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The Failure of State and Nation Building
in Afghanistan

SUPERVISOR

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Declaration

I, Osman Mohammed Afzal, hereby declare that the dissertation titled "The Failure of State and Nation Building in Afghanistan" submitted to the University of Public Service Ludovika for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Public Administration Science is a record of original research work carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Maria Bordas, Doctoral School of Public Administration Science.

I further declare that:

The research work presented in this dissertation is my own, and it has been carried out during the period of 2019 to 2024/2025.

The best of my knowledge, the dissertation does not contain any work which has been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma, in any university or academic institution. I have acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the dissertation by citing them properly.

Any work done in collaboration with, or assistance received from, others has been duly acknowledged in the dissertation.

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Prof. Dr. Maria Bordas

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Abstract in English

This study investigates the factors contributing to the weakness, fragility, and collapse of the state in Afghanistan, seeking to explain why Afghanistan has persisted as a weak fragile state and collapsed state. The research examines the flawed state structure established around Afghan identity following the creation of contemporary Afghanistan in 1880. Focusing on political structure, governance, law, and the broader political system, the study employs both qualitative and mixed-method approaches to analyse key issues. While numerous publications exist on Afghanistan, this research emphasizes detailed and specific sources, supplemented by non-written materials such as video recordings, to provide a comprehensive understanding of state failure and collapse.

The study critically explores three key domains: (1) Ethnic Approach, State Structure, and Constitutions of Post-1880 Regimes: analysing constitutional provisions, structural gaps, governmental approaches toward ethnic groups, and the legacy of despotism; (2) Political Structures Post-1880: challenging claims of grassroots constitutional movements, contending that such movements lacked clear origins and genuine influence despite contrary assertions in some sources; and (3) Internal vs. External Factors in State Collapse: highlighting the predominant role of internal factors, including tribalism and fundamentalism, in fuelling uprisings against reformist, non-tribal governments, alongside structural inefficiency and ethnic neglect.

The research further examines the fragility and collapse of the post-2001, often attributed to external factors, but argues that internal challenges—rooted in the flawed legacies of monarchy and emirate periods—were decisive and there are no change in regarding fake nationalism and identity, nationalism does not exist in Afghanistan. Political rivalries and centralized power structures undermined efforts toward a value-driven state. The study concludes that decentralization of political power is a prerequisite for democratization in Afghanistan. Moreover, it emphasizes that democracy, beyond a political system, is a cultural construct that requires the institutionalization of democratic values within a society. For Afghanistan, fostering a democratic culture is crucial for sustainable state-building and governance.

Keywords: Afghanistan, state-building, national building, tribal system, corruption, public administration, Taliban, radical Islam, Islamic fundamentalism

Abstract in Hungarian

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Kulcsszavak: Afganisztán, államépítés, nemzetépítés, törzsi rendszer, közigazgatás, Talibán, radikális iszlám, iszlám fundamentalizmus

Acknowledgement

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Chapter I: Introduction

Afghanistan's history is marked by persistent instability, conflict, fragility, and political collapse. Since the formation of contemporary Afghanistan in 1880, the country has faced ongoing challenges rooted in Pashtun tribalism, religious fundamentalism, ethnic tensions, and the centralization of political power. State Nation-building efforts, initiated by Pashtuns with British support, have historically marginalized other ethnic groups, leading to an undeclared and continuous struggle over political power, identity, and social justice. Thus, history of Afghanistan narrate only from weak, fragile and collapse of state. The process of state and nation-building in Afghanistan can be divided into two distinct periods. The first phase, spanning from 1880 to 1973 under the monarchy, sought to enforce nationalism and institutionalize a singular Afghan identity, often at the expense of ethnic diversity. The second phase began with the establishment of the first republic in 1973, continuing autocratic governance without addressing ethnic and political imbalances. Successive regimes have failed to create an inclusive political structure, neglecting rural areas and depriving provinces of basic rights and services. Ethnic and political rivalries have dominated state affairs, with power struggles further deepening national divisions.

Historically, Afghanistan's governance has been shaped by monarchies with tribal and traditional ideologies, starting with Amir Abdul Rahman's attempt to establish a centralized government. However, the state has consistently lacked a strong, inclusive administration capable of enforcing the rule of law nationwide. Rural areas in chart of customary law, in Pashtun areas governed by tribal leaders, the Tajiks areas Arbab, Uzbeks by landlord Arbabs, Hazaras also by Arbabs that 75 percent of the geography remained outside the state's reach, posing a challenge to regimes. Consequently, political regimes, even those claiming democratic in the country, have been unable to implement civic law or foster a connection between the central government and the rural areas. Afghanistan's political landscape has long been dominated by Pashtun nationalism, often enforced through totalitarian regimes that have marginalized other ethnic groups. From the monarchy to the modern era, including the current Taliban regime, Pashtunization policies have shaped national identity and governance, leading to deep-rooted conflicts over political power, identity, and representation. Calls for decentralization and power-sharing, advocated by non-Pashtun leaders such as Abdul Ali Mazari, Ahmad Shah Massoud, Burhanuddin Rabbani, and Marshal Dostum, have largely been ignored. Similarly, Tahir Badakhshi, a

political leader in the 1960s, openly criticized state policies regarding ethnic identity and governance, but his views were strongly opposed by Pashtun nationalists.

The core challenge in Afghanistan's nation-state building process remains the entrenched Pashtun dominance, which Badakhshi referred to as "national oppression". The flawed state-building approach since 1880 has left Afghanistan with a legacy of political failure and ethnic tensions, with Pashtun elites—particularly from the Musahiban and Al Yahya families—shaping governance while resisting changes that could accommodate the country's diverse society. Without addressing these systemic issues, Afghanistan's political future remains uncertain, as historical patterns of exclusion and conflict continue to hinder national unity and development.

The Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, while rooted in tradition, have demonstrated a cultural inclination toward modernity and reform in the country. Unlike the Pashtun tribal communities, there is no historical evidence of these ethnic groups rising against modern values or government reforms. Throughout history, resistance to modernity has largely emerged from Pashtun tribal communities, which have rejected political and social changes, including women's rights and political participation. For example, while Shiites and Tajiks supported Amanullah Khan's modernization efforts, he was condemned as a "pagan" by Pashtun tribal leaders. Similarly, they opposed Habibullah Kalakani's overthrow of Amanullah Khan, viewing it as a setback to modernization.

This research examines Afghanistan's flawed state nation-building process, the roots of state failure in a plural society, and the incompatibility of traditional structures with modern values. Despite ongoing academic discussions on nation-building and state formation, Afghanistan has never successfully modernized due to deep-seated tribalism, religious fundamentalism and most importantly wrong state national building. From the state formation in 1880 to the Soviet invasion, the U.S. intervention and democratization post-2001, and the state collapse in August 2021 with the Taliban's return, Afghanistan's history has been shaped by chronic structural challenges that reinforce the absence of a true nation-state. The research aim is to first elucidate the roots of ethnic conflict, fragility, and the collapse of the state in Afghanistan. These roots are basically the following variables:

wrong state-nation building, multiethnicity, political power, tribalism, and fundamentalism that challenges nation- state building in the country.

The first chapter will consider efforts towards modern state formation and contemporary Afghanistan by Abdul Rahman in 1880 and his efforts towards a central state in the country focussing on how feudal, aristocrats, religious leaders (Mullah) and tribal leaders challenged the king's authority. By elucidating of this issue I would like to demonstrate the legacy of autocratic regimes and ethnic base of state-building and administration.

After Abdul Rahman, his son Habibullah continued and followed these policies (with minor differences compared with those of his father). He brought in some reforms, but still followed the path his father outlined. Thus, the history of Afghanistan considers the Habibullah period to be relatively good compared his father. Habibullah established schools and institutions which consider a fundamental step. After Habibullah, a worthwhile effort to modernise Afghanistan was made by the son of Habibullah Amanullah, who, for nine years, failed to implement reforms inspired and copied from Europe in Afghanistan.

Chapter II will discuss the constitutional monarchy and the reality of constitutional movements in the country. Most authors assume constitutional monarchy and Amanullah reforms, as well as Zahir Shah's last decade of his reign, have been the outcome of the constitutional movement, whereas in fact the kings brought reform, not based on the demands of a movement under the name of "constitutional movement". Subsequently, former prime minister Mohammad Daud Khan dismantled King Zahir's constitutional measures and drafted a new constitution that gave further authority to the president. In other words, the first republic established by Daud was another face of dictatorship and a monarchic system. No election or democratic pattern were embedded in the constitutions to render it a fundamental change compared with the monarchic system, rather democratic institutions were dismantled.

This chapter will also discuss the reason Communism took over Afghanistan and Islamic fundamentalism rose in the country under the name of Jihad. Furthermore, ethnicity and political power, oppression and the tyranny of a single ethnic posing among the PDPA resulted in Tahir Badakhshi, for the first time, protesting against the growth of tyranny by the Pashtuns.

Chapter III will discuss the roots of the civil war in Afghanistan that ethnicities fell into a heinous conflict with each other after falling into the lap of Communism. A diverse view exists on the roots of the civil war in Afghanistan that attribute the war to external factors, however I believe civil in Afghanistan not only has external reason, rather has deep internal reason too. This chapter will illustrate and reveal the external and internal factors of the civil war in the country as well as the second wave of fundamentalism, which concerns the advent of the Taliban.

Chapter IV will demonstrate how non-Pashtun ethnicities could not bear the enforced fake nationalism and totalitarian demands of the Pashtun leaders any longer. Challenging this enforced Afghan nationalism and the posing of sub-nationalism after the civil war demonstrates the peaks of ethnic conflict over political power, historical oppression, and deprivation of non-Pashtun ethnicities in history. Ethnicities flagrantly demonstrated their willingness and standpoints regarding political power, ethnic rights, identity, and the decentralisation of political power. This chapter also sheds light on the mechanisms of solutions to political crises that most of the ethnic leaders posited; however, they did not come to fruition in the country.

Chapter V will explore the U.S. state-building reality and failure in Afghanistan and the internal factors that caused the fragility and failure of the state after 2001. After the 9/11 catastrophe, the U.S. envoy in Bonn, Germany, organised the Bonn Conference for a new phase of " state-building" in Afghanistan; however, state-building in Afghanistan, without considering the historical challenge, seems like flogging a dead horse. This chapter, elaborate the blame game of state failure after 2001, who is blame regarding the U.S supported failed republic after 2001 in Afghanistan. Most of the authors blame the U.S. and international troops for state failure; however, Afghanistan suffers from enduring structural and identity problems as well as a lack of democratic tradition in the country. I will try to find the hidden and chronic challenges of state failure after 2001.

The collapse of the state brought about by the Taliban on 15 August 2021, after 20 years of state-building failure in Afghanistan further confirmed the fact that Pashtun society suffers from tribalism and is unreconcilable with modern patterns, that where Pashtuns are inhibited, has been considered a hotbed for the Taliban throughout the past 20 years.

The state-building failure after 2001 and its fall into Taliban hands has multi-dimensional aspects. However, I argue that the fragility and collapse of the state in Afghanistan has a structural and ethnic aspect, which is that Pashtuns never desired a democratic and developed Afghanistan, though democratic government is considered a crucial threat to Pashtuns and "Pashtunwali" with the result that they cannot tolerate a highly democratic, modern state. Tribalism and its incompatibility support the argument why Pashtuns are retrogressive and how tribal society could overcome modern patterns. Furthermore, research answers the questions of why the centralisation of power is beneficial to Pashtuns, why decentralisation is obligatory for Afghanistan, and why such a political system is fair for Afghanistan as a multi-ethnic society. As well as the fragility and failure of the regime, there are the consequences of erroneous state-building and nation-building experiences in the country that the Pashtun amirs, kings, presidents, and leaders falsified and imposed on the rest of the ethnicities - a historical problem. At the same time, the governance system from 2001 until the collapse of the state by 2021 had fundamental imperfections, whereby, except for the capitals, the rural areas were deprived of the basic facilities, customary role of law was ruled, rather than government law. This imperfection does not seem in governance area, rather it is a wrong social contract that rural areas rules by (Maliks, Arbabs, Mullahs, and tribal leaders).

Yet, after the dismantling of the Taliban regime by the U.S. (2001), Afghanistan was supposed to enter a new phase of state-building and reform relating to a political system and precisely considering the roots of conflict in the country; however, once again reiterating the mechanism that Afghanistan had already experienced and had a negative outcome in political and social areas. In other words, a unitary system with the same perceptions in the pivot of the same values, where the roots of conflict lie, was instituted.

Chapter VI challenges the Doha peace accord and the U.S.' geopolitical perspective in Afghanistan, the circle of Afghan diaspora and how it led the country to collapse, and their role in the U.S. state-building process in Afghanistan.

Chapter VII will focus on the coherence of tribalism and fundamentalism as opposed to modern phenomena such as democracy and trying to find social incompatibilities within the area of modern phenomena. Fundamentalism and democracy, tribalism and democracy, Taliban and tribalism will be discussed. The historicity of the phenomena mentioned and

Fatwa or religious decree relevancies that have played an important role in both the political and social realms in Afghanistan will be concentrated upon.

Chapter VIII examines political culture in Afghanistan. Due to its multi-ethnic diversity, political cultures in Afghanistan are still different. What is the reason for the lack of a dynamic political culture in Afghanistan, and what kind of political culture does Afghanistan have? Efforts have been made to clarify the roots of political culture and its influence on traditional and religious culture.

1.1. Review of Relevant Literature

The latest literature by Mujib Rahimi exactly discusses the identical dilemma of Afghanistan: that "Afghan" and Afghanistan are the outcome of Tsarist Russia and British rivalries. State formation in Afghanistan shows that Pashtuns are one of the minorities of Afghanistan with a centralized political system and autocratic regimes preserving a single ethnic cultural value that throughout history has become embedded and codified in the constitutions of a multinational country. The political regimes from absolute monarchy (1880) to the Emirate regime's (2021) constitutions have generally emphasised preserving the values that only identify with Pashtun values and do not have applicability today. The exact, predominant hurdles of state-building in Afghanistan preserve the structure that nurtured the conflict and rifts among minorities, instead of resolving challenges. 'State Formation in Afghanistan' by Mujib Rahimi (2017) explains the Afghan identity, a single ethnic nationalism, and the genealogy of power. The author provides a post-colonial critique of official discourse focusing on state formation and ethnic histography. He uses a set of theories, structuralism, discourse theory, and post-colonial theory to focus on five critical points. Ethnicity and power; Afghanistan and the concept of 'Afghan'; a single ethnic culture coding in the constitutions such as the *Loya Jirga*; the roots of Afghan/Pashtun nationalism; and the influence of colonial power in the region. State formation through monarchs and the construction of nationalism have been associated only with the identity of a single ethnicity in Afghanistan. Rahimi's core position is the formation of ethnocentric power and the concept of identity in Afghanistan. Based on different sources, the book hypothesises about the colonial powers' Pashtun-centric state formation in Afghanistan and discussions of the ethnocentric aspects. However, the state-building and nation-building

hypothesis is that centralised power management has created rifts among ethnicities that never led to forming a nation-state in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the top-down functioning political power nurtured autocracy and tyrannical regimes that the earliest sources such as Ghulam Mohamad Ghubar, Louise Dupree, Mohamad Sediq Farhang, Zahir Tanin and Muhaideen Mahdi narrate and illustrate efforts toward erroneous state nation-building in Afghanistan, which Rahimi also elucidates as the roots of fake nationalism and identity in the pivoting of the reality of state formation. This is based on earlier literature that considers the history of Emirs, kings, prime ministers, and efforts toward state-building in Afghanistan. The overview of constitutions since the formation of contemporary Afghanistan shows that policies, political system and the exertion of political power to create a constitution from a multicultural perspective centrality of power is not ideal for Afghanistan's society. It, however, sequentially emphasises old structures and maintaining a position of political power with tyranny and coercion. Tyranny, coercion and assimilation are the inherited policies followed by the regimes throughout the political history of Afghanistan (Ghubar, 2012; Dupree, 1980; Farhang, 1996). Gregorian narrates details of governance by Emirs and kings, and to what extent they considered themselves kings to all ethnicities in the country with an ethnic vision taking in the rest of the ethnicities. He affirms all this can be analysed in the context of the current challenges series vis-a-vis the old mindset.

At the beginning of state formation 1880 Abdul Rahman was paranoid about the British and Russian infiltration into political areas on the one hand, and on the other hand, he ruled in the geography where regional kings (lords, aristocrats, tribal leaders) stood against him. Fundamentally, Pashtun tribes challenged his authority, and ultimately signed the Durand line yet conceding huge parts under Pashtuns to British India, now the Federal Administrative Tribal Agency in Pakistan (Gregorian, 1969).

Farhang and Dupree also elucidate the Afghan king's attitude toward non-Afghan ethnicities. They assert that one after another the regimes inherited the autocratic notion and kings' autocratic policies over the rest of the ethnicities. The latest literature also demonstrates the basic roots and challenges of state-building, demonstrates that the fragility and state collapse in Afghanistan is due to shortage of sound governance shortage of balance of political power. Most of new researchers focused on the governance system experienced

within the last 20 years of state-building in Afghanistan and attribute failure to governance system, which is true, however I argue fragility and failure of state in Afghanistan cannot be summarized in the last 20 years, rather has historical aspects too. In other words, the conundrum and challenge of political and social development have a structural root in the country. The power throughout history was exerted in the same structure strong centralized system that just focused on capitals and the government policy faintly introduced by (Khans, Arbabs, Maliks, Mullahs) to the rurales. These ranks were often given by the government and in some case given by local Jirgas to people who had social base.

The deal between the governments from early contemporary Afghanistan (1880) up to last republic (2021) have not been changed fundamentally or bureaucratize the system. Tribal lords first recognised and preserved their semi-authority in the region and used them as the hegemonic sources of the government. For this reason, lords and maliks, clan heads and *mullahs* still enjoy social authority and respect by rural society.

According to experts the roots of conflict and disunity of nationalities often ascribed to cultural diversities in Afghanistan, however, lack of balance of power and lack of sound governance system in the country led to disunity of the ethnicity (Abid, 2017; Shahrani, 2005; Ibrahimi; 2019; Edward, 2011). The notion of recognition of multiculturality was not evident in the regimes. Movements, political parties and intellectuals also emphasised the erroneous process of nation-building in the country. However, the non-Pashtun intellectuals who posed the fundamental solution to the national problem in Afghanistan, were suppressed and murdered by the autocratic regimes, politicians such as Tahir Badakhshi and his entourages. Badakhshi more than half a century ago rose against oligarchy and totalitarian regimes which he called "national oppression" and ethnic rights. (Sadr, 2020).

Furthermore, the constant challenges of Afghanistan are discussed in Iris Young's theory of the "Five Faces of Oppression". She demonstrates that oppression has many faces such as "Exploitation, Marginalisation, Powerlessness, Cultural Imperialism, and Violence". The concept of oppression according to Young is "the exercise of tyranny by the ruling group", which is defined as oppressive in different contexts, as Young explained as the five faces of oppression underlining that each concept has close ties with each other.

Young's fundamental concern is to explore the "justice" in the political area of the structural perspective of preserving justice. What Young explains and categorises as the oppressions are the artefacts of autocratic regimes that disregard the meaning of 'nation-state' (Young, 1988). The earlier literature vividly demonstrates what Young meant by the five faces of oppression in Afghanistan and where the state stood with these five faces of oppression.

Regarding "Negotiation Cultural Diversity in Afghanistan" Omar Sadr (2020) considered the diverse nature of Afghan society and a fair governance system and how the centralised political system could take the opportunity of political development in Afghanistan. (Sadr, p. 172). Shahrani (2002) argues that a strong centralised political system in Afghanistan took that opportunity of becoming a nation-state, and affirmed that except for the Tajiks, Hazaras, and the Uzbek, the rest of the minorities, such as the Sikh, and Hindus, ought to have their rights, while, I believe none of ethnicities has reached to their basic rights. To preserve minorities' rights and a functioning state, Sharani recommends a semi-presidential/parliamentary system for Afghanistan to resolve the challenge. Fragility and collapses of the states one after another, according to Ibrahimi, also connect to the centralised political system and centrifugal society of Afghanistan that has been preserved throughout history. Relations between the centralised political system and centrifugal society have close ties with the system of governance regarding to what extent people are involved in political decision-making and to what extent the people's demands start to function through the government. (Ibrahimi, 2019; Rahimi, 2021).

Fixing Failed States by Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart vividly discusses failed states' theories of governance and state-building based on the rentier economy and UN peacekeeping for state-building. In addition, their book discusses NATO and UN peacebuilding and peace-making as the priority task for fixing failed states (Ghani & Lockhart, 2009. However, the experience shows that on the one hand lack of sound management of the aid for state-building, and on the other hand, the top-down governance paved the way for a wide range of corruption in the government. Besides structural deficiencies in the Karzai and Ghani regimes as the basic cause of state failure, ethnicization of the political power, army, and division of positions in the government based on the categorisation of each ethnicity into different branches were factors that caused deterioration of the situation. In addition, the distribution of *Tazkira* (National identity card)

to all non- Pashtun ethnicities with issuing the Afghan identity in it, frustrated the institutions and had the opposite effect of strengthening the Taliban side.

Furthermore, the US "state-building" failure in Afghanistan resulted from two main factors: first, ethnicization of political power that assumed the Afghan diaspora would terminate and the ethnic vision of political power in the country, Karzai and Ghani called the Taliban brother, based on this theory. Second, weak governance in terms of management and foreign aid. Stabilising a failed state through international aid and a rentier economy in Afghanistan has never been successful unless meticulous management and a strong commitment to the state and the people are implemented. (Rubin, 2016; Scot & Roy, 2015).

'The Delusion of State Building in Afghanistan' by Romain Malejacq (2019) exactly goes through political figures and their roles in response to state-building theories and advises the accommodation of the rule of law, and analyses to what extent elites created convergency and coherency among ethnicities through history. He underlines the concept of elitism in a multi-ethnic society. He evaluates the role of factions and political leaders significant in making a decentralised system that Afghanistan naturality appears federal, dividing political leaders' authority in different zones. They were called "warlords" from four sides of the country, bringing examples of how it is possible to create a united Afghanistan through these elites. The reality of politics in Afghanistan does not go further than the traditional leaders until a value-oriented and literate generation fills the vacuum. National Unity was misinterpreted throughout history, often emphasising strong centralisation to authorise the country (Malejacq, 2020; Carrol & David, 2009). Thus, the traditional leaders, Khans, Arbabs, *mullahs*, and generally *Buzurgan Qawm* (tribe elders) have been the key role players in the decision-making of the government in the country throughout history. Even after 2001, most of these figures did not have official positions in the government, rather they were doomed to serve warlords, leaders of ethnicities, whereas they had their own peoples. Elites of each ethnicity cannot be elites of the rest. The term 'warlords' was used for those who withstood the Soviet invasion and the Taliban before 2001 and remained armed in rural areas (Ghani & Lockhart; 2011). This term brought a rift between the government and elites of other ethnicities, which was the mistaken deliberation. Marshal Fahim, Marshal Dustom, Mohammad Mohaqiq, Karim Khalili, and Said Mansour Naderi are leaders of different ethnicities whom the government 'technocrats' Used to call the 'warlords' (Malejacq, 2019).

Scot and Roy (2015) argue that rentier state is not a responsive to society and often act as dictatorship. Afghanistan could be a stable and robust country in the region with its rich natural resources within 20 years of the international troop's presence and efforts toward rehabilitation and remonstration. A responsible regime with a multicultural base in the country with a decentralised structure could utilise this great opportunity for state-building. The U.S. presence in Afghanistan for almost 20 years was an extraordinary chance for building a stable state with a decentralised political system, which undoubtedly could facilitate ethnic dialogue and alleviate apprehension over political power; however, the ethnic vision of political power prevailed and somehow handed power to the Taliban, who are roughly Pashtuns and forwarded the policy that the nineteen and twentieth century put forward for the state.

1.2.   Research Objectives

To achieve the research objectives, I elaborate on the relevant scientific problems in my dissertation and the structure of my dissertation is as follows: The research focuses on four fundamental areas and tries to demonstrate and explain the state weakness, fragility, and state collapse in Afghanistan.

Before considering the state failure by 2021 in Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to the country, it is essential to have an overview of the past experience of state nation-building in Afghanistan. Past regimes' approach towards state nation-building can help to find the threatening phenomena of the nation-state and the causes of the weakness, fragility, and collapse of the state in the country. There is a strong belief among numerous authors that the state fragility and collapse is an external factor, a mistake and one way or another Afghanistan backwardness was associated with major powers. However, based on my consideration, I believe the failure of a state is not because of external factors, but rather because of a historical challenge such as bad state nation-building based on Pashtunwali and failed governance system.

The first objective of the research is to find the sequence of poor state nation-building in the country and study the monarchic regimes' approaches regarding founding

contemporary Afghanistan and endeavours toward modernity and industrialisation of the country.

The second objective of the research is the political power and its exercise in the country bearing in mind the structural deficiencies in a multi-ethnic country, to find what political system Afghanistan has experienced. Political power and political system have not been compatible compared with the composition of Afghan society.

The third objective of the research is to explore tribalism and Islamic fundamentalism in the country, investigating how tribalism and fundamentalism challenged the regimes and how both phenomena threatened and weakened the state and bourgeois social order. When we study the state, we are also obliged to study the nation and see what extent the level of dynamism, literacy, and political culture of the nation is. According to the different minorities that live in Afghanistan, it is still debatable which minority still lives based on tribal values which one is traditional, and what the factors of fundamentalism in Afghanistan are. These are concrete points in Afghan society and these fields need to be researched in order to clarify to what extent these phenomena have affected the process of nation-state building.

The fourth objective of the research is the state-building process after the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001 by the U.S. After 9/11, the U.S. entered Afghanistan and declared war on terrorism. Within the 20 years of the U.S. and its allies' presence in Afghanistan, a huge amount of money was spent on state building and to strengthen democracy. However, not only democracy did not become institutionalised in the country, rather, the government leadership defamed democracy in Afghanistan with a dictatorial approach. The aid and efforts of the international community for political and social stability ended fruitlessly. After the withdrawal of the U. S. based on the Doha agreement in Qatar, the government of Afghanistan collapsed. Thus, the research objective is 'What were the causes of the collapse?' Which phenomena played a greater role in the fragility and collapse of the U.S.-backed government. It is essential to explore the root of the challenge in Afghanistan and it should be specified that the historical phenomena such as political power and ethnic challenge are the cause of weakness, fragility and collapse of the state - or new factors. The government's inadequate flanks in Afghanistan over the past 20 years are still unclear, waiting to be explored and discussed.

1.3.   Formulation of the Scientific Problem

The problem to be addressed through this study is the Failure of State and nation-building in Afghanistan which is considered a broad area. This research might not be able to respond to all challenges, however, it provides the opportunity to reveal the fundamental challenges of state-building reasons and the roots of state failure.

Many treatises and books have argued about the lack of a national government in Afghanistan, and the roots of the absence of a nation-state are called ethnic and authoritarian approaches of the monarchy regimes, but the reasons for the weakness, fragility and collapse of the state, why the history of Afghanistan is full of disintegration have not been extensively discussed. Other reasons to be explored are why the modern state was not formed, and what the factors and obstacles were to the formation of the modern state. This research discusses the fundamental roots of government weakness and fragility and raises the following questions: based on a brief introduction to the topic area the following questions arose, where the research tries to elaborate the following concepts and questions:

- How did the modernisation process slow down and what can be listed as the fundamental hurdle?
- Why was the modern state not built?
- Has state formation been based on tribal values?
- How did centralisation of political power by monarchs, constitutional monarchies and constitutional movements become a reality, including the first parliamentary experience in the country?
- What social classes were represented in the parliament?
- When were elections first held?
- What electoral systems were created in Afghanistan?
- When were capitalist relations established in the country?
- When did urbanisation begin?
- When were political freedom and liberties and economic rights regulated in constitutions meaning when was a dynamic constitution developed in Afghanistan?

- How did customary tribal law and Islamic Sharia law relate to each other? When did radical Islam appear, and in what form? What role did Islam play in the functioning of the state?
- Political power dilemma, ethnicities, political structure, Islamic fundamentalism, tribalism, and lack of regular governance in Afghanistan are regarded as the most fundamental internal factors which seems essential to focus on.

The posed questions are going to be elaborate in the first part, as they form the base and background of the topic. The second part of the research will deal with the overview of the Communist invasion of Afghanistan and the American invasion and state-building after 2001 and state failure in Afghanistan.

Failure to address these challenges in Afghanistan has left the government weak and the nation in misery. The path chosen by the advanced governments achieved relative political and social development, but Afghanistan has not yet adopted it as it should and is still in dire condition.

Another part of this research that will be addressed from several sides is state-building and its collapse after 2001, during the time the world endeavoured to form a stable government and institutionalise democracy in Afghanistan, sadly, the government fell apart as US troops withdrew from Afghanistan. How much the world has aimed at democratisation in Afghanistan is not addressed in this research, but it will briefly discuss the policies of the U.S. as a pro-democracy government in Afghanistan.

1.4.   The Research Hypotheses

For the research for this dissertation, I formulated the following hypotheses:
• The failure of the Afghan state-building by the U.S. since 2001 was related to ignorance of local cultural traditions and traditional political, governmental, and administrative structures.
• One of the factors of the failure of Afghan state-building was the unbalanced minority representation in the central government, and the lack of autonomy of ethnic minorities, such as Hazara, Tajiks and Uzbeks.

• In countries such as Afghanistan which do not have democratic traditions, the build-up of the Western-type democratic political and government system is not feasible. Rather it is a foreign body.

• In weak, fragile states in the Islamic world, the emergence of radical Islam is inevitable, and it could easily be a hotbed for terrorist organisations which can be clandestine, non-state actors, or will take political and state power.

• The American presumption that foreign forces could impose a functioning Afghan state from above was erroneous, because of historically developed local special features of society, religion, and culture, such as the lack of a centralised state, slowed down modernisation process, tribal system, and law based on custom.

• The American-supported central government was unpopular among ordinary Afghans who believed that central state institutions were ineffective and foreign to them. It is because they do not understand the basic principles of Western-type democracy.

• The unpopularity of the central Afghan government was related to the lack of good governance, i.e., high levels of state corruption, and centralisation of the state without respect for the rights to autonomy of ethnic groups, which led to lack of government legitimacy on local level.

• Neighbouring countries, predominantly Pakistan, did not support the idea of creating an efficient and strong government in Afghanistan, nor did they eliminate hotbeds of radical Islam and the Taliban in the Pakistani side of Pashtun areas (Federally Administered Tribal Areas).

1.5.　　The Research Methodology

To elucidate the thesis's main standpoint, I intend to review the main infrastructure of the state and its peripheral concepts in Afghanistan, and in light of that analyse the state's main challenge. For a further understanding of the topic, I will go through the constitutions of the regimes to illustrate the state-building path and the extent of reforms tending towards the variables of modernity, ethnicity, political power and tribalism that these concepts can immediately be considered the keywords of the challenges in the state-building and nation-building path in Afghanistan.

To find a tangible result, this research has been conducted based on qualitative methods which set out numerous analyses. There are articles and books that pose fundamental questions regarding state formation, efforts toward modernisation and consequently the roots of its failure, the history of conflict in Afghanistan, the fragility of the state, the political system and the multiethnicity of the country. I aim to identify the exact challenges of the state failure of contemporary Afghanistan from 1880 and subsequently and carry out a comparative analysis with the last regime collapse in the country. Regarding the formation of the state, political system, regimes, ethnicity, and nationalism in Afghanistan there exist abundant materials, books, articles, and pamphlets that clearly illustrate the failure and fragility of the state. The theoretical background of the research is analytical rather than narrative; Persian and English resources have been used. For this study, interviews with high-ranking officials regarding the state's failure, drawing on TV channels, the writings of politicians, and a range of documentaries have been used.

Chapter II: The Absolute Monarchy and the Formation of Contemporary Afghanistan

2.1.   Introduction

Afghanistan is a landlocked country located in South and Central Asia. It is bordered by Pakistan from the South and East, by Iran in the West, by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the North and by China in the far Northeast. Afghanistan has a long history and has been at the heart of trade routes such as the ancient Silk Road. The country's history dates to the 3000 BC civilisations that the Achaemenids empire rule. The Achaemenids shifted their leadership to the Seleucids. In the mid-third century, the *Kushani* empire ruled until the 7th century. Kushanis were patrons of arts and religion and were composed of five central Asian nomadic tribes, one of which conquered the Afghanistan area.

The Avastin civilisation flourished in Afghanistan and then Arians lived there. The Zoroastrians were also called Arians. Their holy book called Avesta gave its name to this civilisation, which emerged as Ariana, but after the passage of nearly five hundred years of the Vedic civilisation, the border was changed, and a new round of economic, social,

political, and intellectual life was established. The Zoroastrians had an effective administration and according to their history the sect believed it was unique and as the social norm they believed in "Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds". Arians were civilised and changed from their nomadic life to a life with rules and urbanisation. Later on, the Sasanians (224–651 AD), who had followed Zoroastrian Arya traditions and considered themselves the heirs to the Kayanid dynasty. They identified their realm as '*Iran-Shahr*' and '*Khurasan*', meaning "there where the sun rises", defined as the easternmost region of the dominion. (Karimi, 2014; Ali, 2015).

From the 7th to the 18th century: under the Hephthalites and Sesanis, Hinduism influenced the Afghan princedoms and the Hindu families were concentrated in the Kabul and Ghaznī areas. Excavated sites of the period include a major Hindu temple found in the north of Kabul and a chapel in Ghaznī that contains both Buddhist and Hindu statuary.

Khurasan, a historical land before and after the Arab conquest, was first named by the Sasanians at the beginning of third century BC. Its cities now correspond to parts of eastern Iran and Turkmenistan, Western and Northern Afghanistan, and Southern Uzbekistan later-on- regained virtual independence under the Tahiries, Safaried and Samanied (821 – 999), later on, formed part of the kingdoms of Seljuq, Ghaznavid and the kingdom of Khawrazm-Shah that was subsequently annihilated by Genghis Khan in 1220. Timur's successors (1405–1507) ensured that Afghanistan in this period enjoyed peace and prosperity. They were patrons of learning arts and building that the Timurids left monuments as a legacy of a bright period in Herat province. In the 16th century the Turkic Uzbeks naturally ruled central Asia, led by Muhammad Shaybani who took over in 1507. Subsequently, the Safavid king Shah Ismail annihilated the Shaybani dynasty in Merv. Kabul was made the capital by Genghis Khan and Timur's descendant under the control of Babur who made Kabul the capital of his administration, captured Kandahar in 1522, and marched to Delhi.

The Ghelzai tribe, after defeating Gorgin Khan the Persian governor from Kandahar province, established a self-ruled tribal authority that later on the Duranni tribe led by Ahmad Shah Abdali 1747 and expanded their authority to India and Iran. After the collapse of the Nadir Afshar empire (1736 – 1747). Ahmad Shah Durrani established a new rule in the Eastern lands of today. This new state was formed from the beginning with the agreement of the Afghan tribes in Kandahar. After a period of time, Ahmad Shah Durrani

managed an independent Afghan state. According to Rahimi (2017) the first Afghan independent state emerges under Ahmad Shah's leadership. Gholam Mohammad Ghubar, the famous historian of Afghanistan, believes that the reign of Ahmad Shah and Timur Shah brought relative peace for 45 years. Before the Pashtun tribes came to power, the Pars/Fars/Dehgan, which is today called the Tajiks/Fars and Turk dynasties, held power in different zones, and regional kings were ruling the Khurasan today Afghanistan was divided between various dynasties: the Turks in the Northern part and Pars in the South-eastern part. The Hazaras consider the Mongols and Turks affiliated ethnicities.

2.2.   Amir Abdul Rahman and the State

Contemporary Afghanistan was named by Ahmad Shah Abdali (1747-73) who later ruled the Afghan empire extending from the Amu *Darya* (river) (the ancient Oxus River) to the Indian Ocean, and from Khurasan into Kashmir and Sindh. Amir Abdul Rahman (1880 -1901) founded a part-independent Afghanistan. The compromise between Tsarist Russia and the British allowed Abdul Rahman to establish an autocratic centralized monarchy. Abdul Rahman had achieved inner autonomy by establishing a strong army; however, the British controlled the country's foreign policy and organised military segments and judicial power through British support to consolidate its independence. Amir issued taxation, a system that people then were not aware of, or their responsibility to the monarch; however, regional *Maliks* and *Khans* encouraged the people to refuse it. The people were disarmed; only the government had the right to hold the gun.

The main hurdle of Abdul Rahman regime was the *Khans* (the tribal lords), and the *mullahs* (religious leaders) who had strong social support that were not willing of to accept of the government authority. Intense rivalries grew between the central government and the tribal lords, each of whom had his own territory and social supporters. The disobedience of the tribal lords and *mullahs* to the central government challenged the king's autonomy and initiated a bloody legacy in the history of Afghanistan. Abdul Rahman was involved in two conflicts, with his tribal leaders and with other ethnicities, predominantly Hazaras. The conflict and suppression of the rest of the ethnicities by Abdul Rahman, according to Murtazashivili was to consolidate the authority with a mistaken assumption. Abdul Rahman

in late 19th century from 1880 to 1901 started land repopulation in order to weaken other ethnic groups and subordinate them to central government. (Murtazashvili, 2020).

The king is defined as the king of all the territory of those who live there. However, the Pashtun Amirs and kings disowned the rest of the ethnicities which might not challenge his throne, thus, intense discrimination followed, and the non-Pashtun ethnicities came under the pressure of Pashtun tribes about whose atrocities history narrates. Amir Abdul Rahman began atrocities and marginalisation of non-Pashtun ethnicities, and the rest of the tribal leaders who inherited political power in the country consistently continued the same vision and approach to maintaining political power. During most of the Amir's time, the slavery of the Hazaras was generalised in Afghanistan. According to Mohamad Ali Zahma, the Hazaras were the most condemned minority during Abdul Rahman's regime. To intensify the Hazara atrocities, the administration labelled them pagans to incentivise religious masses against the Hazara minority (Zahma, 2021, p. 179). One of the core impetuses of Hazara oppression was religious and ethnic diversity (Gregorian, 1969). Although Amir was supported by the British whenever faced with external pressure, he blamed Russia and the British for destroying Muslim heritage after liberation.

Religion was also the potent weapon of the Amirs and Kings in Afghanistan for all approaches regarding expanding the autonomy inside the country, especially the struggle with the Shi'ah Hazara. Although the Shiite sect and Sunni sect with minor differences are both called Muslim, discrimination of the amirs and kings toward the Hazaras began a heinous legacy in the country. In the struggle and subjugation of the Hazaras by 1891, the king appealed to fanatic Sunnis, mostly his Durrani tribe, to join in suppressing the Hazara minority by evoking memories and "heroic" slogans of "Durrani tribes in history, in fact almost the same circumstances as the Hazaras (and the Tajiks) had endured during the tyrannical regime of Abdul Rahman. The question arose that if Abdul Rahman did not put forward the action against Hazara and tribes, would he been able to make a state?

Abdul Rahman's regime had a rentier economy as its base; however, at the same time, on the one hand, exceptionally high taxation brought people to the end of their tether. On the other hand, the regime had a strict discriminatorily coercive policy towards the Hazaras, Tajik, and Uzbek ethnicities. *Pashtunization* was the main task of the Amir, to

strengthen authority in the non-Pashtun areas with suppression, systematically evacuate the people and confiscate their property. Pashtuns were deployed to the North, especially in regions where different minorities and cultures lived, giving them great lands. Those withstanding Amir policy were massacred, as happened with Hazara minorities in *Dychopan and Hazarajat*. Due to the persecution and killing of the Hazara minority in Afghanistan, a great segment of Hazara people were forced to leave their land from *Khurasan* and move to Quetta, Pakistan and Iran (Tanveer, 2017).

The policy of Pashtunisation was an official policy of autocratic regimes. The non-Pashtun ethnicities land was confiscated by the regime and distributed to Pashtun people. The regime officially deployed employees to provide welfare to new settlers in different zones, predominantly in Northern parts of Afghanistan (Ali, 2015).

According to Kakar (1979), "Amir's policy was to oppose the concentration of authority though many state departments were headed by officials who were more or less of equal standing, and senior officials were given the modest title of Prime Minister, *Wazir, Mustaufi,* or *na-ib al Saltanat* which signified authority" (Kakar, 1979, p. 28). Amir Abdul Rahman for the first time afforded for managing a central government by imposing tax and integrating of some parts of Afghanistan. For making a central government he suppressed the chieftains opposed the rules and were in denial of central government and "Pashtun State" in Afghanistan (Rahimi, 2017, p. 148). The roots of ethnic conflict according to most authors in Afghanistan go back to the period of Abdul Rahman when no ethnic group was exempt from the oppression during his rule and that of the governments after him. The autocratic regime in which Pashtuns were the pivot of power followed the same notion as Abdul Rahman's officially masterminded regime. The dynasty of anarchic power, absolute monarchy, emirates and republics, headed only by Pashtuns continued and it was made public in every possible way throughout the country. Non-Pashtun ethnic groups, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras, were often the servants of monarchic regimes in Afghanistan.

Abdul Rahman, however, recognised his tribal Pashtun society as conservative, and any minor reform could irritate society. Thus, he emphasised to his son and successors to proceed slowly as he went on.

"There are three kinds of representatives who assemble in my court. . . . These three classes are called Sirdars [the aristocracy], Khawanin Mulki [commoners or representatives of the people, usually tribal leaders loyal to the crown], and mullahs [ecclesiastical heads and church representatives]. This constitutional body has not yet attained the ability nor the education to qualify it for being entrusted with the authority of any importance for giving sanction to Bills or Acts of the Government. But in time perhaps they will have such authority. .. . I must strongly urge my sons and successors never to make themselves puppets in the hands of these representatives of constitutional Government. . . . My sons and successors should not try to introduce reforms of any kind in such a hurry as to set the people against their ruler, and they must bear in mind that in establishing a Constitutional Government, introducing more lenient laws, and modelling education upon the system of Western universities, they must adopt all these gradually as the people become accustomed to the idea of modern innovations". (Dupree, 1980, p. 462).

Social contract between Monarch and society:

Establishment of contemporary Afghanistan society in direct opposition to the state. The traditional society, rooted in ethnic affiliations and local jirgas (councils) operating through fragmented and distributive mechanisms, emerged as a rival to a state that revolved around bureaucracy and centralized laws. Consequently, the conflict between society and the state became a defining feature of Afghanistan's post-Abdur Rahman political tradition. From that point onward, political forces aligned themselves with one of these two camps as their primary platform. In this sense, the political culture of post-Abdur Rahman Afghanistan can be characterized as one based on the dichotomy between society and the state. Despite successive efforts, Afghan governments have yet to resolve this conflict. The primary unit of society in ancient Afghanistan was the ethnicity "qawm." Unlike the reductionist interpretation that views qawm as a rigid ethnic or linguistic identity, in Afghanistan, qawm referred to a broad spectrum of social groups, including clans, tribes, extended families, and groups residing in specific geographic areas such as villages, districts, provinces, regions, and similar entities. In ancient Afghanistan, all meaningful social relations were reflected within the framework of qawm, and ethnic units were managed by councils and jirgas within the context of customary rules and traditions prevailing in local communities. Therefore, the implementation of state laws that were

inconsistent with local norms—particularly when religion was involved—would provoke strong reactions from society.

Under the conservative strategy of the Musahiban dynasty, the state sought to minimize direct involvement in the internal affairs of societal institutions, such as inter- and intra-tribal disputes, delegating these issues to local jirgas, khans, and community leaders. In exchange for the local autonomy granted to these influential figures, the government expected them to act as intermediaries between the state and the local communities.

In cases where the enforcement of state laws in local areas became necessary, the khans and leaders would step in to assist state representatives in implementing these laws. This approach allowed the state to maintain a degree of control without provoking direct resistance, relying on the established authority of local leaders to bridge the divide between society and the state.

This conservative strategy exemplifies the complex interplay between state authority and local autonomy in Afghanistan's political culture, a dynamic that continues to shape the country's governance and societal relationships to this day. Historians and experts on Afghanistan often mention the reformist and constitutional movements present since 1880 until contemporary Afghanistan. However, the parameters of a constitutional movement have origins in the history of other states in Afghanistan but they are seen differently. In fact, constitutionalism can be found as a discourse rather than a movement. Movements has social roots in society, but in Afghanistan did not have a grassroots regime. A series of reforms Habibullah implemented in the country are not the outcome of the constitutional movement in Afghanistan, and the king never discussed diminishing his authority to the good of the people. Therefore, what is mentioned in the name of constitutionalism in Afghanistan is the discourse that provoked the Monarch and the people who participated in this discussion were somehow assassinated by him.

2.3. Afghanistan under Amir Habibullah's Reign

Abdul Rahman's son Amir Habibullah (1901-1919) took power after his father. He inherited political power with a strong military from his father and endeavoured to compensate somehow for the atrocities and cruelty of the previous regime. The king came

to believe that to control the society and to defend the central state from any conspiracy and the tribal lords' plot perfectly, it was necessary to follow religious principles and patterns to keep a calm society and prevent exiles from uniting in opposition to his throne or intriguing against him through foreign powers. Thus, Amir announced an amnesty for prisoners, notably non-Pashtun prisoners such as Hazaras, political prisoners and others. Compared with his father Abdul Rahman, Habibullah represented a relatively moderate person and brought fundamental change regarding women's freedom: women could walk in the park and go to the city and other public places. The social norm of Habibullah, accompanied by religious verses, introduced him as a loyal person to the country that even prompted women singers to repent and ban the custom of polygamy. Abdul Rahman Islamised the Kafiristan (Nuristan) people under the name of Jihad. According to Barfield (2010) "The god-granted State of Afghanistan" was the fundamental legitimacy of Abdul Rahman's governance and Jihad conception that Afghanistan should be defended from infidels and ought to be protected from any Christian attacks (Barfield, 2010, p. 158). However, Habibullah's decision on the Nuristan people was peaceful rather than his father's. Those Nuristani who converted to Islam could retain their lands from the government, but those who did not convert to Islam could not retain their lands. The second point that was considered taboo in society was that the King, for the sake of decreasing polygamy in the community, purposely divorced one of his wives (Tanin, 2005; Gregorian, 1969). Although Habibullah brought changes, instead of following his father's method of governance and following in his footsteps, he emphasised unity and coherence in the country against foreign factors. Habibullah substituted cooperation for coercion although his regime fundamentally followed Abdul Rahman's absolute monarchy pattern. The formation of the central state by Abdul Rahman led to bloodshed and atrocities and marginalisation of non-Afghan ethnicities; however, Habibullah somehow sought to heal the wounds left by his father's regime (Tarzi, 2018).

