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**Title:** Tribalism triumphs in Afghanistan

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**Synopsis:** Another critique, by a prominent Muslim feminist, of the powerlessness of the Hamid Karzai government to prevent the establishment of harsh Islamic laws in Afghanistan.

Like many other commentators in Afghanistan, Manji doesn’t go beyond the clichés—tribal codes of honour based on vengeance and retribution. She does not make any reference to the fact that Afghanistan was a civil, urbanized society of many ethnicities prior to the Soviet invasion. She also ignores the inter-ethnic conflicts between the Pashtuns and the other cultures within Afghanistan.

Finally, like other commentators on Afghanistan, she assumes that these problems were always present in the country and were not, in any way, caused by outsiders (Pakistan under Zia-ul-Haq, the US under Reagan).

**Quotes: “**Culture is among the most obstinate forces anywhere. In societies influenced by Arab culture, a massive motivator of action is *asabiyya* or tribal solidarity.

This analysis originated with the Muslim intellectual Ibn Khaldun, sometimes known as the father of modern sociology. He studied how Muslim peoples evolve, especially in environments that are arid, remote, or, in the case of Afghanistan, mountainous. Where the land is harsh, there's virtually no division of labour. Human survival depends on bonds of kinship, and those bonds can easily degenerate into feelings of group superiority.

Now what happens when tribes compete for superiority? You get a cycle of vendetta and countervendetta. In the end, warlords could be more legitimate than any democratically elected parliament - more legitimate because they're more authentic to the Afghan experience.”