles on "Hanafi jurisprudence," "Pashtunwali customs," and the "Loya Jirga tradition," none of which align with international standards of legitimacy. These principles, characterized by ethnic nationalism, patriarchy, and the fusion of political and religious despotism, are incompatible with the modern state's elements, such as authority, legitimacy, sovereignty, territory, centralized power, and a constitution.

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The concept of Leviathan, introduced in Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy, is a significant theory concerning sovereignty and political systems. It is based on a social contract where individuals surrender their decision-making rights to a centralized government. According to Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, the balance of power between the state and society is crucial in determining the type of Leviathan. This balance may result in different forms of Leviathan: a despotic Leviathan where the state is strong, and society is weak; an absent Leviathan where both the state and government institutions are weak; a constrained Leviathan where the state and society are balanced and interact; and a paper Leviathan where both the state and society are weak. In each type of Leviathan, norms play a crucial role in shaping government behavior and actions. In comparison to Leviathan, the Taliban's Islamic Emirate can be seen as a blend of a despotic Leviathan and a paper Leviathan. In this structure, the Taliban government is strong and authoritarian, but its inability to resolve conflicts, enforce laws, and provide public services leads to a weakened society. This situation restricts individual and social freedoms and places society under the heavy control of the government, with no opportunity for effective political participation. Additionally, exploitative economic institutions in this type of government eliminate incentives for progress and innovation, leading to social instability and weakness. Considering these factors, the Taliban Leviathan can be seen as a combination of both despotic and paper Leviathan types. The paper Leviathan lacks the ability to resolve conflicts, enforce laws, and provide public services, rendering both the state and society weak. At the same time, it constantly fears mobilization from society, which could threaten the stability of its control. In this type of Leviathan, freedom is ultimately thwarted.

According to Quentin Skinner's perspective, understanding the Taliban's ideology and actions requires reconstructing both their practical and ideological contexts, aiming to clarify what the Taliban intends to achieve. A hermeneutic analysis of the Taliban's actions and the political environment in their Islamic Emirate necessitates examining their ideological foundations, customary norms, their political actions, the development or transformation of their ideology, and finally, the relationship between ideology and political action. The ideological crisis in Afghanistan stems from the lack of indigenous forces for national and political independence. As a country with ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, Afghanistan has long faced identity problems. The state's, system's, and nation's identity in Afghanistan have always been ambiguous and unstable. This identity crisis has been exacerbated by the dominance of tribal

culture, which conflicts with modernity and inter-ethnic culture. In this context, the Taliban, as a group with a specific ideology, has been influenced by Hanafi jurisprudence, Pashtunwali customs, and the Loya Jirga tradition. Talibanism emerged as a reaction to the inefficiency of the Jihadist government and ethnic fragmentation, attempting to strengthen its legitimacy among the Afghan people by ensuring security.

The Taliban's political actions are based on Hanafi jurisprudence, Pashtunwali customs, and the Loya Jirga tradition. After the 2001 US invasion and the subsequent fall of their government, the Taliban resorted to guerrilla warfare. Through reorganization and alliances with groups like al-Qaeda, they managed to regain control over various regions and gradually became a significant political power in Afghanistan. However, the Taliban's political actions have consistently been characterized by totalitarianism and exclusivity, which has deepened ethnic and racial divisions in Afghanistan. In forming their ideology, the Taliban collaborated with fundamentalist and reactionary groups, adopting norms from Hanafi culture as their political ideology. Over time, this ideology has evolved under the influence of global and regional developments, particularly after the deaths of the Taliban's original leaders and the emergence of new ones. The group has attempted to adapt its ideology to new global and local challenges. Global events like the September 11 attacks and the US wars in Afghanistan also played a role in these ideological shifts.

As an Islamic movement, the Taliban has intertwined its ideology with political actions. By adhering to Islamic principles and Sharia law, the group seeks to reshape Afghanistan's social and political structures in line with its ideology. The connection between the Taliban's ideology and political action has enabled them to dominate the Afghan people and implement their policies using ideological power. The Taliban's conservative ideology, emphasizing the enforcement of Islamic limits and a particular interpretation of Sharia, serves as the foundation of their governance and helps them reconstruct Afghanistan's social and political systems according to their ideological vision. This analysis shows that the Taliban has not only used its ideology but also its political and military actions to establish a prominent position in Afghan

The comparison between the Leviathan theory and the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban reveals that each of these concepts possesses unique characteristics in areas such as sovereignty, state formation, and political systems. This analysis not only enhances the understanding of philosophical and political concepts but also sheds light on the challenges and opportunities emerging in different

contexts. With the collapse of the Afghan government and the ensuing panic among the people, there are growing concerns that with the rise of the Taliban, Afghanistan might revert to a pre-modern era, where women would be confined to their homes, girls would be denied education, men would be forced to comply with Sharia law, and the Taliban-controlled media would lack freedom. Moreover, the public fears that any Afghan citizen who collaborated with the previous government or the United States might face severe punishment if discovered by the Taliban. In essence, it can be said that the state-building process appears to be moving in reverse, leading to a breakdown of order. However, the Taliban has denied all these claims in conferences, asserting that they have no intention of reinstating previous policies and that their objective is to assist the people and promote the progress and development of Afghanistan. This is a question that cannot be answered definitively at this time; it remains to be seen what the outcomes of the Taliban's Islamic governance in Afghanistan will be. Nevertheless, given the internal and regional circumstances, the future of the Taliban government remains uncertain. Domestically, the issue of governing a fragmented society persists, and the Taliban's Leviathan, in addition to maintaining stability, faces multiple and diverse demands from Afghanistan's youthful and sectarian society. Consequently, the Taliban will inevitably need to adopt a more inclusive approach, which will require developing a coherent theory of governance and appropriate mechanisms. However, it must be acknowledged that the process of forming a strong and stable state is still in its early stages, as the Taliban's Islamic Emirate is highly dependent on developmental assistance and de jure recognition on the global stage to carry out the typical functions of a sustainable government.

**Key words:** Taliban, Islamic Emirate, government recognition, Leviathan, Skinner.