After visiting India in 1907 Habibullah realised that Afghanistan was a century away from any development and needed reform. His fundamental project was establishing a post system, photography, investing in the power dome of *Jabal Saraj*, leading and controlling water sources to boost the agriculture sector and drinking water resources for the capital. The reforms of the Habibullah regime, which concentrated only on rehabilitating the cities, and the whole plan and steps toward the state did not seem enough to alleviate all the wounds

and bloodshed committed by Abdul Rahman his father. Intellectuals who were companions of the Amir and other scholars who were opponents of the anarchic Emirate system in the country ultimately established the constitutional "movement". According to Tanin (2010), citing Ashraf Ghani, "The constitutionalist slogan and manifest were the Sword, Holy Quran, and the pen". The sword meant that Afghanistan should be liberated from the British, who had control of the country's foreign affairs. The pen meant that the country's education system must be strengthened (Tanin, 2010, p. 25). The constitutionalists and intellectuals close to the Amir emphasised that the government must not be separate from the people, and the government, one way or another, ought to have convergence with the society.

As already mentioned, Habibullah retained certain features of his father's administration and methods of governance. He divided Afghanistan into six provinces and administrations: Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Farah, Afghan Turkistan, and Badakhshan (Barfield, 2010; Gregorian, 1969). He inherited his father's policies and prolonged the approach as his father had designed, however with a minor difference compared with his father. Habibullah, after occupying the throne, proclaimed an amnesty for prisoners, and requested the return of political exiles who had left the country during his father Abdul Rahman's tyranny. One of the most popular among the returnees was Mahmud Tarzi, the "founding father of Afghan nationalism". Tarzi used the chance of the amnesty, returned to Afghanistan, and reminded Habibullah about hegemonic resources for spreading Afghan nationalism, which seemed to be his predominant crucial scheme. Tarzi, after being absorbed into Habibullah's court, had two fundamental responsibilities regarding the institutionalization of Afghan nationalism. One was to draft the education system and the second was to establish the Serajul Akhbar journal from 1911 till 1919. The focal point of Serajul Akhbar was the spread and strengthening of nationalism and grabbing the attention of the masses for the nationalism they had planned. In other words, Serajul Akhbar had hegemonic power (Gregorian, 1969, p. 169; Shahrani, 1984, p. 44).

However, from 1880 to 1920, Afghanistan was ceded to immigrants who were invited from Turkey to Afghanistan, placed in important government positions, employed as professionals, and who were experienced in essential parts of government. Diaspores who returned to Afghanistan from Turkey, especially the families of Tarzi, who furnished and had a key role in state-building and performed basic government tasks in the legislative

sector, such as development structure. Therefore, Afghanistan owes a great deal to the cooperation of the Ottoman Turks. Ahmad strongly criticised the failure of the Habibullah government. He rejected the failure of Afghanistan to participate in World War I when Turkish and German delegates came to Kabul to join the first World War.

2.4. The first Constitutionalist "Movement"?

The first democratic pattern and reform regarding state and governance were applied by Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani to Amir Shir Ali Khan (1862-1878). This is called the beginning of modernism and the modernisation discourse in Afghanistan, not even the dominant social base discourse. Amir Shir Ali Khan's reform and his consolidation of institutions, according to Ghubar, was called the first "democratic movement" in Afghanistan. By maintaining the absolute power of the Amir forming a cabinet, printing and publishing in the *Shams-ul-Nahar* journal (1875) and producing stamps, an army, and parallel to these, other innovations which began in Afghanistan with the British invasion. These reform and policies were continued to some degree by Amir Habibullah (1901-1919). By opening schools, madrasa and establishing a journal, Amir brought minor reforms and changes to the country. The Habibiya High School was established as the madrasa (where religious studies are often taught), and after World War II, it changed to the High School "Habibiya Lycée" (Lisa-ye-Habibya). The school curriculum was the Anglo-Indian system; in 1931, the school had 600 hundred students, and the government allocated nearly 100,000 rupees for five teachers' salaries and the students' needs. Amir's brother Nasr-Allah Khan headed and ran the school for almost ten years. (Dupree, 1997. pp. 447 - 449).

During Habibullah's reign, there were two dominant factions: the religious factions under the religious scholar's name *Ulema*, Sufi leaders and nobles that had a high impact on national policy and preaching Jihad against the British. The second was the nationalist and scattered modernist circle that emphasised and advised the opening of schools. Schools and madrasas in the history of Afghanistan have had a significant role in political opposition and cohesion, and most of the political parties' basic ideas emerged from schools. After its establishment in Kabul in 1903, Habibya High School became an intellectual backyard where foreign newspapers and political ideas were often discussed. The intellectual circle then consisted of the bourgeoisie and merchants who did not have close ties with a society

based on political will or reform in the government. The then-traditional society threatened the intellectuals who secretly had reform mindsets. Thus, they could not openly propose reform discourse to the society, for fear that it would be suppressed by the society itself. In a conservative society such as Afghanistan, the formation of the movement, to the extent of challenging the monarchy, it did not seem possible then that a conservative society and regime would tolerate such a movement. However, according to Dupree and Ghubar, the opening of schools and reforms threatened the king's authority. Intellectuals and liberals, namely Mohammad Wali Khan Badakhshani, Mir Zamanuddin Khan, Mir Yarbig Darwarzi, Shuja-ul-Dula, Sayed Jawharshah Ghurbandi and other reformists around the king with teachers together established a faction under the name of Jamiat Seri Meli (National Secret Organisation). The manifestations of the faction were reform and establishing a constitutional monarchy, and most of the intellectuals and democrats were inspired by the foreign press and teachers teaching at Habibya High School.

The National Secret Organisation, as the 'democratic' organisation and constitutionalist bulkhead, did not have social roots in society as the primary supporter. The biggest hurdle to political parties, organisations, *Nehzat, Junbish,* and *Jabah* was society's own conservatism. However, any reform with a Western perspective was predominantly condemned by society, led by *mullahs* and regional lords. The "National Secret Organisation" hold secret meetings against the Monarch hidden from the traditional and religious society. There was no guarantee of support by the masses for the reform and modern pattern in the charting of a constitutional monarchy. According to Barfield, the first enemy of any reformative policy in the government and social-political movement in the social arena was traditionalism and the low level of literacy in Afghanistan's society. Social change and those who were a patron of modernity could never transform Afghanistan, nor were they able to annihilate and displace their opponents in the country. One way or another, often sequentially, opponents overcame each other and followed their policy without social transformation (Barfield, 2010, p. 175). After recognising the constitutionalist members, Habibullah abandoned, tortured, and hanged the "National Secret Organisation" though, according to Ghuabar, they were condemned by terrorising the king and for establishing a constitutional monarchy in the country which threatened the king's authority. They were the first constitutional "movement" that emphasised reform and semi-decentralisation in the country, which was suppressed and annihilated by the king. According to Ghubar, Dupree,

and Barfield, the first wave of constitutionalism failed in Afghanistan. Thenceforth, Habibullah halted renovation of schools and ignored the expansion of education and building schools across the country. Education as the fundamental right of society remained in an undeveloped situation. The King came to believe that any reform and giving space to the intellectuals and reformists in the government would threaten his administration and lead to chaos in society. Thus, the first constitutionalist "movement" was suppressed by the king; however, the intellectuals, constitutionalist circles, and like-minded ones privately continued the *Mashrotiat* (constitutional) notion and followed the roadmap. On the one hand, the suppression of the constitutionalist circle by the king increased the number of likeminded in society; on the other hand, the notion of constitutionalism was inspired and nurtured by two factors; Turkey's revolutions leading to social and political change and the Nihilist movement in Russia and Western liberal movements.

Habibullah, the opposite of his father Abdul Rahman, summoned the descendants of rivals who have been banished by Abdul Rahman such as Peshawar Sardars from India, the *Mushiban* brothers and Mahmud Tarzi from Ottoman Syria, Sufi such as the *Mujadidi* family, the *Naqshbandi Hazrats*, *the Gilani family*, seculars, and religious figures. This policy of Amir stabilised society, relatively removed rifts between the government and the aristocrats; however, the monarchy later did not find itself in total accord with them, but with religious ones. As the predominant circle in the government, the *Ulema* faction was later entrenched with the Amir due to compatibility and ties with the British during the first World War. The modernists pushed the king towards Pan-Asian solidarity, anti-colonial resistance, and national independence, however at the same time, the religious circle, as the segment closer to the Amir, emphasised Pan-Islamic solidarity and Jihad against the colonial powers and non-domination of them (Barfield, 2010, pp. 176 - 177)

The establishment of the *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* publication coincided with 1st January 1906. With the efforts of religious "scholars" *Maulvi Sarwar* and Asif Kandahari, they started publishing publications that emphasised the necessity for constitutionalism, restoration of independence and the rule of law. The leaders of the first constitutionalists wrote a letter and presented it to Amir Habibullah through Mir Gholam Mohammad *Maimanegi*. The king was outraged and felt a powerful threat to his throne and shot Lal Muhammad Khan, Joharshah Khan Ghorbandi, Muhammad Osman Khan Parwani and Muhammad Ayub Khan Popalzai. Thirty-seven members of the constitutionalists were executed by Habibullah and some were

imprisoned. Ultimately, their political activities were halted; however, six years later, Habibullah allowed *Siraj-ul Akhbar* under the supervision of Mahmud Tarzi to continue its activity. The reformists gradually changed their stance against the king, and consequently, the king was killed by radical reformists by 1919. (Ghubar, 2012, pp. 717 - 725).

2.5.Amanullah's Initiatives Failure

Afghanistan's independence goes back to 1919 and was achieved by king Amanullah, with the first constitution with a modern perspective promulgated by the king in 1923. Following the third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919, Afghanistan became free of foreign political hegemony, and emerged as the independent kingdom of Afghanistan in June 1926 under Amanullah Khan. Amanullah was named *Ghazi* Amanullah. The concept of *Ghazi* came from withstanding the British and gaining the country's independence from the British through *Jihad*. Under the title of Jihad against the British, Amanullah incited the border tribes to fight against British India and through this approach gained the support of the religious conservatives. By establishing relations with the Soviet Union, he forced Britain to make concessions to his government and used these conditions for the benefit of religious prestige, and the position of Amanullah's government rose in the Islamic world. Barfield writes that Amanullah made it his motto to defend the Caliph, support the Muslims of India, try to preserve the independence of *Khiva and Bukhara,* and support the *Basmachi* movement that was formed against the Soviet Union in Central Asia, and for this reason religious scholars in Afghanistan gave him the nickname "Ghazi". According to Sediq Farhang's writing, "The *mullahs* were holding the Quran in one hand and the Penal Code in the other, and they were asking the people which one they would accept? But this was not the end of British campaigns in Afghanistan; their third war broke out when Amanullah announced that he would no longer recognise the Treaty of *Gandamak* signed by Mohammad Yaqub Khan in 1879. Amanullah thought that after the first World War, British soldiers were not able to resist. He declared Jihad with the idea of capturing Peshawar and the Southern parts of Afghanistan, which belonged to the Indo-British; thus, the Amanullah forces engaged in battle with British forces in *Kotel Landi*, the Khyber Valley, and Waziristan. British forces captured *Spin Boldak* in Baluchistan, but in Waziristan, war broke out when Baloch militiamen rebelled against their British commanders. Amanullah forces

attacked them during their retreat, and forty British officers were killed. However, according to Barfield as narrated by Ahmed, "The third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919 was not the military triumph painted here. Although the war achieved its political goal of independence, attacking Afghan forces were repulsed, and it was Kabul that sought a truce". (Barfield, 2017). Amanullah strove to establish and be the first independent Muslim state in the region; however, for this reason, the war against the British for independence was influenced by the Jihad concept. After the victory, Sharia law was preserved and he was called Amanullah *Ghazi* (Muslim victor) (Shahrani, 2005; Tomires, 2020). Modernization and reform approach of Amanullah begin after British defeat that state could win the war only by religious incentive (Jihad). In this situation, Mullah Abdullah Gardizi, *Mullah* Lang, and *Mullah* Abdul Rashid did not support Amanullah's reform and roadmap for Afghanistan. In correspondence in 1923 the two *mullahs* who were mentioned, with the support of Mangal, Ahmadzai, Jaji and Suleimankhel tribes, made a declaration against Amanullah's modernisation project. They considered the King's actions to be against Sharia law and demanded the abolition of the Penal Code.

According to Ruttig (2006), after the suppression of the first constitutionalists circle in 1909, from 1911 onward, a new generation raised the constitutionalist banner instantly, in which the key figure was Mahmud Tarzi, who later became Amanullah's foreign minister (1919-1929). It was a significant chance for reformists and intellectuals who could openly undertake activity for reform and intellectualism; however, constitutionalism in Afghanistan never went through barriers as constitutionalists in the rest of the world staunchly stood for constitutionalism and had grassroots. The press and pamphlets, with no barriers, could publish and introduce government policy during Amanullah. The constitution and Amanullah's reform guaranteed civil rights and established the *Loja Jirga* grand assembly as the assembly where only tribal leaders, aristocrats, *mullahs*, teachers, and the people who had traditional noble positions would make decisions regarding national issues as well women suffrage. Amanullah established a court system, abolished privileges such as monthly payments to tribal lords and royal families, arranged and built military forces free of tribal leaders' influences, introduced modern education, and encouraged women's right to education. The king banned the slavery of men and women, which the Hazara minority were often exposed to and which was the legacy of Amir Abdul Rahman and Habibullah. The reforms from 1919 to 1923 by Amanullah, which included the administrative, legal and

judiciary sectors, and, most importantly, the establishment of the parliamentary system, were successful relatively.

The constitution of 1923 formed *Shurai Waziran* the (minister's assembly) responsible for creating councils within the government, such as creating *Shura[3]-e-Dawlat*. The ministers' assembly, according to Kakar and Schiwal, (2021) was the constitutionalist circle under Amanullah's control; the constitutionalists' key figures were Mahmud Tarzi and Nadir Khan. However, Mahmud Tarzi and Nadir Khan were not constitutionalists, rather they endeavoured to form nationalism within central government authority. They brought change to Amanullah's constitutions (*Nizam Nama-e Dawlat-e Alyah-e Afghanistan)* and demanded representative democracy in the country, but it never came to fruition. The constitution was amended by Sharia law. However, *Ulema* or the religious members were not included in any assembly for drafting the constitutions. (Kakar & Schiwal, 2021). The second stage of reform from 1924 to 1928 was partly slower due to insurgency and rebellions, which began with the *Mangal* tribe in the South, against Amanullah's reform policy that excluded Mullahs, tribal leaders and aristocrats from benefits that regimes used to pay them or recognized their social authority.

Political development: introducing of constitutional framework for the first time in history of Afghanistan, recognized gender equality, introduced first constitution, institutionalized the Loya Jirga (grand assembly), centralized governance, dividing Afghanistan into nine administrative divisions, introducing a unified national identity. Economic and infrastructure development including building highways, industrial production, strengthening of military and military equipment, establishing cement factories. Partnership with Germans and French sectors fostered the country economy. In social and cultural area women's has given right, opening school for girls which consider a taboo then among tribal and non-tribal ethnicities in the country.

The Khost rebellion occurred before the king's tour of Europe. The rebellion's impetus was to oppose modernisation and reforms, initiated by the king in 1923. By July 1928, the third stage was when King Amanullah returned from his visit to Britain. He was faced with hate and anger regarding reform policies, exacerbated daily among the people, and a plethora of reforms were dismantled (Vaidik, 1967). To classify the social class then,

the rural, tribal and religious conservatives opposed Amanullah policy lead by *Ulama* (religious scholars), however the urban class supported reforms.

Amanullah's administrative and political reform focused on the draft of constitutions through *Loja Jirga*, which was held in 1922 and ratified by 872 delegates gathered in Jalalabad. The grand assembly (*Loja Jirga*), according to Gregorian (1969) has been a tribal political institution that legitimises the pre-planned tribal decisions of the governments in Amanullah's reign that most of the decisions were drawn up and planned beforehand, then the *Jirga* was held to give it legal status. The government enacted a law that, based on constitutions, segregated the three legislative, executive, and judiciary bodies to enforce the rule of law. The bureaucratic and structural reform of the king was pivotal to a centralised political system and the topic that created the most conflict was that of Afghan identity to be attributed to all ethnicities. Amanullah's unity theory was the assimilation of non-Pashtun nationalities and he believed, with no exception, that all ethnicities in Afghanistan ought to be called Afghan.

On the other hand, the centralised political system that the king dispatched as bureaucratic reform was the segregation of the state into nine administrative divisions, five central provinces, enactment of law for the issuance of Afghan identity cards, birth registration, and establishment of a political party under the name of *Azadi* (freedom) (Pasarlay, 2012). The King's economic reform fundamentally focused on the reconstruction and building of highways such as the Salang tunnel to connect the northern to the capital, the railway road between Kabul and Kandahar and the strengthening of the industrial sector that French and German sectors were in the country, also, producing military equipment, cement factory, and banning foreign goods were other parts of the king's achievement. Some European countries were interested in investing in Afghanistan and limited direct trade also formed with Europe (Barfield, 2010).

The press and cultural reform of the king were opening pamphlets in the capitals of the cities as the hegemonic resources of the government for overcoming the situation by establishing magazines and newspapers such as *Serajul Akhbar*. Most newspapers had enough freedom to criticise the government and independently publish articles. The radio channels are also considered Amanullah's regime's most prominent achievement,

dispatching students outside the country to learn to manage radio channels and other modern professions and arts. In terms of education, Darul Uloom, *Mastorat School*, *Rashidya School, Qataghan School*, and academic institutions for literacy were established in the country. Most importantly, modern science was taught personally by Amanullah. English and German were taught in high schools, and for the deprived people such as Kochi (nomads) provided mobile teachers and literate them. According to some experts the reform by King Amanullah in the country was inspired by a secularist approach, however, what Amanullah did cannot be called secularist approach. Amanullah offered shaving beards, discouraged (seclusion of women), bureaucratic reform, emphasising education, however, did not favoured the traditional and tribal society. The abrupt and rapid reform of the king that considered disrespecting Islamic culture and called secularisation.

In 1926 Amanullah adopted the title of 'King' and enforced a number of reforms which were unsuccessful. The first constitutional assembly gathered in 1923, drafting social reform which emphasised the recognition of citizens' rights and gender equality. Minor changes led to the tribal uprising and challenges of the reform, by the *mangal* tribe lasting precisely nine months. However, after a long tour to Europe and Afghanistan's neighbouring countries in 1928 Amanullah called for second Constitutional Assembly for liberalisation. However this time the members of assembly opposed such liberalisations with the representatives rejecting the rights of modern education for girls, limitation of the legal age for marriage to 18 for girls and 20 for boys, the unveiling of women and outlawing polygamy. Amanullah decided that Sharia law and the Emirate system would not be able to compete with the world of modern bureaucratic states, so he brought fundamental reform, leading to armed rebellions fundamentally in the tribal area of the M*angal* tribe. Regarding the adoption and approval of reforms and regulations in Afghanistan by King Amanullah, there was legal and judiciary experts from Turkey, such as Jamal Pasha, the leader of Turkey's Union and Development Party, Badri Big, the one who had a collection of Turkish regulation system and a file of laws. There was also a number of the king's Afghan companions such as Abdul Hadi Dawi, Abdul Rahman Lodi, Sayed Qasim, Faqir Mohammad Khan, Faiz Mohammad Khan Naseri, Abdul Jabar Khan, Mohammad Reza, Taj Mohammad Khan Paghmani, Mir Ghulam Mohammad Ghubar, Mahmod Tarzi - all experts who designed the constitution and supported the king in the adoption and implementation of reforms politicians in Afghanistan. (Shahrani, 2005; Tanin, 2010).

Amanullah's mistake was the rapid introduction of modernity: a modern pattern in the traditional society that ultimately cost him his throne. Many societal reforms introduced by modernist circles were unpopular in society and many unnecessary decisions were implemented such as demanding that all Kabul citizens should dress in Western clothing, changing Friday as the holiday to Thursday while Friday was considered a holy day for the people. (Shahrani, 2005).

Amanullah's reform ostensibly was copied from Iran's Reza Shah and Turkey's Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's state-building policy, both secular regimes. However, at the same time, Amanullah was following his father Abdul Rahman Khan's policies regarding non-Pashtun ethnicities, such as displacement of Pashtuns from the South to the North non-Pashtun regions. Shaharani (2005) believed that the *Pashtunisation* of northern parts of Afghanistan was the advice from the British for Abdul Rahman, codified in Amanullah's constitution (*Nezam Nama)* that Pashtuns ought to be placed on Tsarist Russian borders in order to prevent the Russians from invading the region (Shahrani, 2005).

Amanullah began by rationalising religious institutions as his main goal being to change the religious institutions (e.g. mosques, and madrasas) as a facet of the government's hegemonic resources. Religious institutions and imams (mullahs) have historically posed significant obstacles to Amanullah's modernization efforts and have contributed to the ongoing fragility of the Afghan state since its inception. These figures wielded considerable influence over traditional Afghan society, rallying the populace against modern reforms and government initiatives. While King Amanullah's reforms aimed to curtail the mullahs' dominant control and rationalize religious institutions, the impact on power dynamics was limited. Notably, even in Amanullah's constitutions, efforts to balance power included only modest constraints on the king's authority. According to Sadr "There was a little progress on the deconcentrating of political power and limitations to the king's authority. Constitutional recognition was granted to the State Council (*Shura-e Daulat*) which existed under Habibullah; however, the king had ultimate legislative authority. The court was also not independent and had no independent authority. For instance, instead of court, Amanullah he himself in 1924, ordered the execution of 54 rebels after the suppression of the Mangal revolution, (Sadr, 2021, p. 51). Jirgas formalized and institutionalized the (Loja

Jirga) grand assembly as the national decision making body. There was no modern election system, the members of grand assembly selected through local and regional that most often the King used select members of the Jirga.

Feudal Hierarchy:

Khans, Arbabs, tribal leaders as feudal ruled the region however, Feudalism in Afghanistan did not shape as in Europe, but shaped by its tribal, social and political structure.

1. The Monarch Amir or King controlled the central government with simi-bureaucracy. The king also acted as the ultimate arbitrator in regional or tribal disputes, if tribal leaders and other Aristocrats could not solve the disputes among the locals or tribes.

2. Beneath the Monarch were tribal leaders who acted as the represent and intermediaries between the central government and local people. They had capability of collecting tax, controlled large tracts of lands and maintained local militias.

3. Landowners and Arbabs who owned enough land hectares managed vast agricultural incomes and had large numbers of labour. By controlling labour driven their power and had high influence in local affairs too.

4. Tribal Elders in local level played important role in maintaining official orders, resolving conflicts. Preaching tribal values to the people and they traditionally owned respect of the people.

5. Tenants Farmers consider at the bottom of the hierarchy. This class worked for upper class, but in exchange they granted protection and enjoyed the right to cultivate the land.

2.6. First Phase of Ethnic Assimilation

The second key point that all the constitutions have emphasised is the Afghan identity, whereby all ethnicities must be called Afghan. Afghan identity does not represent the entire

ethnicities identity in Afghanistan. Rather, it is a single ethnic identity. There are those who believe that Afghans (Pashtuns) have "liberated" the country and established an independent state. Afghanistan has been benchmarked by Turkey and Iran, as Mustafa Kemal did in Turkey and Reza Shah Pahlavi did in Iran. Assimilation of ethnic values and their marginalisation by the constitution to produce nationalism in Turkey and Iran is still considered a big hurdle (Rahimi, 2017). What similarities exist between the assimilation policies in Afghanistan and those implemented in Turkey during the Kemalist era? How did the suppression of non-Pashtun languages and cultures by figures like Mohammad Gul Mohmand affect the ethnic and cultural dynamics of Afghanistan?

Since the foundation of the Turkish republic in 1923, it has been grappling with Kurdish and Armenian issues. Kemalist policy and achieving Turkish nationalism ignored the Kurdish minority, which sparked outbreaks of unrest. The Kurdish language was suppressed and marginalised throughout history in Turkey by nationalist regimes, with the result that ultimately, in 1984, the newly founded Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was established, and the core manifesto of the PKK has been to recognise the Kurds' national identity as such instead of being called Turkic (Larrabee, 2011).

The mistaken Kemalist nation-building and state-building in Turkey still takes sacrifices from two nationalities: Turkish and Kurdish. Turkish nationalism and Afghan nationalism or a single ethnic nationalism formed based on the "Tyranny of the Majority" had been considered the main hurdle of minorities and democratic states since the twentieth century. The Kemalist policy in Turkey aspired to the tyranny of the majority theory so that Kurds were ignored. A similar situation occurred in Afghanistan under the tyrannical Pashtun regimes that ignored the rest of the ethnicities but Pashtuns. Ethnic assimilation in Turkey and Afghanistan is precisely the same process in terms of languages and cultural values of ethnicities, such as roads, public places, and military literature, all just changed to the Pashtu language. In Turkey, the Kurds have been marginalised. The regime changed the Kurdish villages' names, and it was forbidden to give their new-born children Kurdish names (Tezcür, 2015).

The majority and minority notion also inspired the state nation-building process in Afghanistan. Pashtuns believed majorities overall had the power, not minorities. Thus,

Pashtun tribes formed a state based on tribal values and sacrifices and they were in the majority. Without any precise and/or academic justification based on a minority and majority in Afghanistan, however, Pashtuns called themselves the major ethnicity of the country based on a false assumption that if Pashtuns were not the major ethnicity in Afghanistan, they might not be able to form a state, an identity, and achieve independence. They believed that Pashtuns had got "independence" for the country, and if there was no majority there was no national independence.

Another prominent figure regarding the assimilation of identity in Afghanistan is Mohammad Gul Khan Mohmand. Mohmand grew up during the Afghan War of Independence and was Amanullah's trusted person. After the collapse of the Amanullah regime, caused by Habibullah Kalakani, during the reign of Nader, Mohmand was sent to Turkestan (the current Faryab and Maimane provinces predominantly inhabited by Uzbeks and Turkmens) in the areas of Northern Afghanistan as far as Maimane. Mohmand believed that to make a stable state and achieve nationalism, the Pashtu language ought to be expanded and the language and literature of non-Pashtun ethnicities should be eliminated. It was believed that the Pashtuns had gained independence of Afghanistan from British, that the country's official language should be Pashtu, and that they should make a Pashtun-oriented country. Thus, the bureaucratic domain of the Pashtu language, such as official letters, schools and offices and military literature, all changed to the Pashtu; in cases of rejection, ethnicities were severely punished. In addition, moving of Pashtuns to the north based as the governmental plane, the publication of Pashtu language books, as well as changing the names of places to Pashtu language, changing people's clothing style and removing the history and culture of non-Pashtun ethnicities, were part of Mohmand's initiative in the North.

Mohmand destroyed historical places such as Bala Hesar in Maymana City, and historical places elsewhere were also destroyed by his order. To remove the identity and historical values of other non-Pashtun ethnicities, Mohmand suggested the people of Jawzjan build a public library and asked them to collect books, so the people collected about 3,500 volumes of books and handed them over to him; the people expected to create a public library. After collecting books, the people were invited to come to the inauguration of the public library. When people arrived at the venue, they saw books they had delivered to

create a library but saw the books were in a sizeable threshing field. Mohmand picked up a book and asked the people which language this book was written in; the mass replied that the book had been written in Uzbek. Mohmand replied that this country is Afghanistan, and its language is Pashtu. Thus, it is not necessary to read these kinds of books. Then, he picked up the people's traditional clothes and asked the masses to which people this clothing belonged. The mass again replied the clothes were the regional inhabitants' traditional apparel (Chakma); Mohmand replied that this dress belonged to the Genghis, the Mongol people; thus, there was no need to adapt alien traditional cloth. After questioning and answering the people and dialogue, Mohmand burnt the collected books and traditional clothes (Chakma) in front of the people and requested the people to follow government policies. Mohammad Gul Mohmand and Mahmood Tarzi, the two masterminds of Afghan nationalism, accommodated and enforced the assimilation policy over the rest of the ethnicities in the country (Mahdi, 2023).

2.7. Habibullah Kalakani's Legacy

Amanullah's abrupt social and political reform caused *mullahs* to issue a Fatwa (religious order) against Amanullah's regime and reforms. How did the opposition to Amanullah's reforms reflect the broader conflict between modernization and traditionalism in Afghanistan? What does Kalakani's brief rule reveal about the challenges of implementing progressive reforms in deeply traditional societies? The fatwas and requests were: Amanullah was an unbeliever, a pagan king, that tribal and traditional society could not bear. The *mullahs*' requests were as follows: girls and boys sent to Turkey for scholarship ought to be returned to Afghanistan, all women must have a burqa, the Deoband *mullahs* must be returned to the country, the reforms regarding education should be dismantled. Girls' schools must be closed down, Sharia law must be restored. The mentioned requests and fatwas were from the Pashtun tribal area and Habibullah Kalakani (1928 – 1929) who was a fugitive of the Amanullah's government and had fled to Pakistan. In the anarchy created by *mullahs* against Amanullah, Kalakani used the opportunity to enter Afghanistan from the Northern side of Kabul in (Shamali) Plain. He besieged cities in his campaign against the King's reform with the support of *mullahs* in Southern parts of Afghanistan. Some provinces, such as Badakshan and Logar provinces, were not involved in the conflict, and Hazaras were the only ethnicity who supported the Amanullah's reform but did not stand against Kalakani and the Amanullah's regime opponents. The removal of Amanullah by Pashtun tribes and Kalakani from the throne did not bring about any positive change in the situation; rather, people - men, women, and even Kalakani soldiers turned against him and admired Amanullah's policy for the people. According to Najib Mael Hiraway who related this from Kalakani: after taking the throne the king gave a speech addressing the people that "the Amanullah's regime was changing the people to believe in infidelity, we begin our Jihad to rescue you people from tyranny and infidelity and to restore Islamic Sharia, after this you people are exempt of all tax, we will support our soldiers, the government money will goes to support *mullahs*, I am your king" (Herawi, 1993). Kalakani, within his nine-month rule had initially been supported by Pashtun tribes for overthrowing Amanullah. However, he did not bring any change, but preserved and returned the conservative rules which the *mullahs* called "Sharia". Habibullah, who had exempted people of taxes at the beginning, later taxed the people multiple times, and closed trade

routes with outside Afghanistan. The economic situation was deteriorating more than ever before.

Kalakani was the first Tajik to take power since the formation of contemporary Afghanistan. He was on the throne from January 17 to October 13, 1929. He restored the "Sharia law" and the traditional customs regarding marriage and restrictions on women, he banned girls' schools and recalled girl students from Turkey; he maintained the polygamy law and halted all progressive reforms that Amanullah had initiated (Gregorian, 1969, pp. 276 - 286). Nadir Khan, Amanullah's commander in chief who did not agree with Amanullah's reforms, was fired by Amanullah, and was appointed as the ambassador in Paris. While Kalakani took Kabul and was appointed as the emir by *mullahs*, Nadir came to Peshawar and entered Afghanistan, organised and equipped an army from the tribes from both sides: Pashtuns, FATA and Afghans against Kalakani. After conflicts, Nadir requested Kalakani to sign a peace treaty in Kabul, but Kalakani with 17 of his entourage were tortured and hanged by Nadir in the streets of Kabul. Nadir's soldiers, who were formed from Southern tribes, looted the property of Kabulis 'once they entered Kabul' (Farhang, 2002).

2.8.Mohamad Nadir Khan's Autocracy (1929–1933)

The elder son of the Mushiban family, Nadir, who was Amanullah's ambassador in Paris then, after hanging Kalakani and his entourages, established a monarchy based on Pashtun nationalism. How did Nadir Khan's emphasis on Pashtun nationalism contribute to ethnic divisions in Afghanistan?

What parallels can be drawn between the marginalization of non-Pashtun ethnicities in Nadir Khan's regime and similar instances of ethnic suppression in other nations? The 1931 constitution of Afghanistan (Oṣul-e asasi-e dawlat-e aliya-ye Afghanistan) was adopted by the grand assembly (*Loya Jirga*) and survived for over three decades. The 1931 constitution had partly confirmed the influence of the traditional stakeholders (elders of ethnicities, tribal leaders, aristocrats). Immediately for the first time *mullahs* were appointed to ministerial posts and recognition of Hanafi-at jurisprudence, and the autonomy of *Sharia* were guaranteed in these constitutions. Nader Khan's 1931 Constitution was remarkable in many respects and was more liberal than the 1923 Constitution. This law established a legal

system in Afghanistan and theoretically placed the monarchy under the rule of law. It included progressive provisions such as mandatory education, the prohibition of slavery, and the ban on torture. Additionally, it recognized the duality of the legal order by emphasizing the equality of Afghan citizens before Sharia law and state law.

The constitution established a national parliament with legislative powers, consisting of an elected National Council (Majlis-e-Shura-ye-Milli) and a royal council. The upper house (Majlis-e-Ali) was composed of appointed nobles, and ministers were made accountable to the parliament. Article 71 also mandated the establishment of consultative councils in each province. However, the structure and election process of provincial councils and municipalities were left to be determined by subsequent laws. According to the Nadir constitution, government ministers were responsible to the national assembly (Majles-Shurai-e Melli) and the constitution of Nadir Khan, compared with Amanullah's, seemed "democratic" on paper, while the approach was totally dictatorship and Pashtun benefit policy. People had the right to elect their representatives on paper, but delegates were appointed by the king, decisions got by Nadir. The national assembly (*Shura-e Melli*) did not have the authority to represent the people's will and summon government officials, whereas in the constitution they were called the people representatives; representatives were selected instead of to be elected by the people; the government selected members of the national assembly (Gregorian, p. 305).

The constitutions of Amanullah and Nadir Khan both emphasised Afghanization of non-Pashtun regions. Nadir Khan assassinated the social activists and, based on the Fatwa *mullahs* (religious clerics), assaulted the non-Pashtun areas to manoeuvre the government authority.

Nadir's policies were against Tajiks in the Northern part of the country and Hazaras in the South and West. The king dispatched troops to suppress the regional elders who had social support in the Hazara, Uzbek and Tajik regions. To save their authority, Nadir built a professional army of about forty thousand troops trained by German and French military advisors (Tanin, 2010).

Nadir's constitution emphasised freedom of speech, activities, newspapers, and pamphlets. However, he did not base his actions on the constitutions that were enacted; instead, Nadir based his actions on his vision. According to Nick Cullather (2002), Nadir Khan established a monarchy based on Pashtun nationalism or scientific racism; the rest of the ethnicities were marginalised, suppressed, and had a minor role in the government. The suppression of non-Pashtun ethnicities by the Nadir regime assumed that they would not rise against the government (Cullather, 2002). The hanging of Habibullah Kalakani, a Tajik leader who took power from Amanullah, is one of the examples of the regime's approach towards ethnicities in the country, and it was a warning to the rest of the ethnic groups in the country that in the case of any movement against the government they might face the same fate Habibullah faced. One of the main reasons for Habibullah Kalakani's hanging was that they overthrew King Amanullah, a Pashtun, from the political power, which had been acceptable to Pashtuns, and Kalakani was the one who broke the Pashtuns' uncontested political power dynasty that had existed in the country since 1747. The Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek ethnicities had been under a single ethnic authority threat since Abdul Rahman's reign in the country. Dynasties of power belonging to single ethnicities and regimes and their constitutions that restricted as well as disowned the remaining ethnic groups did not allow the rest of the nationalities to feel as if they were residents in the country. In other words, the regime's attitude towards non-Pashtun ethnicities has been that they are migrants, often affiliated to neighbouring countries, Tajiks to Tajikistan, Uzbeks to Uzbekistan, and Hazaras and remaining Mongolians and Afghans (Pashtuns) are from Afghanistan. This is the mindset of division that comes from the authoritarian Pashtun regimes that alienate other ethnicities. The ethnic hatred of regime caused and Nader Shah's antagonism against non-Afghan ethnicities caused him to be killed by Abul Khaliq Hazara (Rahimi, 2017; Brasher, 2011).

Nadir Khan's regime gave clerics enough space and listened to the *mullahs*' advice for the operation of Sharia law. Before Nadir Khan, Amanullah's regime restricted the *mullahs* and examined them for religious education, which was part of the reforms and rationalisation of religious areas. One of the significant measures of Amanullah for modernisation in Afghanistan is considered the control of religious institutions, that could not succeed.

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2.9. Republicanism's Initial Thoughts in Afghanistan

Prominent Muslim intellectuals, such as Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani (1839–1897) and Muhammad Abduh, were pivotal in articulating the compatibility of republicanism with Islamic principles. As reformists, they emphasized the importance of rationality in political and religious discourse, challenging the perception that republicanism was foreign to Islamic thought. Instead, they contended that the values central to republican systems were already embedded in Islamic traditions. For instance, Afghani advised King Amir Shir Ali Khan (1863–1879) to align governance with societal will, promoting transparency through media like newspapers and pamphlets. Drawing inspiration from early Islamic philosophers such as Farabi and Ibn Sina, Afghani attributed the lack of republican and constitutional governments in the East to ignorance, superstition, tyranny, and resistance to scientific advancement (Sadr, 2021; Marwat, 2005).

Radical opposition, advocating jihad against colonizers:

Reformist adaptation, seeking progress through rational principles introduced by the colonizers, though rejecting their cultural domination. Afghani and Abduh championed republican governance as a rational alternative to the traditional caliphate system, which they deemed unstable and unsuitable for contemporary contexts. They argued that the governance structures of a nation should reflect its unique history and societal needs. Afghani criticized blind adherence to clerical interpretations, urging Muslims to employ reason and critical thinking to address their socio-political challenges. Islam, he maintained, encourages intellectual inquiry and rejects passive imitation. Afghani further posited that the advancements of Western civilization stemmed from empowering individuals rather than centralizing power in autocratic systems (Hadad, 2020; Sadr, 2021).

Islah and the Contest of Ideas

The *Islah* (reform) movement sought to harmonize Sharia with civil law and modern state institutions, advocating republicanism as a superior alternative to the caliphate. However, this vision faced staunch opposition from conservative groups, including the Salafi movement, which upheld monarchies and the traditional caliphate (Khilafat). This ideological conflict between reformists and radicals continues to resonate across Islamic

societies, with Afghani and Abduh's writings forming a cornerstone for contemporary reformist thought. Afghani delineated two approaches to existence within religious discourse: one that devalues the material world and another that regards it as significant and worthy of exploration. He aligned with the latter, emphasizing the Qur'an's calls for rational thought and engagement with the natural world. Through references to elements such as olives, mountains, and celestial bodies, the Qur'an, according to Afghani, encourages intellectual and scientific inquiry. This perspective aligns with the spirit of early Islamic civilization, which thrived on the pursuit of knowledge and rationalism.

In Afghanistan, reformist principles influenced the constitution under King Amanullah Khan and subsequent rulers. These constitutions emphasized Islam as the foundation of governance, ensuring that laws aligned with Islamic values while resisting foreign interference. Islamic nationalism served as a unifying force against external adversaries, such as the Soviet Union and British Empire, fostering resilience and solidarity among Afghanistan's diverse ethnic groups.

2.10.Summary

The failure of reform in Afghanistan has roots in the lack and existence of three elements: the growth of the bourgeois social order in Afghanistan; the absence of class society; and the tribal system. Tribal and Sharia values are closely related and do not negate each other; however, the elements that threatened the absolute monarch and Amirs were those that questioned their authority, not Islamic fundamentalism or ethnicities. On the other hand, the elements that threatened and provoked the nation were reforms assumed to negate Sharia and tribal values. Both tribal leaders, Arbabs, Khans, religious extremists united against the reforms that Amanullah undertook in the field of education and public services after Afghanistan's independence, and dissolved the Amani system. Before the reform, Amanullah was an admired Amir of the country, a person who strengthened Pan-Islamism at that time; however, by the time Amanullah carried out reforms, other bourgeois in Afghanistan did not concur. It was a failed experience of the bourgeois circle. The emergence of the bourgeoisie in Afghanistan, however, goes back to the period of Sher Ali Khan. Amir Sher Ali Khan became acquainted with the principles of a new civil order under the guidance of Seyed Jamaluddin Afghani, a petty revolutionary bourgeois. Jamal al-Din, fascinated by bourgeois ideas and reforms concerning advanced societies abroad, had progressive ideas for the development of eastern nations, especially Muslims, and played a major role in forming the progressive thoughts of Amir Sher Ali Khan. Jamal was trying to bring Afghanistan into the Pan-Islamic Union through the Emir. Therefore, while in Afghanistan the bourgeoisie still did not have a clear economic-social distinction; bourgeois ideas were maturing in the heart of the feudal society and relying on strong ethnic foundations.

The history of the cabinet of ministers in Afghanistan starts with the era of Amir Sher Ali Khan (1825 – 21 February 1879) whose chancellor was Seyyed Noor Muhammad Shah Kandahari, and whose duties included the ministries of the interior, foreign affairs, finance, while acting as a general and as a secretary of the court. This cabinet was formed to a large extent without ethnic and linguistic discrimination, and none of Amir's relatives and friends were included in it. He also took other actions that showed aspects of bourgeois democracy in its primary forms, including strengthening the army and controlling the provinces from the centre, which resulted in relative peace in the country. But the big break that can be seen

is in the period of Abdurrahman and Habibullah, his son, who saw the bourgeoisie as a threat to their authority and began to suppress anyone who disagreed with the system. The plan that could open up the way for the industrialisation of Afghanistan was the Amanullah plan, which was characterized by the absence of the bourgeois class and did not find any social support. Before other argument, the modernization initial efforts by Amanullah failed through

Chapter III: From Constitutional Monarchy to Republic: Reality and the Influence of Constitutional 'Movements'.

3.1. Introduction

As the previous chapter clarified the approach of Kings respected the state-building approach, nationalities, and reforms that King Amanullah owed from European countries. Most of the authors believe Afghanistan's relative changes brought by Amanullah and the rest of the kings are the outcome of a movement's efforts toward constitutionalism and modernity. I believe Afghanistan never experienced the existence and evidence of a staunch movement under the name of reformist or constitutionalist. After the collapse of the Amanullah regime, the practical course for implementing laws and nationalism designed by Mahmoud Tarzi and others began which were in the pivot of Afghan (Pashtun) nationalism.

Most sources consider those who enacted and implemented a new set of laws in the government as constitutionalists, whereas constitutionalism is very different from what Nader Khan and Tarzi implemented. It was the laws that the king himself modelled and he drafted the constitution. It was not the outcome of a movement under the name of constitutionalism. King Zahir converted the absolute monarchy system into a constitutional in order to obtain the consent of the people and the right to join the United Nations and he signed the Fourth Constitution of Afghanistan with 11 chapters and 128 articles under the name of the Constitution on October 31, 1964. In this chapter, the impact of the movements and the waves of democratization that influenced Afghanistan through structural revolutions and political changes around the world or not, are examined. The history of the constitutional monarchy in Afghanistan attained 40 years when King Zahir, as a king,

legitimized the Mushiban family. However, the political power was in the hands of the King's Zahir uncles, Hashim Khan, Shah Wali Khan, and Shah Mahmood Khan.

Zahir Shah's reign is particularly distinguished by the final decade, often referred to as the Decade of Democracy or the Decade of the Constitution. This period stands out in stark contrast to the preceding thirty years of his rule, during which the political landscape remained stagnant. Throughout that earlier phase, parliament and other national institutions operated without significant evolution, largely retaining the structures put in place by Nadir Shah. The king maintained the authority to appoint parliamentary representatives, and democratic progress was minimal. However, the 1964 constitution marked a turning point. Unlike previous and subsequent constitutions, which were crafted solely by the monarchy, the 1964 document emerged after 18 months of consultation and voting involving diverse segments of society, tribal leaders, government officials and *Arbabs*. This process introduced a democratic dimension, guaranteeing individual freedoms and expanding opportunities for political participation. Although democratic institutions during Zahir Shah's monarchy exercised only relative authority, the 1964 constitution laid a foundation for potential long-term democratic development. Notably, this constitution incorporated critical elements such as the division of political power, a competent bureaucracy, and mechanisms that elevated the role of citizens in decision-making. These features set it apart as a progressive framework aimed at fostering a more inclusive and participatory political system. This constitution emphasised on, elected parliament, elected local councils, elected provincial councils, with an impartial, and the judiciary. At the same time, in the last thirty years of Zahir Shah's rule, there was no elected parliament or local councils, and the judiciary was under the influence and supervision of the king and the prime minister.

There has been no significant constitutionalist movement in Afghanistan that effectively challenged regimes, prioritized the public will, or pressured governments to consult diverse segments of society. Unlike other nations, where grassroots movements have marched for justice and rallied against governmental tyranny, Afghanistan's reforms have historically been top-down, driven by the ruling elite rather than social movements. Analysts often claim the existence of a constitutionalist movement, but the evidence does not support this view. Even minor reforms since 1880 were decisions made by kings or emirs without societal pressure.

For instance, Zahir Shah's constitutions and reforms cannot be attributed to a constitutionalist movement. Constitutionalism was largely suppressed, with proponents of limiting monarchical authority often imprisoned and lacking societal support. Amanullah 's reform efforts failed for similar reasons, as they were imposed from above without a foundation of grassroots support, unlike the bottom-up constitutional movements seen in neighbouring country Iran. Consequently, no democratic or constitutional movement emerged to shift governmental attitudes in Afghanistan. Capital cities under the control of the government, rest of the country under the control of regional lords.

Reforms under rulers like Amir Habibullah, Amanullah, and Zahir Shah were typically inspired by their exposure to foreign systems during trips abroad rather than domestic pressure. Habibullah's reforms followed his visit to India, while Amanullah's bureaucratic and social reforms were influenced by his travels in Europe.

In contrast to countries where constitutionalism laid the groundwork for democracy and popular sovereignty, Afghanistan's reforms served the rulers' interests rather than reflecting public demand. Even Zahir Shah's constitution, which introduced democratic values and promised social stability in a multi-ethnic society, lacked any meaningful influence from domestic movements. Thus, the chapter highlights that reforms in Afghanistan, from Amanullah to Zahir Shah, were consistently top-down initiatives, with no evidence of grassroots democratic or constitutionalist pressure driving change.

3.2. Constitutional Movement Reality

The so-called constitutional "movements" in Afghanistan fail to meet the essential criteria of genuine reform movements aimed at achieving justice, reducing inequality, dismantling autocracy, or curbing monarchical authority. By definition, a movement requires substantial grassroots involvement and social resonance, which the so-called Afghan constitutional movements lacked. A small, disconnected circle without deep societal roots does not constitute a movement.

Authentic social and political movements emerge from widespread discontent over injustice and inequality, fostering collective action that reshapes the social contract. While individual perspectives may vary, such movements draw in all those impacted by systemic injustice, growing organically into justice-oriented, bottom-up revolutionary efforts. This

traditional model of movements often arises in fragile states and autocratic regimes, where the absence of justice provokes revolutions. Conversely, responsible governments operate within the framework of a social contract, prioritizing the people's will and addressing societal demands (Snow, Soule, Kriesi, and McCammon, 2018).

By this standard, what has been termed a constitutional movement in Afghanistan lacks validity. It neither embodied the collective will of a society striving for justice nor generated the revolutionary momentum needed to challenge dictatorial authority. Instead, these efforts remained isolated initiatives, far removed from the transformative, grassroots-driven movements seen elsewhere. Constitutionalist movements often oblige the king and autocratic regime to reform and review the social contract with the government. However, constitutionalism in Afghanistan was only a discourse within a limited circle, and none of the following revolutions which inspired nations and led to a potential movement for reform and democratic values, but not Afghanistan. The first wave of movements and revolutions took place in certain Islamic countries between 1905 and 1911 leading to modernisation, such as in Turkey, Iran. However, Afghanistan did not experience any movement under the name of constitutional movement that led to regime change until the 1970s.

The second wave of revolution, spanning 1917 to 1923, emerged during the eve of the First World War and precipitated the downfall of major empires, including Austria-Hungary. Initially, constitutionalist revolutions dismantled the Russian Empire, giving rise to the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire, weakened by its own constitutionalist revolution, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk spearheading Western-style modernization efforts. In Afghanistan, Amanullah Khan pursued reforms following independence, but his initiatives collapsed due to insufficient social backing. The third wave of revolution, occurring between 1930 and 1938, marked a retreat for constitutionalist movements. The economic toll of war and the disillusionment following the First World War drove many nations toward authoritarianism. The fourth wave, from 1943 to 1949, coincided with Germany's defeat and the rise of anti-fascist movements in Eastern Europe. Unlike earlier uprisings, these revolutions were less violent and did not rely heavily on armed conflict.

The fifth wave, between 1989 and 1996, was characterized by anti-communist revolutions, including Afghanistan's religious revolution that saw the Mujahideen's victory.

Since then, various regimes have produced numerous constitutions, though none have effectively aligned with widespread public aspirations.

Despite the social foundations and anti-totalitarian outcomes of these five constitutional waves, Afghanistan's experience diverged significantly. It lacked a mass revolution or cohesive movement capable of driving reforms in line with the people's will. Instead, Afghan political systems were consistently shaped by rulers—kings, emirs, prime ministers, or presidents—who tailored constitutions to consolidate their own power. Huntington's framework of democratization waves, which profoundly influenced other societies, found little resonance in Afghanistan, where societal mobilization against the government remained negligible. At the end of the 20th century, Huntington distinguished three waves of democracy since the formation of democratic systems in Europe: the first wave began in the 1820s and lasted until the First World War with roots in the American and French revolutions. The emergence of national democratic institutions and elections with the majority vote and the right to vote for 50 per cent of men was one of the successes achieved at this stage of democratisation. The reverse of the first wave of democracy began with Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, the domination by totalitarianism in European countries, and the emergence of the ideologies of Communism, fascism and militarism.

The second wave: From World War II to 1960, whereby other countries subscribed to democracy. West Germany, Italy, Austria, Japan and South Korea started moving towards democracy after the end of the war, and countries like Turkey and Greece for instance also experienced democracy in the late 1940s. Countries in Latin America have also transitioned to democracy and weakened autocratic regimes. In the late 1960s, some developments such as the coming to power of authoritarian militaries in Latin America and Asia, with Pakistan turning to extremist mobilisation and also military domination. The era of military coups caused the second wave of democracy to stop (Diamond, 2011). The third wave began in 1974 with the collapse of the non-democratic systems of Southern Europe, first in Portugal, then in Spain and Greece, and within 15 years, democratic regimes replaced authoritarian governments in about 30 countries (Huntington, 1991). However, Afghanistan did not witness an uprising or revolution that resulted in constitutional reforms, and the constitutional revolutions from Europe to Iran had no effect on Afghan society and constitutionalism was a less supported 'minor circle' debate. Abdul Hai Habibi's book on

the Constitutional Movement in Afghanistan mentions people and introduces people as the first constitutional 'movement circle' the absolute majority of whom were religious experts *(Molvi/ Mullahs)* that was suppressed. The poems and slogans describing the first constitutional circle bear similarities to contemporary interpretations of religion. Habibi's account of the first constitutional movement lacks clarity regarding its objectives and the specific constitutional revolution it may have drawn inspiration from. While individuals with independent views on constitutionalism are mentioned, they appear to have been uninfluenced by external revolutions or constitutional movements. The first constitutional circle, known as the Afghan Brotherhood, included Indian teachers at Habibiya High School who supported constitutionalism. Amanullah himself was a member of this group, and after Afghanistan gained independence, many constitutionalists assumed various government roles. Despite this, the monarchy remained hereditary, and constitutional discourse was not widely cited or debated by other writers (Habibi, 1985).

King Zahir (Shah)1933-1973

The reign of Zahir Shah (1933–1973), one of the longest in Afghanistan's history, marked a pivotal chapter in the country's political evolution. This period's political structure was characterized by a dual nature: it upheld traditional and authoritarian elements while simultaneously creating opportunities for reform and development. During the reign of Zahir Shah, Afghanistan functioned as a highly centralized absolute monarchy, with virtually all significant political, economic, and social authority concentrated in the hands of the king. While nominal governmental institutions existed, their power was superficial, as ultimate decision-making rested firmly with Zahir Shah.

The governance structure operated through a rigid bureaucratic system, where ministers and provincial governors were directly answerable to the king. These governmental bodies served primarily as instruments for implementing royal directives. However, widespread corruption within the bureaucracy and inefficiencies in resource management severely undermined the effectiveness of this system, posing substantial challenges to state functionality during this period. A critical examination of the political framework of this era can be organized around several key themes. Despite Afghanistan's policy of neutrality, Zahir Shah fostered friendly ties with most nations involved in the global conflict. His constitutions were characterized by moderation, incorporating

democratic ideals and nationalist slogans emphasizing Afghanistan as a homeland for all ethnicities. These constitutions promoted democracy, welfare, human rights, and the people's will, aligning with international human rights frameworks. The political advancements of his era were marked by increased freedom of speech, the emergence of factions, pamphleteering, and individual rights. Zahir Shah advocated for a constitutional monarchy over an absolute one.

However, the Loya Jirga, central to his governance, was criticized as being a pre-planned, opaque assembly used by regimes to legitimize power rather than reflecting the genuine will of the people. In 1965, Zahir Shah convened a grand assembly to enact a constitution with 128 amendments. While these amendments, including the sixth, championed equality, justice, democracy, national unity, and developmental balance, they overlooked Afghanistan's diverse societal composition and reinforced a unitary system. This emphasis on centralization exacerbated ethnic tensions rather than fostering genuine unity.

The insistence on a central political system, rooted in Pashtun-centric governance, was a critical miscalculation. While national unity was a recurring theme in Afghan constitutions across regimes, it often served as a veneer for policies that ignored ethnic plurality. Prominent Pashtun elites, like Anwarulhaq Ahadi, resisted decentralization, arguing it would undermine Pashtun cultural dominance and lead to the erosion of the unitary state. Ahadi's proposal of dividing Afghanistan into ethnic zones resembles a federal or decentralized structure, yet it underscores the tensions surrounding power distribution.

Afghanistan's rulers consistently disregarded its multi-ethnic reality, resulting in a history marked by authoritarianism, neglect, and bloody outcomes. The consequences have included revolutions, instability, and repeated state collapses, making Afghanistan one of the most fragile nations in South Asia.

Zahir Shah's constitutions draw state issues based on the Hanafi sect. In contrast, the Hazara ethnicity of Afghanistan is Shiite, and Hindus and Ismailia's are also living in the country, although there is no restriction on religious beliefs. However, before the King Zahir regime, during Abdul Rahman and Nadir Khan's regime, the Hazara minority was humiliated and tortured. Farsi and Pashtu are the national languages of the country;

however, the constitutions emphasised only learning Pashtu and making it national, Afghan identity, codifying of *Loja Jirga* (grand assembly) as the legitimate sources for enacting constitutions which do not consider legitimate and transparent sources for the destiny of a multi-ethnic state. In the constitutional monarchy of Mohammad Zahir, the king had tremendous authority and preserved the traditional system and structure.

The 1964 Constitution introduced by Mohammad Zahir Shah expanded the scope of democracy in Afghanistan, emphasizing individual rights and creating opportunities for political participation. However, this constitution also curtailed the royal family's influence, particularly by prohibiting its members from holding political office. This provision, while advancing democratic values, exacerbated tensions within the royal family. For instance, it barred Daud Khan, the king's cousin and former prime minister (1951–1963), from addressing his political grievances within the framework of formal political institutions established by the Constitution (Shamshad, 2016). These internal conflicts ultimately undermined the democratic process, culminating in a military coup in 1973 led by a royal family member, which replaced the monarchy with a presidential regime.

While the 1964 Constitution marked a significant departure from traditional autocracy by introducing democratic reforms, the political structure remained heavily centralized, with ultimate authority concentrated in the hands of a single individual. Notable changes included the establishment of a bicameral parliament comprising the Wolesi Jirga (House of Representatives) and the Meshrano Jirga (Senate). However, despite provisions for free elections to select parliamentary members, central control persisted. For example, one-third of the Senate's members were appointed by the king, while others were chosen through a mix of local councils and elections. This arrangement ensured that the central government, and ultimately the king, retained significant influence over parliament decisions, undermining the democratic intent.

The constitution introduced a system of governance featuring five types of administrative entities—provinces (Wolayat), districts (Woluswali), sub-districts, provincial municipalities (Sharwali Wolayat), and rural municipalities (Sharwali Woluswali). Despite these structural reforms, key positions such as governors and district governors were appointed by the president, maintaining centralized control. This model,

replicated in the 2004 Constitution, demonstrated a continued disconnect from genuine democratic principles and modern governance standards (Their, 2020).

The limitations of the 1964 Constitution were further evident in its treatment of women's political roles. Although four women secured seats in the 1965 parliament, their participation remained minimal, reflecting broader societal restrictions on gender equality. Moreover, the king's authority to dissolve parliament further weakened democratic safeguards, ensuring that power remained concentrated at the top.

Ultimately, while the 1964 Constitution aimed to modernize Afghanistan's governance, its centralization of power, reliance on royal authority, and failure to fully embrace democratic principles contributed to persistent political instability and limited the effectiveness of its reforms.

Social Class: Throughout history, Afghanistan society has been shaped by various factors such as economics, politics, ethnicity, religion, and geography. This class-based system has consistently had a profound impact on the country's social structure, distribution of political power, and development. Below are some key characteristics of the class-based society in Afghanistan.

In the past, Afghan society was heavily dominated by large landowners and local aristocracy. This class, often comprising ruling tribes and royal families, owned a significant portion of the agricultural land and natural resources. Their political and economic power directly influenced people's lives and played a pivotal role in national decision-making.

Urban Middle Class: with the emergence of a state bureaucracy and relative modernization during the reigns of Amanullah Khan and Zahir Shah, a small urban middle class began to form. This class included government employees, teachers, traders, and intellectuals. While their role in the country's political and social dynamics was limited, they were influential in reform movements and cultural and educational activities.

Farmers and Peasants: Farmers and peasants constituted the majority of the population and generally lived under harsh conditions. This class was largely dependent on

landowners and retained only a small share of agricultural production for themselves. Poverty, illiteracy, and lack of access to basic services were defining features of their lives.

Marginalized Classes and Minorities: In addition to the main classes, groups such as the Kuchis (nomads), ethnic minorities (Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Turkmens), and religious minorities (Shias, Sikhs, and Hindus) were identified as marginalized and sidelined classes. These groups often suffered from social, economic, and political discrimination and had limited access to power and development opportunities.

3.3.   King Zahir and Democratic Pattern Evidence

Amir Abdul Rahman advised his successors not to hurry in introducing any reform and patterns alien to Afghan society which would lead to confusion and could even endanger the nation's existence. Abdul Rahman, with all his atrocities against the non-Pashtun people, however, recognised his tribal Pashtun society as conservative, and any minor reform could irritate society. Thus, he emphasised to his son and successors to proceed slowly as he/they went on.

This advice of Abdul Rahman was heeded by his son Habibullah, but after the independence of Afghanistan (1919), Amanullah was inspired by developed and industrialised states during his long tour to Europe. He tried to win people's attention by creating a partly elected, consultative cabinet to confirm how sensitive the people were to change. The constitution of Nadir Shah in 1931 was also ineffective in establishing institutions and democratic practice. Nadir acted to prolong Amanullah's reform; in reality, he did not follow what was codified but rather functioned in the favour of aristocrats and *mullahs*.

King Zahir (1933-73), was born and studied in Kabul, and attended Habibya and Istiqlal High School. He was nineteen years old when he ascended the throne on November 8, 1933. Familiar with government and the administration of the system, King Zahir, at age eighteen, was appointed as the acting Minister of Defence and later on Minister of Education by his father. According to Gregorian, King Zahir only gave legitimacy to the Mushiban family in the context of constitutional monarchy. The real power was in the hands of the

king's paternal uncles (Shah Mahmud Khan, Shah Wali Khan and predominantly Muhammed Hashim Khan, the then prime minister (Gregorian, 1969, p .342). King Zahir's 30-year reign was focused on "national consolidation" and foreign relations, and Afghanistan, without foreign aid, could stand on its own feet by internal development alone. Although the Cold War had a negative influence on the development process, King Zahir maintained neutrality. Regarding the dilemma of Pashtunistan which considers parts of the challenge in the context of the state nation-building process, most of the regimes in Afghanistan led by Pashtuns did not recognize it as an official border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The intensity of the issue in King Zahir's rule posed a fundamental issue, according to Bezhan (2014).

"In June 1947, Afghanistan's government called for an independent Pashtunistan and denounced the 1893 agreement; in 1949, Afghanistan's parliament declared that it did not recognize the legality of the Durand Line. The government in Afghanistan affirmed this abrogation by instituting Pashtunistan Day, to be officially celebrated each year on the date of Pashtunistan Independence, 14th August. In addition, the government renamed a major square in Kabul Pashtunistan Square and expressed symbolic solidarity with Pashtunistan with the issue of commemorative postage stamps, the broadcast of a daily programme on national radio, and the commissioning of numerous books" (Bezhan, 2014, p. 2).

Except for Pashtuns in Afghanistan, the rest of the nationalities in the country in the democratic decades reacted intensely to the interventionist policy of Pashtun rulers and considered it a big challenge for the country. Ibrahimi said (2019), "King Zahir (1933-1973) marked a sharp transition from previous interventionist strategies to conservative governance which relied on patron-client networks and intermediary mechanisms in the countryside. Mushiban's family conservatism echoed the lessons from internal and external reactions to interventionist and radical approaches to governance and their devastating effects on state-building in the country" (Ibrahimi, 2019, p. 54).

The interventionist policy of King Zahir regime after the independence of Pakistan in 1947, was exacerbated in Afghanistan in that there was no interest in this policy, but further provoked Pakistan to take precise, strategic action regarding Afghanistan and use Pashtuns on both sides (Pakistan-Afghanistan) against each other. However, throughout history including the periods of King Zahir and his prime ministers, they unconsciously stood up

for Pashtunistan independence or claimed ownership of the Federal Administrative Tribal Agency (FATA) area. According to Ibrahimi, the great grandfather of King Zahir Sardar Sultan Mahmod Khan was the last Afghan (Pashtun) who ruled the Pashtunistan area and was defeated by Ranjit Singh the Sikh (1834). Then Peshawar completely separated from Afghanistan (Ibrahimi, 2019). The interventionist policy of the Kabul Administration after King Zahir, which was followed by the Communist and non-Communist regimes, as well as the Pashtunistan issue and the non-recognition of the Durand line by Pashtun leaders, have been a provocative issue to Pakistan. Support of Pashtuns in Pakistan is considered non-armed interference from an international relations perspective that throughout history Afghanistan has nevertheless been a weak state. However, the claims of reunification and support of the secessionist group in Pakistan by Afghan-Pashtun leaders have never been that strategic but based on ethnic ties. Afghanistan has never been a state strong and stable enough politically or militarily to win this game against Pakistan.

3.4. King Zahir's First Prime Minister

After the assassination of Nadir Shah (1933) by Abdul Khaliq Hazara, King Zahir became the figurehead king, and Nadir's brother Hashim Khan became the first prime minister of the Mushiban family in Afghanistan. Mushiban's family had a significant role in creating single-ethnic nationalism. The Hashim administration paved the way for nationalists and modernists to formulate the tenets of 'Afghan' nationalism and follow Amanullah's reform and Tarzi's nationalism in the country. Regarding what Tarzi emphasised, most poets, historians, and writers supported and regarded the modernisations and considered them a cultural renaissance. The nationalists believed that Islam's modernisation and progress were not compatible. However, the way to maintain the Islamic faith is to ascribe and explore a definition of Islam and preach that "no true Muslim knowingly or willingly oppose reform and modernisations". Two predominant visions existed regarding the country's backwardness while Hashim was the prime minister. The Islam apologists blamed the disunity of Islamic societies whose lack of unity they considered the basic factor of backwardness in Islamic societies. Afghanistan ought to follow Islamic law and adhere to the rest of Islamic societies. The other vision largely

blamed historical factors and their influence on the country such as the Turko-Mongol invasion of Afghanistan in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Gregorian cites Ghubar "Until the onslaught of Gengiz Khan, Afghanistan was the shining star of the Islamic world" (Gregorian, 1969, pp. 342).

Amanullah's hasty social and political reform in Afghanistan was a big lesson to the regimes after him that any reform first needs to find the convincing language to address a traditional and conservative society. This justifies the modernist circle efforts for modernisation and marginalisation of traditions vis-à-vis the hurdles for reform and modernity.

Hashim Khan's policy of gradualism was first to pave the way for reforms and create convergency between modernism and the religion that all cultural and social patterns had been given religious affiliations. Hashim and the centrality of power caused him to act as a dictator. According to Bezhan "Hashim was also a cruel man, especially towards reformist intellectuals and Amanullah modernisers. The suppression of the Young Afghans Party was not only because he wanted to consolidate Mushiban's family rule, but he considered it a personal duty. Firstly, it was connected to his political worldview. Hashim was a constructive politician who was totally against reform and modernisation". King Zahir and Hashim Khan in their speeches often emphasised in the introduction to Islam that Islam is not against modernity and social reform, rather, according to them it is a social religion. The great emphasis of Hashim as the prime minister was modern education: he believed that nation and state-building begin by education. However, the most challengeable and greatest mistake that the Mushiban dynasty made for Afghanistan was making nationalism based on a single ethnicity. Schools were the hegemonic resources that were instrumentally used for national consciousness and institutionalisation of the Pashtun language as the national language in the country. By 1938, according to Gregorian, schools and associations were pressured by Hashim to marginalise the Persian-Dari language, instead of making Pashtu the official language, whereby everyone would be supposed to learn it. One of the major policies of state nation-building of the Mushiban dynasty was to expand and officialise the Pashtu language throughout the country and instate it as the administrative language, according to Rahimi's finding regarding the institutions which had a predominant role in expanding and introducing sub-nationalism as 'Nationalism' in Afghanistan.

"The establishment of academic and research institutions in Afghanistan begin in the reign of Amir Amanullah Khan. The first of these organisations was Pashtu Maraka (1922), and then in the reign of the Mosahiban Dynasty the process was followed by the establishment of 'Anjumane Adabi Kabul' [Kabul Literary Association] (1931), 'Anjumane Adabi Herat' [Herat Literary Association] (1937), 'Anjumane Adabi Pashtue Kandahar' [Kandahar Pashtu Literary Association] (1932), and 'Pashtu Toluna' [Pashtu Association] (1937), later the Kabul Literary Association was replaced by the new Pashtu Toluna, 'Anjumane Tarikhe Afghanistan' [Association of Afghanistan History] (1942), 'Anjumane Daeratul Maarief Ariana, [Association of Encyclopedia of Ariana] (1948), 'Ameriate Bastan Shunasi' [Directorate of Archaeological Research] (1966) and finally the establishment of Afghanistan Academy of Science (1970). Subsequently all these organisations were united under the auspices of the Afghanistan Academy of Science" (Rahimi, 2017, p. 279).

These hegemonic resources for the expansion of a single set of ethnic, historical, and cultural values and nationalising them had key roles that were purposely established by authoritarian regimes. The policy of making Pashtu a national language and co-equal with Persian had been advocated in Amanullah's regime. Later, this policy created a broad discussion between the Persian and Afghan presses. Regarding the marginalisation of Farsi-Dari in Afghanistan, the Calcutta paper Habl-ul-Matin warned the Afghan government about decisions regarding the officialisation of Pashtu as an artificial national language in the country. The paper emphasised that such efforts to marginalise Persian would have a negative outcome for the national unity of Afghanistan and lead the country in the wrong direction (Gregorian, 1969, p. 350)

The Pashtu Tulana (academy) efforts only concerned the translation of texts and books for secondary schools, teacher training institutes and madrasas to expand the Pashtu language, institutionalise Pashtun cultural values throughout the country and make Pashtu a mandatory subject in schools. Except for that, there are no findings or evidence regarding the Pashtu Tulana to show its academic aspects or whether it has tangible educational activities as well as epistemological or social research. However, according to Gregorian the Pashtu Tulana had four sections: history, literature, linguistics, and press-publications that had a key role in the promotion of the Pashtu language. Furthermore, Pashtu Tulana as the think tank institution for nationalism and single ethnic officialization, had ordered by

1936 that all government officials had to learn Pashtu. As opposed to expanding the policy of single ethnic nationalism in the country, two fundamental challenges existed then for the Hashim Khan regime and his mastermind circle such as Mahmud Tarzi, who endeavoured to maintain the country's independence and the Afghani nationalism.

Pata Khazana (the hidden treasure): Besides all coercion and fabrication regarding state nation-building in Afghanistan by Pashtun leaders, the other flagrant fabrication has been regarding the antiquity of Pashtuns and the Pashtu language. According to Sadiq Fetrat Nashinas' findings, the book under the name of hidden treasure (*Pata Khazana*) does not have that antiquity as claimed by Habibi Abdul Hai, who was the discoverer of *Pata Khazana* , who mentioned that the author of the book was a person named Muhammad Bin Dawood Hotaki and the book had b*een* found in Quetta-Pakistan in the spring of solar year 1944. He claimed to have saved a copy of it, adding that "After I became aware of the book's antiquity and its importance, I presented it to scientific circles, especially to Sardar Mohammad Naeem Khan, the Minister of Education. He admired the hidden treasure, which indicates the Pashtu language's purity and its antiquity (Habibi, 1961). Habibi and his colleagues' hidden treasure was part of the Pashtunisation of the country, as begun by Abdul Rahman Khan (1880), which had voluntary and mandatory policies for Pashtun migrating to the Northern side of the country. Pashtunisation of the country was considered the biggest project of the Pashtun kings, prime ministers, and presidents. In 1885, the Pashtun population in the northern part of Afghanistan was about 3500 families; however, by 1988, the Pashtun population had increased to 40,000 thousand families and the Uzbeks', Hazaras' and Tajiks' lands were confiscated by the government and distributed to newly-settled Pashtun families, above eight years old member of the family-owned eight hectares of land in the North of the country (Qataghan). Most Tajiks and Uzbeks lost their lands in Qataghan (Sadr, 2020, pp. 108 - 114).

3.5.   Shah Mahmud

Hashim Khan (1933 - 46) occupied the post of Prime Minister and then passed the premiership to his brother Shah Mahmud (1946 - 53). According to most authors, there was a considerable difference between the two-brother governance and statesmanship. Mir Mohammad Sediq Farhang writes: "The Prime Minister (Hashim Khan) did not give up his position easily, and in the end, the resignation was imposed on him while the army soldiers

surrounded him in the palace". (Farhang, 2002). This was the beginning of the inner conflict in the Mushiban family characterised by the variety of each other's notions towards governance in the country. The difference was not structural but only in attitude, with nationalities who had been suppressed, humiliated, and ignored throughout history. Mahmud was the second Prime Minister of Zahir Shah's term, and compare to Hashim; Mahmud admired all nationalities in the country. After being appointed prime minister, he invited the heads of the Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and other nationalities and asked for forgiveness for the oppression the kings and regimes had committed against them throughout history. This attitude of Shah Mahmud was considered a green light for forming a multicultural and democratic state; however, according to Akhgar, this policy was to subdue the ethnicities and prolong their power dynasty through appeasement and good relationships with other nationalities, as no-one without Pashtu language skills could work in the government. The democracy that Shah Mahmud Khan represented was a democracy that comes from the weakness of the ruling family. During Hashim Khan's period there was weak diplomacy and unstable foreign relations, thereby domestic support at least was needed. In other words the (royal family) did not believe in democracy. In this period, the *Azad Naday Khalq* (the voice of the people) and the *Watan and Woles* (the state and people) press were allowed to publish and freely issue critiques of the government. In the Hashim period, though, the press did not grow enough, although restrictions issued to the political activists, press, opposition, even those who criticised the government were suppressed by Hashim Khan. (Akhgar, 2010). However, according to Gregorian, *Islah,* and *Anis* began daily bilingual publishing in Kabul, and also weeklies *Bidar in Mazar-i-Sharif*, *Ittihad-e-Baghlan, Ittihad Jalalabad*, *Ittihad Khanabad*. Such publications were established in different zones and provinces in the country. They were not allowed to publish topics opposing government policies, but published Pashtu heritage and articles to introduce the Pashtu language in non-Pashtun zones. The main policy controlling the press was prolonged by Shah Mahmud, but with the difference that restrictions on the press and intellectuals to address the government and social norms were eased by Shah Mahmud.

Although Shah Mahmud was considered a Prime Minister of peace rather than Hashim his brother, according to some authors, due to reforms and policy regarding the intellectual base, the ethnic vision was still the predominant policy and the plan preserved in any regime led by Pashtuns. Tajiks and Turkmens had been tortured in the North of the

country and their lands had been confiscated when Mahmoud hold the political power. The predominant impetus for these atrocities against ethnic groups by the regimes seems that the state was formed of 'Pashtun'. Thus, no other ethnic groups were righteous regarding the political destiny of the country. This vision followed through any regime in the country. Atrocities and torture of non-Pashtuns by Shah Mahmud in the Northern part of Afghanistan such as the arrest of 1000 Turkmen households sending them from Kunduz Khanabad to Kabul by foot and ordering to his cavalry corps that those who could not walk during the journey ought to be killed.

3.6. Failure of First Republic 1973-1978

The classical concept of a republic, as articulated by numerous scholars, underscores the centrality of the people's will as the bedrock of a legitimate state. However, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan deviated starkly from these foundational republican ideals. A profound disconnect existed between the Western conception of a republic and the Afghan iteration, which neither garnered broad societal support nor authentically reflected the diverse aspirations of its populace. Theoretical constructs such as democracy and other modern political phenomena were conspicuously absent from both the analysis and the practical framework of Afghanistan's republican system. These principles failed to permeate the state's structure or resonate within Afghan society.

In contemporary political theory, a republic is frequently defined in opposition to monarchy. While classical political thought distinguished sharply between democracy and republicanism, modern interpretations often integrate democracy as a fundamental component of a republic. Despite overlapping ethical and political elements, liberalism, democracy, and republicanism remain distinct theoretical constructs (Sadr, 2020). Afghanistan's first republican regime was established on July 26, 1973, through a coup d'état led by Mohammad Daud against the monarchy. This "bloodless" coup ended King Zahir Shah's constitutional monarchy, which Daud criticized for stagnating Afghanistan. Utilizing his influence over security forces and leftist factions, Daud seized the Shahi Palace during the king's absence in Italy and instituted an authoritarian republic that lasted until 1978. Although Daud proclaimed his regime a "parliamentary democracy," it bore clear

authoritarian traits. Reflecting on the coup, Daud justified it by stating, "Patriots across the country observed the miserable state of the homeland with deep concern, especially the army. They bore the pain and hoped the corrupt and outdated system would recognize the nation's plight and reform itself. However, these hopes proved entirely unfounded, as the government's corruption left no room for expectation of reform" (Tanin, 2005, p. 171).

Despite its revolutionary rhetoric, Daud's republic failed to embody the democratic ideals or republican principles championed in classical and modern political theory. Instead, it marked an authoritarian turn disguised as reform, underscoring the gap between Afghanistan's political realities and the theoretical ideals of a republic. Zia Majid, Daud's presidential palace security commander, criticized this supposed democracy, stating: "Although they announced a fake democracy, unfortunately, nothing was done for Afghanistan or the purpose of democracy. You can see that in the constitution associated with ten years of democracy, where the king had assumed all the powers" (Tolo News, 2021). External dynamics heavily influenced the regime's trajectory. Daud's coup against King Zahir is often linked to Russian interests in reshaping Afghanistan's governance. Tanin quotes Qasim Rishtya, who attributed the monarchy's collapse to "inner political rivalries involving internal and external factors." Historian Sayed Tayeb Jawad highlights Afghanistan's geopolitical importance, particularly Russia's aspiration to access warm waters, as a critical driver of the coup. Contrary to the claim that internal inefficiencies caused the monarchy's failure, Jawad argues that Russian support for Daud aimed to establish a compliant regime. Even prior to the coup, Daud sought economic and military assistance from the USSR to bolster his position (Saunders & Appelbaum, 1973; Tanin, 2005, p. 472).

Following the establishment of Daud Khan's republic, his foreign policy and domestic strategies deepened Afghanistan's political and social fractures. His aggressive pursuit of Pashtun reunification, exemplified by the slogan "da Pashtunistan zemong" ("Pashtunistan is ours"), intensified tensions with Pakistan over the Durand Line dispute. While Pashtun leaders endorsed this initiative to bolster demographic dominance, it alienated non-Pashtun ethnic groups, who viewed the policy as exclusionary and divisive. Ghulam Mohammad Mohammadi identifies Daud's reunification agenda as a significant obstacle to Afghanistan's state- and nation-building, noting its detrimental effects on national cohesion and stability.

Daud's governance was marked by authoritarianism, with nationalist policies that prioritized Pashtun-centric objectives over broader regional or ethnic inclusivity. Despite shared ethnic ties with neighbouring states like Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, his focus on Pashtun reunification sidelined opportunities for broader regional unity. His refusal to recognize the Durand Line fuelled tensions with Pakistan and justified its interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Pakistan's involvement, as Mohammadi (2010) argues, contributed to Afghanistan's fragility, influencing key events from the anti-Soviet jihad to the Taliban's resurgence in 2021.

Daud's reliance on Soviet support, particularly after U.S. refusals to aid his modernization and militarization efforts, deepened Afghanistan's dependency on the USSR. This dependence contradicted King Zahir Shah's vision of neutrality, ultimately leading to Daud's resignation in 1963. Under Zahir Shah's subsequent constitutional monarchy, reforms sought to promote equality and freedoms, but Daud's return to power in 1977 saw the introduction of a highly centralized, authoritarian constitution. This model failed to address Afghanistan's deep divisions, culminating in Daud's overthrow in a communist-led coup in 1978.

Daud's nation-building efforts, rooted in an exclusionary nationalism inspired by Mahmud Tarzi, aimed to assimilate diverse ethnicities into a Pashtun-dominated framework. This approach ignored the lack of interest among Pakistani Pashtuns in reunification and exacerbated internal discord. Ultimately, his policies weakened Afghanistan's sovereignty, amplified ethnic divides, and left the nation vulnerable to regional power struggles, a legacy of instability that endures. The first republic, following the constitutional monarchy, was created under Daud's rule. Its legitimacy was once again endorsed by the Loja Jirga, which enacted a constitution that largely echoed the previous authoritarian structure, repeating concepts such as "all residents of Afghanistan should be called 'Afghan,'" "Afghanistan is a united and undivided democratic country," and "the country ought to be governed based on the unitary system" (Rahimi, 2014, p. 221). The first republic, however, was fundamentally authoritarian, with most decisions and authority concentrated in the hands of the president. This marked a regression for democracy, as the parliament, meant to represent the will of the people, was dissolved.

Daud's changes to the legal system further consolidated his power, transferring legislative functions to the executive branch, abolishing the Supreme Court, and transferring its authority to the Ministry of Justice. These actions reflected the decline of democratic principles in Favor of autocratic rule, signalling the failure of Daud's republican vision to create a stable and democratic state.

According to Sadr "With the second global reverse wave (1960–1975), which led to the establishment of military rule in most South American states and the reversion of several young Asian democracies, Afghanistan also had its second reverse wave of democratisation from 1973 with the coup of Mohammad Daud and the establishment of an authoritarian regime by him which continued until 1978". (Sadr, 2021, p. 55).

According to Bezhan, the origins of a political party in Afghanistan go back to the M*ashrotiat* constitutionalist "movement" in early 1900. Groups of youths in Amanullah's regime (1919-1929) gathered as the opposition for the successive constitutional government under *Afghanistan-e Jawan* (young Afghans), who strove for reform in the constitutional government modelled on young movements in contemporary Turkey. The *Wesh Zalamian*, as the young nationalist movement, opposed the Daud regime's policy; however, in the Pashtunistan issue, the separation of Pashtuns and the Durand line agreed with the Daud policy and proclaimed the reunification of separated Pashtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan (Bezhan, 2014).

Regarding Marxist ideology and its advent in Afghanistan, most authors write that it goes back to Amanullah Khan's regime and constitutional movements where the young movements had a basic role in introducing Marxism in Afghanistan with activists like Abdul Rahman Loudin, Ghulam Mohaiddeen Arti, and Mir Ghulam Mohamad Ghubar, as well as through young movements *Waish Zalmian*, the constitutional movement, *Hezb Jawanan Bidar, Hizb Watan, Hezb Khalq,* which were condemned for their Marxist ideology in Afghanistan. By 1919, when Afghanistan gained its independence under Amanullah, it was the first state who recognised the Communist in Moscow and formed a political relationship with Russia; hitherto, Marxism had been introduced in Afghanistan step by step, and most of the authors and the then intellectuals subscribed to Marxist ideology. (Hossain, 2009.)

The constitutional monarchy lasted decades. As it faded into democratic ways, three ideologies that intellectuals often led emerged. These debates were enough support for political development initially; however, later on, the debates intensely created tumult in the country. The ideologies' core debates were socio-economic development and political reform. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (Hezb Democratic Khalq, PDPA) was the main opponent of Soviet-style socialism in Afghanistan in 1965. The second ideology was the Maoist ideology that *Sazman-e Jawanan Mutaraqi* (the progressive Youth Organisation) led the party in 1966. The third was the party of Jawanan-e Musselman (The Muslim Brothers youth) that followed the International Muslim Brotherhood. Universities and academic institutions were the forums for posing political ideologies, and most oppositions and parties emerged from the universities, specifically the Maoist movement under the name of Shola-e Jawid from Kabul University. Ibrahimi believes that "The Maoists argued that Afghanistan bore greater similarities to pre-revolutionary China in its level of socio-economic development than it did to Russia". (Ibrahimi, 2012).

The PDPA opposed and refused to participate in parliamentary elections, emphasising socialism and peasants as the main revolutionary force. The era of state-building by Marxist and Maoist ideology did not end well in the country, causing atrocities and the killing of opponents. Most of these atrocities and the impetus for killing was from the ethnic perspective.

Afghanistan's political landscape was shaped by two overlapping conflicts: an ideological struggle among factions and an ethnic conflict that permeated political discourse. Mohammad Tahir Badakhshi, a Tajik leader and co-founder of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), challenged the party's leadership over its approach to ethnic marginalization. His critiques led him to break away from the PDPA, and in August 1968, he founded the SAZA of Afghanistan, an organization advocating for a multicultural and egalitarian society. Badakhshi's vision rejected the dominant Pashtun-centric model, emphasizing the need to end what he described as "national oppression" of non-Pashtun ethnicities like Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks (Sadr, 2021).

Badakhshi argued that Afghanistan's central issue was not class exploitation, as in Western contexts, but ethnic and national oppression perpetuated by Pashtun elites. His manifesto called for a federal political system to replace the centralization that had concentrated power in Pashtun hands since the state's formation. He posited that federalism would respect ethnic diversity, preserve cultural values, and foster solidarity in a multiethnic society. In contrast, the centralized political system, whether monarchical or democratic, entrenched Pashtun hegemony and marginalized other ethnicities.

The SAZA organization primarily comprised Tajiks and sought to unify democratic activists and movements, such as Mahfil-e Intezar. Badakhshi's followers echoed his belief that Pashtun totalitarianism obstructed Afghanistan's progress and exacerbated ethnic divisions. His vision for a "just and democratic solution to the national question" proposed decentralization as the path to ethnic equality, cultural recognition, and sustainable nation-building.

While the PDPA, Afghanistan's leading leftist party, failed to engage meaningfully with Badakhshi's critiques, other leftist movements also emerged. Among them was Shol-e Jawid (Eternal Flame), a Maoist organization influenced by Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong's ideology. However, internal divisions and dissatisfaction weakened the movement, particularly after the PDPA assumed power. Shol-e Jawid's ideological rigidity and inability to adapt led to its fragmentation and eventual dissolution (Newell, 1979).

Badakhshi's contributions remain underexplored, as many of his writings are unpublished or lost. However, his advocacy for federalism and ethnic equality highlighted systemic flaws in Afghanistan's governance, where assimilationist nationalism fuelled discord. By challenging the dominant narrative of Pashtun supremacy, Badakhshi and SAZA provided an alternative framework for state-building in a diverse and fragmented society—one that prioritized decentralization, inclusivity, and justice over authoritarian centralism.

3.7. People's Democratic Party and Inner Conflict

Marxist ideas began to gain traction in Afghanistan during the 1940s, introduced by key figures such as Noor Mohammad Taraki, Babrak Karmal, and Mir Gholam Mohammad Ghubar. However, some Afghan historians trace the roots of Marxist influence even earlier, to Amanullah Khan's reign and the Second Constitutional Movement. This movement, led by youth groups loyal to Amanullah, including Abdul Rahman Lodin, Gholam Mohiuddin Arti, and Mir Gholam Mohammad Ghubar, played a critical role in fostering leftist ideologies (Hussainzada, 2009). By the 1940s, Marxist and leftist intellectual circles, often operating clandestinely, began to take shape, focusing on the exchange of books and ideas. These early groups included influential figures such as Ghubar, Taraki, and Karmal, who later spearheaded the formation of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

Despite its initial unity, the PDPA quickly fractured along ideological and ethnic lines, splitting into two factions: the Khalq faction, led by Noor Mohammad Taraki, and the Parch am faction, headed by Babrak Karmal. This division deepened when the PDPA assumed power, culminating in violent internal conflict. The constitutional decade (1964–1973) marked a pivotal period for political development, during which the PDPA began to solidify its presence. Initially formed under Mohammad Daud's leadership, the PDPA included prominent members such as Tahir Badakhshi, Babrak Karmal, Nur Mohammad Taraki, and Mir Akbar Khaibar. These leaders, along with others, began meeting in 1965 to shape the party's direction, with its roots firmly grounded in socialism and parliamentary democracy. The party's early manifesto emphasized the working class but was plagued by intense leadership rivalries.

The PDPA's trajectory was significantly influenced by Mohammad Daud's 1973 coup, which overthrew King Zahir Shah and established a republic. Daud's alliance with the Parcham faction of the PDPA played a critical role in this transition and paved the way for Communist regimes in Afghanistan (Abid, 2017). However, the ethnic and ideological fractures within the PDPA reflected broader divisions in Afghan society, where fundamentalist and ethnic-based political visions undermined democratic values and obstructed meaningful democratization.

Ethnic tensions were a driving force behind the PDPA's fragmentation. Afghanistan's history of internal strife was further exacerbated by the PDPA's ideological divisions and competing political agendas. The rise of religiously motivated opposition movements, particularly the Muslim Youth Organization (Sazman-I Jawanan-i Musulman), founded in 1969 by Abdul Rahim Niazi and others, exemplified this dynamic. This group emerged as a counterbalance to the growing influence of the PDPA's Marxist-Leninist factions, which had already splintered into Khalq and Parcham by 1967. The interplay between the PDPA's internal conflicts and the rise of Islamic fundamentalist groups underscored Afghanistan's deep-seated challenges in achieving political stability and unity.

In essence, the PDPA's formation, rise, and eventual fracturing reflected a broader narrative of ideological and ethnic tensions within Afghanistan. These divisions not only hindered the party's effectiveness but also mirrored the country's long-standing struggles with fragmented political visions and competing identities. The resulting political instability provided fertile ground for opposition movements, setting the stage for decades of conflict and upheaval.

3.8. The National Oppression Party (Settam-e Melli)

Tahir Badakhshi (1933–79) was one of the founders and a member of the central committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), who clashed with Noor Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, members of the PDPA, due to inequality and the ethnic vision of political power. Badakhshi with 21 of his followers created another circle named Mahfel Entezar (waiting circle) with the hope of absorbing other alienated groups disappointed in the ethnocentric vision in the PDPA. How did Tahir Badakhshi view ethnic challenges in Afghanistan, and what solutions did he propose for addressing them? The differences between them grew such that Tahir Badakhshi left the People's Democratic Party after organising Mahfel Entezar and organised a revolutionary organisation under the name of Sazman-e Inqilabi-ye Zahmatkashan-e Afghanistan (Revolutionary Organisation of Afghanistan's Toilers) (SAZA) (Sadr, 2020. p. 138). The members of this organisation were purposely titled national oppressors, mostly Tajiks. Although the organisation followed

Marxist ideas, they still considered the main problem of Afghanistan's society to be an ethnic challenge. So, they raised the voice of equality against the regime that was only ostensibly called 'democratic'. The members of this faction believed that the Pashtuns and their totalitarian demands were the fundamental challenge in Afghanistan and compared with the multiculturality of Afghanistan's society, it is essential for the government to absorb all ethnicities into the government and rationalise the state institutions with multicultural values. Badakhshi and his political followers then predicted the challenge of the state nation-building process in the country and its negative outcome in the future that, according to him what was going on in the regime, was flagrant exploitation, oppression, and ethnic discrimination. SAZA also after a while split into two different factions: one was Tahir Badakhshi and the second was under the name of Sufferers Sacrifices Organisation of Afghanistan (SSOA) led by Bahruddin Bais. The split was ideological: Maoist and Leninist ideologies between the factions triggered the separation and knowledge that all of them had been the leftist group who formed the PDPA. The core idea of SAZA led by Badakhshi was to ignore the 'social question' rather than pay attention to the ethnic question that the government ought to have prioritised and recognised the multiculturality of the society. However, this notion from two perspectives was suppressed; first, Communists suppressed the multicultural question in a multiethnic society that preferring only the tenets of Communism that ought to be followed. Secondly, most of the regimes did not recognise the multiculturality of the country, rather considering it a threat to the unity of society.

The concept of National Oppression (*Settem Melli)* was a title given by Badakhshi's political opponents who were predominantly Pashtuns who never believed or recognised the diversity of society in Afghanistan. SAZA factions emphasised structural challenges and prioritised the salvation of the dichotomy that threatened and deprived the non-Pashtun ethnic groups.

Of two letters from Badakhshi written from prison to different addressees, one is for a Communist general by the name of Nabi Azimi encouraging him with the illustration of political and social theories for justice. Badakhshi advised Azimi never to forget two things regarding political activities in Afghanistan society: first, consider the situation of the lower class of society and their miserable deprived life, which is the politician's responsibility to defend. Badakhshi in this letter pointed out the deprivation and the political virtue of a politician to support his argument, referencing Western authors and political activists, such

as Honoré de Balzac the French realist, who had a crucial role in the enlightenment of society. The focal point of Badakhshi's message to Azimi is to stand firm against autocracy and injustice that feudalism and the lords, controlling the political and economic autonomy. Badakhshi well understood Balzac and Victor Hugo and emphasised a realistic approach to retaining and preserve lower-class rights. According to his letter, Azimi should stand with the realistic approach for social justice "A realist writer takes his story's hero from people and his environment and does not get influenced by Roman stories. But for a realist writer such as Tolstoy, every social and natural phenomenon is the subject and is expressed normally. In realistic writings, there is no artificial unity, random things are not seen" (Badakhshi, 1964).

In his second letter to his family and kin that after being hanged by the Communist regime, Badakhshi said they ought to follow his way for justice and equality in Afghanistan. Badakhshi was an intellectual and freedom-loving figure who emphasised national issues and a democratic solution in Afghanistan in order to eliminate the backwardness of the country and to transition society to a favourable situation. During his joint political activity in the People's Democratic Party, he believed there was national oppression in Afghanistan, though. Ethnic oppression, under an authoritarian and tribal regime for more than two centuries and where Pashtuns still emphasised their own centrality in the PDPA factions where Badakhshi strove for change. The leaders of the PDPA denied the existence of ethnic oppression in Afghanistan, did not accept Badakhshi's plan and formula and emphasised the class struggle in the cities. Badakhshi and a group of his friends emphasised solving the issue of nationalities, as well as working with the masses in the country's villages and harmony with the peasants. They insisted that the national party and the national front should take over the leadership of the mass revolution. (Sarfaraz & Ali, 2014)

3.9. The First Communist Regime experience

The Khalq (People's) and Parcham (Flag) branches which formed the People's Democratic Party (PDPA) of Afghanistan in 1977 led a coup against the first republic, in which Daud and his republic were annihilated, fully preparing the ground for the intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan that lasted from 1978 to 1992. What were the ideological and ethnic tensions between the Khalq and Parcham factions of the PDPA,

and how did these tensions impact the governance of Afghanistan? After the collapse of the Daud regime, in November 1987 a constitutional assembly brought fundamental change based on liberal patterns that recognised fundamental rights and drafted a multi-party democratic system in the country. The constitution exclusively recognised the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which later on, in 1988, in a parliamentary election, won seats in parliament (Sadr, 2021. p 57). Ellison (2017) cites the reality tensions between factions and the coup expressed by the then Soviet ambassador in Afghanistan that rising tensions between President Daud's "bourgeois" administration and pro-communist rebels created an increasingly tense atmosphere in Afghanistan. "Daud expressed the interests and class position of bourgeois landowners and rightist nationalist forces," these facets of his leadership which, in the Soviet ambassador's interpretation, harmed the working class and stood in the way of sweeping economic reforms. This time the regime change was based on the Communist ideology established and led by Taraki. The coup was led by Noor Muhamad Taraki Khalqis faction. After gaining power, Taraki the president purged the Parchamites (the banner factuib) from the PDPA and the administrations. Although Moscow advised the Khalqis to make an inclusive government including non-Communists, however, the ethnic vision exist in Khalqis which were Pashtuns ousted and marginalized the Parchamist (the banner faction) which were composite of Tajiks, Uzbeks and other ethnicities. (Sarfaraz & Ali, 2017).

The Communist regime for the first time in history recognised Afghanistan as a multi-national state, which had been one of the fundamental issues concerning state-building and nation-building, which ought to be formed based on the reality of the society rather than the assimilation of ethnic groups and ignoring their values. The structure of power was still centralised, and some ethnicities gained power legally and legitimately. This, however, created rift and chaos in the country. In Babrak Karmel's constitution, the Communist regime categorised society, such as Kôchi's, farmers, intellectuals, and clerics, who seemed to be the deprived stratum of the society whose rights had been taken before the advent of the feudal system. The democratic republic of Afghanistan ostensibly recognised the multi-ethnicity and multi-nationality of Afghanistan as the country's reality. A Hazara could immediately achieve the prime ministerial position, and Tajiks and Uzbeks also had political participation in the country. The constitution of the Communist regime often emphasised

equality and unity of ethnicities and welfare in the country and urged the multiculturality of Afghan society. "During the PDPA's government, the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural character of Afghanistan was officially recognised, opening new avenues for cultural expression in the form of daily newspapers in the vernacular, ethnic languages, the formation of folk songs, dance troupes, and wider publicity for ethnic poets and their works. All citizens of the Republic of Afghanistan, men and women, regardless of nationality, race, language, tribe, religion, political ideology, education, occupation, ancestry, wealth, social status or place of residence, were viewed as equals, and entitled to equal legal rights according to the law" (Safaraz & Ali, 2017). Afghanistan was a multi-national country with no major ethnicity. However, some authors wrote that Pashtuns were in the majority. There are no exact statistics based on an academic approach to demonstrate a precise number of any ethnicity in the country, so all findings estimating the number of any ethnicity in Afghanistan were not academic. Rahimi quotes Barren Rubin, the Afghanistan expert who, according to 1979 statistics, estimated that Afghanistan was comprised of 7 million Pashtun in Southern and South-eastern Afghanistan, but they had been intentionally integrated into non-Pashtun areas. 3.5 million Tajiks inhabited the Northern side of the country including Kabul the capital. 1.5 million Hazaras were living in the centre (Hazara Jat) including Kabul. 1.3 million Uzbeks were living in the Northern part of the country. Approximately 80,000 Aimaqs lived in the Western part of the country, and approximately 60,000 Persian (Farsiwan) Herati lived in the Southern and South-Eastern parts of the country. Zalmay Khalilzad also estimated a Pashtun population of 4.8 million, 3.6 million Tajiks, half a million Uzbeks, Aimaq ½ million, 400,000 Turkmen, 200,000 Baloch, 700,000 Noristani, 600,000 Pashai and the rest 170,000, thus totalling a population of 12 million. Such an estimate regarding ethnicities in Afghanistan has created a big delusion that Pashtuns are the major ethnicity who liberated Afghanistan from the British. (Rahimi, 2020, p. 83) According to Naby: "During the first twenty months after its introduction in 1978, the nationality policy was implemented in four areas: government participation, education, newspapers, and culture. The first, government participation, was not formalised, although the chief Turkic member of the cabinets for the past twenty months, an Uzbek poet named Abdul Hakim Shara'i Jauzjani, had served as Minister of Justice and Attorney General. With the shift in power in late 1979, he was replaced as the government's token Turkic member by Mohammad Khan Jalaler, a Turkmen with long ties to past regimes and no apparent

connection with any pro-Soviet parties. Jauzjani, an active Khalq party member, had vigorously promoted Turkmen and Uzbek advancement." (Naby, 1980).

The Communist regime's state-building has been termed "revolution from above" a radical group constantly tried for modernisation in a forced way that led to chaos. The first step of the communist regime was the reinforcing of military forces. Although the military sector had already since the Daud regime with the support of the Soviet Union strengthened, fully armed. The second priority of the communist regime was boosting of the factory and labour class. From Amanullah to Daud, who established the first republic, continually created violent obstacles, mainly the Jihadist movement was the outcome of state transformation into "democratic". (Halliday. F, Tanin. Z, 1998).

While the PDPA took power in April 1978 in a revolutionary way, they were strongly committed to the Soviet Union. They accommodated the communist pattern that most people instead raised against the communist regime's atheist approach in the country, provoked the people, and led to chaos. A communist was randomly sentenced to paganism that communism encouraged people toward secularistic patterns in the governance system as well as in the social area. According to Christina Dameyer, the Communist regimes pursued to de-Islamisation policies. Even in 1979, the government requested Masque to spread Marxism values (Dameyer. 1985). The Kabul Radio channels were used as the hegemonic resource the communism then for preaching Islam and socialism values similarity. Rivalries among PDPA key figure members Hafizullah Amin and Noor Mohamad Taraki were on the appointments of their kins and clients in the key governmental position that led to the PDPA fracture and its division, and the other parts of conflict were ethnic as Tahir Badakhshi named the "the national oppression". Hafizullah Amin appointed his brother and relative in the key position of the government and called himself an uncontested leader of the party, and marginalised the Taraki (Sadr, 2020, p- 138-141).

The change of regime in 1979 in the country widened the ethnic rift too. In the Khalqi regime, Ghilzai Pashtun dominated the country that except for Ghilzai and Durrani two Pashtun tribes has intense rivalry among each other, however, in 1979 Khalqis tried to pursue ethnic policy against non-Pashtun but also against non-Pashtuns ethnicities too and

even the Khalq party intended to replace the Persian language with Pashtu. In contrast to the previous leader Taraki made a speech only in Pashtu. Later on, in the Babrak Karmal regime and vice versa, Kabuli Persian was also incorporated too. Furthermore, Karmal appointed a prime minister from Hazara Community Sultan Ali Kishtmand, and in general, he tried to open avenues for the rest of the minorities in terms of political participation and their cultural values, as well as tried to make an inclusive army that all ethnicities somewhat participate in the political arena and army. According to Ahadi in the Karmal regime (1980-1986) Karmal this period was the decline of Pashtuns though except for Pashtuns that are in majority, the power was relatively distributed among the rest of the ethnicities. According to Ahadi, as much as Afghanistan goes toward democracy and ethnicities find opportunities for political participation, that is considered the decline of Pashtuns. Ahadi discusses the Karmal and Najibullah regime as the Pashtuns declined, though Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazara's cultural values and their participation increased power was increased (Ahadi, 2006, p-14). By 1964 Uzbeks were allowed to have publications and write in their language; later on, the fierce Pashtuns came to power, such as Taraki, who often pressed for using Pashtu reprimanded Uzbeks for writing in their language (Naby, 1980, p-288).

The armed forces in the Karmal regime now, with the support of the Soviet Union, developed enough, created border troops, and established Sarandoy armed police. Military service became compulsory for all males by 1981. In 1982 a new military-political system came up; those military forces were modelled based on the Soviet arrangement that created the Ministries of Interior, Ministry of Defence, and KHAD, the intelligence service. The military system and political system both step by step changed to the Soviet model. One of the difficulties regarding the military system was arranging and making inclusive military forces to encompass all ethnicities. The Soviet advisors recognised that Afghanistan was strictly involved in ethnic rivalries that no one could trust each other. The fragility of the state in the Communist regime was a lack of trust in each other precisely; distrust between Khalq and Paracham created a big rift and led to horrendous atrocities and killings. In contrast, the roots of Khalq and Parcham were the same Marxism-Leninism, as well as there, was no ideological difference between Khalq and Parcham either.

Following the Soviet Invasion, the banner branch of the party (Parcham) with the support of the Soviets came to power, for state-building and began social transformation

strategies. The party's social transformation strategy was direct interference, soft tactics, and coercion. The direct transformation of the party was the redistribution of land activating of cooperatives for peasants. By 1980 the regime sponsored 1,144 peasantry cooperatives and for the encouragement and absorption of local areas, the government visited remote areas, districts, sub-district, and villages to promote the cooperative's policies. District committees increased from 104 to 205 as well as increased district party organisations, and local committees too.

The second was the social transformation strategy which is known as pacification. This soft strategy was to attract religious and tribal leaders to create alliances and make them the hegemonic resources of the government and its politics in rural areas. By 1980 the state had a massive campaign for absorbing and influencing *mullahs* somewhat through financial and political investment. From 1980 to 1986 the government claimed that (US$ 80 million) was spent on religious institutions, masque, clerics support, and financing religious education. By the end of 1989 across the country, about 20,000 *mullahs* received salaries (awqaf), coupons and food. Strengthening of clerics and religious institutions during communist were not that in managed way. During King Zahir, the Deobandi madrasas and religious institutions were not allowed spontaneously do activities without formal registration. The *mullahs*, *arbabs* and tribal leaders' nobility and position were preserved, however, the government attempted to manipulate traditional Jirga and connect them to local government institutions, the purpose of giving authority to Jirga, clerics had a political aspect that lest not the revolutionary government utilised them to their interest against the government.

The point that the communist regimes considered important is rural economic bosting which is agriculture livestock in the country.

3.10. The Constitution of Najibullah

By April 1980 Babrak Karmal the then Communist president introduced a new constitution that encompass the non-PDPA members to make an inclusive government, however, this policy failed, though the war already expanded in the country, the peace-making possibility was short. The regime sought to open avenues for national reconciliation

to end the conflict in the country with Mujahidin and rivalries that weakened the PDPA and the regime. The National Reconciliation Policy (*Siasat-e Ashti-e Melli*) was to establish local non-aggression; however, the main obstacle to the national reconciliation policy then was some Mujahidin factions' dependency on external sources or countries, such as Hizb-e Islami led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, was one of the Mujahideen factions which were inclined toward Pakistan. Although most of the Mujahideen factions were organised and formed in Pakistan, however, Hizb-e Islami was one of the factions that followed the external benefits for the purpose to take power in Afghanistan through the support of Pakistan. (Johnson, 2014).

In 1986 Najibullah was appointed the head of the PDPA party, and leadership changed. He started a consultative approach to the National Reconciliation policy before holding Loja Jirga. The Loja Jirga introduced many changes that were obliged to constitutional reform to decrease the war impetus: such as the state system should go back to 1978, (Republic of Afghanistan), and Islam should be cited as the national religion. The PDPA should change its name to Watan Party (fatherland party), and the PDPA should give a chance for non-PDPA members to have membership of the party (Heela, 2018).

The constitution of Najibullah's republic was enacted in 1988 by the grand assembly (Loja Jirga) and the constitution emphasised the unity of the nationalities, the strengthening of peasants and cooperatives, and the local labour union. According to the constitution, the president was responsive only to Loja Jirga only. The Najibullah regime proposed national reconciliation that encompassed both the communist and Mujahid factions. The national reconciliation purpose was to settle down the Communist party's tug of wars between each other and importantly the resistance/Mujahideen group. Also, killing and atrocities of the regime's opponents are considered a war crime.

The Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan by 1989, and Najibullah Ahmadzai stayed in power and adopted a new constitution. The Grand Assembly again (Loja Jirga) legitimized Najibullah's constitution. This time also emphasized the unity of ethnicities and the unitary system that the president is only responsive to the Loja Jirga. Still, there is no other change regarding the conception of unity and a unitary system in the country. Unity in the constitution was an empty slogan, however, regimes unitary structures and conflict

did not pave the way to unity of ethnicity. Although conflict and rivalries marginalize Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara in history have not been a lesson for the regimes to resolve. The constitution based on the Loja Jirga elucidates that the president's seventh year can be in power, and the president is responsive to only Loja Jirga.

By 1986 Najibullah replaced Karmal and became the president of the Republic of Afghanistan seeking to open the route for S*iasat-e ashti-e Melli's* national reconciliation policy in Afghanistan. This policy for reconciliation among ethnic factions and opponents was declared in January 1987 and encouraged by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. Law on Political Parties was gradually created by 1988; seven new parties were registered. SAZA was led by Mahbubullah Kushani before was led by Tahir Badakhshi under the name of Seem-e melli appeared openly for the first time. The second party was Sazman-e Zahmatkashan-e Afghanistan (SeZA) Organisation Afghanistan's Toilers that led by Kandahari's Hamdullah Gran, Ittihad-e Ahzab-e Chap Demokratik Union of left Democratic parties. Hezb-e Edalat-e Dehqanan-e Afghanistan (HADA) peasants Justice Party of Afghanistan. These parties and other token Islamic "block parties" got the chance to have activity. Control of the multi-party system by Najibullah was uncompromising as effectively the multi-party system was preserved and was fruitful for Eastern European states. By 15 April 1988, parliamentary elections were held in the country; however, most of the seats were allocated to PDPA. A new cabinet with the non-PDPA party prime minister was formed that included SAZA one of the parties that had contention over political power and ethnic ignorance by the regimes (Ruttig, 2006. p 13).

With the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, Najibullah adopted a new constitution in 1991 with some changes. While Najibullah put forward the multi-party system, this allowed Karmal Parchami to sub-faction and condemned Najibulahs new policy and sentenced him to the betrayal of the revolution and accused him of being the Soviet Puppet. Najibullah called his regime the Republic of Afghanistan, installed himself as the president of the state and the PDPA replaced its name with *hezb-e Watan* (Fatherland Party). (Penz, 1988). However, it was a historical mistake, according to Najibullah, to have come under a specific ideology, though almost the PDPA leadership and manifest somewhat changed, and hezb-e watan committed itself to democracy based on a multi-party system. The policy's core idea was to create a multi-party system under the national reconciliation

plan to resolve the conflict and give space for the rest of the factions. (Ruttig, 2006). According to Tanin's that narrate of two major generals and the vice president of Najibullah, besides the regime was under economic pressure, could not wage defence against the Jihadist factions, the regime was faced with inner frustration too. Najibullah often behaved ethnically and was paranoid of non-Pashtun officials at the last period of his administration, the relationship between Najibullah and General Dustom as well as other non-Pashtun commanders was soured. (Tanin, 2006, 371).

Although the U.S. cut off support from Mujahid factions, they continued their resistance against the Communist regime. In September 1991, Moscow signed a document stating that the strategic support of the regime of Dr. Najib was halted. By the coming of Mihael Gorbachev to the Soviet leadership, "Mikhail Gorbachev determined that the war could not be won and that the "bleeding wound" had to be staunched (15,000 Soviets died in the war, another 35,000 were wounded). Efforts by the United Nations (UN) to negotiate a settlement, which had begun in 1982, finally bore fruit when in 1988 the Geneva Accords were signed, bringing an end to hostilities". (Greenberg Research, 1999).

3.11. Summary

The cornerstone of the modern state in Afghanistan was established by the absolute monarchy. From Abdul Rahman to Nader Khan's period, from Nadir Khan to the third decade of Zahir Shah, the political approach toward ethnicities and the governance system in the country has been autocratic, and the policies on ethnic groups seem the same that each regime inherited on another. For this reason, the focus of this chapter has been on the constitutions and despotic governance systems of the regimes and the effectiveness of the regimes in Afghanistan from the revolutions at least after the First World War. Although the political structure substituted from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, however, the political approach and the ethnic view on non-Pashtun ethnic groups and tyranny over the people in Afghanistan were inherited and sustained in the regimes. The constitutions were since the modern state enforced sequentially, only has been for the benefit of one nationality and for the expansion of the hegemony of the ruling nation in

Afghanistan which were Pashtuns. Any modern phenomena and modern discourse considered evil and suppressed.

Authoritarian approaches of the systems, and ethnic marginalisation and depriving of them have been inherited and adapted from one system to another, from one ruler to another. In the constitutions sees difference, however the fundamental idea maintained. The revolutions that took place in advanced countries against tyranny and totalitarian regimes in the world did not affect the political situation in Afghanistan. Constitutionalism, democratisation, and some authors refer to this discourse as a movement, in reality, has not been formed movement in the pivot of democracy and constitutionalism in Afghanistan in the way which was needed and expected often. What the king, the prime minister, and president find better and necessary for the country, under the name of reforms brought change in their governance approach, which cannot actually be referred to as democratic reforms. In Afghanistan, there has only been a constitutional discourse, not a potential social movement led to the change in the government. The waves of democracy and revolutions before the Cold War and after the Cold War did not create a movement in Afghanistan that was referred to as a movement. One of the reasons that can be mentioned in the context was the neutrality of Afghanistan in the Cold War, the lack of knowledge and literacy of the people about the government and the social contract. Reformist movements are often created in societies that are aware, however, in Afghanistan vice-versa the nationalities have always been involved and under the pressure of regimes due to oppression and tyranny.

From Abdul Rahman until the last decade of Zahir Shah, the regime was concentrated in the capitals of cities, the rural areas of Afghanistan have been deprived and unaware of any kind of government decision, this has been because of the dependence of the rural people on the traditional economy and independent from the government. One of the shortcomings of the governance of the kings and other rulers of the state since the formation of the modern government in Afghanistan is the lack of good governance.

Another point that has been taken into account and has been considered in this chapter is the root of conflict, the core of the conflict, and the fragility of the government until 1965 to what extent the constitutional laws and political rulers have accepted pluralism as a reality in Afghanistan. It was mentioned earlier that the constitution and structure were the same

until the decade of democracy, but the decade of democracy, the last period of Zahir Shah's rule, can be considered as the background of democracy in Afghanistan. During this period, democratic institutions such as the parliament had a fundamental authority in terms of law consolations and a great authority in the legislative sector, and the balance of power in the government can be seen in this period. Therefore, Zahir Shah's constitution and his way of governance, which is called parliamentary democracy, could provide the ground for Afghanistan to become a nation-state. Though the values that Zahir Shah embedded in his constitutions could lead to sound political norms in the country.

Another topic discussed in this chapter is the Constitutional Movement or the movement of democracy, which often introduces two historical periods which the period of Habibullah and the period of Amanullah and the independence of Afghanistan. A series of reforms ،including the negligent reforms of Amanullah are attributed to the Constitutional Movement which according to the resources ،Amanullah as a constitutionalist after a long trip to Western countries was trying to change the traditional reforms and norms as soon as possible, however, Habibi is the author of the Constitutional Movement in Afghanistan ، which the rest of the authors regarding constitutional movement in Afghanistan quote him, that Amanullah's reform was the constitutionalist movement endeavour. The constitutionalists, the majority of whom were the *mullahs*, did not agree with the reforms that Amanullah undertook, and in fact it was the *mullahs*' and Molave circle that rebelled against Amanullah's reform. Therefore, the Constitutionalist in Afghanistan has not been that fundamental discussion to attract the society and was not a popular and inclusive movement. The people who introduce as constitutional sources consisted of poets '*mullahs*' and Molavi affirmed this circle identifies themselves as the 'Afghan Brotherhood' 'it is not clear what kind of constitution they have been trying to achieve.

Chapter IV: Legacy of Ethnic Notion and the Civil War.

4.1 Introduction

Revolutions and movements have always been about changing the status quo in societies. The history of states is full of revolutions and massive movements, usually against authoritarian governments and tyrannical rulers. Rarely can countries be found that have not experienced revolutions and bloody political changes, however, in either case, these states have reached a tangible result and built a government ultimately after every form of chaos and political change. In Afghanistan, however, after every revolution and political fluctuation, in order to solve and escape from a crisis, one way or another, a new chapter of crises has been opened and has continued the conflict in the country. Some authors claim that civil war in Afghanistan did not have ethnic aspect, rather the external factors flamed the war in the country among Mujahideen political faction. However, I believe that each conflict in Afghanistan has ethnic roots that its linage sequentially discussed in previous chapters.

Civil war in Afghanistan demonstrated that political power and lead the country with a single ethnicity is impossible; however, seems Pashtuns from any political thought are not accepting to the political power be shared. Since the Soviet interventions to Afghanistan in 1979 three constitutions were drafted and implemented in order to ease the rifts and conflict over political power, but with no tangible result. The Mujahideen groups agreed upon an inclusive political system in Afghanistan and for reaching such a goal devised an interim regime to pave the way for elections. However, a big success after a long battle with Communism was converted to a new chapter of war. As the inner factor, the root of all these disputes and conflicts and the annihilation of big success for which the Jihadist parties and the people of Afghanistan paid the price of war, in the first stage there was ethnic conflict that Hikmatyar together with Communist party Khalq (people) allied against the Tajik interim government in the country. This chapter discusses the Civil War with roots in Afghanistan and in other words, ethnic conflict over political power in Afghanistan where the conflict had historical roots in the notion of leadership in the country.

4.2 The Internal Factor

After the last Communist regime collapse in Afghanistan, the Jihadist factions formed a shadow cabinet in Pakistan in April 1992 as a "government in exile". Pakistani officials offered a plan to openly accepted by Mujahideen party leaders, which was to instal a transitional government in which the presidential post was a sequential one after another leading to pave the way for an election.

1. The National Rescue Front (Jabha-e-Najat-e-Melli) led by Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, was selected as president for two months.

2. Jamaat-e-Islami Afghanistan led by Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masoud

3. Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was selected as the prime minister of Mojaddedi.

4. Hezb-e-Islami of Afghanistan – a branch of the Hekmatyar movement led by Mohammad Yunus Khalis

5. Etehad-e-Islami led by Abdulrab Rasol Sayaf

6. Mahaz-e-milli led by Pir-Sayed Ahmade Gailani

7. Harakat-e-Inqilab led by Mohammed Nabi Mohammadi

The Jihadist parties were composed fundamentally of Pashtuns and Tajiks, however, Pashtuns constituted the absolute majority in number while Hazaras, Tajiks and Uzbeks were also included. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb e Islami was not present in the Peshawar accord. However, his delegates represented him, and he was appointed as the prime minister. However, the ethnic burden of the civil war became focused after the decision of the Seventh Peshawar party accord. Hekmatyar was appointed as the prime minister, however, with an ex-Communist branch of *Khalqis* (People) who were predominantly Pashtuns, as well as another party led by Abdul Rasool Sayyaf, who at the beginning coalesced with Hizb-e-Islami branch of Hekmatyar versus the interim government, but later gave up the alliance with Hekmatyar and joined Jamiat-e-Islami party and Ahmad Shah Masoud. The Parcham branch of ex-Communists, which were mainly

Tajiks and the rest of the non-Pashtun tribes, mainly Uzbeks and Ismailis, entered an alliance with Ahmad Shah Masoud. Hekmatyar's criticism of the coalition government was that one should not form an alliance with Communists. However, the only solution was an alliance with the Communists to prevent a civil war. The United Nations time and again offered to Hekmatyar to give up opposition and sign a coalition government. Gorbachev's representatives also continued to talk with Hekmatyar about a coalition government in Afghanistan, however, Hekmatyar rejected the idea.

In accordance with the decision of the Peshawar Council, Sibghatullah Muja Dadi's two-month presidency ended in late June 1992 and Burhanuddin Rabbani assumed the interim government presidency. However, Rabbani after a four-month presidency term, due to a war-torn situation, did not agree to transfer political power to a group of individuals who did not have legitimacy. Thereby, for the legitimacy of political power, in January 1993, Rabbani organised a council under the name of Ahl Hal-Aqd, (a council composed of clerics with Islamic knowledge) to consult on the draft of a new constitution for the interim government and extending his presidency until an election could be held. Some parties denounced this council's uninviting of General Dostum, the leader of Uzbeks, to the council for having a Communist past. This caused the Uzbek militias to leave Burhanuddin Rabbani. In March 1993, with the mediation of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and with Pakistan as the host, meeting in Islamabad, another plan to resolve the civil war was devised - a power-sharing plan that would allow Rabbani to continue his work as the interim president, according to the Peshawar Council, with Hekmatyar as the prime minister. In addition to that, one of the major responsibilities entrusted to Hekmatyar, was a cabinet shuffle with the consent of President Rabbani, and a prime minister shuffle of the cabinet. Hekmatyar requested that he might not accept Ahmad Shah Masoud as the Minister of Defence, but President Rabbani refused Hekmatyar's request, and so began the second stage of the conflict again.

After leaving the government in 1994, General Dustom joined two rival parties, Hekmatyar and Abdul Ali Mazari, signing an accord and establishing "the coordination council" against the government. This body decided to raid three zones in the central government of Rabbani. Planned victory, Hikmatyar was going to be the president, Abdul Ali Mazari was the prime minister and Dustom as the minister of defence. Notwithstanding, the governmental troops suppressed and defended this regime's coalition against the government.

Tanin quotes from the civil war involving key figures: Burhanuddin Rabbani, one of the presidents, according to Rabbani with an "abundance of responsible and irresponsible armed groups caused the civil war in Afghanistan". Hikmatyar the one did not accept Rabbani's offer of the prime ministerial post, alleging that "neither Masoud nor Burhanuddin Rabbani is to blame for the civil war, it was the Communists who even caused a civil war between the Mujahideen after the collapse of the government". (Tanin, 2005, p. 407 - 410).

Rabbani's constitution could not find an opportunity to pass through legal sources; however, the Mujahideen manifesto was more radical than Communist constitutions. The constitution fundamentally has been affiliated with Islam and Islamic values. Afghanistan is an Islamic country that remains united and independent. Sharia law is the only system that can solve the challenges in the country. With its origins radically in Islam, it is centralised as this constitution, emphasising the centrality of power based on Sharia law. The whole political system of Afghanistan ignored this verse of the Quran that 1400 years ago had pointed out the multi-nationality and multi-ethnicity of nations, though most of the constitution subsequentially emphasised that Afghanistan is an Islamic country, and Sharia law had a basic prominent role.

> "O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that as the believer who has At-Taqwâ, he is one of the Muttaqûn (Verily, Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Aware" (Rahimi, 2020)

In this verse, god says "I have created you with different colours, sects, and nationalities. This is the core discussion of multi-culturalism in a multi-ethnic society to value and recognise each other based on the Quran as the sacred book of every regime. The Emirates and democratic, autocratic systems in Afghanistan, despite marking and labelling everything with Islamic values, randomly paid attention to this verse of the Quran as a strong argument to pave the ground for the rest of the ethnicities rather than ethnicities in Emirate and non-Emirate political systems which have been under the pressure of tyrannical autocratic regimes.

The civil war in Afghanistan left around 30,000 victims, about half a million were displaced from the capital, institutions and related infrastructures that had been preserved

despite the political struggles of past regimes were destroyed through civil war, treasuries looted, cultural heritage, monuments and museums eliminated.

4.3. The External Factor of the Civil War

The civil war in Afghanistan has external factors too where, in the national case, ethnicity and power are considered core challenges in forming a nation-state as well as any other development in the country. One of its precise examples is the devastating civil war in the country. At the same time, the conflict of gaining power in Afghanistan has had external factors with the major powers constantly trying to enforce their agendas and seek their political interests. Geopolitical Afghanistan is often described as the crossroad between Central Asia, Iran, the Arabian Sea, and India. Iqbal Lahori, a poet, also called Afghanistan the "heart of Asia" or Lord Curzon call it the "Cockpit of Asia". From a geostrategic perspective, Afghanistan's important geography has meant that the global and regional powers intend to change the situation in their favour. This means the significance of Afghanistan's geography is that it lies close to several energy-rich countries as well as having been the major route of the transport of energy resources. The country's geographic position has also contributed to the multiethnicity of the country, though as the crossroads different ethnicities were inhabited throughout history. The roots of the civil war go back to both, the multiethnicity and geostrategic position of the country. The global power and regional power constantly tried to support the ethnicity in Afghanistan to hold the political power that could deal with and preserve the external interest in the country and at the same time preserve its dominance in the country. (Ghufran, 2001). There has been an interdependent interest between external factors and Pashtuns that both follow each other's interests. Except for the U.S. of America, China, and Russia as the major powers, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and India, are the regional countries involved in rivalries in the region, their rivalry in Afghanistan ground broadened since the Soviet Interventions. However, Ahadi claims that Iran, based on cultural ties with non-Pashtun ethnicities, supported the non-Pashtun factions in Afghanistan and formed the Northern Alliance comprised of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazara, and Ismaili Shiites in Afghanistan after the last Communist regime (Ahadi, 1994). This Alliance had been comprised of the factions that were committed to an Afghanistan where all ethnicities must have their role in the politics.

It was Ahmad Shah Masoud's belief that ethnicities should be included in political power and insisted on the role of ethnicities and their rights in the political arena.

Out of seven political factions that were involved in the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, six of them were predominantly Pashtun parties (Ahadi 2006). Hazara factions randomly supported the Jihad against the Communist regime in the country. Hizb wahdat-e Melli, Hizb-e Harakat-e Melli, the two grassroots Hazara factions from the beginning of the Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan, opened a channel with Iran from a religious perspective enjoying the support of Shiites. Later on, Iran not only support Hazaras but also other political factions for Jihad too. Hazaras nationality had been suppressed and marginalised enough throughout history much more than the other ethnicities in Afghanistan by the Pashtun-centric authoritarian regimes. Somehow, they always tried to find a supporter inside the country for any political decisions. However, the same deliberation existed regarding the Uzbeks too (Rasuli, 2017). The Mujahideen factions under the name of the "Peshawar Seventh Party" planned to make an inclusive government with Islamic values in the country, but Hazara factions were not included in this plan. For this purpose, Iran sought to include Hazaras in the political arena, enthusiastically supporting Hizb- Wahadat Melli Afghanistan (the Afghanistan National Unity Party) to be in the political equation. (Haqshenas & Emran, 201, p. 95 - 124).

Struggle over political power after Najibullah's regime was not based on the structural diversity or ideological perspective of the factions, rather it was the totalitarian demands of Islamic Faction led by Gulbedin Hikmatyar. He moved against the decisions made by the Mujahideen factions. Hikmatyar, the leader of Hizb-e-Islami (except for rivalries that had with Ahmad Shah Masoud) considered that giving the Tajiks and non-Pashtun factions space would be a decline of the Pashtuns's in the political domain. Two visions upon the decline of political power could be if a non-Pashtun president democratically or in a non-democratic way came to the leading position of the country. The second decline of Pashtuns affiliated to the extent of a democratic regime, however much democratic would still mean the decline of the Afghanistan Pashtuns' regime and their marginalisation, though the true democracies in multi-national states give values and opportunities for political participation of the residents of ignored ethnicities and races. This is Anwarul Haq Ahadi's perspective as the Pashtun and author of "The Decline of Pashtuns" in Afghanistan.

The collapse of Najibullah regime's was the end of bloodshed in the country. However, Hikmatyar once again started bombing the capital Kabul, which led to more than 1800 innocent people being martyred per day by rockets and bombs (Johnson, 2016). Mutual benefit of Pakistan and Hikmatyar was in Afghanistan Pashtuns should not lose political power. A self-sustaining cycle emerges as the local war economy offers significant personal gains for local military leaders, who become powerful divers of ongoing conflict. These leaders effectively keep their client communities captive to their ambitions, with strong incentives to escalate hostilities. Apparently political dispute but in reality according to Afsah ethnic conflict in Afghanistan which often fuelled by external influences. (Afsah & Guhr, 2005).

The war in Afghanistan, beyond its devastating human and material toll, triggered a profound transformation in the country's social, political, and economic structures—one that largely dismantled traditional systems and replaced them with militarized, ideologically driven power dynamics. After communism intervention in Afghanistan, the conflict led to the erosion of long-standing societal institutions, displacing the traditional authority of Khans and landlords in favour of "Jihadi commanders" who derived legitimacy not from established customs but from ideological and military power. After the Soviet Union withdraw from Afghanistan, the Jihadi commander took the Arbab and tribal leader position among the people in rural areas. While the old elite, often characterized as conservative and hierarchical, maintained order through social and tribal networks, the new actors were predominantly young, radicalized, and intent on reshaping society through militarization and ideological control. This shift did not necessarily equate to progress; rather, it introduced a more volatile and coercive power structure that prioritized ideological loyalty over governance. Second, violence supplanted traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, such as jirgas and councils, which historically played a stabilizing role in Afghanistan's society. With the weakening of both the state and local institutions, justice became dependent on access to armed force rather than mediation or consensus. This transformation entrenched a cycle of militarized dispute resolution, making local warlords and insurgent factions the ultimate arbiters of power. Consequently, many of the traditional elites either fled or saw their wealth and influence stripped away. Those who remained were

often reduced to mere spectators, forced to negotiate their survival through financial payoffs or strategic marriages with the new ruling class

Third, the war devastated Afghanistan's agricultural foundation, which had long underpinned its economy, and facilitated the rise of an illicit economy centered around extortion, smuggling, and the drug trade. This shift was not incidental but rather a direct consequence of the war's militarization: economic opportunity became tied to one's ability to wield arms and maintain an armed force. As a result, former insurgents rapidly accumulated wealth and power, establishing themselves as local elites. The transformation of Afghanistan's economy from a primarily agrarian system into one dominated by illegal commerce fundamentally altered the social fabric. Where decisions were once shaped by communal and customary norms, they now became subject to the interests of warlords and militant factions. Politics became a matter of military dominance, and social interactions were increasingly dictated by Islamist and ethnic divisions.

Ultimately, the war did not merely replace one ruling class with another; it fundamentally altered the nature of governance, economic power, and social order. The transition from traditional leadership to warlordism entrenched a system where power was determined by force rather than legitimacy, fostering a cycle of instability that continues to shape Afghanistan's trajectory.

4.4. Strategic Use of Pashtun Nationalism in the Rise of the Taliban

Afghanistan as a multi-ethnic society consists of almost 15 minorities, the core being Hazara, Uzbek, Tajik, and Pashtun, all four ethnicities continually involved in political ,power after decades of democracy in Afghanistan (1964-1972). After the Najibullah regime, civil war broke out in the country and Afghanistan was divided into five geographical zones. Each of the factions had its own constituencies. In Northern Afghanistan Abdul Rashid Dustom Uzbek controlled provinces such as Faryab, Jawz Jan, Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan, and partly Kunduz. The North-Eastern parts of Afghanistan such as Takhar, Badakhshan, Parvan, Kapisa, and parts of Kunduz province were controlled by the Tajik leader Ahmad Shah Masoud. In central parts of the country, Hazaras were dominant in areas such as Bamyan, and some parts of Ghor, Urozgan, and the Ghazni

provinces. The Western parts of the country such as Badghis, Herat, Ghor, and parts of Farrah province were also controlled by a Tajik leader, Mohamad Ismael Khan. The remaining Southern provinces were controlled by the Pashtun.

The Taliban began their activity in the Spin Boldak-Kandahar province of Afghanistan on 10 October, 1994, at the beginning calling themselves "*Tahrik e Islami Taliban Keram*" which means 'the Islamic Movement of the Taliban'. Their cross-border movement was led by Pashtuns, following the Deobandi ideology of Islam. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan had fundamental roles in recruiting and forming the Taliban and staunchly backed the Taliban movement then with ammunition, fiscal aid, and the creation of seminaries and madrasas in Pakistan. These madrasas grew under Zia al Haq in Pakistan and attracted Afghan war refugees, providing them with accommodation and paving the way for religious studies, while during the Mujahedeen these madrasas were also active. Taliban as the ethnic group garnered the support of both sides frontier Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan that fully supported and solidarity of Pashtuns led to Taliban reach to political power.

On 16 December 1996 the Taliban occupied Kabul and arrested Najibullah, the former Communist regime president and his brother, hanging them at a crowded intersection of Kabul. After occupying Kabul, the Taliban changed their regime name to 'The Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan', nearly 80% percent of which they occupied. Over 1500 Ulama (spirituals) *mullahs* given Fatwa (religious order) and accepted *Mullah* Omar as the emir (leader) of the Taliban.

The Taliban reverse all innovations and structures introduced during the Communist regime, even going so far as to destroy pre-Islamic monuments like the Bamiyan Buddhas (Nojumi, 2002, p. 9-11). By 1996, the Taliban controlled over 90% of Afghanistan and sidelined the Mujahideen. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and United Arab Emirates were the first counties to officially recognized the Taliban regime. Under Taliban rule then and today women faced severe restrictions, they were banned from attending school and had minimal role in public life. Women restrictions comes from both Taliban culture and Arab culture that introduced by Arab Jihadist post 2001 during the Soviet Intervention. (Zachery, 2014; Maria, 2015, p. 124). During the war against the Soviet Union, Arab fighters also joined the

Jihad in Afghanistan. However, in 1996, Osama bin Laden and his group, al-Qaeda, established a base in Afghanistan, using it as their operations centre. Al-Qaeda leveraged Afghanistan for military purposes, including troops training, arms trading, coordaining with other jihadist groups, and planning terrorist activities (CFR, 1999).

Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are no different in their terrorist approach, even ideologically considered somewhat similar to each other. However, their Utopia seems different from each other. Al-Qaeda does not claim to build a state based on Sharia law what the Taliban calls the Islamic system, rather they consider the West as the main enemy of Islamic values; democracy and any modern phenomena are rejected by both fundamental groups, and anti-Westernism is their common policy. However, the Taliban in the "wake of the Islamic system" are in a certain range. The source of both ideologies is religious fundamentalism. Mr. Schott claims that Afghanistan has not witnessed a culture of anti-Westernism throughout its history, except there has been an anti-Western culture in Arab and Middle Eastern countries, and the Taliban were not so opposed to Westernisation, they were and are only trying to build their own tribal system. These sub-points cannot be seen as fundamental differences between al-Qaeda and the Taliban. (Schott, 2012).

The concept of an Emirate is to build a structure based on the Quranic text that the social norm and official norm ought to follow Sharia and there is no command except for Allah, God. The emir has absolute executive, legislative and judicial authority. The Emirate practised by the Taliban on the principle that "sovereignty is manifested through implementation of Sharia; the leader is chosen by a select Islamic shura, or council; all branches of government are subject to the authority of the emir; and basic rights are defined/limited by Sharia as interpreted by the emir/leadership". (Thier, 2020).

The phenomenon of Talib has been operational since the 1990s and this identity and its ethnic roots have been included in the history of Afghanistan. Since the inception of this movement, the phenomenon of Talib has been Pashtun-centric, demonstrating the pure tribal attitudes of Pashtuns, however in a radical way. Pashtun tribes and four tribes with Pashtun populations are Sarbanari, Gharghsht, Batani, and Karlanery. Sarbanari is the Ghelazai tribe, which is mainly the Taliban of these tribes. Mullah Omar, from the Ghalazai tribe, was the founder of the movement of the Taliban. Pashtunwali existed as the social law

of Pashtun tribes before Islam. In schools such as Deobandi the Taliban studied Islamic fundamentalism and established thousands of Deobandi madrasas, preaching Islam based on the Deobandi school of thought and its strict ways. (Mohanty, S. K., & Mahanty, J. N. 2010). The non-Pashtun areas in Afghanistan were alien to that Islam introduced by the Taliban mixed with a tribal code and Sharia. Its violent manner was rooted in tribal culture rather than religious.

Other ethnicities' reluctance to the Taliban and fighting with them after 1994 can be critically understood through two main issues. First, the Taliban's interpretation and enforcement of Sharia law were politically motivated, serving the interest of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and certain Arab states. These countries backed Taliban's ideology, which blended religious principles with Pashtun tribal values, raising questions about the authenticity of its Islamic claims. This politicized version of Sharia alienated non-Pashtun ethnic groups, who saw it as a tool for external influence rather than genuine religious governance.

4.5.   The Constitution and Multiethnicity

In multi-ethnic societies, the constitution first considered the multi-ethnic nature of the society. The main criticism regarding ethnicity and the constitution is directed at liberal democrats that refuse to acknowledge ethnic diversity. The argument is that liberal democratic constitutions are under the cloak of individualism with the cultural values and mores of big communities being imposed on minorities, regardless of gender, religion, and culture. "The response to this criticism in countries such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Estonia, and Hungary is the constitutional recognition of cultural groups through separate representation in the legislature and the executive, and special cultural or educational institutions" (Ghai, 2008).

Multi-ethnic societies that have chronic challenges often experience these ways of resolving ethnic conflicts that either lead to prosperity and tranquillity or to change as independent states. These experiences are significantly seen in Eastern European countries that so far huge rifts and intense conflict even of a federal, fair political system that is often prescribed for a multi-ethnic society in order to resolve the dilemma of power and conflict

among diverse societies, did not respond to the former Yugoslavia situation, which ultimately led to independence states.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, in different corners of the world, multi-ethnic societies witnessed intense ethnic conflict, though Communism did not allow sub-nationalism or the nationalistic policies in diverse societies before its collapse. One of Communism's features was that did not allow a separate nationalism to be formed under the Communist rule (Zuber, 2007). The conflict of such societies was resolved through democratic systems, prescribed as the system to answer the issues of a diverse society and ethnic challenges. Representative democracy observed cultural values and recognised the diverse nature of the societies and evaluated the minorities' rights. Democracy opened up ground for multiculturalism and equality in most multi-ethnic societies where inequality in terms of political power had created challenges, however, the constitutions as the key element that can preserve democratic values brought a change in multi-ethnic societies and resolved inequality, for instance in Namibia and South Africa, as well as resolving the intense conflict among Catholics and North Protestants of Ireland. In Balkan countries, conflicts have been resolved based on democracy and codifying of the ethnicities' rights and values in government.

Ghana is one of the West African states with diverse religious beliefs, and its political system is democratic. Although Ghana is one of the most peaceful African countries, however, diversity in beliefs still creates a challenge for the state. Ghana is a diverse religious and tribal state that is surrounded by taboos and traditional customs. According to Abeku Essel Emmanuel, these taboos should be recognised and should be codified somehow by the Constitution in Ghana. Otherwise, democracy would have been cursed by people that could not recognise their taboos. Recognition of taboos and cultural values that are affiliated with Ghanaian beliefs have challenged the governance system. "Taboos and governance are embraced as being one entity within the notion that without taboos the governance of a community cannot be firmly achieved" (Abeku, 2020, p. 5). This opportunity has been given by democracy to Ghanaians and the notion of democratic rule is the phenomenon that comes from pre-emptive culture, which the state recognises it as a value.

A political system that answers even to the taboos of the minorities is ideal for all diverse societies, and thus does not change the constitution according to the inhabitant's customs, norms, and demands, otherwise the state would not support the people. Democracy and the constitution in Afghanistan have not been aligned with each other throughout the short history of democracy after 1964 or after 2001 either. The constitutional structure did not change, the same definitions of nation and nationalities were emphasised sequentially by all the constitutions. One of the key elements of democracy is to consider minorities and lead the society on the path to justice, however, the reverse of the constitution remained in favour of a single ethnic demand in the country. The institutionalisation of democracy in Afghanistan needs different conditions. According to constitutional considerations since the formation of the modern state, the country has never paid attention to diversity. The first condition for the institutionalisation of democracy is constitutional reform in the country. This ought to begin by codifying minorities' cultural values and recognition of them, though still the non-Pashtun ethnicities feel deprived of the privilege that a responsible government often gives them. The second condition for the institutionalisation of democracy is the decentralisation of power in the country that is a cooperative step towards institutionalisation of democracy. It is the political system that can ally the conflict and rescue the country from long-term fragility. According to Rahimi's critique of the constitution, the prescribed decentralized Parliamentarian model for resolving conflict and the rest of the challenges often originate from the state.

Rahimi is apprehensive regarding the federal system in Afghanistan, the peoples' demand for federalisation is higher than a parliamentarian model of the state. According to Rahimi, a decentralised federal system for Afghanistan from two perspectives might face a challenge in Afghanistan society that federal system would be a fair choice for a wider geography but not for geography such as Afghanistan, where its loss would be more dramatic than its benefit in geography. The second point he emphasises is that in the federal system the minorities who are spread all over the country would be deprived of political power, they would not be able to have independent representation in the state, they might turn into a threat against the state and begin to rebel. With due attention to the social formation and ethnicities in Afghanistan, the consensus model of democracy would be a fair choice for the country, often prescribed for a multi-ethnic society, embracing all minorities and giving whole ethnicities the chance for political participation. Rahimi cites Liphart

(1999) regarding the consensus democracy that has emphasised consensus democracy's importance for the multicultural society, which at the first stage of this model of democracy opens avenues for ethnicities to have active political participation precisely in executive power. Ethnicities represent somehow and could participate in the whole decision-making of the executive power, thus not depriving anyone of political decision-making (Rahimi, 2020. p. 46).

The other efficient aspect of consensus democracy in the Parliament system is that ethnicities have the right to handle their social issues in local areas through local officials, including education, religious issues, and the rest of the values. This cooperative system has been functioned in multi-ethnic societies such as Cyprus, Columbia, India, and Iraq. The core discussion of the system is that it gives a chance and opens avenues to the minor parties and their participation in parliamentary elections. With due attention to Afghan society, the apprehension of the minorities toward the central state and institutions has been so far a lack of their participation in the government that then feels deprived of political power. Regarding different types of democracy, most authors insist on consensus democracy to give minorities the chance for political participation.

The war in Afghanistan, beyond its devastating human and material toll, triggered a profound transformation in the country's social, political, and economic structures—one that largely dismantled traditional systems and replaced them with militarized, ideologically driven power dynamics. After communism intervention in Afghanistan, the conflict led to the erosion of long-standing societal institutions, displacing the traditional authority of Khans and landlords in favor of "Jihadi commanders" who derived legitimacy not from established customs but from ideological and military power. After the Soviet Union withdraw from Afghanistan, the Jihadi commander took the Arbab and tribal leader position among the people in rural areas. While the old elite, often characterized as conservative and hierarchical, maintained order through social and tribal networks, the new actors were predominantly young, radicalized, and intent on reshaping society through militarization and ideological control. This shift did not necessarily equate to progress; rather, it introduced a more volatile and coercive power structure that prioritized ideological loyalty over governance. Second, violence supplanted traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, such as jirgas and councils, which historically played a stabilizing role in

Afghanistan's society. With the weakening of both the state and local institutions, justice became dependent on access to armed force rather than mediation or consensus. This transformation entrenched a cycle of militarized dispute resolution, making local warlords and insurgent factions the ultimate arbiters of power. Consequently, many of the traditional elites either fled or saw their wealth and influence stripped away. Those who remained were often reduced to mere spectators, forced to negotiate their survival through financial payoffs or strategic marriages with the new ruling class

Third, the war devastated Afghanistan's agricultural foundation, which had long underpinned its economy, and facilitated the rise of an illicit economy centered around extortion, smuggling, and the drug trade. This shift was not incidental but rather a direct consequence of the war's militarization: economic opportunity became tied to one's ability to wield arms and maintain an armed force. As a result, former insurgents rapidly accumulated wealth and power, establishing themselves as local elites. The transformation of Afghanistan's economy from a primarily agrarian system into one dominated by illegal commerce fundamentally altered the social fabric. Where decisions were once shaped by communal and customary norms, they now became subject to the interests of warlords and militant factions. Politics became a matter of military dominance, and social interactions were increasingly dictated by Islamist and ethnic divisions.

Ultimately, the war did not merely replace one ruling class with another; it fundamentally altered the nature of governance, economic power, and social order. The transition from traditional leadership to warlordism entrenched a system where power was determined by force rather than legitimacy, fostering a cycle of instability that continues to shape Afghanistan's trajectory.

4.6. Summary

Due to attention to conflicts after the formation of the "modern state" in Afghanistan (1880), the failure and collapse of the state since then have developed structural roots. Conflicts and the bloody transition of power one after another display that it is precisely the consequence of poor state nation-building. Although the reasons for the collapse and fragility of the state vary from those in other countries' experiences, however in Afghanistan

fragility and collapse of the state sequentially have links with the variables of the centralized political system, ethnicity, power, tribalism, and fundamentalism.

Regimes could never bear political opposition and new ideas. One regime after another adopted the killing and atrocities of their opponents and ethnicities, even tribal conflict rivalries among Pashtuns were the outcome of a unitary system. There has rarely been a peaceful transition of power in history – it was substituted with the killing and eradication of rivals. The first reason was the accumulation of power in control of the single person and the opponents were killed by the power holder or his opponent. At the beginning of modern state formation, the first inner conflict of the Pashtun tribes weakened Amir's authority (Ghelzai and Durrani). The second was atrocities of non-Pashtun ethnicities and the slavery of the Hazara minority, ultimately dissolved by Amanullah; the third, the constitutions of each regime's emphasis on a unitary system and definition that everyone is an Afghan. Although most of the policy and vision regarding the non-Pashtun ethnicity were the same as those of Abdul Rahman continued by the rest of the regimes. However, the Amanullah's and Zahir Shah's reforms could open a rational route for nationalities fair and peaceful dialogue in the future instead of suppression. The fourth was the suppression of intellectuals and reformists/constitutionalists. The challenge that often outruns others by being mentioned more than any other challenge is the ethnic vision of the political power, that Pashtuns have never been willing to accept non-Pashtun authority in the country and this apprehension led to Pashtun leaders emphasising preserving a unitary system in the country, though through such a system they conquered the country and exerted their social influence. Ethnic vision in all regimes has been a tangible fact from which Afghanistan still suffers. The priority of Pashtuns compared with other ethnicities since Abdul Rahman and the displacement of Uzbeks, Tajiks, Hazara, and the confiscation of their lands is the legacy of the Pashtun kings, amirs, and presidents that led to the fragility of the state. Besides the totalitarian vision of political power and tribalism in the country of a single ethnic group, the second factor that often served as the hegemonic resource of amirs and kings has been the *mullahs*' segment that stood up against modernity and has been a constantly-agreed circle against the suppression of intellectuals and modernists. The independence of Afghanistan was achieved by a reformist Amanullah. However, traditional society and the most dominant circle of the society, the *mullahs*, proved one way and another that they can

steer the society rather than intellectuals or politicians in rousing the people against any reform and government decisions. During Amanullah's rule, the intellectuals arose more than before and could speak publicly, though they were faced with a conservative society in that Arbabs and *mullahs* had dominance and could influence society. Intellectuals, step by step were strengthened by the Amanullah regime, so the clash between intellectuals and traditional society has been a never-ending contest in Afghanistan. Most of the constitutions from Zahir Shah to Dr. Najibullah emphasised democracy and equality, but in reality, their political approach varied and had not changed toward the ethnicities, though equality in a multi-ethnic society can be achieved by allowing space for other ethnicities.

Chapter V: Nationalism and Sub-nationalism

5.1. Introduction

Afghanistan was a multinational country marked by its current borders in the 19th century during the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman. The ethnic groups living in this country are Tajik, Pashtun, Hazara, Uzbek and the rest of the minorities such as Baluch, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Sadat, Arab, Gujar, Pashaei, Turkmen, and Tatar (Qaiser, 2012). Each of these minority groups possesses its own distinct culture, language, and historical heritage. Throughout the country's political history, no regime has successfully upheld the unique ethnic identities necessary to create a sense of shared nationalism among all groups. Historical efforts have consistently prioritized the "Afghan" nationalism that disregards other ethnicities. Policies promoting forces nationalism and assimilating- intentionally established by the government and authoritarian regimes-continue to be enforces by government administrations. This remains a contested issue. Afghanistan still suffers from the lack of a nationalism defined by the values of all ethnic groups. Afghan nationalism was imposed by authoritarian regimes, and the same ethno-cultural patterns were imposed on other ethnic groups throughout history. The second discussion of this chapter is the concentration of political power, which has had maintained a the coerced nationalism in the country and is considered the main cause of sub-nationalism in the country. I believe that decentralization resolves long-standing divisions and conflicts between ethnic groups over

political power and a nationalism embed all ethnicities. On the other hand, institutionalizes democratic values too. Although Afghanistan's society and ethnicities are in close convergence and relationship with each other, at the same time, elitism on the part of nationalities seems to be an undeniable reality. However, politicians are relatively accountable to their ethnicity and the region to which they belong and come from, rather than to national thinking. However, this is not as vital as how they behave nationalistically. A politician who is trustworthy and thinks in any way at the national level is still attached to his tribe or ethnic branch. The article precisely illustrates the enforced roots of nationalism and sub-nationalism reasons. Therefore, in contrast with all deliberations that prefer the centrality of the system for a united, stable Afghanistan, I believe that decentralisation is the key element for supporting nationalism and a nation-state. A centralised political system did not respond to comprehensive nationalism in the country, nor it can unite a diverse society.

5.2. A Fake Nationalism in Afghanistan

As Spencer believes a nation composed of a cultural and identical group that encompasses different ethnicities, religious believes, and ethnocultural values, will have a problem if there are inequalities and most importantly inequal distribution of political power (Spencer, 2005). As well as Gellner (1980) defines nationalism as a shared sentiment or collective responsibility that drives the public to raise a unified voice when the state violate fundamental principles of the social contract. (Gellner, 1980). Still, some argue that there is no clear definition of nationalism, but there are many arguments and theories about nationalism and patriotism that are in fact directly related to dynamic nationalism. Some argue that nationalism has to do with a single nation, concepts such as political culture, national identity, language, and a specific territory. (Hobsbawm, 1996). From 1600 to 1815 nationalism was considered a pervasive political ideology that nurtured and shaped a revolution to form the nation-state, such as the French Revolution in Europe. In other words, nationalism is an ideological movement to preserve the autonomy and unity of society, which is considered a key element in the definition of a nation. With a little reflection, the modern age can also be considered as the age of meaningful ideologies, the various ideologies that have manifested themselves in the modern era, especially in the twentieth century, have been able to arouse the imagination of the masses, are unparalleled throughout

the known and unknown history of human beings such as Nazism, fascism, liberalism, socialism, communism, Maoism, Stalinism, etc. Among the most important are the influential ideologies of the contemporary world that have depicted a desirable ideal situation by criticizing and rejecting the status quo. The mass influence of these ideologies has been such that sometimes the influence of an ideology such as communism can only be compared with the influence of the teachings of the prophets. Definitions of nationalism demonstrate that nations are its outcome as well as movements in the nineteenth century; and the nineteenth century has been considered the era of revolutions for nationalism across the world, though it was nationalism that led the revolutions and movements to give birth to modern nation-states. (Hill, 2020; Wimmer & Feinstein, 2010).

Harrison argue that nationalism involves two key aspects: cultural nationalism, which reflect the shared identity and belonging of nations' people, and the responsibility of its member to uphold political sovereignty. Beyond the sense of unity and attachment to the state that defines nationalism, there is also patriotism-a concept focused on attachment for one's country without a political dimension. Nationalism, however, extends beyond patriotism and carries political implications, often driving movements and significant changes within society. (Harrison & Boyd, 2018). Patriotism is often characterized by an individual's connections to their country, nations and its values, embodying a selfless love for the land, its government and its defences. This includes a dee sense of belonging to one's homeland, respect for regional values, and solidarity with fellow citizens. Regarding this context Terence references Jean Jacques Rousseau's theory of public educations, which suggests that installing patriotism begins in childhood, fostering a sense of belong, identity and knowledge of ones country through early educations (Terrence, 1975; Hobsbawn, 1996).

Nationalism, on the other hand, is often associated with the United States and the French Revolution in the 18th century, which from a modern point of view, nationalism, was seen as a movement that strengthened national feeling, as Max Weber also stated in his definition of the concept of nation, that the use of "national feelings" and feelings for society .(Norkus, 2004). On the other hand, the definition of evolution in the understanding of nationalism emerges in the name of civil nationalism, civil nationalism is a new nationalism that emerged after the French Revolution and was based on the characteristics of the

Enlightenment and was considered as a central discourse from the point of view of the nation-state. (Ashraf, Nozar &Tahmasi, 2015; Maza, 1989).

For Gellner, nationalism is the result of rational modernization in industrial societies that parallels the events and revolutions that occurred in the 19th century, resulting in opportunities for the modern state and even undeniably influencing the foreign policy of a state through nationalism. However, the contemporary theorist's conceptualization of nationalism is different from the classical theory of nationalism. Classical theorists believe that before defining nationalism, it is necessary to define the concept of nation, although nationalism derives from the nation. For classical theorists, a nation is a set of people who endeavoured to achieve their desires through collective action. In general, they prioritize the nation and attribute it to the history of humanity and its purpose in life. On the other hand, Gellner (1980) believes that nation does not generate nationalism, in fact they are nationalist movements that define nations, adding that "nationalism is the theory of political legitimacy" (Gellner, p. 1 - 2).

In contrast to Gellner's assumption, nationalist movements in diverse mosaic societies like Afghanistan have been unbale to foster true nationalism; instead, reformist efforts tended to deepen ethnic divisions. Afghanistan lacks a cohesive nationalist movement and unlikely to develop one without implementing substantial reforms focused on nation-building. Contrary to Gellner's assumption, however, nationalist movements in mosaic societies such as Afghanistan could not create nationalism, but any reformist movements, on the contrary, led to ethnic divisions. In fact, Afghanistan does not have a nationalist movement and cannot have it unless a series of reforms are introduced in the field of nation-building. The nation-building process in Afghanistan remains unsuccessful, and the country has yet to emerge as a unified nation. Shared national values that could unite all ethnic groups have not yet been clearly defined or embraced. Nation-building is still a failed process, and Afghanistan has not yet been a nation, and the national values on which all ethnic groups depend have not yet been defined and reflected. (Delanty, 1996). As Gellner defines, nationalism is not simply the product of nationalist movements, nor can it serve as a unifying political ideology in Afghanistan to strengthen national unity. In Afghanistan, nationalist movements have never emerged with a clear, unifying objective. Instead, several factors have hindered foundational concepts of nation-building and nationalism, leading to a form of sub-nationalism where each ethnic group strives to promote its own values.

Throughout Afghanistan's constitutional history, elements such as the national anthem, flag, currency, and national identity have primarily reflected Pashtun values, while the identities and values of other ethnic groups have been largely excluded.

Decentralizing political power has various dimensions, with the primary aim of addressing the complexities of political governance. Shifting political power from central authorities to local government helps address local challenges and better serve the people, while also promoting a more accessible path to democracy. Another key purpose of decentrations in multi-ethnic societies is to mitigate conflict over political power by providing a more balanced power-sharing arrangement (Shahid, n. d). Therefore, multi-ethnic societies often require a distinct approach and specific goals when pursuing the devolution of political power. According to Hymen (2020), "Afghans are neither one people nor one political community. The state itself is broken-backed, and the country is divided between two rival governments: a Taliban-ruled state competes for control of northern regions under mutually rival governments, warlords. Ethnic, tribal, and sectarian divisions have worsened and further fragmented the country" (Hymen, 2002). The sectarian divisions have not been the primary obstacle to nation-building in Afghanistan; rather, the devastation caused by the country's political authority and political power struggle has been more significant. However, widespread hostility toward the Hazara populations notable escalated during the Taliban regime (JHA, 2013; Conversi, 2014).

Afghanistan and Afghan nationalism and identity are artefacts of the Great Game rivalry between Russia and Britain in South Asia (1880-1901). Mahmod Tarzi the founding father of Afghan nationalism or the co-author of the Afghan Nationalism devised nationalism in favour of one ethnicity after colonial hegemony in the region. He pursued two specific objective: first, to assert the Pashtuns as the dominate ethnic group in Afghanistan, despite they are not being the majority. The second, to facilitate the settlement and dispersion of Pashtuns across the country. The resettlement of Pashtuns in the northern region of Afghanistan (Qataghan) was formalized as an officials policy under the administration of Abbdul Rahman Khan (1880-1901), later reinforced this policy through the " Nizamnamyee Naqileen ba Samti Qataghan" a directive for the settlement of nomads in the northern region. (Shahrani, 2018). The process of Pashtuniation of Afghanistan which was initiated by Emirs and Kings, is considered a fanatic vision upon political power and rest of the ethnicities in Afghanistan. Tarzi's second objective was ethnic assimilation,

which he believed could foster Afghan nationalism across the country. Drawing inspiration from Mustafa Kamal Ataturk's model in Turkey, where Tarzi had lived and studied, he sought to replicate similar policies. Ataturk had deliberately ignored and attempted to assimilate Kurdish Identity, a policy that has since fuelled ongoing conflicts between Kurds and Turks in Turkey (Mosavi, 2015' Sullivan, 2016). Tarzi's concept of ethnic nationalism in Afghanistan was notably influenced by Pan-Turkish and Nazi ideologies, aiming to impose a single ethnic identity on the entire nation, much like Ataturk's approach in Turkey. However, to silence criticism of his ethnicity-centred nationalism, Tarzi strategically linked it to religious narratives, seeking to downplay tensions and dissuade other ethnic groups from opposing his fabricated vision nationalism (Gregorian, 1967). The promotion and institutionalization of " Pashtunwali" (the Pashtun cultural code) were key efforts supported by the government through initiatives like the publication of Serajul-akhbar and the establishment of Habibia High School. This school played a significant role in advancing government interests, Afghan nationalism and the Pashtu language. Pashtunwali seems has be a powerful ideology among Pashtun tribes, serving as an Afghan customary law that demands strict adherence and leaves little space for other cultural values. In rural areas of Afghanistan, conflict resolution has traditionally been conducted through Jirgas-assemblies of Pashtun convened to address intern tribal disputes. The concept of the Jirga was later institutionalized in Afghanistan's constitutions as the Loya Jirga, granting a measure of legitimacy to government decisions. However, from a modern perspective, the efficacy and efficiency of this mechanism remain questionable. Despite its traditional significances, reliance on the Loya Jirga has undermined the role and dignity of formal institutions like the parliament and senate serving as source of governmental legitimacy that has diminished over time.

The Afghan Identity according to Rahimi came by colonial power which refer to Pashtuns and colonialism, prolonged the Pashtuns ruling class hegemony over the other ethnicities. The ruling ethnic class then officialised the values that the rest of the nationalities did not have cultural or historical affiliation with. The government employees were even obliged to learn the Pashtu language, use in day-to-day bureaucracy even writing official request by Pashtu where the prevalent language was Farsi. Farsi/Dari served as the country's lingua franca, the 1964 constitution under the new democracy recognised the Pashtu language officially and added it as its second official language. This procedure from

long ago was designed specifically in 1937 under the name of the Pashtu Academy, *Pashtu Tolaney* (Hymen, 2002). The Pashtu Academy mindset was to replace Persian words and terminologies with Pashtu words; however, these efforts for the language did not end cooperatively to compete with Farsi/Dari. Ethnic vision upon the political power began with the formation of the state from 1880-1901 by Abdul Rahman followed by the rest of regimes and consolidated the Afghan nationalism. Amanullah after a tour to European countries, began with the European model of state-building, based on a secular, liberal pattern in Afghanistan that the society were not ready to tolerate such a models and reforms. According to Ibrahimi (2019), the state-building by Amanullah in Afghanistan was a radical approach, which ultimately triggered a revolt in the country (Ibrahimi, 2019, p. 48; Amir, 2005). The precise ethnic demography of the ethnicities in Afghanistan is not precise; there is a rough and not credible estimate of the ethnicities and Pashtun population. Pashtuns believe being in the majority, the details of which are not based on statistical research. Afghanistan as a country of minorities; there is no major ethnic group, all assumptions are premised on estimates, without any official demography. Instantly Pashtuns are considered the major ethnic group in the country which does not have academic roots. Overall, population estimates are that Pashtuns are nearly 32% or 42 % percent, Tajikis about 27%, Uzbeks and Hazaras about 9%, and there are smaller groups (this is not a credible statistic from the number of ethnicities in Afghanistan (Qayam, 2012, Afzal, 2022).

Minority in Afghanistan have resided there for over 5,000 years, united in resisting British and Soviet Interventions. They fiercely opposed colonization's and foreign invasions (Rahimi, 2017,pp-42-47) The three Anglo-Afghan wars concluded with the Treaty of Rawalpindi in 1919, marking Afghanistan's independence from Britain and its transformation into a modern, sovereign state. According to Riedel (2014) The Durand Line was reaffirmed as the border, but Afghanistan was granted complete independence in managing its foreign policy. It quickly became the first nation to recognize the new Communist government in Moscow. Lenin, Russia's leader, dispatched a Soviet delegation to Kabul in September 1919 to establish diplomatic relations, while the Soviets provided training and equipment for the Afghan air force" (p. 10). Despite the Durand line being officially recognized as the elites have consistently refused to acknowledge it as such.

5.3.   Enforced Nationalism

The decentralization of political power in many pluralistic societies gained momentum following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Under Communist regimes, discussions of regionalism and nationalism were deemed a significant threat to the Communism ideology. In the Balkan countries, nationalist and regionalist movements were stifled under Communist rule, unable to openly advocate for their rights. Due to repression. Multi-ethnic states were compelled to adopt the nationalist frameworks imposed by Communist regimes. Ultimately, the rise of potent nationalist movements played a key role in the downfall of Communism (Beissinger,2009; Marinov& Veyenkov, 2014,p.470). Afghanistan, as multicultural state, similarly faced the imposition of single ethnic nationalism throughout its history. In many post-conflict nations following the Soviet Union's collapse in 1990, governance systems evolved and nationalism was redefined-particularly in multiethnic states such as in the Balkans. However, Afghanistan remained largely unchanged. Despite opportunities to rebuilding nationalism, implement reforms, and hold elections after Communist's defeat, the country descended into civil war, that eventually led to the rise of the Taliban regime in 2001, which then initiated certain changes (Marinove, 2007). Afghanistan does not face significant sectarian conflict as a potential challenge to state. In contrast to many multi-ethnic societies where ethnic divisions often stem from religious, racial, or cultural differences, however, Afghanistan has not experienced such divisions rooted in race or religious beliefs (Fox, 2000; Kadayifci, 2008).

Since the inception of state and nation-building in 1880, ethnic roles have not been a prominent focus of Pashtun-centric governments. The autocratic and dictatorial systems in Afghanistan's history provided non-Pashtun ethnic groups with opportunities to advocate for equal rights. Efforts to create a pluralistic and peaceful society remain essential for recognizing ethnic values and addressing the challenges of power dynamics, which are seen as the primary obstacle to broad-based nationalism. Recognizing non-Pashtun identities could promote greater unity among ethnic groups. Although Pashtuns maintained authority in previous regimes, their own identity—divided between the Ghilzai and Durrani tribes—remained intact. However, this does not mean that Pashtun rulers refrained from assimilating other ethnicities or restricting their political participation (Balkhi, 2020; Richard, 1989). A significant critique of U.S.-led state-building efforts in Afghanistan after

2001 was its focus on centralizing authority and endorsing a constitution that legitimized a dominant, imposed identity (Jawan, 2012).

Political rivalries over power have posed significant challenges to fostering a sense of unity essential for nation-building in Afghanistan. The process of both state-building and nation-building was heavily influenced by single-ethnic dominance. Amir Abdul Rahman, a modernist king who ruled Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901, structured the state along ethnic lines, marginalizing minorities other than Pashtuns from political power—a policy that risked fuelling secessionist movements. During Abdul Rahman's reign, Pashtuns were regarded as the most esteemed tribe, receiving preferential treatment. The administration even allocated salaries exclusively to Pashtun men and women (Balkhi, 2020, pp. 84–85).

5.4. Roots of Sub-nationalism

With the exception of Tajik leaders such as Habibullah Kalakani (1929), Babrak Karmal (1979-1986), and Burhanuddin Rabbani (1992-2001), Pashtuns have historically held political power and leadership in Afghanistan. Coercion has been a recurring feature of Afghanistan's political history, reflecting a broad-based ethnic policy. Pashtun attitudes toward other ethnic groups remain evident, shaped by a legacy of single-ethnic autocratic rule. This regime fostered stereotypes against other nationalities many of which persist today, reinforcing the centralization of political power predominantly in Pashtuns hands. A shift from centralized to a decentralized system would disrupt the Pashtun's longstanding authority and political dynasty that one way or another they. (Thier, 2020).

In most multicultural states, conflicts often stem from the distribution of political resources, development inequalities, internal colonialism and religious diversity (Blauner, 1969). In Afghanistan, while internal colonialism may not be a significant factor, the other sources of conflict are present to varying degrees. Regional, ethnic, and religious stereotypes are deeply ingrained in the country. It is common for individuals, regardless of ethnicity, to appended their regional affiliations to their names. As discussed earlier, political, even those in high-ranking positions, often prioritize serving their ethnic group and region above national interests. Centralization is viewed as a barrier to democracy. Moreover, the concepts of democracy and a centralized political system are inherently incompatible. While democracy empowers people to determine their political future, the vertical structure of centralized political power disrupts and undermines the democratic

process (Gomes, 2018). Lijphart, and Bernauer argue that when political power is centralized checks and balances does not exist in the government, reduce accountability, foster corruption, and most importantly undermines any democratic principles. Hartzel & Hoddie argue that Power sharing is a mandatory issue in ethnic and ideological divers societies that leads to marginalization of minorities group and limit democratic values (Lijphar,1968 ; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2020).

Political decentralizations refers to the delegations of authority and responsibility to local governments. In today's modern world, participatory governance has become a key priority, receiving widespread international support and advocacy. This form of governance, a result of decentralized political systems, emphasises the importance citizen involvement in government decision-making(Rugo, 2013). While decentralizations can occur across various domains, political decentralization is particularly essential in multi-ethnic societies. In pluralism states, excessive centralization of political power has often led to political instability and decay. Studies on decentralization of political power in multi-ethnic communities, particularly in African countries, highlight its role in mitigating ethnic divisions over political power. For Afghanistan, decentralization based on authors is an imperative for two main reasons: First, from a developmental Sandpoint, it can foster good governance, enhance stability, and address issues related to national identity as the fundamental challenge of ethnicities. Second, it is crucial for strengthening democracy and achieving sustainable peace, especially since centralized system have repeatedly failed to advance democratic efforts. Furthermore from a governance perspective centralizes system are often inefficient and responsive (Muhammad, 2016).

The main goal of democratic decentralisation is to establish effective mechanisms for democratic governance, ensuring that citizens have significant influence over political decision-making and can hold government accountable if it violates the social contract. Sadr argues that democracy may not be a suitable model for post-conflict states as it often legitimizes war legacies and lacks the necessary institutions infrastructures (Sadr, 2021). Democratic decentralizations fosters a smoother relationship between the government and its citizens. This alignments between the government and the people ensures the legitimacy of both the regime and the state. Consequently, decentralization is often considered a prerequisite for democratizations (Chatterjee, 2014)

To find the precise ways of having a democratic government, the people ought to have a strong influence on political decision-making and follow up if the government violates the social contract. Sadr argue that democracy is not a suitable model for post-conflict states, though it legitimises the war legacies and lacks the necessary institutional infrastructure (Sadr, 2021). Democratic Decentralisation creates a smoothing relationship between the government and the people that Afghanistan from this perspective has various challenges. Convergency among government and the people guarantees the legitimacy of the regime and democratic values; with due attention to mentioned points, decentralisation is posed as the preconditions for democratisation (Chatterjee, 2014).

The first and most critical steps toward establishing democracy in Afghanistan is to evaluate its society and asses its compatibility with modern concepts such as democracy and democratic values. Sociologically, the Afghanistan's society is decentralized and exhibits distinct attitudes toward government, politics and democracy. Despite this, traditional assemblies have proven effective in solving conflicts in remote areas through feudal mechanism (Barry & Samuel, 2009). The success of democracy and its promotion is closely tied to the political system, which lays the foundation for democratic values and fosters public participation in political process and sound governance. In an ethnically diverse society, centralized political power often leads to challenges if it is not distributed democratically. Afghanistan's historical reliance on a unitary system of administration has repeatedly failed to meet the criteria of democracy. This has led to the emergence of single-ethnic domination, accompanied by the falsification of national identity and a narrow nationalism that fails to represent the country's broader ethnic diversity. Afghanistan's governance, through nominally democratic, has often taken an autocratic approach, driving the country into stagnation and hindering progress. The 2004 constitution, established after the Bonn agreement, largely replicated the centralized autocratic system of the past. While it proposed measures such as village and district councils and empowered citizens to elect mayors to strengthen local governance, these provisions were never effectively implement by the government. (Thier, 2020; Qayam, 2012).

The historical centralization of political power in Afghanis, predominantly under Pashtun leadership, has systematically excluded other ethnic group from meaningful participation in the government. This longstanding reality has fuelled ongoing debates about the necessity of restructuring the political power in the country. Despite two decades of

state-building efforts following 2001 backed by substantial aid for development, reconstruction and democratization these initiatives largely failed to produce sustainable progress. The potential for transformation in Afghanistan was undermined by ethnic divisions and ideological sympathies with the Taliban. Sadr (2021) drawing on Huntington's theory of democratization, identifies this period as Afghanistan's fourth wave of democratization. However, persistence of old system and emphasising on old values facilitated to advent number of challenges and strengthens the fundamental enemy of democracy fundamentalism in Afghanistan. As a result, democracy what the world community and Afghanistan society expected democracy remained nascent and failed to be institutionalized meaningfully. (Sadr, 2020, pp. 90).

5.5. The Outcome of Enforced Nationalism

The decentralization of power in many pluralist societies emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In Communist regimes, debates about regionalism and nationalism were considered a severe threat to Communism. In Balkan countries, the nationalist and regionalist movements under the Communist yoke could not raise their hands and explicitly request their rights, being suppressed by the Communist regimes. Multi-ethnic states were faced with enforced Nationalism that the states willy-nilly ought to accept the favoured Communist regimes' nationalism. Eventually, it was the potent nationalist movement outcomes that resulted in the demise of Communism (Beissinger, 2009; Marinov & Vezenkov, 2014, p. 470). As a multicultural state, Afghanistan was faced with single-ethnic enforced nationalism throughout history. In most post-conflict states, after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, the government system changed: Nationalism was redefined in multi-ethnic countries, pacifically in Balkan countries; however, Afghanistan remained in the same situation as before. After the defeat of Communism there was an opportunity to reconstruct Nationalism and bring fundamental reforms and hold elections in the country, however civil war occurred, after which a fundamentalist Taliban regime in 2001 took the opportunity to make renovations in the country. (Marinova, 2007). There is no severe sectarian conflict to consider a potential challenge in Afghanistan, while in most multi-ethnic societies, ethnic cleavage originates from religious beliefs, races, and cultural diversities; however, in Afghanistan there has never been a cleavage based on race or religious beliefs (Fox, 2000; Kadayifci, 2008).

Since the beginning of state and nation-building in 1880, ethnic roles have not been a significant topic in Pashtun-centric governments. The autocratic and dictatorship systems in Afghan history gave non-Pashtun ethnicities the chance to demand their equal rights. Admittedly, endeavours for a pluralistic and peaceful society are necessary to define the ethnic values and dissolve the puzzle of power considered the primary hurdle for an expansive Nationalism. Identifying non-Pashtun identities would culminate in bringing close convergence among ethnicities. Although in previous regimes where Pashtuns had authority, the Pashtuns themselves, whose identity was divided between *Ghelzai* and *Durrani*, and their tribal identity, were saved. However, this does not mean that the Pashtun rulers did not assimilate other ethnicities or restrict them from politics (Balkhi, 2020; Richard, 1989). One of the critiques levelled at U.S. state-building in Afghanistan after 2001 was the support for the centrality of authority, and a constitution legitimised by an enforced identity (Jawan, 2012).

The political rivalries over power have been a big hurdle for the sense of oneness in Afghanistan in supporting nation-building in the country. However, a single ethnic dictatorship strongly influenced the process of both state-building and nation-building. Amir Abdul Rahman, a modernist king of Afghanistan from 1880-1901, codified the state with ethnic notions that, except for Pashtuns, marginalised other minorities from political power, a policy that could only create a secessionist movement. In Abdul Rahman's regime, Pashtuns were considered an admirable tribe, more than other ethnic groups; the administration also determined salaries only for Pashtun men and women (Balkhi, 2020, pp. 84 - 85).

5.6.   Roots of Enforced Nationalism that Led to Sub-nationalism.

Except for Habibullah Kalakani (1929 - November 1929), Babrak Karmal (1979 - 1986), Burhanuddin Rabbani (1992 - 2001), the Tajik rulers and the rest, Pashtuns had held political power and been in leadership. During the reign of Pashtuns in Afghanistan, especially since Abdul Rahman in 1880, Afghanistan and Afghan identity arose. According to Mr. Balkhi's (2020) findings, the *Afghan* concept was derived from one of the Arian Rulers (Ashefkan) (Asakan) who ruled in Kapisa and Kabul, then added *'Sta*n' the Persian word, which means *'the territory'* (Balkhi, 2020, p. 62 - 63). Afghan identity in Rahimi's

findings, however, means Pashtuns, that *Afghanistan* and *Afghan* both have ethnic affiliations, though the great Khurasan, the historical name which changed to Afghanistan. Thereby Pashtun elites are affiliated with other ethnicities in (concerning other nationalities in the country created a potential pitfall in the political and social arena (Rahimi, 2017, p. 240 - 241). In Afghanistan, power and ethnic diversity are a chronically tangible challenge; unconditional nation-building and state-building without considering conflict over power in Afghanistan mean certifying a historical fallacy. Coercion in the political history of Afghanistan is an inevitable broad-based ethnic policy. The ethnic mindset and attitudes toward the rest of the ethnicities by Pashtuns are still tangible. The single ethnic autocratic regime nurtured stereotypes against other nationalities in Afghanistan that nevertheless exist today and emphasise the centrality of power predominantly by Pashtuns. The Pashtuns' authority and dynasty would break if the system changed from a centralised to a decentralised one (Thier, 2020). The Nuristan inhabitants during Abdul Rahman's reign were converted forcefully to Islam, as well as the rest of the ethnics such as the Hazara Shiite Muslims, who were despised and dispossessed of their lands and enslaved, and the rest of the ethnics such as Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen brutally brought under control, and their rich lands distributed to Pashtun settlers (Hymen, 2002, pp. 307).

In most multicultural states, the conflict has been over the division of resources, development inequalities, "internal colonialism," and religious diversity (Blauner, 1969). However, in Afghanistan there is no evidence to illustrate the functional aspects of internal colonialism in the country which it may go through and find the specific reasons for. Still, the regional stereotype where fundamental developments functioned asymmetrically has been evident in recent years. The previous pages mentioned that politicians, even in higher positions, feel responsible for serving their people and the region first, which is the flaw of the centralised political system in the country. Centralisation, on the one hand, is considered a hurdle for democracy. On the other hand, democracy and the centralised systems are not concepts that are compatible with each other, though democracy gives rights to the people to decide upon their political destiny; however, the vertical structure of power interrupts the democratic process by fallacy (Gomes, 2018).

5.7. The Dilemma of Decentralisation of Political Power in Afghanistan

Political decentralisation means transferring authority and responsibility to local authorities. Participatory governance is a priority issue for today's modern world and has excellent international support and advocacy, predominantly in participatory governance, which is the outcome of a decentralised system; citizens' voices play a crucial role in government decision-making (Rugo, 2013). Decentralisation can happen in different areas; however, political decentralisation is incumbent on multi-ethnic societies. In pluralistic states, the infinity of power has resulted in political decay. Current decentralisation studies in most multi-ethnic communities in African countries show that it is usually poised to settle down the ethnic cleavage over political power. From two perspectives, decentralisation seems urgent for Afghanistan - from a developmental perspective that would lead to good governance, stability and pave the way for solving the identity dilemma. Secondly, its necessity and purpose are for the strengthening of democracy and sustainable peace, where all efforts towards democracy in a centralised system have been in vain. Moreover, a centralised system from the governance perspective is remarkably weak and unresponsive (Muhammad, 2016). The good governance perspective, democratic decentralisation has five key characteristics.

According to Guido Bertucci. 'They are (i) legal reforms to devolve power not only to local governments but also to local communities (giving decision making power and authority to them especially in matters of socio-politico-economic local concern); (ii) strengthened local governments' capacity (in terms of finance, personnel, organisation structures, management systems, data and information, facilities, networks, etc.), (iii) local government accountability to both citizens and central government, transparency, and responsiveness; (iv)enhancing the role of civil society both at the local level and national levels (practicing what we prefer to call horizontal decentralisation) and (v) showing both intent and progress in improving the quality of life of the local people (i.e., enhancing people's access to public goods and service.' (Bertucci, n.d).

The goal of democratic decentralisation is to find the exact ways of having a democratic government so that people ought to have a strong influence on political decision-making and follow up if the government violates the social contract. Some critics argue that democracy is not a suitable model for post-conflict states, though it legitimises the war

legacies and lacks the necessary institutional infrastructure (Sadr, 2021). Democratic Decentralisation creates a smoothing relationship between the government and the masses. Convergency among government and the people guarantees the legitimacy of the regime and states; with due attention to mentioned points, Decentralisation is posed as the preconditions for democratisation (Chatterjee, 2014). Yet, the first and essential step for Democracy is to consider the Afghan society and its compatibility with modern phenomenon's such as Democracy. From a sociological perspective, the Afghan society is a decentralised society with a different attitude towards the government. Still, assemblies have efficiency in settling down the conflicts by feudal in remote areas (Barry & Samuel, 2009). Democracy and its promotion have a dependency on the political system; it is the political system that nurtures the roots of the democratic values in society and promotes the participation of people in political events and the government's right decision. Also, in an ethnic community, power always creates pitfalls if it is not divided democratically; thereby, the criteria of Democracy do not meet in the unitary system of administration. A Single ethnic dictatorship in a centralised political system emerged that still goes in tandem with falsifying the identity and making a fake nationalism that does not reflect and encompass the rest of ethnic's values is the outcome ethnicities in Afghanistan with an autocratic approach under the name of Democracy leads the country to a further miserable future and would keep the government at bay from development and modernity either. After the Bonn agreement, the 2004 constitution for Afghanistan was a replicate of the past autocratic centralised system. Although the 2004 constitution proposed village council, district council, and giving authority to people for mayoral elections, which would strengthen the local governance, it did not function by the government (Thier, 2020; Qayam, 2012).

The centralisation of power and ruling of Afghanistan by Pashtuns throughout history and excluding the rest of ethnics from the political arena is an inevitable fact in Afghanistan, which has triggered a broad discussion about changing the structure of power in the country. However, twenty years of state-building after 2001 and surge of aid for developments, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and efforts toward Democracy did not end helpful for the country, loss of opportunity for Afghanistan sacrificed by the ethnic vision and sympathy to the Taliban. The decay of Democracy in the country has numerous reasons; however, one of the inevitable vicious phenomena has been ethnic vision toward Democracy and election. According to Sadr (2021), that owes the term from Huntington's theory of democratisation,

it was the fourth wave of democratisation in Afghanistan; however, due to the centralisation of power, the re-emergence of the Taliban, and fundamentalism influence in the country, Democracy stayed fledgling, did not institutionalise in the country (Sadr, 2021, pp, 59). As aforementioned, the society of Afghanistan typically has a decentralised form. Decentralised form means, that ethnicities have their heroes; Hazara's patriotist who even gives sacrifice for the whole country, never can be the pride of Pashtun or Uzbek, but only for Hazaras; exact deliberation match also about the other ethnics too. As well as factions have been the same formed based on the ethnicities, there is no multiethnic supported faction in Afghanistan that absorb and encompass all nationalities; the most populous factions' focal point is their ethnicities benefits. Without a doubt, this is the outcome of the centrality of power in the country (Sadr, 2020, pp. 90).

5.8. Summary

The primary unifying factor among Afghanistan's ethnic groups has historically been religious nationalism with religion often serving as rallying points against the government. Islamic nationalism has also been a powerful motivator in resisting foreign interventions. For instance, Jihad has provided a strong spiritual incentive that transcends ethnic divisions, enabling all groups to unite under banners of religion to defend the country. Religious nationals has consistently brought together divers ethnicities whenever external forces have threatened Afghanistan. However, nationalism promoted by authoritarian regimes, centered around Afghan-Pashtun identity, has been significantly influenced by religious nationalism. On the one hand, religion has acted as a barrier to discussing ethnic diversity and values; on the other hand, in a religious society, religious identity often takes precedence over ethnic or cultural identity. For traditional, poorly educated and impoverished communities, immediate livelihood concerns outweigh the recognition of appreciation of ethnic identity and its associated issues. Although regimes have attempted to unify the nation around Afghan nationalism, two major challenges have fuelled sub-nationalism in the country. First, there is a deeply rooted historical legacy of marginalization and discrimination against non-Pashtun ethnic group. Second, political power struggles persist, with each ethnic group believe that their internal unity is essential to securing political influence within the country.

It is essential to have a system that strengthens the unity of nationalities and resolves the dilemma of political power and the identical issue. Based on evidence and literature

regarding Afghanistan, the country needs a political system that guarantees the role of ethnicities to at least could be able to choose their governor, mayor, and the local officials. Lack of trust among the government and ethnicities; instantly, in a province where Uzbeks are in majority, the central government appoints a Pashtun or a Hazara governor, the people cannot trust him as the governor. The reliable governor for the people considers the one who is the inhabitant of the province or off the people. Therefore, the only way to lead the country toward peace and tranquillity and lead to a stable Afghanistan is to share political power. Multi-ethnic societies have chosen Federal system, which might convince the nationalities in the country. However, regarding Federalism, much negativity and delusion exist in the community. First, Federalism might increase the ethnic rifts in the local domain; society is not ready for such a developed system; Federalism would nurture warlordism in the sub-regions. Despite the mentioned delusion and concerns regarding the federal system and its nonefficiency for Afghanistan, however, vice-versa Federalism could be a fair model for controlling and resolving the political power dilemma and guaranteeing peace in the country.

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country; conflict over power in a centralised system has led the country to be at bay from development and stability, most notably harmed to have an inclusive nationalism. Although beardedness and instability of the country have different aspects, however, on the whole, the country suffered from a chronic challenge which is power and ethnicity. The political power and ethnicity puzzle in the main text illustrated that in what content concentration of power in Afghanistan from the early formation of the modern state has been destructive and led the country toward instability. The authoritarian regimes from two perspectives harmed the country; first, torturing, restricting, enslaving, assimilating identities, and dictating single ethnic values to the whole nationalities ultimately sub-nationalism versus nationalism emerged in the country. Secondly, the centralised political system legacy has been a fragile state; Democracy with a centralised system has not been compatible as Afghanistan experienced the authoritarian system throughout history. Political parties and elites strived for the institutionalisation of Democracy; however, not come to fruition relatively preserved a single ethnic authority in the country. Therefore, the irreconcilability of Democracy with a centralised political system defamed the democratic values in the country.

The only element that united ethnicities in Afghanistan is the religious nationalism or religion often united the mass versus the government. As well as, the Islamic Nationalism has been the most influential incentive against foreign interventions such as Jihad had been a robust spiritual incentive that all ethnicities in the pivot of religion stood up for defending the country without distinction, without an ethnic vision, and religious nationalism united the nationalities whenever the foreign factor invaded the country. At the same time, there is no cleavage based on ethnicity or language diversity among people in the country.

Due to the mosaic nature of the Afghan society and conflict of power, it is essential to have a system that strengthens the unity of nationalities and resolves the dilemma of power and the identical issue. Based on evidence and literature regarding Afghanistan, the country needs a political system that guarantees the role of the people to at least mass could be able to choose their governor, mayor, and the local officials in general. Another factor that created Sub-nationalism in Afghanistan is the lack of trust among the government and ethnicities; instantly, in a province where Uzbeks are in majority, the central government appoints a Pashtun or a Hazara the governor of them, the people cannot trust him as the governor. The reliable governor for the people considers the one who is the inhabitant of the province or the region. Therefore, the only way to lead the country to peace and tranquillity and lead to a stable Afghanistan is to decentralise the political system by choosing the Federal as the political system. Admittedly numerous multi-ethnic societies have chosen Federal, which is a decent system for Afghanistan too. However, regarding Federalism, much negativity and delusion exist in the community. First, Federalism might increase the ethnic rifts in the local domain; society is not ready for such a developed system; Federalism would nurture warlordism in the sub-regions. Despite the mentioned delusion and concerns regarding the federal system and its nonefficiency for Afghan society, vice-versa Federalism could be a fair model for controlling and resolving the political power dilemma and guaranteeing peace in the country.

Chapter VI: The U.S. State-building Failure in Afghanistan

6.1. Introduction

After toppling the Taliban regime (2001) in Afghanistan by the U.S., state-building, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and ensuring peace begin in the country. Within a long period of the war, the country was vehemently ruined by the civil war and the Taliban's retrogressive tyrant regime. State-building was considered the country's key element; most Afghan refugees returned home from neighbouring countries and pinned hopes for a secure and prosperous Afghanistan. However, step by step, all hopes for peace and prosperity changed to despair; though one way, or another, the Taliban remerged and dispatched a new approach, such as suicide attacks, bomb blasting in public among the masses, terrorising key political figures, annihilating schools, clinics, and entire fundamental projects. With such an inhuman approach created a big challenge for the country which ultimately by 15 August 2021 took the power and state collapsed. Afghanistan before 15 August 2021 was still a fragile country with no stable government to overcome challenges such as poverty and the war against terrorism. Thus, a vicious phenomenon, fundamentalism, and the Taliban had been a significant challenge in the country, in addition poverty was another segment of state weakness which was the outcome of the continual war in the country that hampered the development process and economy for several decades; however, fundamentalism is not the outcome of a weak economy. As Basil Siddique quotes Fukuyama: "Poverty is not the proximate cause of terrorism: The organisers of the 9/11 terror plot came from relatively well-off backgrounds instantly Bin Laden, however, became recruits of violent Islamism not in their native countries" (Sediqiue, 2012; Maria, 2015).

Except for the U.S. intervention purpose in Afghanistan, the aid for strengthening a united and democratic state was a crucial opportunity for building a state with democratic values in the country. The main factor that the US support for "state-building" failed in Afghanistan was the weakness and disability of the central government structure that except for the capitals, could not expand it authority in the rural areas. By other saying failure basic roots can be affiliate to governance system. One of the hurdles that lead the state-building process to fail was terrorism and influence of fundamentalist circles in the society, that

society both urban and rural were influenced by them. The hegemonic sources of the Taliban and ISIS religious institutions have actively strived to change minds through institutions which, in reality, none of them has Islamic bases in the society. These institutions (Darul Hefaz, Darul Madarass, Darul Ulum, School of Haqnia, and Masques) are considered the hegemonic resources of fundamentalism and Taliban and terrorism in Afghanistan, which have actively defamed democracy, democratic values and government that strengthened the customary law influence in the society. However institutionally, corruption vehemently influenced and has been a big hurdle for relative development and religious institutions ideologically changed people's mindsets concerning government and democracy. The concerning point of this chapter is to find out is it called state building after 2001? Why the state remained fragile and collapsed, and how the hegemonic resource of fundamentalism influenced the failure of state-building?

6.2. Bonn Accords

With the cooperation of the Northern Alliance, the U.S. removed the Taliban from Afghanistan two months after the 9/11 incident. The U.S. delegation led by State Department Special Envoy for Afghanistan, James Dobbins and White House delegate Zalmay Khalilzad, an American Afghan who had had multilateral negotiations and consulted with different political figures and Afghanistan beneficiary states representatives. The U.S. envoy James Dobbins consulted Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Turkey, India, and Germany to manage a transitional government in Afghanistan, and at the same time, the political elites of Afghanistan separately considered establishing an interim, successful government. China and Japan had a rather lower profile, as observers. Each country was following its own interest: Iran desired a settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan, wanting to return the two million civil war Afghan refugees who had sought asylum in Iran, as well as to restrict and reduce at least the opium that travelled through Iran on its way to European markets. Pakistan as a neighbouring country would be satisfied with a Pashtun, though Pakistan could easily subordinate Pashtuns in Afghanistan through Pakistan's Pashtuns and Pashtunwali code. Pervez Musharraf, the president of Pakistan's, concern regarding the Northern Alliance authority in Afghanistan that India had a close relationship with the national front and the Northern Alliance which he saw as a threat to Pakistan. Musharraf's

demand was closely listened to by the U.S., who, though, Pakistan then considered a key ally in combatting terrorism and cooperating in the annihilation of the Taliban regime and as the neighbouring country to Afghanistan, where it could play a crucial role. The UN team led by Lakhdar Brahimi which included Ashraf Ghani, and Barnet Rubin the New York University Professor and Afghanistan specialist. The Northern Alliance or United Front board led by Younis Qanuni, the Peshawar group led by Pir Syed Ahmed Gilani, the Cyprus group led by Homayun Jarir and a delegation on behalf of the supporters of Zahir Shah, the former king who was known for the Rome movement held the Bonn conference. Taliban and Hizb-e-Islami Hekmatyar were banned from participating in this meeting.

The conference was scheduled for seven days, however, extended by the UN request to 10 days. Within ten days of negotiations and consultations with delegates groups, Dobbins requested them to introduce candidates. The Rome group King Zahir team introduced Abdul Satar Sirat, however, according to James Dobbin's Karzai requested by Abdullah Abdullah that the leader of the Interim government must be a Pashtun, as well as the Pakistani officials also emphasised Karzai. Although Yunus Qanuni as the head of the interim government board in Bonn, was not satisfied with the decision to dismantle the national front, the transitional government led by Rabbani in Kabul, however Qanuni and Rabbani pressured by Dobbins and Zalmay Khalilzad to admit the decision what has been taken in Bonn. According to Field "Khalilzad spoke directly to Northern Alliance warlords Dostum and Fahim as well as Rabbani. Dobbins held a press conference to focus attention and pressure on Rabbani. In the background, Dobbins told the press that Rabbani was "dragging his feet" in order to buy time in favour of the Northern Alliance. The following day, after being informed that the alliance would receive no more Russian support unless they accepted the "deal on the table," Qanooni submitted the cabinet nominations to Brahimi" (Filed & Ahmed, 2011, P. 8).

Younis Qanuni refused to compromise and objected to the division of ministries, Qanuni was stressed for keeping three key ministries for Northern Alliance (Ministry of Defence, Interior, and Foreign Affairs) however, the mediation and insist of Mohammad Javad Zarif the then-Iran foreign minister convinced Qanuni to accept the decision. Before holding the Bonn conference, Burhanuddin Rabbani, advised and emphasised to Yunus Qanuni, that in case of any hurdle and pressure by foreign factors, quit the meeting, and not necessarily negotiate with them, though Afghanistan then had its representative in the UN

as well as, based on Peshawar accord the Rabbani regime had legitimacy and insisted that the accord ought to be signed under the government control inside Afghanistan. Ultimately, they reached an agreement among two candidates, Hamid Karzai was selected as leader of the transitional government. The Bonn agreement specified three fundamental issues for the transitional government until pave the ground for the election: First established a peaceful transfer of political power, transition political power in Afghanistan has always been bloody and non-peaceful. Second, specified the competence and responsibilities of the leadership of the interim government. Third, the armed groups that were against the Taliban or were armed in the past were brought under the leadership of the transitional government. To maintain the authority of the transitional government, the local commanders who were armed and were considered a threat to the transitional government were disarmed under the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR). (Gossman, 2009; Lambah, 2006).

The main objectives of this conference was to establish a legitimate transitional government ending war and tragedy in Afghanistan, establishing national reconciliation, lasting peace and stability, respect for human rights in this country, establishing independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, recognising the right of the people of Afghanistan to choose their political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, the presence of various parties and groups, social justice, the selection of members and the formation of a Loya Jirga (Afghanistan's Grand assembly), composed of ethnic elders and the members of the Afghan parliament and formation of the National Army (Field & Ahmed, 2011).

6.3. The 2004 Constitutional Loja Jirga (Grand Assembly)

The Constitutional Loya Jirga adopted the 2004 Constitution, a centralised presidential system in which the president has nearly absolute authority, with resolutions that freedom of expression, women's rights, and the institutionalisation of democracy as fundamental components of the post-contract Bonn accord constitution. According to the Constitution, the President is in charge of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and exercises his competence in the executive, legislative and judicial fields. In accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, the president has two first and second vice presidents. The first vice President shall act in the absence of, resignation or death of

the President in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. In the absence of the First Vice-President, the president shall act in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. The President is elected by a majority of more than 50 per cent of votes.

Rahimi quotes Mr. Johanson as saying that centralised regimes have always been the challenges that have sustained fragile the state by inheriting from the previous regimes: identity, nationalism, state-building, the structure of the country's political and administrative institutions, legitimacy, language and culture, border with Pakistan, representation, centralisation, and decentralisation of power, remained as unresolved and controversial issue in all regimes in Afghanistan. Pashtuns often emphasise on central leadership and structure. Tajiks are seeking to share power, Uzbeks and Hazaras to recognise their identity and create mechanisms for local governance. The regimes have been the main factor in the failure of regimes in Afghanistan and regimes have passively acted over solving the rifts among the nationalities in the country. (Rahimi, 2020, p. 118).

6.4.   A Periodical Glance at U.S. Policy over Afghanistan

President George H. W Bush's policy over South Asia was only about competition with the Soviet Union, which eventually led to the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan. He believed that after the Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan would start a new chapter in its history, and peace would settle in the country. However, he called it an extraordinary triumph for the Afghan people, especially for "freedom fighters" Mujahideen. (Gawhari, Abuzar, 2009, Pp, 2-10).

On January 14, 1990, Bush sent a U.S. delegation to South Asia for the settlement of the war in Afghanistan. This was at the time when both superpowers came to the decision to cut off arms to opponents in the country. The Bush administration and Pakistan wanted to see the Communist regime toppled even Najibullah the then Communist president had to resign from his presidency. In contrast, the Soviet insistence was to keep Najibullah in power.

When Clinton took power in 1993, he was faced with a different situation in international spheres, especially in South Asia: The Cold War had ended, and he had to control and follow U.S. strategy in South Asia. However, since the withdrawal of the Soviet

Union from Afghanistan, Washington forgot the country. In the Clinton administration there was also no official policy about Afghanistan, rather it was "pipeline politics." Russia wanted to curb American project but later on "the vacuum in official relations was filled by the entrance on the scene of oil companies interested in the construction of pipelines through the Afghan territory controlled by the Taliban." (Basosi, Duccio, p. 137) ."Two gigantic projects were planned in the U.S. On the one hand, it supported the Unocal corporation in its bid to build a pipeline from Turkmenistan through the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan". The depth of U.S. strategy during the Clinton administration in Afghanistan was not specific. However, according to certain analysts, Clinton's period was America's holiday period, and U.S. foreign policy was not specified in South Asia; rather, it was the 9/11 incident that shook American strategists and politicians to step strongly against Al-Qaeda (Afghan Voice Agency, 2013).

6.5.   The U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan

The relationship between Bin Laden and Afghanistan begins during the period of jihad, when Osama participated in the war against the Soviet Union to recruit and strengthen jihad and later opened an office in Pakistan to carry out his work. After the fall of the Soviet Union and participation in the Afghan jihad, Bin Laden returned to Riyadh and worm welcomed by the Saudi government and the U.S. also applauded for his accomplishment, however, Bin Laden's relationship with Saudi Arabia and the U.S. broke down when in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait the Saudi government supported the U.S. standpoint regarding Kuwait and took action against Saddam. Thus, Bin Laden encouraged and nudged anti-Western extremism especially in the Middle East. Bin Laden's acquaintance with Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abd al-Azam, who had a past brotherhood ideology background in Egypt, crucially cooperated in Al-Qaeda's ideology expansion, Islamism and fundamentalism in the Middle East and abroad in Pakistan and Afghanistan too. Before 9/11 Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri organised attack to the U.S. Embassy in Sudan and Kenya. The 9/11 attack was organised from Afghanistan that Al-Qaeda led by Bin Laden took its responsibility (Bordas, 2014, pp. 129 - 134).

According to Barfield (2010) the unwillingness of Mullah Omar for Bin-Laden to be extradited to the U.S. was based on Pashtunwali principles which is called "*Melmastia*" which protects the mission even at the risk of life. The tribal vision of such an element involved the West in a year-long term in Afghanistan. (Barfield, 2010, p. 268).

On September 11, 2001, a series of suicide attacks was carried out by members of al-Qaeda in the U.S., most notably the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Two thousand nine hundred seventy-seven people lost their lives during the attacks. (Masud, Enver, 2008) The terrorist operation took place on U.S. soil, with various political, economic, security, and military consequences for the country and the international community. The nationalities of the hijackers were specified as fifteen Saudi nationals, two nationals of the United Arab Emirates, an Egyptian citizen, and a Lebanese citizen (The 9/11 commission). The UN Security Council resolution regarding the incident at the first stage was to authorise the establishment for six months of International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan to support the interim authority in the maintenance of security. The council unanimously adopted resolution (1386) 2001 and requested the member states to contribute and in case of taking part in an operation, the forces ought to work in close consultation with the interim government and Special Representative of Secretary-General Lakhdar Brahimi. (UN Security Council, 2001).

With the UN coordination after the 9/11 incident, president George W. Bush decided to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, regarding this mission allies supported the Bush administration decision. At the same time, the people of Afghanistan also were sick and tired of the tyrant and terrorist Emirate regime of the Taliban, however, resistance led by Ahmad Shah Masoud against the Taliban existed in Panjshir and some other areas. Ahmad Shah Masoud two days before 9/11 assassinated by two Arab terrorist in Northern part of Afghanistan Takhar province. The president Bush emphasised that "We know that true peace will only be achieved when we give the Afghan people the means to achieve their own aspirations," Mr. Bush said. "Peace will be achieved by helping Afghanistan develop its own stable government. Peace will be achieved by helping Afghanistan train and develop its own national army. And peace will be achieved through an education system for boys and girls which works" (New York Times, 2002).

The *War on Terror* operation by the U.S. in Afghanistan precisely was aimed at al-Qaeda's hotbed and the Taliban as the like-minded regime. Thus, Bush announced a global war on terrorism, chased al-Qaeda's top leaders, and bombing their nest by December 2001. Eventually, by May 2011, Osama, Al-Qaeda's leader, was found and killed by the U.S. Navy SEAL team in Abbottabad, a city near Peshawar, Pakistan (Asthappan, 2016).

All efforts toward counterinsurgency and peacekeeping by the world community in Afghanistan did not well manage strategically, the Karzai administration passively functioned to prevent the re-emergence of the Taliban. On the one hand, Karzai did not have experience in building institutions and governance system. However, on the other hand, he had working experience with the Taliban and had ethnic (Pashtun) ties with them. Therefore, the Karzai administration did not agree with the shift to counterinsurgency (Tellis, 2009). The Taliban, as a result of the weak policies of the Karzai administration, re-emerged in Afghanistan. The government did not recognise them as terrorists but instead called them "Dissatisfied Brothers." This strategy continued for more than a decade and ended with the sacrifice that none of the leaders paid, but innocent people. Considering this, the U.S. eloquently, in January 2013, told to Afghan delegation in Washington that the Taliban, after 2014, no longer would be the U.S. enemy even if they attacked Kabul. Unfortunately, it seems Washington and the rest world community realised that a massive amount of money had been spent on the military sector in Afghanistan, yet there is no commitment to stability in the country (Neumann, 2015). What consider a big hurdle against state-building in Afghanistan: fundamentalism, ethnic sympathy with the Taliban, and rampant corruption that paralysed the state institutionally.

Based on Brown University's findings, the cost of war in Afghanistan from October 2001 to April 2021 has been estimated at nearly $8 trillion dollars and 900,000 deaths; of course, parts of this money waged on strengthening and stabilising Afghanistan. (Kimbal, 2021).

6.6. ISAF and NATO in Afghanistan

ISAF is the UN-mandated decision posed in December 2001 in the Bonn agreement by the UN security council. The goal was to deploy international forces to support and assist the newly established Afghan government transitional authority and paving the way for a

secure environment (Stollenwerk, 2018). In August 2003, NATO undertook the command of ISAF and launched International Security Assistance Forces. First, the assumption was to strengthen institutions in the capital and focused on five crucial key pillars "Military Reform, Police Reform, Government Reform, Economic Reform, and Drug Growth Eradication." (Beljan, 2013).

The ISAF's military reform focal point was to educate and train the Afghan National Army and Police. Counterinsurgency and peacekeeping were the main goals of ISAF in Afghanistan. Training, advising the Afghan National Army, and siding them in counterinsurgency and neutralising insurgents' networks went in tandem with the other fundamental projects in the country. The definition of war by the ISAF in Afghanistan was so evident. According to US Army General David Mc Kiernan "The fact is that we are at war in Afghanistan. It's not peacekeeping. It's not stability operations. It's not humanitarian assistance, it's war" (Tuck, 2014).

In this war, NATO roughly lost its 3,500 soldiers for establishing a centralised rule state, elected leadership to encompass democratic values and emphasise on and the state that to be responsive for human rights. However, the ideal democracy of the U.S. and its allies did not materialise as they predicted and invested nearly 1 trillion dollars, the loss of 2,500 soldiers, in supporting and paving the way for democracy in Afghanistan (Witter, 2016). The reality of war for the U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan was quite clear; however, the supported government in Afghanistan had an obvious sympathy with the Taliban. There was no definition of 'war' and 'enemy' in the government as well as in the U.S. policy except for Al-Qaeda. Hamed Karzai called the Taliban 'brothers' and the U.S. that lead the operation in Afghanistan did not have definition out of the Taliban as did regarding Al-Qaeda. In general, one of the phenomena that the Taliban did not annihilate in Afghanistan was the weak approach of the government concerning the enemy (Sorkin, 2014).

6.7. Provincial Reconstruction Team

In August 2003 NATO took command of ISAF. Two months later, at the request of NATO, the UN Security Council issued Resolution (1510) for the expansion of ISAF out of Kabul, before that in November 2002 Karzai requested PRT, though the regional development was listed as a priority. (Balkhi, 2021, p. 335). Each NATO member covered

the provinces and based on UN rehabilitation policy functioned all across the country and expanded the PRT tasks. The PRTs small military unite that served in different developmental areas, however fundamentally served in three main area, reinforcement of and support of local authorities and legitimacy of the central government in provincial and district level, development of national, provincial, district and local governance as well as the structure. (Sigar, 2010).

According to UN resolution: "Stressing also the importance of extending central government authority to all parts of Afghanistan, of comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of all armed factions, and of security sector reform including reconstitution of the new Afghan National Army and Police, [The Council authorises the] expansion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force to allow it, as resources permit, to support the Afghan Transitional Authority and its successors in the maintenance of security in areas of Afghanistan outside of Kabul and its environs, so that the Afghan Authorities as well as the personnel of the United Nations and other international civilian personnel engaged, in particular, in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts, can operate in a secure environment, and to provide security assistance for the performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement". (Eronen, 2008).

According to Eronen's quotes from Robert M Cassidy the history PRT goes back to post- World War II that French did it under the programme of Administrative Specialisées (SAS) in Algeria as well as the U.S. did it under the name of Civil Operation and Rural Development Support in Vietnam. The focal point of these programmes however in Afghanistan is a bit broad and extensive covering Rural and regional rehabilitation as well from the membership perspective is also large number of countries hold this responsibility that by 2002 from "Joint Regional Team" developed to "Provisional Reconstruction Team" which begin activities from Gardiz, Kunduz and Bamiyan and after a while based on activities its name changed to "Provincial Reconstruction Team". In order to take into account, equal development, the provinces and reconstruction were selected based on ethnicity. Kunduz Northern Tajik, Bamiyan the central Hazara, and Gardiz admittedly Pashtuns. High-ranking officials of ISAF, NATO and Afghan ministers refined by the PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC) co-chaired by Afghan the minister of Interior and the Commander of ISAF which include other Afghan ministers, NATO, United Nations

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), EU representative and ambassadors by 2004 established the ESC to provide plan and oversight of PRTs missions.

The dysfunctionality of the local governance in terms of service delivery, providing welfare and lack of an organised master plan for urban and rural development, as well as lack of justice are inevitable challenges in the local areas. Additionally, the low salary, weak leadership, illiteracy of employees, insufficient training in the local administration were the factors that exacerbated the extent of the corruption. Although trainings and capacitating of employees by many non-governmental organisations NGO in different bureaucratic area and sector happened, but the corrupt and non-responsive circle basically influenced the rests. "While using Afghan institutions, such as representative bodies and the media to check corruption can mitigate some abuses, absent a legal ability to compel compliance and to investigate abuses, there is only so far that public opinion and moral authority can go to 'reining in' recalcitrant officials".

The PRT co-responsibility and activity was providing facilities in rural areas, where there was considered lack of fundamental needs (schools, clinics, bridges, hospitals, and some public interest projects such as water wells) renovation of school buildings and distribution of stationery to schools, as well as renovation of public building or clinics which considered the basic and fundamental need of rural areas supported often by PRT. However, insurgency, corruption as well as warlords restricted the PRT activities. Corruption as the vicious phenomenon plagued the government precisely the military sectors and weakened the government. Weak administration and lack of rule of law lead to undermine the state. However, regarding the PRT multimillion projects and corruption according to Daniel R. Green (2007):

"In the course of supporting the Government of Afghanistan, U.S. military units, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), and District Support Teams have often unwittingly fostered corruption through their hiring practices, contracting methods, and partnership strategies. It was not uncommon, during the early years of PRTs, for example, for Coalition Forces to turn to local government officials, interpreters, and Afghan Security Forces for recommendations with respect to development projects, contractors, and building locations". (Green, 2007).

Corruption has questioned ISAF's activities in Afghanistan. The lack of careful attention and planning of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in the construction projects, caused the contractors to not perform projects with better quality and standard. On the other hand, the central government were reluctant to take stand against the corruption, this emboldened the corrupt local officials too.

6.8.   The Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT)

Development projects and strengthening local institutions from the perspective of good governance, and the capacity for building institutions were PRT tasks across the country. However, the OMLT team's area of activity was to strengthen and empower the Afghan National Army forces, which were jointly operating against the Taliban. One of Afghanistan's most important needs was a strong, professional army to have the ability to combat terrorism with modern military equipment.

The OMLT team had four training phases that NATO specifically has Edud within Kandak (battalion). The first phase of training and preparation of soldiers. In the first phase, each nation was responsible for training of their OMLTs based on OMLT handbook, sequentially, the OMLT training often standardised by NATO and distributed the following subjects. Such as mission familiarisation, weapons qualifications, first aid, mine awareness, improvised explosive Device (IED), rules of engagement, law of war, driver training and handling of equipment. In the phase two was urban operation, Joint Multinational Readiness Canter (JMRC), base defence, cordon and search. (Haug, 2009, pp. 50-55) Phase three was a three-day course regarding the operational situation in the ground which it was mandatory to all NATO member countries to know step by step the mission pre operation course and trainings. Phase four training was for 30 days, and its purpose was to transition from one team to the next team and counter-insurgency procedure. In this phase, according to Afghanistan cultural sensitiveness also instructed to the OMLTs. After the mentioned phase and sequential training to member state's OMLT team. This training was instructed to the Afghan National Army too).

The capacitating and military training fundamentally focUSed on the ANA, though the responsibility of the ANA was broader than Afghan National Police (ANP) and the

Police had poorly trained rather than the ANA until 2008. Afterwards, the police in different areas (anti-crises unite, fast respond unit) trained and gained the independent operation ability. As much insurgency was exacerbated in the country, different special forces were established in ANP and ANA for combat, however the police section suffered of corruption, lack of operational coordination with international troops in operation fields. The same challenge exists regarding the ANA the lack of coordination in counterinsurgency in the country that often lack of incoordination caused massive casualties in police and National Army.

The Afghan security forces had enough equipment and trained by NATO member states and were capable of fighting terrorism. What was perceived a weakness was the way of combating terrorism and the influence of political factors on the war. The political disunity fundamentally caused the army's weakness. Furthermore, the army had no independent operations, though the military operations according to the constitutions under the supervision of the commander chief, the president. Instantly both Karzai and Ghani banned night raids on the Taliban which according to senior commanders local and ISAF commanders the night operations were the most subversive to the Taliban and "an essential part of our operations". Karzai listened to 2000 thousand sent Pashtuns elders by the Taliban to lobby ban night operations. One of the winning policies of the Taliban was to sending inhabitants to the government and complain about war crime and civilian casualties, till the human right organisations put pressure on the government for civilian casualties. (Rodriguez, 2023; Clark & Rahim, 2011).

6.9.   Barack H. Obama's Policy over Afghanistan

Barack H. Obama's administration policy over Afghanistan was tangible in two parts: al-Qaeda hot bed annihilation in the region and strengthening of Afghan National Army. Obama did not take into account the Taliban its enemy, rather they were following al-Qaeda's centres specifically al-Qaeda's leader who was found near a military camp in Abbottabad, Pakistan; in a country that has nurtured and supported terrorism and fundamentalism in the region. Expectation of Afghan government according to the second amendment of Strategic Agreement with the U.S. that both countries should fight against terrorism. The U.S. believed that today al Qaeda does not exist in Afghanistan, the war against the Taliban is basically not a U.S. task. In other words, according to Dr. Rangin

Spanta Afghan foreign minister in Karzai cabinet, Obama did not want to put pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting the Taliban and terrorism in Afghanistan. So far, the Afghan government has always criticised U.S. administrations that rather than fighting against the Taliban, the root of this ideology and source of them should be dismantled. (Spanta, Rangin, 2018, pp. 39 - 42) The core of Obama's strategy in Afghanistan was about defeating of al-Qaeda, not the Taliban. After 2011 the U.S. mission was obviously done with al-Qaeda, the security transitional process started from 2011 and was scheduled to end in 2014 when the Afghan National Security got responsibility for the missions, independently launching operations in the country, although in emergency American troops could support Afghan troops. (BBC Farsi, 2014)

The strategic partnership of Afghanistan and the U.S. eloquently emphasised that "Recognising the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the U.S., signed May 2, 2012, and reaffirming that, as recognised in that Agreement, the Parties are committed to strengthen long-term strategic cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including ensuring peace, security, and stability; strengthening state institutions; supporting Afghanistan's long-term economic and social development; and encouraging regional cooperation". (The White House, 2010, pp. 19 - 22)

Obama in the beginning of his presidency endeavoured to increase the number of American troops in Afghanistan to defeat terrorism and be supportive of training of the Afghan National Army and Police, noting that "The Parties shall continue to foster close cooperation to strengthen security and stability in Afghanistan, counter-terrorism, contribute to regional and international peace and stability, and enhance the ability of Afghanistan to deter internal and external threats against its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, national unity, and its constitutional order" (Agreement Between the U.S. of America and Afghanistan, 2012). Otherwise mutually agreed, the U.S. forces shall not conduct combat operations in Afghanistan. In 2013 the Taliban office opened in Doha, Qatar, and held a press conference that the U.S. was optimistic about the opening of the Taliban office, saying that it would begin long-delayed peace talks with the Taliban (Mehmood, 2020). However, Karzai was reluctant about the reasonability of this development, emphasising that if any talk about peace is drafted, it must be along Afghan-owned and Afghan-led negotiations.

Karzai's relationship with Obama's administration at the end of his presidency was in turmoil and anarchy. Although Karzai did not object to the U.S.-led security and defence agreement, he has set a condition for signing it. The start of a peace process with the Taliban and the complete and immediate suspension of the operation of foreign forces on Afghan homes at night was an important prerequisite for Karzai, who did not want to foster apprehension of people against the government and the U.S. (Dawi, 2014).

The next important part of the strategic agreement with the U.S. was related to conducting American prisons for the Afghan government. Most people were apprehensive about getting this responsibility from the Afghan government because the government would release the terrorists from the dungeons. Indeed, the government eventually released inmates from Bagram prison which brought the anger of Americans and fostered the distrust between the U.S. and Afghan administrations. As mentioned before, Karzai wanted to bring restrictions on U.S. operations on Afghan homes, but the U.S. was also reluctant to follow Karzai's preconditions for signing the strategic partnership agreement (Infoplease, 2017)

The presidential election of Afghanistan in 2014 was with problems and wide fraudulence: after two terms, Ashraf Ghani was declared the winner of the election, despite the hesitation about the election commission that indicated manipulation and fraud in favour of a specific team. President Obama's then Secretary of State John Kerry solved the conundrum by suggesting a coalition government between Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani.

International treaties are commonplace to regulate relations between countries and international organisations. One of the treaties now increasingly used in relations between countries are strategic partnerships. Afghanistan, after the September 11, 2001, incident, and the formation of a new government in the country, made a lot of treaties with regional and trans-regional countries. One of these treaties is the strategic alliance between the U.S. and Afghanistan. The treaty has been divided into eight parts and 34 articles regulating relations between the two countries, from 2014 to the end of 2024 in the economic, social, political and military sectors. The third part of the strategic alliance refers to the regulation of military relations between the two countries through a bilateral security agreement. Bilateral Security Agreement September 30,'2014 (D'Souza, 2014).

In international law, the Bilateral Security Agreement refers to formal contracts between the two countries, on the basis of which the parties mutually agreed to provide support and military assistance in the event of a crisis and war. The Taliban, like the most powerful enemy of the U.S. in Afghanistan, have called the agreement a colonial treaty, signing it for the duration of the war in Afghanistan, and repeated their determination to continue the war until the departure of the last foreign soldier from Afghanistan. Therefore, in the current circumstances, Karzai was determined to oppose the agreement, providing a relative basis for the Taliban's satisfaction and providing a space for continued talks and, ultimately, peace-making in the country. Karzai has repeatedly insisted that he would not sign an agreement until the U.S. has provided a compromise with the Taliban. As the heads of the National Unity Government Ghani and Abdullah faced a of huge burden of challenges they inherited from the Karzai administration, including the challenge regarding the Bilateral Strategic Agreement with the U.S., namely that the previous administration was reluctant to sign it, even though this was a key question and tough decision and that most people were optimistic to come to an agreement with the Americans. Karzai did not have enough argument about not signing the Strategic Partnership with the U.S. Ostensibly, Karzai's opposition was only about the night operations of American troops on personal homes which in some cases led to the death of innocent people, and this was the red line for Karzai.

Ghani during his election campaign elucidated and harangued that in case of winning the election, he would sign the Strategic Agreement with the U.S. What is questionable is that: The Bilateral Strategic Agreement – in addition to strengthening the Afghan security forces and institutions in the country – it may include other points that are relevant to the U.S. on a regional basis. Both countries agreed on the regional threat that if Afghanistan's neighbour countries interfered in its inner issues, the U.S. would support Afghanistan to prevent these attempts. In order for Afghanistan having cooperative and friendly relationship with its neighbours, "with a view to the importance of regional cooperation for the consolidation of security in the region, the parties shall undertake earnest cooperation with the countries of the region, regional organisations, the United Nations, and other international organisation, on mutually recognised threats, including terrorist networks, organised crime; narcotics, trafficking; and money laundering" (US Department of State, 2012). However, the U.S. according to some Afghan Parliament members, violated the

agreement, by independently conducting operations in different areas which have been restricted in the agreement. They also claim that the U.S. does not want to fight against the Taliban and only conducts operations against those terrorist groups who are specifically threatening the U.S. in different parts of Afghanistan. The second amendment of the agreement mentioned that the U.S. would fight against terrorism, but the Taliban as a terrorist group has not been annihilated. Most of the critics believed that the U.S. would strongly step to remove the Taliban and ISIS from the country and that the hotbed of terrorism would be dismantled, but the purpose of U.S. military operations against terrorism refers to complementary operations to support the operation of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces against terrorism, not to independently conduct operations against terrorism.

U.S. fiscal support in terms of strengthening the Afghan National Defence Force in the agreement text has not been specified: it is unclear how much the U.S. would per year spend on military reinforcement until 2024. Another point which grabbed the media's attention was the clerics of the country that ever supported the agreement. Most people criticised the Washington-Kabul agreement due to the Taliban attack escalation and to Afghan soldiers' sacrifice in the country: most of the provinces and districts fell into the hands of the Taliban which brought criticism by the people, especially from the Parliament members. After the fall of Kunduz Province to the Taliban, Hamed Karzai the ex-president of Afghanistan believed that this agreement would not ensure security in the country, even parts of Afghanistan should be under the control of the Taliban because they are also from Afghanistan soil. (DW, 2014)

According to the critics, Washington-Kabul agreement did not bring change in the security situation. Instead, Taliban and ISIS dominance was enhanced in the country. Another part of the war against the Taliban is the lack of a specific definition from them: neither Karzai, nor Ghani could define the Taliban as a terrorist group to the world to the people of Afghanistan. They always bowed to the Taliban, because they are Pashtuns and for having the same ethnical background. After 2014, the Ghani administration tried to argue that Pakistan should stop supporting the Taliban and ISIS in Afghanistan, but diplomacy and lobbying in the United Nations and the U.S. against Pakistan under Obama was not so effective.

In the strategic agreement between Kabul and Washington, the commitment to defend Afghanistan against foreign aggression has been severely under the pressure and insistence of Afghan officials, including President Karzai. Yet the practical mechanism of this defence is not clear but ambiguous. Afghanistan is interested in defining Pakistan as a threat, something that does not seem acceptable to Americans.

6.10. Western Critics of Obama's Policy in Afghanistan

Great powers use a set of power tools to follow their goals in order to control the actors in different regions or wherever they see benefits. One of the tools abused by large powers is terrorism. In fact, great powers use the concept of terrorism as a political object in order to discredit their opponents, and in particular the challenges that they have created to maintain their domination and hegemony. Pakistan is one of the countries that has used the Taliban for ages in two fronts: against Afghanistan and India, and against other regional powers in South Asia who also use the Taliban against the U.S. and the Afghan government, like Iran and Russia. Russia supports the Taliban in Afghanistan, so the U.S. in peace negotiations with the Taliban should not underestimate Moscow and to show its role in region. (Wahdatyar, 2017). The Western and Eastern criticism on Obama's strategy in Afghanistan after 2014 was its lack of focus on Pakistan's, Iran's, and Russia's involvement in supporting terrorism. However, the U.S., from Republicans to Democrats, has always been supporting human rights, democracy and the fight against terrorism in the Middle East and South Asia, but in general they have not shown so great interest to institutionalise democracy or peace. Iran and Russia interfere somehow in different issues of relationship between Afghanistan and the U.S. The Taliban, ISIS and other terrorist groups have been one of the tools and strategies for advancing the goals of Russia, Iran, and Pakistan in Afghanistan (Afghan Voice Agency, 2013).

6.11. Resolute Support Mission

After a dozen years of international military combat forces presence in Afghanistan, which consider the U.S.' longest war in history, the Afghan National Security Assistance Forces in late 2015 took the whole security responsibility of the country. Resolute Support mission in January 2015 replaced the International Security Assistance Forces mission to continue its cooperation and counterpart with the Afghan National Armed forces. The

resolute support mission trained with the high standard, the Afghan National forces to combat terrorism professionally, and also financially contributed to Afghan National Security Forces and military institutions that it was the profound NATO's commitment to the Afghan government (Salman, Tezel, Bayramog, Meral, Akyildiz & Eryilmaz, 2016). The RSM challenge was the local irregular militias that called local Afghan police. The government wanted to control the areas through (ALP) that were not trained in military tactics and principles but extraordinarily supported the regular Afghan troops. (Schreer & Waldman, 2019). Although both Ghani and Karzai administrations did not have an offensive policy against the Taliban, however, *Arbaki* (ALP), as a supportive armed group, strongly sided with the Afghan National Army and Police. Such as (ALP), the Americans already experienced in Iraq, and it was a grassroots initiative against al-Qaeda that they armed locals in Iraq and named Sons of Iraq. They were para-military and familiar with the geography of conflict in Iraq, remarkably resolving the complexity of fighting for American troops (Abed & Jensen, 2010).

6.12. Fundamental Deficiency of Government after 2001

There are abundant explicit and implicit writings about the concept of state-building, which is genuinely an inter-disciplinary topic encompassing social science, international relations, political studies, economics, security studies, and developmental studies. Most of the time, state-building is considered an interventionist strategy that bureaucratically strengthens or restores institutions, in general, to activate the apparatus of a state as the U.S. did in Iraq (Zoe, 2007). However, the tangible outcome of state-building in Afghanistan by the Western world was forming a centralised system that in a multi-ethnic society such as Afghanistan is still a problematic issue. From the governance perspective, the centralised system needs to be more cooperative to foster and pave the way for development. On the contrary, centralised state building and a rentier economy never allow capacities to rise, though the state has a massive dependency on foreign aid (Jennifer, 2019). The U.S.'s early understanding was that establishing a stable government with some semblance of law, functioning security forces, court, knowledgeable bureaucracy with a centralised structure might create coherence in a war-torn country. The U.S. policymakers' assumption was that establishing an overwhelming military dominance in the country and subduing all sources

of power there could introduce democracy, and democratic patterns in the country. However, the country's political and social needs did not crystallise before initiating the state-building process and democratisation. According to Acemoglu "In viewing nation-building as a top-down, "state-first" process, US policymakers were following a venerable tradition in political science. The assumption is that if you can establish overwhelming military dominance over a territory and subdue all other power sources, you can then impose your will. Yet in most places, this theory is only half right, at best; and in Afghanistan, it was dead wrong". (Acemoglu, 2021).

To illustrate the state-building challenges in Afghanistan, the three crucial inner factors that disrupted and hindered the process in the country should be explained as the insufficiencies of government in Afghanistan almost since 1950. First, non-control over religious institutions easily changed into the hegemonic resource of terrorism and the Taliban that threatened the government for almost 30 years. The second was the lack of transparency in foreign aid and the state as the (only pebble on the beach), meaning that the leadership could not ensure trust between the state and the people (Edwards, 2011). The third has been considered the weak governance system that except for the capital the rural areas remained outside even minor development and state hegemony. This issue is not limited to only a single regime; however, throughout history, rural areas continued in their traditional way of life.

According to Rubin (1992) "Like the elites of other rentier states, the old regime was hardly accountable to the state's citizens: there was little taxation and little representation. Its policies were aimed at expanding the state and the modern sector it controlled and at redistributing some of its revenues to obtain loyalty through patron-client relations. These policies created a bureaucratic class that lived (or aspired to live) in Kabul. This city developed upper and middle classes with Westernised or semi-Westernised lifestyles. The state's development policies did not improve the standard of living of the rural masses or provide them with a reliable and just administration". (Rubin, 1992, p. 82).

Thus, the unbalanced development has two challenges. The first challenge to consider is the rough terrain of the country that needs enormous fiscal capability to build schools, clinics, and cater for living situations. The second has been the corrupt, irresponsive government that often endeavoured to convince the capital's inhabitants only for political

purposes. The rural areas, however, have been self-sufficient. Absence of interference by the government throughout history caused segregation of the central government from a high proportion of citizens and rural communities. Rural deprivation and living based on livestock shortages in rural development programmes in Afghanistan caused a cultural gap in the administrative sense between rural and urban people. Thirdly rural areas remained unaware of the patterns and elements upon which state formation is based, and also political culture, nationalism, and social responsibility. Thus, Afghanistan experts and researchers often suggest a decentralised system to cover the rural areas and allow the rural dwellers to find affinity with the government one way or another. (Zhang, Yu, Zhang, 2019).

Religious Institutions as the Hegemonic Sources of Fundamentalism:

The hegemonic sources of terrorism have always been active and manipulated in Afghan society through preaching in madrasas and religious institutions under the government's dominion, yet against the government. These institutions were launched in Pakistan during the Jihad in 1979 against the Soviet Union, predominantly during the Taliban regime between 1994 - 2001 (Aljezeera, 2014). Thus, a lack of strategy in the government and absence of control of religious institutions, such as the mosques *Darul Hefaz, Darul madrasa[1]* which preaches Islamic fundamentalism to the people, plunged the state into the quagmire of instability. Many pupils get lessons on religion in these institutions, and are easily manipulated and overwhelmed by terrorist agendas. There is abundant evidence that most pupils either come from Pakistan or graduate from these institutions hired by the Taliban inside Afghanistan (Fuller, 1991).

Fundamentalism in Afghanistan took root during the war against the Soviet Union, predominantly under the Taliban regime. Only madrasas[2] were legally open during their administration (Roy, 2002). As a result, these institutions became hegemonic resources of terrorism and fundamentalism in Afghanistan and their influence was underestimated by the regimes supported by the U.S. since 2001.

Since 2001 efforts to establish and institutionalise democracy have not succeeded over the past two decades. Indeed, the origins of its failure cause people apprehension as democratic phenomena are defamed by the Imam's (clerics) groups in the *madrasas* and other religious institutions that constantly preach to the people against democracy, in order

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[1] Religious institutions where pupils' study basic religious lessons.

to change minds. According to them, democracy would diminish Islamic values in society, whereas terrorism with the same narration and using the same argument slaughters people in some Islamic countries (Larson, 2011).

Fundamentalist circles in Afghanistan seek religious authority in political and social affairs, not marginalisation of religious patterns. They believe that the only effective view is their own, and the opinions of others are not justified from a religious perspective. Fundamentalists have a problem with the phenomenon of the state in terms and definitions based on today's patterns, in their opinion, every case should refer to religion. Thus, society and politics will be defined in a religious context. A kind of excessive insight and understanding of religion and religiosity, retrospection as a principle and its implementation in the modern era, has caused cultural and political disturbances as well as fragility in Islamic countries, especially Afghanistan. In other words, religion has become a phenomenon that negates and contends with the state with its present standards accepting only those values that have religious beliefs. Religion has an important role in Afghanistan's society 'and it is a part of the collective identity' but the religious approach in Afghanistan is different from developed Islamic countries. In fact it can be said that 'the religious worldview of the people of Afghanistan is different from the rest of the Islamic societies in the world that are illiterate' but are radical in Islamic beliefs.

Fundamentalism actually refers to the political history of the country of Afghanistan that has been attacked and invaded by foreigners many times. The only tool that has legitimised and supported the people's resistance has been religion, which within the concept of Jihad, defended and stood against inimical foreign nationalities. Jihad, in the course of history, became an anti-foreigner struggle in every respect and preached for the traditional society to defend the country from any alien factor. The resistance and Jihad preaching against foreign factors and defending the motherland misled and mistaught the traditional society, though. Still, society's vision of modern phenomena is preached by religious conservatives. There are different arguments regarding fundamentalism in Afghanistan; some authors consider social phenomena and ascribed fundamentalism to tribal vision; however, what is referred to as the bedrock of fundamentalism mainly in Afghanistan, according to Qaderi & Qasim (2021), comprises three distinct periods: the period of Jihad against the USSR; the disputes between rural people and urbanites; and the Islamic Revolution of Iran (which is one of the factors of fundamentalist intensification in

Afghanistan). However, the basic reason for fundamentalism and its influences is that people are deprived of literacy in the country. People admit and believe any narration related to religion. (Qaderi & Qasim, 2021, p. 11). Radical thinking was formed during the Jihad period, which society considered an Islamic society inheritance. However, Islamic texts were not written and interpreted to boost Islamic knowledge; religion has been an inherited phenomenon in Afghanistan with no wide understanding of Islam. These inherited Islamic values faced the Soviet intervention, they started a war of liberation to defend this heritage; however, the arrival of the Arabs in Afghanistan to support Jihad in Afghanistan made the platform more favourable for radicalism and more usable to encourage people against the Soviet invasion in which not only Saudi Arabia was involved recruiting warriors for deployment to Afghanistan, but also the U.S. of America, recruiting from Egypt, Sudan and Algeria. (Hoodbhoy, 2005. p. 15). Besides, Arab warriors exacerbated the fundamentalism in the region, 'Islamic schools such as the Deobandi schools had a fundamental role' in Afghanistan.

6.13. Supremacy of Law

Governance with the soft manipulative strategy and aspirations to the rule of law in the nation has not been seen in Afghan government bodies since 2001; authorities were accommodated only through military force. The Afghan society is ideologically governed by religious proxies such as clerics who are inclined towards retrogressive mentalities and who preach through the mosque to the people and thus rule minds. However, physical society is being governed by the government through military force. Among the solutions are, first, it is imperative to remove and eradicate economic hurdles, terrorism, and the fundamentalist influence of the society. The eradication of fundamentalism in Afghanistan is to structuralise religious practices and control religious institutions. As mentioned, to become a spiritual leader, or mullah one must meet specific academic criteria and competencies. One way or another, mosques and *mullahs* have been at the disposal of terrorism and fundamentalism. Such an offer could have freed society of the grasp of clerics who have little information and knowledge about the Islam of Peace, but are grounded in fundamentalism and regress to traditions of centuries ago for solving today's problems. In modern governance, institutions have a crucial role. This is where Muslim reformist scholars found compatibility between Islam and modernity regarding social issues and

institutions. They also believe in social progress and the institutionalisation of liberal elements: democracy, social justice, equality, human rights, freedom of thought, expression, education, science, and technology guarantee the development in Islamic countries. Ali Abd al Razig, concerning politics and governance, argues that "Islam is not against democracy and democratic institutions and values as Islam as brought and preached by the Prophet Muhammad was not concerned with the issue of politics and governance. He holds that Islam is a message and a religion and not a government and a state" (Yusuf & Ali, 2012). Democracy is a principle available in Islam, though they are mutually compatible in the concept of collective decisions being taken by the masses for their political destiny, which in Islamic literature means *Shura*[2]. Muslim scholars clarified and solved the puzzle of a false belief from Islam that created a phobia rooted in Islam by fundamentalist and terrorist groups in Afghanistan and some Islamic countries (Hofmann, 2004). The compatibility of today's phenomena in the name of modernity has its rationality in Islamic principles; however, the article aims not to find the compatibility of Islam with modernity. The most prevalent efforts for state-building in a failed state involved in a war against terrorism need to strengthen military capabilities, hard power, and ways of manipulation and how to institute a broad hegemony. (Sadek, 1998).

The second challenge that blunted the state-building process in Afghanistan is corruption, which has been a crucial challenge from the very beginning of a new phase of state-building after 2001. In the last two decades, corruption penetrated institutions in all parts of the state. Although numerous funds were allocated for corruption eradication by USID and some European countries' anti-corruption measures, the population was affected by unemployment lack of an economic sector and absence of entrepreneurship to create jobs (Singh, 2016). The only option that people want to make a living is to work in the government. Tor achieve a government post, bribing has become an inevitable custom in society. There is no other lucrative organisation to work for, except the government. Clientelism erupts dramatically in government institutions, which often appoint staff to government positions either based on political relations or family affiliations. In other words, it can be said that this is a new pattern of nepotism (Dharmavarapu, 2015).

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[2] Shura or consultation is an instrument for reconstruction and reform, mentioned in the Qur'an and suggested in the practices of the Prophet and his Companions Muhammad (PBUH) Generally, it is a tool used by Muslim scholars and rulers or caliphs in arriving a decision or ruling on particular matters or issues relating to the affairs of Muslims.

In 2015, the World Bank rated Afghanistan the fifth most impoverished country globally, reflecting that unemployment and corruption adversely affect the country and entrepreneurs. Lack of bureaucracy and technology also paved the way for corruption. Afghanistan has a significant dependency on foreign aid, and this inflow of aids contributed to widespread corruption (Mark & Brick, 2010). Since 2001 under state-building, reconstructions, development, democratisation, and the tremendous amount of money donated for Afghanistan, all donations somewhat looted by external and internal sectors in the country (Spenta, 2017).

From the state-building term, multicultural states for well-being and good governance must first create mutual trust between government and ethnics and strive for nationalism to encompass and observe the values of all minorities in the country. Equalities and justice among ethnics strengthen the political culture and pave the way for peaceful integration. State-building in the liberal context in a hindered and war-torn Islamic country is a challenging process. To know these hurdles, first, there needs to be a sociological outlook on society to recognize and precisely understand the acceptance of modern phenomena. Traditional society is a retrogressive society sunk in rough religious beliefs incompatible with new patterns (Zammin, 2018). According to Ibn Khaldun, the *rural people and urban sentiment* differ; Rurales are united with sentiment against unknown patterns, but urban is not. Except for divine-related patterns, traditional society does not readily accept modern ways such as democracy, freedom, and civil rights. Introducing these patterns in traditional societies needs strong relationships with people by providing welfare and economic growth.

The third problem is the method of governance that caused to failed of democracy and state-building in Afghanistan; the failed rule of law, economic injustice, lack of reform, unemployment pressure, and most importantly, non-transparent election; but criticism levelled for imposing democracy in Afghanistan by the U.S. that people did not know democratic patterns at the beginning (Enterline & Greig, 2008). Since 2001, Afghan society governed by two powers: visible power, the government with organised Army, and invisible power, which is the religion (Murtazashivil, 2016). The visible power ought to be government but demonising the Taliban and sanctifying them in natural tendency was one of the causes that terrorism remained in the country. Admittedly, forces or hard power is not the only way of governing to expand sovereignty in a state; hard power instead is a threat

to unlawfulness as well as maintaining independence, but to develop authority only with military options is a wrong deliberation. Priorities of governance today are different and softer than before, and statesmanship is based on a democratic approach and sociological recognition. In Afghanistan, the primary hegemonic source of the government is the only military institutions, instead of having cultural, social, and political hegemonic sources references in the society; people militarily are under the control of the government, but ideally under the control of Islamic fundamentalism, religious instructions and religious circles whereas, in retarded communities, religion is a supportive phenomenon for the people to come along with their life (Forouzan & Alishahi, 2018).

6.14. Rentier Economy

There are different definitions of rentier states, however, there are two prominent definitions. Rentier economy refers to governments that provide their expenditures by external factors, not having sufficient domestic income. Rentier economy refers to states whose resources are provided by natural resources; thus, both are called rentier states. The rentier economy corrupts the state if not well managed as Afghanistan instantly often enjoyed rent, however, never could qualify the economic and development sector to create long term opportunity to run the economy of the state. Rentierism in Afghanistan has had a negative consequence too. The rent was spent on political rivalries versus each other, instead of being used for development and state capacity building (Ahmadian & Farzli, 2011). According to Shruke "First, the massive aid-and-war economy created a rentier-state condition. Easy money discouraged the government from generating local capacity and slowed the development of a sustainable, Afghan-owned order. This feature in turn collided with aspirations for a democratic polity. With foreign patrons providing vital economic and military resources, the government had few incentives to develop long-term bargains with its own people" (Shruke, 2013).

Since 1956 the Afghanistan has had 40% of foreign support in divers area. The military sector was supported by the Soviet Union, the U.S. gave support in education, the economy, agriculture, and engineering, as well as France and West Germany in law-making and technology. In fact, enough support, but the history of rentierism and Afghanistan as an aid-independent state goes back two centuries, coinciding with the reigns of Durrani rulers such as Shah Shuja (1809-1818) and Dost Mohamad Khan, who then they enjoyed the

extensive British stipend. However, just at the beginning of the twentieth century the competitive support between major powers prolonged the rentier state by supporting and stabilising of internal fragility in Afghanistan as Abdul Rahman (1880-1901) received nearly 1.2 million Indian rupees to consolidate the government and for internal control and through that aid he could enforce tax on the people. The Musahiban regimes (1929-1978) also enjoyed British aid that enabled the re-establishment of the army. The Daud regime (1973-1977) as well as the Communist regime were extremely dependent on foreign aid (Isar, 2014).

Table 1: Domestic Revenue and National Expenditure (1973 - 2005)

Year	Total (million Afs)	Domestic Revenue (% of total expenditure)
1973	11,318	63
1977	24,326	61
1979	30,173	52
1982	42,112	71
2004 - 05	41,952	31

Source: (Rubin 2002, 113 & 297), (World Bank 2005a, 7-8)

One of the main reasons that Afghanistan has become a rent-consuming state is an internal factor in the first step, and it can be said that unearned revenue without taxes and labour corrupted the political figures, as well as the state system, and was enjoyed by opportunist circles. Individually the political figures have also always attempted to gain foreign financial and political support to dominate and force their political rivals to succumb and to maintain domestic political authority; however, sequentially, with each up and down in political areas, the coming of a new regime has destroyed the relative infrastructure of all controls, and each administration has demanded foreign aid which it was accustomed to receive and support its regime by means of foreign relations and support from external factors. Political rivalries and ethnic divisions in Afghanistan have led the government to demand rent and lobby for foreign aid to be granted. Although the political structure in Afghanistan has been flawed, competition has been based only on political authority and ethnic domination in the political area. Thus, despite deficiencies in terms of law, institutional areas, autocracy and shortfalls of rationale and bureaucracy, the political factions and individuals have endeavoured to maintain political authority and have reached

out to outside resources to maintain the political domain. Internal rivalries with an ethnic core have made Afghanistan always dependent on foreign aid.

According to their origin, rents can be divided into different groups such as economic, political, social, and informational rents :

1. *Political rent:* the formation of political rents is one of the consequences of political corruption in any society, and whenever the government and powerful political parties decide on and distribute the sources of wealth and power, in doing so, they discriminate between different individuals and groups of society, and in fact, political influencers intend to give a privilege to a particular person or group by taking competitors out of the field to facilitate this.

2. *Social rent:* Having certain privileges that are not available to them outside of certain people's individual qualifications and inherent merits is considered social rent. Social rents indicate that ineligible individuals or groups enjoy social privileges they do not deserve and they lead to wealth accumulation among a small number of people. Social inclusion allowances takes place in various forms. Sometimes, people get opportunities by taking advantage of their jobs, sometimes by having kinship relationships or being in a particular organisation or group, or sometimes by political influence in passing certain laws that have general applicability and can create social endpoints for some people, such as roads, factories, dams, and other things that lead to a rise in land prices.

3. *Informational rent:* Early and exclusive access to economic information in the field of commercial 'monetary' 'foreign exchange' 'stock market' 'finance' and development plans is the origin of one of the most important types of rents called informational rent. This means that some individuals with early acquisition of various information about the impending changes in laws and regulations, new policies and decisions, reforms in certain areas and comprehensive urban maps use this information for their own personal benefit and achieve great wealth. This clever access to the right information itself leads to unhealthy economic competition in the capital market.

For 20 years, the West's efforts to preserve democracy in Afghanistan failed with a rentier economy, however, and the government in Afghanistan did not take advantage of Western aid and also did not inherit a sovereign, accountable government. As the previous chapter clarified the roots of state-building failure and corruption within the state that spoiled the democracy and any modern pattern with a historical lineage, however, another part considered significant in the field of state-building in Afghanistan is "rentier state building" and a rentier state and democracy.

Despite efforts to build capacity and enablement of the state institution, and the bureaucratisation and strengthening of key institutions to support democracy in the country, however, the country needed a fair responsible management of aid to change a functional state, and reverse the rentier economy state approach, making changes to an autocratic regime because the nation does not pay taxes and the government does not fully consider itself responsible to the nation. Furthermore, there is weak commitment regarding the social contract between the state and the nation. As Ibrahimi states: "Rentier states derive most of their income from rents rather than taxes and citizens. This practice gives citizens little leverage to hold the government accountable and enter into a 'social contract', on the one hand, and turn the state into a network of actors who aim to rule through new patrimonial and clientele systems, on the other. Some of the weakest rentier states are predatory states" (Ibrahimi, 2019, p. 42). Democratisation and preservation of democratic patterns and values through rentierism is a vain attempt, as Verkoren & Kamphuis (2013) quote from Khan that "trying to turn rentier states into Western-style democracies is futile because the structure of the economy creates strong incentives for patronage-based rule. This is not only because of the predominance of rents but also because informal economic activities (not taxed) make up a major part of the economy in many developing countries. In some cases, introducing institutions from a liberal market democracy might even destroy delicate balances of power among elites and lead to violent internal conflict" (Verkoren & Kamphuis, 2013, p. 508).

6.15. Summary

The U.S.'s strategic relations with Afghanistan go back to the Jihad against the Soviet Union ensured by Pakistan that the Mujahideen group began a Jihad. Pakistan served as a channel between the Mujahideen and the U.S. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union the U.S. was cut off from the Mujaheddin and did not support the government of Burhanuddin

Rabbani. However, the Americans were brought to Afghanistan by the 9/11 attack and planned to suppress Al-Qaeda. The Taliban, as a terrorist group such as Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, was not suppressed by the U.S. as expected. The Taliban was reinforced as a threat by Pakistan. The Western state-building process in Afghanistan faced many challenges that can be divided into two parts. Afghanistan's internal and external challenges influenced state-building in many ways. NATO and ISAF began rebuilding in various areas. Key and important ministries were established, and different institutions strengthened and activated to pave the way for peace and stability, for institutionalisation of modern patterns such as democracy. Institutions for elections, which played an important role in Afghanistan's destiny supported and supervised as the initial task in the country. In addition to U.S. assistance, non-NATO cooperation was also focused on Afghanistan, where Japan as an Asian country was boosting it within the agricultural sector and various areas. Efforts were made to build a government in Afghanistan, and huge amounts of money were spent by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams to build institutions and public needs. But the question that has already been posed has a common response among most researchers: besides the structural weaknesses of the state 'widespread corruption' 'fundamentalism' and 'tribal approaches' are the main causes of the fragility and collapse of the post-2001 state. Each of these factors has paralysed parts of government and society and existed as a major obstacle. After 2001 and what the state-building process impacted and destroyed from within, widespread corruption within institutions weakened the foundations of the state. On the other hand, tribalism and competition for political power increased the fragility of the state and exacerbated the tension. The tribalist and ethnic outlooks were very clear as was the fact that there was no specific definition of the Taliban as a terrorist group, which was the main hurdle in the government's way.

Another part of the challenge of state-building in Afghanistan was the lack of implementation and introduction of the law. Except for capitals, traditional law was preferred to civil law in rural areas, and disputes were often settled on the basis of traditional law practices. The law was not introduced to the people as a fundamental principle by the government for introducing the constitution and social order. Although law enforcement in the capitals and rural areas had varied not only since 2001, in previous governments, there had always been a flaw that ruled and concentrated power in the city. The sources of conventional and traditional law hegemony persisted, and a dichotomy between the

surroundings and the city was created. On the other hand, after the defeat of the Taliban, with the exception of the tribal chief, the traditional nobility among the people and irresponsible armed commanders in the rural areas had authority and resolved the people's conflicts and quarrels.

Chapter VII: The Doha Peace Accord and State-collapse

7.1. Introduction

The U.S. of America's presence in Afghanistan had strategic goals and Afghanistan has been geopolitically important for major hegemonies since the distant past, and from time to time major powers have been trying to use Afghanistan strategically. For this reason, foreign factors as a hurdle to state-building in Afghanistan and rentier governments and dependent on foreign countries are mentioned. However, the U.S. presence and the cooperation of Western countries to Afghanistan was an important opportunity for real state-building in Afghanistan, but the opportunity in the first step was lost due to ethnic thought whose roots have been generally discussed in previous chapters. The great powers made efforts with costly, broad policy strategies to maintain their hegemony everywhere and ensure their own interests. The issue of terrorism for the U.S. became a top priority after the 9/11 event. The initial attempt by the U.S. was to avenge the American people and eradicate terrorism and its supporters. As the only remaining superpower of the bipolar system the U.S. won the support of other actors and allied countries and invaded Afghanistan for revenge and overthrow of the Taliban regime and suppression of Al-Qaeda, entering a geostrategic region. The predictions were often such that with the arrival of the U.S. and the overthrow of the Taliban, Afghanistan would not be exposed to terrorist and retrogressive groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. However, ostensibly despite all efforts toward the annihilation of terrorism, the gradual growth of the Taliban was not important to the U.S. After 2014, the U.S. administration announced that the U.S. would not attack the Taliban unless there was no threat to U.S. security. According to Tapper (2011), Joe Biden, the Obama administration vice president also emphasised that "the Taliban per se is not our enemy". (Tapper, 2011). This decision was made by the U.S. when the Taliban was growing and enjoying regional cooperation from Pakistan and Iran, but on the other hand, such a hasty decision by the U.S. against the Taliban proved the U.S. presence in Afghanistan was not for the sake of only state-building, but also had deep geopolitical aspects. This was a time when members of Al-Qaeda were not present in Afghanistan – the leader of Al-Qaeda had been killed in Pakistan, yet the Taliban was not recognised as an enemy- 'the Taliban was conditionally recognised as an enemy if they posed a threat to American national

interests. In this case, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan does not seem to be anything other than a fundamentally geopolitical goal.

The decisions and the reduction of the U.S. military forces from Afghanistan year by year, rejecting combat against the Taliban conditionally gave hope for the Taliban, and simultaneously demoralised the Afghan government and the military. There was a strong belief that upon the U.S. cutting ministries' salaries, and withdrawal from the country, the government would definitely face collapse and failure which ultimately occurred on 15th August 2021.

The U.S. left Afghanistan after the longest war on terror under the Doha agreement whereas day by day terrorism and fundamentalism were growing and surrounding the government. The process of reducing U.S. forces in Afghanistan began after the killing of Bin Laden, and the Obama administration then reported a reduction in the U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan to Afghan officials and media. Following that, the Donald Trump administration was reluctant to waste further time and money on the Afghan case and the Trump-led Doha talks were more focused on intra-Afghan talks. The withdrawal of the U.S. troops based on the Doha Accord and the Taliban's reoccupation of Afghanistan annihilated any relative achievements that had been made and established during almost 20 years in the country. To clarify the mentioned Doha Accord content, and illustrate the mistakes surrounding the U.S. withdrawal, however, what is the content of the Doha Accord? Can the Doha Accord be seen as the deliberate surrender of power to the Taliban by the U.S.? Where are the roots of state collapse after the U.S. withdrawal? Also, this chapter opens another aspect of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan demonstrating that the "Rimland and Heartland" theory is still an efficient theory in U.S. South Asia foreign policy. This theory shows that the U.S. did not invade Afghanistan solely for state-building and for suppressing the 9/11 perpetrators, rather the 20 years of the U.S. presence in South Asia had geoeconomics and geostrategic purposes too.

7.2. Doha Accord

The Doha "Peace agreement" between the U.S. of America and the Taliban is a multi-dimensional topic to research. Nevertheless, apart from the Doha peace process, it is

essential to elucidate the key mistakes made by the U.S. in Afghanistan that have a link to the failure of the state. However, the U.S. with whatever reason for its presence in Afghanistan, began state-building in the country and established a top-down administration system. Top-down state-building means institutions formed and strengthened, step by step introducing democracy by holding elections, strengthening women's rights, emphasising human rights, and other democratic patterns,, such as supporting civil society, jurisdiction, and law enforcement. Within roughly twenty years of supporting the government the U.S. spent huge amounts of money and aid for building and reconstructing the country. However, on one hand, the fragility of the state was the origin of its passive structure, on the other hand, corruption raged in the government precisely in the military sector weakening the morality of defense forces in the lower level of the military against the Taliban and terrorism (Claske, 2010). The two sides negotiated on ceasefire, withdrawal of foreign forces, intra-Afghan negotiations, and counterterrorism assurance, however, why did the negotiations fail, and how did the Taliban use from false negotiation policy to their goal?

False negotiation theory: Negotiations between the parties to the conflict are often based on a common thought, mutual interest and disagreement, denial of each other, and an honest dialogue. False negotiation, however, means that the parties are not honest in it and use it as an opportunity for the next steps. The sincere negotiation is the art of reaching a peace agreement by actors who are truly ready to end a conflict, however, false negotiation is the art of not reaching an agreement. On the other hand, the parties who do not intend to make peace are trying to create twists in the negotiations though the negotiations will somehow be fruitless. Parties that want to conduct false negotiations have two distinct tactics. They use it to avoid consensus. First, it uses a delay tactic that prolongs the peace talks to break the negotiation process, in which case the false negotiator tries to prevent his opponent from profiting from the negotiations by creating a robust response to the opponent's proposal and avoiding allowing key issues to become part of the negotiation. In light of this theory, what the Taliban and the U.S. both parties did during the Doha Peace negotiations it was a false negotiation, none of them were honest in their promise. The Americans were not honest in peace talks with the Taliban and were aware of the attacks, and killings of the Taliban during the peace talks in Doha, however, the U.S. sought a respectable withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the Taliban sought an opportunity to put more pressure government to leave the country as soon as possible. As soon as negotiations

began, the Taliban launched a campaign to lure the Afghan people and the international community into believing that the Taliban had changed and tolerated, while the Taliban and their thoughts were clear, they had never stopped killing and fighting. Senior Taliban members ,including Sirajuddin Haqqani, describe their goals of negotiating with the US ، led by Trump in a letter to the New York Times that the Taliban used peace talks as well as pressure on the U.S. (Ibrahimi, 2022).

In intra-Afghan negotiations, the Taliban continued to play a false trick but neither reached a general agreement because neither the Taliban nor the Afghan government were sincerely prepared. The talks were under U.S. pressure but stalled without the slightest agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The parties agreed to a temporary ceasefire and insisted not to commit any form of violence against each other. The U.S. promised to decrease its troop presence from 10،000 to 8،600 in about 135 days, as well as if the Taliban abide by the Doha agreement and end their violence, the U.S. and all foreign forces including NATO will leave Afghanistan in about 14 months. The negotiations between the Taliban and Khalilzad reached 18 months and nine rounds of negotiations with the U.S., and the Taliban promised to sign a deal with the U.S. and following that begin inter-Afghan talks. Another issue that can be analysed is the combat against terrorism on Afghanistan's soil, where the Taliban assured the U.S. that they would cooperate with the U.S. regarding counterterrorism in the region and would not allow any terrorist activities on Afghanistan's soil to threaten U.S. national security. The peace agreement between the U.S. and the Taliban was signed by and Afghan American Khalilzad on behalf of the U.S. and Mullah Brother on behalf of the Taliban. Afghanistan's neighbouring countries and the U.S. political rivals supported the withdrawal of U.S. forces and NATO troops from the region. The next and hardest phase of negotiations was the intra-Afghan negotiations that the Taliban as the terrorist group within almost 20 year, took lives of many families beloved ones, thus, negotiation with the enemy who tortured, killed, suicide attacked was a big burden to the negotiation team. On March 20, 2020, the Afghan government formed an all-inclusive negotiating team consisting of past politicians, people's representatives, and civil society representatives, headed by Abdullah Abdullah, deployed to Qatar an Emirate-system country that hosted U.S. peace talk with the Taliban and the intra-Afghan peace talks. However, negotiations were deadlocked at each meeting, and the Taliban did not back down

from their positions. Their strong emphasis was primarily releasing their prisoners. They refused any of the Afghan government's conditions and escalated the violence and war.

The most important thing that was included in the Doha Agreement and which the Taliban had to implement was the guarantee that 'Afghanistan's territory should not be used against the U.S. and its allies', and the Taliban should not allow any group or individual to do so. It is also stated in another amendment of the accord that the Taliban should not cooperate with groups or those who threaten the security of the U.S. and its allies, whereas in al-Zawaheri in August, 2022 a drone strike killed people in Kabul the capital, what the U.S. Secretary of State called a "gross" violation at Doha by the Taliban. (Reuters, 2022). The Al-Qaeda network was responsible for the events of September 9/11 that gave the opportunity to American forces to annihilate the Taliban and follow their enemy's footsteps in the country. However, after signing the agreement with the U.S., the Taliban did not cut off their relationship with this terrorist group, predominantly the Haqani network, however before the Al-Zawaheri the UN Council reported that Al-Qaeda leaders were still present in Afghanistan and were protected by the Taliban (Browne & Hansler, 2020; Bateman, 2022).

According to the Accord, all U.S. and Western troops must quit Afghanistan by May 1, 2021, which caused a catastrophe for the country. The U.S. and its Western allies hedged their assessments regarding their withdrawal and peace agreement with the long-term enemy the Taliban, that after leaving the territory, the Taliban would take over the country. The Afghan military forces after the Doha Accord were the "monkey in the middle" of the geopolitical game of the U.S. plus regional hegemonies, Pakistan, Iran, India, and the fractious, unwise political leadership in Afghanistan. According to the Accord the Taliban prisoners sentenced for organising heinous bomb attacks, suicide attacks, killing civilians and soldiers, must be released from prison as one of the amendments promised to the Taliban in the accord:

"The U.S. is committed to starting to work immediately with all relevant sides on a plan to expeditiously release combat and political prisoners as a confidence-building measure with the coordination and approval of all relevant sides. Up to five thousand (5,000) prisoners of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the U.S. as a state and is known as the Taliban and up to one thousand (1,000) prisoners of the other side will be released by March 10, 2020, the first day of intra-Afghan negotiations, which

corresponds to Rajab 15, 1441 on the Hijri Lunar calendar and Hoot 20, 1398 on the Hijri Solar calendar. The relevant sides have the goal of releasing all the remaining prisoners over the subsequent three months. The U.S. commits to completing this goal. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the U.S. as a state and is known as the Taliban commits that its released prisoners will be committed to the responsibilities mentioned in this agreement so that they will not pose a threat to the security of the U.S. and its allies." (Maizland, 2020).

The Taliban committed to ensuring that the released prisoners would not pose a threat to the U.S., however, to the contrary, the released Taliban joined up again and fought against the government and fully strengthened the Taliban front. The released number of Taliban prisoners was not minimal nor underestimated. Although the day after the peace agreement between the Taliban and the U.S., Ghani rejected the exchange of the 5000 prisoners and eloquently stated that freeing of Taliban prisoners is not under the authority of America, but the authority of the Afghan government. He also asserted that releasing of 5000 Taliban prisoners would not be a pre-condition for Intra-Afghan talks with the Taliban. However on March 10 Ghani accepted releasing 1500 Taliban within two weeks and the conditional release of the remaining 3500 prisoners after Intra-Afghan talks. (American Journal of Law, 2020).

The decision of the U.S. and Western allies to withdraw has been condemned by experts from different perspectives that the agreement was not based on the strong commitment and documentation: "The Agreement, while signed, also has indicia sometimes associated with nonbinding commitments, such as the repeated use of "will" rather than "shall." The Joint Declaration uses similar language. While the Joint Declaration was reached between states, it is unsigned and titled a 'Declaration' rather than an 'Agreement'—further signals of [its] non-binding status". (American Journal of Law, 2020). First, the U.S. did not want to spend more money on Afghanistan, because it was hopeless, and the public opinion did not support it any more, nor could it achieve the geopolitical goal they had had. Trump's promise in the election campaign in 2006 was: "America first!" Americans withdrew from Iraq, and also Syria. (Kiely & Farley, 2021). The Doha Accord with the Taliban by the U.S. instead of being a peace accord, was rather an official recognition for a terrorist group in the region where ultimately Taliban took over the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul, on 15th August   and came to power. In other words,

recognition of the Taliban by the West can be considered annihilation of nearly 20 years of achievements in the country, and the Accord means giving the house key to the burglars. From a legal perspective the Accord had been condemned, as per the UN Security Council in Resolution 1267 and the Taliban was listed as an armed non-state and terrorist organisation, that by their evidence in 1994, had strikingly committed atrocities and human rights violations in Afghanistan (Tadjdini, 2021).

The foreign factor as the all-weather friend of the Taliban, the Pakistan Intelligence Service, used the opportunity to support the Taliban in gaining power and forming a state in Afghanistan to be friendly towards Pakistan and to ensure its interest. Since the Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan, Pakistan had been looking for the strategic depth that could only come through Pashtuns, and except for Pashtuns in Afghanistan, the rest of the ethnicities, Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara were considered hostile to Pakistan (Thomas, 2022).

7.3.   From Geopolitical Goals to State-building in Afghanistan

The U.S. war against terrorism in Afghanistan is often seen as more of an excuse than a substantive action against terrorism. Under various slogans, the U.S. deployed troops with both light and heavy weaponry, equipping and supporting them extensively in Afghanistan. However, the collapse of the Afghan state in 2021 and the Taliban's swift return to power demonstrated that the so-called "war on terror" largely remained a slogan. The U.S.'s efforts seemed to culminate only with the killing of Osman bin Laden. Similarly, there was an expectation that the U.S. would also eliminate Al-Qaeda and its ideological ally, the Taliban, which is recognized as a terrorist organizations. However, the U.S. officials often emphasise on war against Al-Qaeda only. Thus, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan for almost 20 years consider based on geopolitical perspective, rather to fight against terrorism. Afghanistan's role as a buffer state between Russia and the India ocean, as well as its potion as a transit route for goods from South Asia to Central Asia and Europe, has long held significance in geopolitical theories. This has med it a focal point for major powers through history, adding further complexity to U.S. in the region.

The historical identity of a nation is often shaped by its geography, ethnicity, shared culture, and languages. Afghanistan, frequently referred to as the heart of Asia by writers,

poets, and scholars owes much of its significance to its geo-economics and geo-strategic attributes. Its location has rendered it a key point of interest for regional and global powers, but this importance has also made it a perpetual target of imperial ambitions. Afghanistan's geopolitical relevance has been evident through history, serving as a battleground for imperia competition form Mongols and Persians to modern superpowers. Situated in South and Central Asia, Afghanistan's landlocked and historically, it served as a central hub in trade networks such as the Silk Road, further enhancing its importance. Hower its strategic value has come at a cost, as the country has consistently been embroiled in conflict driven by the aspirations of foreign powers. While many scholars highlights Afghanistan's geographic positions as am means for hegemonic nations to influence the Middle East and broader Asian regions. This perspective often ignores the agency of Afghanistan's people such as by the late 19th century. Afghanistan's role as a buffer state between the British and Russian Empires cemented its geopolitical importance. Yet this designation, rather than safeguarding its autonomy, subjected it to further external manipulations. Ultimately, while Afghanistan's geography has brough it immense significance, it has also subjected the nation the relentless exploitation and conflict, challenging the simplistic glorification of its strategic location.

Afghanistan's strategic position has historically made it a focal point of intense rivalry, particularly between Tsarist Russia and the British Empire. This rivalry culminated in a series of invasions, each reflecting the country's geo-strategic significance. Following the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919, Afghanistan secured its independence through the Rawalpindi Treaty, an achievement commemorated annually on August 19 as Independence Day.

Post-World War II, the collapse of British colonial dominance in the subcontinent shifted global power dynamics, with the Soviet Union emerging as a superpower alongside the United States. Although Afghanistan temporarily receded in geopolitical importance following Britain's withdrawal, it remained integral to the strategic considerations of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. This was evident during the Cold War, when the Western bloc, with Pakistan as a key U.S. ally, actively worked to counter Soviet influence in the region. Afghanistan re-entered global focus with the Soviet invasion of 1979, a turning point that dramatically altered the region's strategic balance and drew in both regional and global powers.

India, motivated by its rivalry with Pakistan, was an exceptional case as it aligned with the Soviet Union during this period. The Soviet invasion highlighted two critical issues. First, it was an unprecedented move that alarmed the West, particularly the United States, which perceived it as a betrayal of the détente policy. Second, it served as a warning to the Muslim world, as the U.S. feared the Soviets intended to establish a long-term presence in Afghanistan. In response, the U.S. rallied Muslim-majority allies, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan, to counter Soviet ambitions.

The invasion also heightened fears in China, as it coincided with Soviet support for Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. This dual threat led Beijing to suspect a broader Soviet strategy to encircle China, further intensifying regional tensions. Thus, the Soviet intervention not only reignited Afghanistan's geopolitical significance but also reshaped the strategic calculus of major powers across Asia and beyond.

American attention during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was primarily focused on the Persian Gulf. President Jimmy Carter identified the Soviet Union as a significant threat to the region's oil resources and global stability. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski warned that Afghanistan could become the Soviet Union's "Vietnam" and emphasized the need for Washington to formulate a robust counter-intervention strategy. This U.S. response to the Soviet invasion was multi-faceted, encompassing four key elements.

First, the Carter Doctrine warned the Soviets that any further expansion beyond Afghanistan, particularly toward the Persian Gulf, would provoke severe consequences, potentially including the use of nuclear weapons. Secondly, the U.S. launched a comprehensive diplomatic and propaganda campaign to isolate the Soviet Union internationally, denying it support for its actions in Afghanistan.

Third, recognizing that post-revolutionary Iran under Khomeini was an unreliable ally in the region, the U.S. turned to Pakistan as a strategic partner. Pakistan, in turn, saw this alliance as an opportunity to enhance its geo-strategic significance and align itself with a global hegemon. Pakistan became a key player in supporting the Mujahideen, who were fighting the Soviets with significant assistance from the U.S.

The fourth and most controversial aspect was the internationalization of jihad. The U.S., through the CIA and Pakistan's intelligence agency (ISI), actively recruited fighters

from across the Middle East and other Muslim countries, framing the conflict as a "holy war" for freedom. For the U.S., however, this was a strategic war rather than a religious one.

After the Soviet withdrawal and the subsequent collapse of Communism, Afghanistan faced continued turmoil. The last Communist regime, led by Najibullah Ahmadzai, resisted the Mujahideen for nearly two years before Kabul fell to forces led by Ahmad Shah Massoud. Massoud, renowned for his military prowess and resistance against both the Soviet Union and later the Taliban, was later honoured as Afghanistan's national hero by the Karzai administration post-2001. Afghanistan, however, plunged into instability once more following the Soviet withdrawal. The situation repeated itself decades later when the U.S.-backed "democratic" regime, established under the Doha Accord, capitulated to the Taliban. The Taliban, known for their adherence to tribal rather than humanitarian values, regained control despite nearly 20 years of U.S.-led efforts under the banner of the "War on Terror" and "Operation Enduring Freedom."

Critically, the U.S.'s War on Terror did not aim to eliminate terrorism broadly but focused specifically on dismantling Al-Qaeda as its primary strategic objective. The Taliban, responsible for the deaths of thousands of American and allied soldiers over two decades, were never officially designated a terrorist organization by the U.S., unlike Al-Qaeda. This discrepancy, along with the protracted U.S. presence in Afghanistan, has led many scholars to argue that the war was less about eradicating terrorism and more about advancing geopolitical objectives. The term "state-building," often used to describe U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, is seen by critics as a complex and ambiguous justification for these broader aims.

Afghanistan's domestic and international politics have gone through a long history with ups and downs, parallel with the objective, theoretical developments in the world of politics. At its inception, the Rimland Theory reflected a pluralistic approach to international relations, which gradually shifted toward a dichotomous worldview following World War II, as the global order divided into Eastern and Western blocs. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Communist vision of a global order further transformed the geopolitical landscape, giving rise to American unilateralism. Many American theorists subsequently dismissed alternative perspectives, framing U.S. hegemony as the inevitable trajectory for present and future global development.

Nicholas J. Spykman (1893–1943), a prominent geopolitical scholar, articulated the Rimland Theory in his 1942 work America's Strategy in World Politics. Spykman's ideas were partially a critique of Halford Mackinder's earlier Heartland Theory, presented in The Geographical Pivot of History. Mackinder emphasized the strategic importance of Eurasia's "Inner Crescent" (the Heartland), proposing that control over this region was central to global dominance. Spykman, however, redefined this area as the "Rimland" and argued that the peripheral coastal lands encircling Eurasia were of greater geopolitical significance.

The Rimland, as described by Spykman, includes parts of Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia, encompassing regions critical for U.S. security. Spykman posited that control over these areas would be pivotal to maintaining balance and preventing regional hegemony, as dominance in the Rimland would directly threaten U.S. interests. The Rimland, he argued, was more significant than the Heartland due to its population density, resource richness, and strategic position between the Heartland and major maritime routes.

Mackinder and Spykman diverged sharply in their assessments of geopolitical dynamics. Mackinder's theory emphasized the centrality of the Heartland, asserting that it was bordered by Eastern Europe, Siberia, the Arctic Ocean, and the Himalayas. He famously stated, "Who rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World Island; who rules the World Island commands the world." Mackinder considered Eurasia, Africa, and the surrounding seas as the "World Island," a critical geopolitical nexus. He advocated for policies that would ensure a balance of power in this region to prevent any single power from dominating the Heartland.

In contrast, Spykman viewed the Rimland as the "World Island" and argued that maritime power, rather than the Heartland's rail-centered strength, was the ultimate determinant of geopolitical control. He combined elements of Mackinder's theory with the naval-focused ideas of Alfred Thayer Mahan, underscoring the importance of sea power and its ability to influence coastal regions. Spykman contended that the Rimland served as a "debatable zone," vulnerable to control by both Heartland powers and maritime powers.

Spykman's reinterpretation of Mackinder's ideas shifted the focus to the geopolitical importance of regions such as Western Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia. These areas were viewed as vital zones for maintaining global stability and resisting

hegemonic ambitions. For Spykman, the Rimland's strategic advantage lay in its ability to integrate land-based and sea-based power, making it a critical region for U.S. policy and global strategy.

Mackinder's Heartland Theory, while influential, has faced critiques for its lack of applicability in certain historical contexts. For example, when Mackinder formulated his ideas, no single country had the capacity to dominate the Heartland or its surrounding regions. Nevertheless, his emphasis on Eastern Europe and Central Asia as key to controlling the Heartland continues to inform discussions on global power dynamics. Both Mackinder and Spykman contributed significantly to the evolution of geopolitical thought, with Spykman's Rimland Theory providing a more nuanced framework for understanding the interplay between land and maritime power in the modern world. (Garrity, 2013). The Rimland's economic significance, serving as a motor of the modern global economy, can be analysed through two primary components: its vast reserves of oil, gas, and other energy resources, and its substantial consumer market. As an energy-rich region, the Rimland occupies a pivotal role in both contemporary and future geopolitics. Equally important is the region's reliance on consumerism, as the demand for goods in these nations has created a highly competitive market among industrialized producers. Many oil-rich Rimland countries (with the notable exception of Iran) function primarily as one-stop economies, depending heavily on oil revenues while importing consumer goods, effectively channelling wealth back to industrialized nations.

In Zbigniew Brzezinski's influential 1997 book The Grand Chessboard, the Rimland is defined as encompassing Eurasia, bordered by the North Sea to the south of Russia, the Xinjiang province of China to the east, the Indian Ocean to the south, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. This expanse includes over 400 million inhabitants, divided into 25 politically diverse nation-states with significant ethnic and religious heterogeneity—factors that often contribute to regional instability. Brzezinski argued that the Rimland remains central in a world transitioning from American unipolar dominance to a multipolar, post-American era. The geopolitical contests of this era are not centred on democratization or state-building but revolve around energy resources, nuclear strategies, and territorial influence, further elevating the region's importance.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the bipolar system positioned the U.S. as the world's sole superpower. The resulting democratization of former Communist regimes in Central Asia and Eastern Europe shifted the geopolitical status quo, creating opportunities for the U.S. to operationalize Spykman's Rimland Theory. By leveraging its influence in the Rimland, the U.S. aimed to encircle the Heartland and extend its global reach. American military bases in Central Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe exemplify the continued relevance of the Rimland strategy in U.S. foreign policy. These bases, strategically situated around the Heartland, are not merely defensive outposts but instruments of influence aimed at maintaining dominance in a geopolitically vital region.

Contrary to the assumptions of some analysts following the Cold War, the Rimland strategy has not diminished in importance. While the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Heartland-adjacent states initially seemed to undermine the necessity of Rimland-focused strategies, Brzezinski revitalized its significance. In The Grand Chessboard, Brzezinski identified key pivot states within the Rimland—France, Germany, Russia, China, and India—as central to shaping the global order in the post-Soviet era. This conceptual shift prompted U.S. policymakers to reorient their strategies toward ensuring stability and influence in these regions.

Nicholas J. Spykman, a Yale University scholar and proponent of geopolitical theory, critiqued Mackinder's Heartland Theory for overemphasizing land power while neglecting the role of maritime strength. Building on Mackinder's ideas, Spykman formulated an "inhibition strategy" aimed at curbing the Soviet Union's expansion and consolidating U.S. influence in the Rimland. According to Spykman, control over the Rimland acted as a barrier against Heartland dominance and was best achieved through sea power, aligning with the naval capabilities of Rimland nations. This perspective later informed Brzezinski's geopolitical narrative, which emphasized the Rimland's critical function in U.S. foreign policy.

The U.S. presence in Afghanistan, often framed as part of the "War on Terror," aligns with the geopolitical imperatives of the Rimland Theory. Rather than solely targeting terrorism, U.S. strategies in Afghanistan reflected broader goals of securing influence in Central Asia and countering the influence of rival powers such as China and Russia.

Afghanistan and Pakistan, situated as pivotal nodes in the Rimland, have played crucial roles in the U.S.'s efforts to exert control over this strategically significant region.

Geopolitical considerations, particularly those concerning the Rimland, remain central to U.S. foreign policy. The Middle East and Central Asia, as connectors of Europe, Asia, and Africa, hold critical geostrategic value. One significant contemporary challenge to U.S. dominance in these regions is China's One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR), also known as the New Silk Road, launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013. This ambitious project underscores the ongoing geopolitical rivalry over Rimland territories and highlights the enduring relevance of Spykman's framework in understanding global power dynamics (Mafinezam, 2016).

Since World War II, the United States has pursued a strategy to encircle the Soviet Union by forming alliances with countries located within the Rimland zone. This approach was implemented through military and strategic pacts such as NATO in Europe, ANZUS along the Pacific front, CENTO (formerly the Baghdad Pact or Middle East Treaty Organization) in West Asia, and SEATO in Southeast Asia. These alliances aimed to establish a network of containment around the Soviet Union. Today, similar dynamics persist, evident in NATO's expansion and U.S./NATO involvement in Afghanistan and Central Asia. These efforts are intended to secure influence in the region while acting as a counterbalance to Russia and China. The U.S. presence in the Rimland, particularly in Afghanistan, is a source of concern for major powers such as China and Russia, as well as regional rivals like Iran.

While U.S. apprehensions about China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative are understandable, American policymakers face the challenge of determining how traditional alliances, such as NATO, ANZUS, CENTO, and SEATO, can effectively influence China's rise as a global power. These alliances must encourage China to adopt responsible, transparent, and cooperative behaviours as its influence expands. OBOR presents both a challenge and an opportunity: it threatens to enhance China's dominance in Eurasia and Rimland Asia, yet it also holds the potential to stimulate much-needed economic development in these underdeveloped regions. By leveraging this opportunity, China's ascent could be guided by values consistent with global stability.

Historically, OBOR traces its roots to the ancient Silk Road, a trade network established as early as the second century, which connected East and West economically. The modern OBOR project, initiated in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, significantly expands on this historical framework. Unlike its predecessor, which was primarily a land-based route, OBOR encompasses both land and maritime corridors, connecting approximately 60 countries worldwide (Danny, 2016; Marwa & Propin, 2019, p. 154). This initiative is one of China's most ambitious trade and infrastructure projects, with the potential to reshape global economic systems.

The United States, however, views OBOR with concern. Washington fears that the initiative could allow China to dominate key markets in Europe, Africa, and beyond, challenging U.S. economic competitiveness. Of particular concern is China's "dumping" practices, which could undermine U.S. industries (Stephen, 2016). To counterbalance OBOR's growing influence, the U.S. has sought to address regional instability under the guise of countering terrorism. However, the U.S. definition of terrorism has often lacked specificity; for instance, the Taliban was not initially identified as a primary adversary. Analysts increasingly link U.S. engagement in Afghanistan to broader Chinese economic projects, such as OBOR and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which are perceived as threatening U.S. strategic interests in the region (Azhar, 2018).

Some analysts advocate for the U.S. to shift from a competitive stance to one of deeper cooperation with Southeast Asian nations and major powers such as China, India, and Russia. By fostering mutual interests, the U.S. could potentially mitigate tensions. However, the inherently competitive and anarchic nature of the international system complicates the establishment of cooperative relationships with these countries (The White House, 2010). Afghanistan remains a strategically important location for the U.S. under the Rimland Theory, serving as a geopolitical vantage point in the region. Moreover, China's modern Silk Road initiatives, including maritime passages that align with Rimland theory, amplify the significance of Afghanistan for U.S. strategic interests. Thus, the U.S.'s focus on the region reflects both its historical and ongoing pursuit of influence over the Rimland and its attempts to counter China's global economic ambitions. China has increasingly prioritized its maritime presence, significantly enhancing its naval capabilities and merchant fleet at a remarkable pace. This strategic shift aligns with China's ambition to revive its historical Silk Road trade connections with Europe. The modern iteration of this initiative

involves the ancient Silk Road economic belt, encompassing Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe (Morgan, 2017; Sharma & Jogana, 2018).

In Afghanistan, the United States pursued immediate objectives such as defeating Al-Qaeda, removing the Taliban from power, and addressing opium production. However, as highlighted by Brzezinski, the geostrategic priorities of the U.S. in Afghanistan extend beyond counterterrorism to securing access to natural resources in the region and countering the influence of major geopolitical rivals, China and Russia (Josef, 2013). This reflects the enduring relevance of the Rimland Theory, which, while initially aimed at containing communism during the Cold War, now serves as a framework for countering economic rivalries and controlling strategic resources in Central Asia.

During the Cold War, Western analysts advocated the application of the Rimland Theory to halt the global spread of communism. In the post-Cold War era, the theory has evolved to encompass the containment of rival economic projects. Central Asia has become a focal point for competition, particularly regarding control over economic development and energy resources. The U.S. and its allies' involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq underscores their broader strategy to maintain influence in line with the Rimland Theory.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the emphasis shifted from military dominance to geo-economic competition. Regions such as the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea have gained significance as geostrategic and geo-economic hotspots. This shift reflects the growing importance of energy resources and the increasing demand for energy, particularly from newly industrialized nations in East and South Asia. The extraction, exploitation, and transfer of energy, alongside the development of new trade routes, have emerged as critical issues in regional geopolitics.

Moreover, Central Asia remains a contested zone. Countries such as Russia, China, Iran, and India express mixed sentiments regarding the U.S. presence in the region. Many officials in Iran and China, for instance, perceive U.S. activities as a form of encirclement, while Moscow contends with the reality of its diminished capacity to ensure stability within the former Soviet territories (Iseri, 2009, pp. 28–31). This geopolitical rivalry underscores the complex interplay of security, economics, and energy politics in the region.

7.4. The Role of the Afghan-Diaspora in U.S. State-building

Afghanistan has long endured bloody revolutions and state collapses. Consequently, millions of people sought refuge abroad and settled in foreign countries. Thus, the brain drain is another part of the crisis where quality, literate people were forced out in each chapter of the war in the country. After each collapse, the diaspora returned to the country, whereby after the revolution and non-peaceful transition of political power, educated, qualitative and experienced people left the country. Today, brain drain is one of the most important issues in developing countries, especially the war-torn ones. The history of the development of developed countries demonstrates that human capital plays an important role in the process of their development, and industrial society certainly owes its economic, social, cultural and technological development to the existence of human capital. A high level of literacy and quality of education as well as investing in diverse areas of education is the fundamental issue that Afghanistan as an underdeveloped country did not find the chance to access high quality, standard education, thus making human capital a rare commodity in politics, sociology, and technology. In order to transition from backwardness and reach certain stages of development, developing societies are also forced to undertake the costs of creating human capital and developing technical knowledge in order to stimulate social, economic, political, cultural and technological development and to implement and promote all levels including at those costs. Therefore, the sustainable development of a society depends on the resources and human capital needed by that society, and underdeveloped societies have no choice but to develop key activities of the society, producing and forming the human capital they need. The most important thing in bringing positive change to society is the human capital reserves of that society.

Diaspora refers to people who migrate abroad due to disorder and bad political and economic conditions and settle in another land. The origin of the word is Greek, meaning dispersal. The Greeks used this concept in such a way that they sent people to settle in the territories before the conquests and wars and called them diaspora. According to Ages (1973)" It has been used to describe the status of Jews during the Babylonian captivity in the sixth century B.C. Diaspora has also been utilised to characterise the flourishing Jewish community that lived in Alexandria shortly before the rise of Christianity. The more recent use of the term, however, has to do with the position of the Jews that resulted from the

abortive revolt against the Roman occupation of Palestine in the first century". (Ages, 1973). Now, the main issue is not hermeneutics' and dealing with the concept of diaspora itself, actually, the function of the diaspora in Afghanistan, played a significant role in the state-nation building process after 2001 and constituted the main body of the current government. The diaspora circle emphasises the skewed nationalism that according to academic historical sources has challenged the state and nation-building process in Afghanistan, as well as being considered a predominant hurdle against becoming a nation. The discussion of nation-building, state-building, and nationalism in Afghanistan is considered one of the fundamental issues, thus, until this conundrum is solved in Afghanistan, conflict and the fragility of state are an everlasting challenge in the country. They believed this flawed approach would guide Afghanistan toward development. Members of the diaspora have acted as seeds of civilization in fragile nations, yielding positive outcomes in their homeland. They have somehow saved governments from fragility in reproducing national and cultural values, and symbols, reducing ethnic differences, and strengthening democratic models, management, and professional work in institutions. China, India, South Korea, and Pakistan are among the countries with the upper hand and are active in the economic and industrial sectors of the diaspora. In Africa, the members of the diaspora population did significant work discussing nation-building, which can be researched and followed more concretely in a comparative manner in different countries.

On the other hand, the diaspora's role in diplomacy is still seriously discussed. The diaspora is considered a point of connection and indirect voting between governments. It cannot be said that they are disturbing for countries; today's new diplomacy is based on the spectrum of diaspora. In most cases between governments, diaspora community members work informally. According to the analysis by the World Bank, the most important disputes and wars in the future will be held by diaspora members. (World Bank Institute, 2006). They will act as an influential and vital element in governments' foreign and domestic policies. Undoubtedly, the use of diaspora in American politics is concretely clear as to what extent they play a role in the United States' foreign policy. Regarding Afghanistan, the diaspora has been an organiser and political expert so far. At least after the Bonn conference, the role of this group in the political field and the "process of "state-nation building" has been more prominent than in any other political party, which people often call American technocrats. Diaspora in Afghanistan calculated and distributed power according to the ethnic structure

so as not to make a claim on the centralised power structure. Still, this is one of the erroneous calculations about power. After Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi government was formed with the diaspora, the Shiites, who escaped from Saddam's regime. The U.S. lobbyists came to power in the field of Shiite political power in Iraq, and they are still in charge of the affairs of that country. Before suppressing any group, the Americans reached out to the diaspora. America's experience of state building in every country is connected with diaspora, which can be seen from Iraq to Afghanistan and Libya. Although the spectrum of diaspora is very effective in fragile countries, its function in Afghanistan should be seen from the perspective of the power structure. It was already mentioned that in large and prosperous countries, the role of the diaspora is very prominent; From economics to politics, diaspora community members play a constructive role. In Afghanistan, however, those who return to the country from democratic and free societies with high scientific capacities work in opposition to the vicious circle of ethnicity and desire for power. We have witnessed such instances in recent years, a notable example being the Pashtun leaders referring to the Taliban as 'brothers' and extending support to them. Afghan transnationalism outside Afghanistan is intensely involved in political issues, especially identity issues. Pashtuns, Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks all have separate associations outside Afghanistan, and the dominant discussions in these associations are unifying of themselves.

Ashraf Ghani, Hamid Karzai, and other nationalists were raised in societies where democracy, freedom, equality, and crucially, ethnic cohesion were fostered by a . However, their actions concerning Afghanistan deviated from these ideals, particularly as members of the Afghan diaspora. The diaspora successfully invested in and developed sectors such as telecommunications, banking, civil aviation, and real estate. In contrast, corruption within the business sector, notably involving the families of the president and vice president, led to the failure of many initiatives. As Fatima (2014) notes, "Diaspora participation has failed to produce significant positive impacts due to the individualistic attitudes of diaspora leaders." This failure is partly attributable to the nature of the constitution, which enabled these individuals to pursue personal agendas. The presence of leaders motivated by personal business interests and short-term profits, often at the expense of broader community concerns, is a common characteristic in many political systems.

This is a significant taboo in Afghanistan's political structure, and undeniably, it is one of the factors contributing to the fragility of the U.S.-backed government. The roots of

each challenge and failure stem from a power structure founded on injustice. Patronage and nepotism are widespread issues in Afghanistan, observable across all regimes. True democracy, as defined by Karl Marx, cannot be expected in developing nations, especially fragile states. In Marx's model of democracy, the political state dissolves, and people fight for freedom, not for a monarch (Chrysis, 2018, p. 38).

In Afghanistan, however, capitalists hold both economic and political power, and the people struggle for the concepts of 'individual' and 'nation.' These two factors have distorted the notion of democracy in the country. While these elements should not be conflated, the absence of a robust political culture and a lack of understanding regarding citizens' rights to vote have placed priority on individual and national identities over political progress. On one hand, democracy was undermined by the diaspora's fraudulent elections, and on the other, mullahs contributed to the discrediting of democracy, law, sovereignty, and freedom, labeling democracy as blasphemous rule. In the view of the mullahs, freedom was limited to women's veiling. Under the current Taliban rule, women are deprived of basic rights, and yet, this deprivation is justified as democracy. In the past, mullahs equated democracy with women's freedom, with no other definition of freedom or democracy.

The process of democratization requires democrats and technocrats. However, historically, Afghanistan never experienced the type of democracy seen in developed countries today. The inclusion of the diaspora community in the government was rooted in the idea of democratization. In third-world countries, democratization was introduced by force: "The war against terrorism, the war for the survival of freedom" were slogans used by the U.S. for state-building in Afghanistan. Neither Karzai nor Ghani capitalized on the opportunity to build a sustainable state. The U.S. democratization efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan share many similarities. Shiite Iraqis, much like the Afghan diaspora, moved into the Iraqi government after Saddam's regime. They filled the gaps left by the collapse of the government with hard work and dedication, decisively fighting ISIS. Today, Iraq is no longer in the global headlines for poverty, scarcity, or war.

7.5. Summary

Afghanistan has long held strategic geopolitical significance due to its position as a buffer state between Russia and the Indian Ocean, and as a key transit route for goods between South Asia, Central Asia, and Europe. This has attracted the attention of great

powers throughout history. With the end of U.S. isolationism, Afghanistan once again found itself at the center of international focus. The U.S. not only recalibrated its policies to align with Afghanistan's geopolitical importance but also reinforced this significance by leveraging new geopolitical considerations. After the Soviet withdrawal and the collapse of the Communist regime, the U.S. largely disregarded Afghanistan, despite having previously aligned with Afghan forces during the Soviet-Afghan war. While Cold War dynamics played a part, a primary motivation for U.S. involvement in South Asia was the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian region, as outlined by geopolitical theorist Nicholas Spykman. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the ensuing superpower rivalry in the region were intertwined with the spread of jihadist ideology—the first wave of fundamentalism in Afghanistan, which the U.S. fully supported against the Soviet Union. Despite this, the central focus remained on the "Rimland," a critical concept in U.S. geostrategy.

Today, despite Washington's rhetoric about withdrawing from Afghanistan, the U.S. is likely to maintain its military presence in the country for at least another decade. Terrorism, a complex and deeply rooted issue in Islamic countries, remains a strategic concern for the great powers. However, the U.S. has shown reluctance to eradicate terrorism completely, as terrorism is often seen through a dual lens—dividing actors into "good" and "bad" terrorists, such as the Taliban. The primary goal of the U.S. is not the complete eradication of terrorism in Afghanistan, but rather its strategic management within the broader context of regional power dynamics. U.S. policy in South Asia is heavily influenced by other regional actors such as China, Russia, and India, as well as smaller countries like Iran and Pakistan, which possess nuclear capabilities. The U.S. cannot afford to ignore these players, particularly as tensions between Iran and the U.S. continue over nuclear issues.

Terrorism in South Asia has become a strategic game for regional actors, who seek to exploit fundamentalist groups for their own geopolitical objectives. Regional countries hold both military and economic importance, which makes it crucial for the U.S. to maintain influence over them. China's "One Belt One Road" initiative, which spans Asia, Europe, and Africa, represents a significant challenge to U.S. global policy. This vast economic project risks encircling the "Rimland" and could threaten U.S. strategic interests. Despite U.S. military bases in Central Asia, countries like Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have

increasingly strong ties with China and Russia. Even if the U.S. were able to hinder China's plans in these countries, Central Asia's strategic ties with China would limit American influence. Obama's South Asia strategy differed significantly from Trump's. Trump criticized Obama's approach, calling it expansionist, while his own strategy initially focused on domestic issues, arguing that the U.S. had no obligation to engage in matters that didn't directly concern its citizens. However, several months into his presidency, Trump reversed course, declaring that a U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan would risk the resurgence of terrorism, a destabilized Afghanistan, and a loss of credibility for both NATO and U.S. global leadership. Consequently, the U.S. remained engaged in Afghanistan. However, Trump's decision to negotiate peace with the Taliban raised two significant strategic challenges. First, Iran, a nuclear power, is a military rival of the U.S. in the region. Second, the Persian Gulf, a historically vital area for U.S. interests, remains critical due to its energy resources and strategic shipping lanes. The U.S. has long regarded the Persian Gulf as a commercial and geopolitical crossroads, and its importance has only increased given its oil and gas reserves.

Trump's South Asia strategy also had a pronounced economic dimension, with a focus on countering China. Throughout his presidency, competition with China remained a primary concern, especially regarding China's growing influence in the region. Despite resistance from some of Trump's advisers, who advocated for full-scale confrontation with China, others—such as Peter Navarro and Alexander Gray—called for a more measured approach. This internal divide reflects broader tensions in U.S. policy toward Asia, especially concerning the potential for military escalation between the U.S. and China in the coming decade.

Chapter VIII. Religious Fundamentalism and Tribalism: the Two Enemies of State and Society in Afghanistan.

8.1. Introduction

Religious fundamentalism and tribalism are two destructive ideologies that have long existed within Afghan society, posing a significant threat to innovation, reforms, modern

patterns, and democracy since the early formation of modern Afghanistan. The values of both ideologies reinforce each other, which is evident in the close relationship between these two forces in Afghanistan's political history. Tribalism, particularly associated with the Pashtuns, and fundamentalism, as an all-encompassing ideology in Afghan society, have shaped the country's social and political landscape.

In Afghan society, fundamentalism, which threatens both religion and culture, has not yet been fully defined or understood. The society appears unaware of the distinction between fundamentalism and true Islamic values, largely due to widespread illiteracy and a lack of understanding of religion and its philosophical underpinnings. Instead, fundamentalist ideologies have been prescribed as religious truths. Numerous factors contribute to the persistence of religious fundamentalism, often referred to as political Islam. This has led to the resistance of reforms and the preservation of traditional norms within the government, with the people opposing any significant changes or minor reforms. Consequently, regimes have been forced to engage with the populace and uphold tribal and religious values, often avoiding disruptions to customary laws that people have accepted and lived by for generations.

On the other hand, the values upheld by Pashtun tribalism have deep religious and cultural roots, and they do not necessarily contradict each other. A clear example of the coordination between fundamentalism and tribalism in Afghanistan can be seen in the Jihadi movements and the Taliban. In this chapter, I aim to clarify how these two ideologies have converged, as I believe they represent the primary obstacles to social and political development in Afghanistan. These two forces have consistently threatened modernity and limited reforms in the government since the reign of Amanullah Khan, both considering any state-driven progress as the enemy. Many writers and experts on Afghanistan often analyze these two ideologies separately, but I argue that their close convergence has been a key factor in the fragility and weakness of the Afghan state throughout its political history. This convergence ultimately gave rise to the phenomenon of Political Islam.

8.2. The Two Enemies of Democracy in Afghanistan

The society of Afghanistan has been governed by two circles: the tribal circle and the religious circle, including traditional people (e.g., tribal elders, Arbab). The difference between the sovereignty of the state and the rule of the religious and traditional circle has

existed in Afghanistan since the beginning of the contemporary Afghanistan, and the presence of law; however, the religious circle have been trying to implement Sharia and traditional rules and afforded in maintaining of customary law in the society. In the case of civil law authority in society, the religious circle authority is an undeniable case in society. In the absence of government authority in rural areas, throughout history, people have had a mystical respect for the elders, especially those who are benevolent and thoughtful, as well as the mullahs or the person who has a deep understanding of religion is respected for having the religious understanding are accepted for the people. Thus, traditionally they have the right to settle conflicts and attend the Jirga/ Majlis/ Shura, not everyone else. This is common in Afghanistan among any ethnic minority which resolves differences and challenges in a conventional manner and refers to the government in the event of an impasse. However, the fundamentalist and tribal debates in Afghanistan go beyond the fact that tribalism and fundamentalism have succeeded in understanding each other, and the result is the Taliban Emirate system. Although the Taliban as a fundamentalist and terrorist group had an outward backdrop, however seems the Pashtun minority's tribal view of political power strengthened the Taliban rise too. The Taliban movement emerged from Pashtun tribes to gain political power and two ideologies actually helped shape the Taliban in Afghanistan: an ethnic vision of political power, and the second is fundamentalism in which madrasas played a key role in expanding of it. Many author still blame the involved countries in political failure of Afghanistan however, roots of the challenge exits in the country.

The concept of political Islam supported by religious radical circles, particularly mullahs (clerics), has historically lacked a concrete framework to establish a cohesive system in Afghanistan. No Islamic regime has been implemented that strictly follows Sharia law as a foundational social principle or aligns with contemporary norms. While fundamentalists assert that Islam is a complete religion and that the enforcement of Sharia law can guide society toward the right path, there is no practical example of such a system functioning as a universally accepted social norm.

The second ideology, tribalism, particularly in the context of Pashtunwali, has historically bolstered fundamentalism in Afghanistan, creating opportunities for the politicization of tribal values. An illustrative example of this tribal perception of democracy in Afghanistan is that the more democratic and pluralistic regimes have become, the more

Pashtun elites have felt marginalized or threatened by other ethnic groups. They perceive democracy as a potential loss of Pashtun authority, fearing that a genuinely democratic system might redistribute power among the country's diverse ethnicities. This ongoing apprehension among Pashtun elites reflects a resistance to democracy and multiculturalism.

This chapter examines the convergence of tribalism and fundamentalism in Afghanistan, arguing that these two ideologies have historically challenged democratic principles and modern governance. From the perspectives of tribalism and fundamentalism, democracy and its values are irreconcilable with their worldview. Pashtun life is deeply rooted in tribal traditions that resist modern values, favouring the ancestral ways of life dictated by Pashtunwali. Similarly, the fundamentalist ideology finds resonance in tribal roots, particularly given that Islam itself emerged in the tribal context of Arabia. Sharia law, before being codified as a religious framework, was inherently rooted in Arab tribal values.

The Taliban exemplify the intersection of tribalism and fundamentalism, embedding cultural and tribal codes within Islamic verses and presenting them as religious mandates. Their vision for a utopian state—centred on political Islam—parallels the aspirations of other terrorist organizations, such as those ISIS in Iraq and Syria, or Boko Haram in Nigeria. While their specific goals may vary, these groups share a common reliance on Sharia to legitimize their actions and maintain ideological coherence.

Religious institutions, mullahs, tribal leaders, and ethnic elders have collectively attempted to institutionalize the Taliban's desired Islamic regime, particularly through the Emirate system. Afghan society, albeit unconsciously, has historically served as a hegemonic resource for the Taliban through these institutions. For instance, religious pupils in mosques have been financially supported by local communities, perpetuating the cycle of clerical influence. Tribal leaders (bozorg Qawm) historically wielded significant authority as quasi-governors in rural areas, resolving disputes and legal matters through assemblies (jirgas), which have even been integrated into the Afghan constitution. Although jirgas are a tribal mechanism for conflict resolution, the Taliban have manipulated them to codify decisions that preserve tribal hegemony and ethnic dominance (Ibrahimi, 2019).

The question arises: How does democracy confront the dual challenges of religious fundamentalism and tribalism in Afghanistan? Religious institutions, long considered a source of hegemonic power for the Taliban, have consistently influenced Afghan society

and resisted modern and rational ideas. While other Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, have experienced some degree of change and rationalization, Afghanistan's religious institutions have largely maintained a rigid, traditional stance.

The Soviet intervention in 1979 further entrenched radicalism through the proliferation of institutions like Darul Uloom, Darul Hifaz, and Haqqani schools, which became nation-building platforms for the Taliban. Deobandi schools in Pakistan also played a role, directly and indirectly supporting the Taliban by promoting radical ideologies and establishing madrassas in Afghanistan over the last two decades. These institutions remain fundamentally opposed to regimes advocating for human rights, democracy, women's rights, and free elections (Sharma, 2009, pp. 36–42).

According to Borchgrevink (2010), Islam in Afghanistan is a blend of formal, scholarly interpretations, Sufi practices, and customary traditions. While traditional expressions of Islam dominated until the 1950s, the influence of Islamist thinking from Pakistan and Egypt introduced new ideological currents. The Afghan resistance to the Soviet-backed communist regime, framed in the language of jihad, further radicalized religious-political parties in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Historically, mullahs have exerted significant influence over the masses, framing their interpretation of religion in ways that align with traditional societal norms. Few institutional reforms have been made to address this influence, with Amanullah Khan's abrupt reforms being a rare exception. However, Amanullah's efforts were dismantled by the mullahs, who rallied the population against his regime. His defeat, followed by the rise of Habibullah Kalakani, demonstrated to clerical circles their capacity to challenge and even overthrow governments. Subsequent regimes avoided direct confrontation with the mullahs, often aligning themselves with clerical recommendations.

The rivalry between religious institutions and the government has been a recurring theme in Afghanistan since 1880. When Amir Abdur Rahman came to power, he faced opposition from clerical circles, who issued a fatwa labelling him a British puppet. Aristocrats supported this religious decree, as it protected their privileges, including tax exemptions. Abdur Rahman ultimately subdued the rebellion and shifted public allegiance toward his regime, marking the beginning of formal recognition for religious authorities. The emir granted the mullahs control over judiciary matters, dividing laws into three

categories: Sharia law (handled by mullah judges), administrative law, and tribal law. This arrangement established separate courts for religious, civil, and criminal matters (Yassari & Saboory, 2010).

Customary law further entrenched the authority of tribal and religious leaders. Rural populations adhered to traditional rules for crimes such as murder, adultery, and theft, following decisions made by elders within the framework of Sharia law. According to the International Commission of Jurists (2004), the formal legal system remains secondary to the customary and Islamic laws that govern the majority of the population. The report notes that attempts to enforce secular laws diverging from these traditions often provoke protest and unrest.

Tribal aristocracy and religious establishments have historically shared mutual interests, collaborating to resist any regime that challenged their authority. Both groups have enjoyed extensive economic and moral power within Afghan society, perpetuating their influence and hindering progress toward democratic governance.

Bar (2004) critiques Islamic fundamentalism by highlighting its inseparability of religion and politics, stating, "Islamic fundamentalists... do not distinguish between the political and the religious. Islam is, in essence, both a religion and a regime (din wa-dawla), and no area of human activity is outside its remit. Regardless of the nature of the problem, 'Islam is the solution'" (p. 29).

A key aspect of Islamic fundamentalist ideology, including the concepts of Dar al-Harb (the abode of war) and Dar al-Islam (the abode of Islam), is rooted in the ideological framework of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. This movement asserts that Western values infiltrated Islamic societies, altering traditional social norms. To restore Islamic principles and eradicate Western influences, the re-Islamisation of Muslim societies is considered essential, accompanied by a call for an "Islamic awakening." By the 1980s, this awakening extended to advocating for jihad in regions such as Afghanistan, Palestine, and Kashmir. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan legitimised this call for jihad as a universal obligation (farz 'ayn) for all Muslims, framing it as a defence of Islamic nations and communities (Bar, 2004).

Furthermore, Al-Farsi (2013) examines the perspectives of Middle Eastern scholars on the compatibility of democracy with Islamic principles such as Shura (consultation), a

fundamental pillar of Islamic governance. These scholars have explored whether democratic systems inherently contradict Islamic teachings.

The Tunisian scholar Rachid Ghanoushi contends that if democracy is understood as a political system, often associated with the West, that upholds individual rights, expands avenues for political participation, allows citizens to elect their leaders or representatives, and ensures the orderly transfer of power, then there is no Islamic text that contradicts the principles of democracy. Similarly, Iran's former president Mohammad Khatami observed that democracies do not adhere to a singular formula. Democracy may lead to a liberal system, a socialist system, or a system that integrates religious norms into governance. According to Khatami, Iran has adopted the third approach. This perspective is not new; earlier Islamic scholars, such as Rifa'ah Tahtawi (1801–1873), Khairuddin Al-Tunisi (1810–1899), Jamal ad-Din Al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), Abdurrahman Al-Kawakibi (1849–1903), and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935), have argued that Shura (consultation), a cornerstone of Islamic governance, aligns with democratic ideals. Thus, it can be argued that no religious texts in Islam inherently oppose democracy in this context (Al-Farsi, 2013).

In Afghanistan, efforts to preserve Islamic values led to the establishment of madrasas by 1940 with the primary aim of training judges and embedding them within the regime to influence public opinion. These judicial sectors adhered to a system consistent with Sharia law. However, these madrasas exclusively focused on teaching an increasingly radicalized interpretation of Islam, omitting other academic subjects. The institutions were administered by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Hajj, included Dar al-Ulum Arabia in Kabul, Madrasa Abu Hanifa in Kabul, Fakhr ul-Madares in Herat, Madrasa Jami Sharif in Herat, and others across Afghanistan in cities such as Mazar-i Sharif, Takhar, Kandahar, Jalalabad, and Paktia. Their primary purpose was to prepare judges for the Islamic judicial system and integrate it into the nation's legal framework.

Following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Deobandi school of thought began to influence these institutions, embedding radical Islamic ideologies. This trend extended to other religious schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, making these institutions among the most influential in the region regarding Islamic education and issuing fatwas. A 2007 survey by the Afghan Ministry of Education revealed the existence of 336

Islamic schools across the country, with 95.63% of students receiving instruction rooted in the Deobandi tradition. Their curriculum included mandatory subjects such as tafsir (Quranic exegesis), hafiz (Quran memorization), sarf and nahw (Arabic grammar), tarikh (Islamic history), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and Sharia (Islamic law). The Deobandi-based Dar ul-Uloom institutions largely reverted to their 1930 curriculum, which was primarily religious, albeit with the inclusion of subjects such as calligraphy, mathematics, and Persian. Significant revisions to the curriculum were introduced during King Zahir Shah's reign in 1954, incorporating modern subjects such as history, geography, petition writing, management training, and financial affairs (Sharma, 2009). However, these changes did not address the deeply entrenched religious focus of the madrasas, leaving the system susceptible to external ideological influences.

The religious domain in Afghanistan has remained largely unreformed, with clerics (mullahs) wielding significant influence, particularly in rural areas where they occupy revered positions. Their directives often hold greater credibility than government laws and regulations. As agents of fundamentalism, clerics have sought to monopolize religion in society and have actively advocated for the establishment of an "Islamic government." Their interpretation of political Islam and Islamic values is often misaligned with broader conceptions of governance and modernity. From the perspective of the rule of law, religious institutions have become hegemonic resources for movements such as the Taliban, undermining societal adherence to legal frameworks. Clerics have mobilized the populace against state laws, frequently portraying the regime as a "Western puppet" while denouncing Western culture, secularism, human rights, and women's rights as adversarial to Islamic and tribal values.

The government's failure to regulate religious spheres has been a significant weakness, resulting in clerics exerting greater societal influence than state authorities. This has steered Afghanistan's society toward fundamentalism and radical Islam, creating a dichotomy in which religious and tribal parameters dominate governance structures. Consequently, the society has been split between the authority of the state and that of religious leaders. While some scholars attribute the fragility and collapse of the Afghan state to external factors, such as historical jihadist movements against the British (1842), the Soviet Union (1979), and the United States (post-2001), the deeper systemic issues lie in the interplay of internal dynamics.

As Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) argue, states like Afghanistan suffer from "extractive institutions" that hinder property rights, rule of law, and functional legal systems, while allowing local and national elites to dominate political and economic life. Post-2001, the legal framework in Afghanistan was ostensibly built on Islamic principles. However, it revealed the state's weaknesses and the inadequacies of officials in enforcing the rule of law. Modern concepts such as human rights, democracy, and justice, which underpin the governance of developed nations, have consistently been rejected by religious circles and tribal regions, particularly in predominantly Pashtun areas. While these modern values are not explicitly addressed in the Quran, mullahs frequently dismiss them as alien constructs incompatible with Afghan society.

This tension between modernity and tradition manifests in two dominant ideologies in Afghanistan: fundamentalism and tribalism. Both ideologies reject modernity and rational governance structures, exacerbating radicalism and socially isolating the population. This ideological clash has fundamentally disrupted state-building processes, not only in Afghanistan but in other Islamic countries facing similar challenges.

In Afghanistan's socio-political structure, the feudal system, deeply rooted in patriarchal family dynamics, reflects a hierarchical model where the lord assumes the role of an omnipotent patriarch. The feudal lord, much like the head of a family, perceives himself as the ultimate authority and proprietor of his subjects, without any sense of accountability toward them. Within this patriarchal framework, the actions of the family patriarch—or, by extension, the feudal lord—are immune to scrutiny, irrespective of their rationality or ethicality. Loyalty to the patriarch, especially in intertribal or inter-family rivalries, remains unquestioned. This unaccountability has historically characterized the behaviour of tribal and regional lords in Afghanistan.

The perpetuation of this feudal-patriarchal system has profoundly shaped Afghan societal mentality, aligning social understanding with the principles of family patriarchy. Continuous historical conflicts, wars, and crises are seen as outcomes of this enduring social system, which has hindered Afghanistan's transition to modernity and perpetuated its comparative underdevelopment. Ferdinand Tönnies' sociological distinction between Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society) illustrates this phenomenon, where Afghanistan aligns more with pre-modern community structures rather than modern societal

frameworks. The conflict between rural tradition and urban modernity, according to Tönnies, parallels the tension between village and city, with religious scholars, arbabs (lords), and aristocrats resisting any changes that threaten their interests.

Among the Pashtun community, however, the rural-urban divide is less pronounced due to their shared adherence to Pashtunwali—a cultural code that governs social behaviour and ideals. The Pashtunwali ethos, including its tribal values and principles, remains integral to the Pashtun identity. Tribal leaders continue to enjoy significant social authority in Pashtun societies, where a blend of tribal structures, fundamentalist Islam, and elements of Arab tribalism influences governance and societal norms. For the Pashtun community, a society devoid of Pashtunwali is inconceivable, and this cultural code often supersedes broader Islamic values.

The Taliban regime, while ostensibly governed by Islamic law (Sharia), primarily enforces Pashtun tribal norms. Policies such as the prohibition of girls' education, severe restrictions on women, public executions, and rejection of modernity reflect tribal customs rather than authentic Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic teachings, as enshrined in the Quran and Hadith, emphasize women's rights, including the right to education and social participation. Yet, the Pashtun tribal framework historically restricts women's societal roles, aligning with the practices of the Taliban. As Allen and Vanda (2020) argue, the Taliban's governance derives more from tribalism than from a precise interpretation of Sharia.

The tribal aristocracy, particularly among Pashtun tribes such as the Ghilzai confederation and marginalized Durrani sub-tribes like the Alizai, Ishaqzai, and Noorzai, has historically supported the Taliban. This alignment reflects a deep integration of tribal identity with political movements. Concepts like "brotherhood," emphasized in Islamic traditions and tribal codes, reinforce this connection. For instance, post-2001 Afghan leaders, including Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani, referred to the Taliban as "brothers," highlighting a tribal perspective on the insurgency.

From the era of Abdul Rahman Khan to the collapse of Ghani's administration in August 2021, Afghan regimes have often collaborated with tribal elites and religious establishments. These entities, with their entrenched societal influence, were co-opted to consolidate state power. However, this collaboration often allowed tribal aristocrats to infiltrate governmental institutions, using their positions to further their own social and

political influence. As Ghani (1978) observed, such alliances reinforce the hegemony of tribal and religious elites, entrenching traditional power structures at the expense of genuine modernization and state-building efforts.

The previous chapter examined the failure of political regimes in Afghanistan since the establishment of the modern state, highlighting the role of tribal groups, whose amalgamation with Islamic fundamentalism undermined both democratic and non-democratic regimes. Following 2001, the U.S.-led introduction of democracy in Afghanistan encountered similar obstacles. Over the past two decades, tribal dynamics have been closely tied to sympathies with the Taliban. Even technocrats, many of whom had assimilated into Western societies and were familiar with democratic and pluralistic values, often resorted to leveraging ethnic divisions to expand political rifts. This approach further exacerbated ethnic cleavages, contrary to expectations that the diaspora would facilitate the institutionalization of democracy and equitable governance in Afghanistan. This chapter explores the historical roots of tribalism in Afghanistan's political landscape and the hegemonic influence of religious fundamentalism, both of which have systematically alienated society from the state and constitute significant socio-political barriers.

8.3. Islamic Radicalism and Fundamentalism

The term religious fundamentalism in many different contexts and contexts to describe surrender and rigid loyalty to a set of principles or beliefs is used. Religious fundamentalism means the approach of those religious groups who want such a literal and apparent interpretation of the main religious texts or books and believe that the teachings obtained from such readings should be applied in all aspects of social, economic, and political life. Religious fundamentalists believe that only one view of the world can be correct and only their view is true, there is no room for ambiguity or multiple interpretations. In religious fundamentalist movements, access to the correct and precise meaning of the scriptures is limited only to a group of privileged "interpreters" such as clergy, priests or other religious leaders (Giddens, 2010). The most important and the first basic distinction of fundamentalist movement it is their "reactivity". Fundamentalists believe that their religion is under severe threats.

The modern world is on the side of secularism, and that is why they are in a battle and must resist in every possible way; Therefore, fundamentalists are basically against modernity and always in their thought is that there is an enemy (Herriot, 2021:11).

The clash between the two civilisations Islam and the West would stay as long as Islam remains on its retrogressive narrations of social and political form that weak Islamic countries fundamentally are involved of fundamentalism. The second theory sees the happy days of the West as fleeting and warns about the danger of an imaginary enemy in the form of a confrontation between the two civilisations of Islam and the West. Francis Fukuyama, the proponent of the 'end of history' theory, believes that 'liberal democracy' is the final form of government in human societies (Fukuyama, 2012). The history of humanity is also a coherent complex that leads a large part of human society toward liberal democracy. Fukuyama expresses it as follows: "The end of history is when man finds a form of human society and in that the deepest and most basic human needs are fulfilled. Humanity today has reached a point where it cannot imagine a world fundamentally different from the current world because there is no sign of the possibility of fundamentally improving the current order. During the last few years, along with the victory of liberal democracy over its ideological rivals such as hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently Communism, an important consensus has emerged around the world about the legitimacy of liberal democracy as the only successful government system. But in addition to that, liberal democracy may be the end point of the ideological evolution of humanity and the last form of state and in this position, it may constitute the "end of history". (Fukuyama, 2012). In fact, the defeat of Communism is the reason for the victory of Western liberal values and the end of ideological conflicts. According to Samuel Huntington, the clash of civilizations represents the dominant paradigm in global politics and the culmination of conflicts in the modern era. In his analysis of which nations pose the greatest threat to the United States, Huntington identifies Iran, China, and Iraq as the primary contenders. He categorizes the contemporary world into distinct cultural spheres and asserts that regions defined by Islamic culture constitute the principal potential adversaries of the West. Huntington argues that the Christian-Jewish West, in the 21st century, will face political and economic challenges stemming from the imperialist aspirations of Islamic and Confucian societies. He predicts that future conflicts will primarily arise between Western civilization and an alliance of

Confucian and Islamic cultural groups, with such civilizational clashes marking the final stage in the evolution of global conflict.

Huntington's outlook on the future of inter-civilizational relations is notably pessimistic. He highlights the weakening of the nation-state as the fundamental unit of international relations, an increase in nationalist tensions, the escalation of conflicts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the growth of global disorder. Huntington argues that domestic, ethnic, and global politics will increasingly be subordinated to "civilizational politics." He also asserts that in the post-Cold War era, the central powers within each civilization will replace the Cold War superpowers as the primary actors in world affairs, rendering the concept of "world power" obsolete. Huntington insists that the future world order will be inescapably shaped by civilizations. He further contends that Muslims perceive Western culture as materialistic, corrupt, decadent, and immoral, and believe it should be resisted to counter the changes that Western culture imposes (Huntington, 1997, pp. 109–120).

At the dawn of the 21st century and the third millennium, Islamic revivalism, which began roughly a century ago, gained unprecedented momentum, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks. This revivalism, referred to by many in the West as "Islamic fundamentalism," emerged as a significant political force and a formidable challenge to liberal democracy, particularly following the decline of Marxism. According to Sai, Islamic fundamentalism is both a political and intellectual movement aimed at addressing the issues plaguing underdeveloped Islamic states and societies. The roots of this movement trace back to the late 19th century, encompassing a spectrum of reforms ranging from moderate approaches to radical extremism.

Islamic radicals posit three core principles regarding religion: first, Islam provides comprehensive solutions to all societal problems, rendering alternative systems unnecessary; second, societal issues such as economic underdevelopment, inequality, and injustice stem from the failure to adhere to Islamic principles; and third, reforms must prioritize Sharia values over imported Western ideologies. For radicals, disregarding Sharia equates to rejecting Islam itself, with violent defence of its implementation often crossing into acts of terrorism.

However, the European Parliament offers a broader definition of Islamic radicalism, describing it as "the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views, and ideas which could lead to terrorism" (European Parliament, 2015). This definition contrasts with the actual practices of some Islamist groups in Islamic societies, such as the Taliban, who propagate their ideology domestically while also engaging in proselytization efforts in Europe. In weaker Islamic states like Afghanistan, the concepts of Islamic radicalism and fundamentalism often lack clear understanding or recognition. The practices of radical groups in these contexts often diverge from the European Parliament's characterization, underscoring the complex and varied interpretations of these phenomena within Islamic societies.

8.4. Religious Justification (Fatwa) and Political Legitimacy

In Afghanistan, Islamic fatwas play a significant role in establishing political legitimacy, particularly given the strong influence of religion in Afghan society. Leaders often seek endorsements from religious scholars to align their policies with Islamic principles and gain broader public support. Fatwas from prominent scholars can either affirm or challenge governmental authority, especially when government policies diverge from Islamic teachings. During conflicts, fatwas have been pivotal in justifying or opposing various political actions, influencing public opinion, resistance movements, and even international perspectives on Afghan governance—not just at specific junctures in history, but throughout Afghanistan's history.

Considering the social norms and political culture in Afghanistan, mullahs/clerics have often converged with and become dependent on politicians and leaders. In many political situations, politicians use mullahs' fatwas (religious orders) to influence the masses. The role of the Ulama (religious scholars) alongside the central government has been twofold: on the one hand, they were at the disposal of the politicians; on the other hand, their involvement demonstrated to the people that the religious segment was also engaged in politics, thereby ensuring public support.

During election campaigns, mullahs delivered speeches emphasizing the religious aspects of the elections, which helped strengthen the position of the candidates. While

fatwas and religious orders did not officially have a role in the government, after 2001, the government established an Ulama Shura to strengthen its policies and open a line of communication with the religious sector. The Ulama Shura (Council) was established in 2002 to unify religious circles and jihadist figures, representing the non-democratic segment of society. The council had representatives in all 34 provinces, operating under a top-down management style. Its primary task was to promote the rules based on Sharia law and serve the religious community responsibly. The council's composition was predominantly Sunni, with a sizable number of Shiites, both of whom were seen as observers of customary law and regulations aligned with Sharia (Sharma, 2009).

8.5. Tribalism and Democracy

The convergence of tribalism and Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan has significantly shaped its sociopolitical landscape. Tribal identities often intersect with religious beliefs, creating a complex network of loyalties that can both support and undermine governance. While tribal leaders can wield significant influence over their communities, Islamic fundamentalist movements, such as the Taliban, have exploited tribal structures to gain legitimacy and control. This interaction can lead to a reinforced conservative social order, where tribal customs and Islamic law blend, complicating efforts for modern governance and Tribalism is often affiliated with Pashtuns in Afghanistan. Except for Pashtuns the rest of the nationalities do not live based on tribal values and rules. Hazara, Tajik, Uzbek, and other ethnicities are urbanised and quit the values of tribal mindsets. However, Pashtuns live based on tribal codes and principles and took any chance of development in the country throughout history. Clarification of the concept as well as its influence on state-building and nation-building processes in Afghanistan, first, needs to define 'tribalism'.

What is tribalism and how does it threaten democracy? How it has been a hurdle for development and modern phenomena? Although in other chapters ethnic rivalry as a predominant hurdle of state-building and nation-building has been discussed, another angle in Afghanistan that matters is tribalism from both religious and ethnic perspectives . Afghanistan is a multicultural society and has different languages and social structures. Tribalism supports religious fundamentalism in Afghanistan due to several interrelated factors: Social Structure: Tribal identities often dictate social organization and governance,

making tribal leaders influential in community decisions, including religious matters. Shared Values: Tribes typically uphold conservative values that align with fundamentalist interpretations of Islam, creating a natural alliance between tribal customs and religious beliefs. Conflict and Resistance: In times of conflict, tribal affiliations provide a sense of security and belonging, making fundamentalist groups like the Taliban appealing as they promise to defend tribal and religious identity. Legitimacy: Religious leaders may use tribal structures to gain legitimacy, reinforcing the authority of both tribal and religious institutions.

In Afghanistan, tribalism is a central aspect of identity, shaping loyalty and governance structures at the local level (Barfield, 2010). Islamic fundamentalist groups, particularly the Taliban, have strategically aligned with tribal leaders to gain grassroots support. This relationship is symbiotic: while tribal leaders gain protection and access to broader networks, fundamentalist groups benefit from the tribes' legitimacy and local influence (Giustozzi, 2008).

The social structure of tribalism often promotes values such as honour, hospitality, and loyalty—values that fundamentalist groups co-opt and frame within an Islamic context to legitimize their authority and maintain social cohesion (Edwards, 1996).

1. *Resistance and Mobilization*

Tribalism and Islamic fundamentalism converge in times of resistance, where religious identity often becomes a rallying point against foreign influence. This was evident during the Soviet-Afghan war, where tribal leaders and Islamic fighters, known as Mujahideen, united to resist Soviet forces (Roy, 1986). The Taliban, emerging after the Soviet withdrawal, utilized similar strategies, appealing to both tribal and religious sentiments to gain support against perceived foreign and un-Islamic influences (Marsden, 2002).

Scholars argue that tribal networks, which prioritize kinship and community over centralized governance, are crucial in mobilizing support for fundamentalist agendas (Ahmed, 1980). In Afghanistan, where centralized government has historically struggled to exert control, fundamentalist groups often find it easier to align with decentralized tribal structures to further their influence.

2. *Cultural Conservatism and Social Order*

Tribalism in Afghanistan often aligns with a conservative interpretation of Islam, which reinforces the traditional social order, including gender roles and community authority (Dupree, 1973). Fundamentalist groups leverage this cultural conservatism, emphasizing Sharia law in a way that resonates with tribal values and norms, thus strengthening their position.

The relationship between tribal customs (Pashtunwali among Pashtun tribes) and Islamic law creates a dual system where religious law is perceived as compatible with and supportive of traditional tribal practices (Ahmed & Boase, 2004). This alignment allows fundamentalist groups to operate within tribal regions without fundamentally disrupting the social order, thereby embedding themselves into the community fabric.

3. *Impact on Political Legitimacy and Governance*

The convergence of tribalism and Islamic fundamentalism presents challenges to state-building and governance. The Afghan central government has historically struggled to exert influence over tribal areas, where allegiance is often to local leaders rather than the state (Rubin, 2002). Fundamentalist groups like the Taliban capitalize on this fragmentation, positioning themselves as defenders of both Islam and tribal autonomy against external intervention.

The Afghan state's attempts to centralize power have often been met with resistance from tribal groups who see such efforts as threats to their autonomy and way of life. Fundamentalist groups tap into these sentiments, portraying themselves as more legitimate representatives of Afghan Islamic and tribal identity (Johnson & Leslie, 2004).

Therefore, a responsible government never finds the chance to build a nation-state based on democratic values in Afghanistan. Most authors ascribe this question to external factors and countries involved in competition in Afghanistan and the region. However, what has threatened nation-state building in Afghanistan has been a single ethnic totalitarian approach toward gaining political power in the country and defining themselves as the superior ethnic group over the rest of the ethnicities. Tribalism in most multicultural and modern states assume an evil concept that has been inimical to progress and development. The term initially stems from the Latin *'tribes'* and did not refer to a group of people with

a common interest; rather at the time it was used in the political area of public administration in ancient Rome. However, the uses of the term 'tribe' in the modern era and 'tribalism' can be particularly traced back to European colonialist anthropology (Ojiaku, 1972; Rogers, 2019).

The incompatibility of democracy and tribalism, according to Frances Fukuyama, begins with the method of living where democracy qualifies the living style of the people and decision-making for their political lives. In effect, 'tribalism' undermines democratic attitudes in general. The contestable argument is which attitudes are considered democratic: democracy of Greek origin, and its focal point is the political arrangement where people matter. Aristotle defined Democracy as 'rule of the people' and that justice and equal sharing are core principles of democracy.

According to Davis "What is held to be Democracy or rule of the people above all is what results from the sort of justice that is agreed to be democratic, which is all having equal shares on the basis of number. Under a democratic system, there is 'election to all offices from and among all,' with most offices 'of short duration'; governance is based upon the 'rule of all over each, and of each overall in turn'; and 'the assembly,' is not specific individuals. It has "authority over all matters or the greatest". (Davis, 2020, p. 44)

The theory of 'social contract' is the philosophical basis of the modern state and the rational foundation of the establishment of the state. According to this theory, humans have lived in a hypothetical state called a 'natural state' in a disorderly, free state in nature, then with rational knowledge and considering the benefits of order and law, they obeyed the government and sacrificed their 'natural liberties', 'stepping into the range' of 'individual freedoms' that the government's power and order limit and at the same time guarantee. Therefore, the "social contract" is an unwritten compromise between the members of a society and is based on the "will of all" to act with mutual responsibility in their relations under the rule of the government, and the government emerges, based on this implicit 'contract'. It should be kept in mind that the will of all, in the beginning, meant the will of all property owners or taxpayers, which usually did not include women, the unemployed, and the poor. Tribalism often acts against the social contract, unlike giving preference to ethnic or tribal values and ignoring rules and principles. This 'social contract' is the core discussion of democracy whereby the options are in the hands of the people to legitimise

and delegitimise the government in democratic societies. According to Francis Fukuyama, however, tribalism threatens democracy and democratic values as well as threatening the way of life in democratic societies. According to Fukuyama, the birthplace and cradle of pluralism in Europe is fracturing into segments where all rifts originate from tribalism by right-wing parties in Europe and the U.S. as democracy and its values' patron state. The right wing in Europe intimidates the tribal vision in society, which caused nationalities and minorities to redefine their identity and pay attention to the phenomenon that has been discussed already. This redefinition and paying attention to the U.S. minorities happened in the U.S. and blacks and Indians consider themselves as the separate segment and marginalised tribe. According to Fukuyama "Identity politics is no longer a minor phenomenon, playing out only in the rarefied confines of university campuses or providing a backdrop to low-stakes skirmishes in 'culture wars' promoted by the mass media. Instead, identity politics has become a master concept that explains much of what is going on in global affairs" (Fukuyama, 2018). Afghanistan and Afghan identity is a historical debate that still considers a fundamental key issue for nation-state-building. The response regarding identity in Afghanistan, unlike Fukuyama's view, explains and calls tribalism a threat to liberal democracy and public administration in the West, however, the Pashtun tribalism in Afghanistan on the one hand, ignoring the rest of the minorities' rights, on the other, has been considered a formidable challenge versus state and democratic regimes in the country throughout history. There have not been any regimes ignoring tribal values as the old-fashioned principle and replacing them with modern, updated rule. The democratic regimes and the autocratic ones overall in Afghanistan throughout history refrained from recognising a multicultural society, though the false delusion regarding a multicultural society still exists as the threat to 'Afghan' nationalism. Recognition of Afghanistan as a multicultural society has two fundamental enemies: first centrality of power transaction forms an ideal multicultural society by its real meaning in the country, though power and tribal vision regarding gaining power has always been ethnic. Transaction of power has been through elections, however, a tribal vision still influences power. Conflict and the miserable failure of democracy and elections in Afghanistan have not been due to external factors as often as authors claim, thereby, ignoring the chance of a multicultural, democratic society such as Indian society with numerous sects, religions, and ethnicities living peacefully together. Secondly, the worldview differences held by ethnicities in the account of the development and state, the Tajiks, Hazara, and Uzbeks welcomed democracy, development, and modern

patterns for reforming and evolution of their society, however, on the one hand, regional and global hegemonies harboured the Pashtuns and considered them as the dominant ethnicity in Afghanistan, powerfully propagated by the Pashtun diaspora in the U.S. of America. The U.S. democratisation in Afghanistan was based on the erroneous calculation that Pashtuns are the major ethnicity of Afghanistan. Thus, apparently, they ought to be in the power. This perception has been supported by a centralised regime dealing with Afghan American Diaspora Hamed Karzai and Ashraf Ghani. Both presidents from the Afghan American diaspora, despite their academic background and living based on democratic values in democratic countries did not plan to build a state to embed all ethnicities to live in tranquillity and unity in Afghanistan, and vice-versa, the heavily emphasised *Afghani-yat*, (Afghan-ness) which ended badly among a multiethnic society. The second point which negatively created stereotypes among ethnicities was the diaspora raising tribal autocracy in the historical chart of democracy imposed on the non-Pashtun ethnicity which even marginalised the Uzbeks, the Hazara, and Tajik leaders (Kauser, 2014).

8.6.   Taliban and Tribalism

On 15th August 2001, the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan after a long period, in fact a 20-year battle with the "democratic regime" supported by the world community. The collapse of power into Taliban hands in Afghanistan attracted the attention of most political science scholars regarding modern state-building in Afghanistan. The fragility and the collapse of the state in Afghanistan are considered a tribal challenge that restricted Afghanistan's progress toward a developed state by others proclaiming a modern nation-state (Chang, Pentao, Xiyao, 2022). Roughly fifty ethnicities have been recognised in Afghanistan however, fourteen only have been recognised officially by the constitutions, and the four ethnicities are the major ethnic groups in the country, Hazara, Uzbek, Tajik, and Pashtuns, who all are the most active groups in the political arena. The Pashtuns preserved their tribal values officially in the county. On the other hand, the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazara left behind their tribal values and attitudes towards government. However, the Pashtuns preserved tribal values in both political and social ways of life (Bordas 2015, p. 123). In the Pashtun tribal form, Khan, the one who is landlord, and *Malik* who is one step further away than 'khan' are a privileged circle that leads the Jirgas' 'gathering'. However,

among Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara tribal values and rules in either social or political arenas do not exist (Shahrani, 2013, pp. 24 - 25; Glatzer, 2002, pp. 5 - 9). Religious values come after tribal values in the political dialogue, though the politics of Afghanistan, in general, has been influenced by ethnic and tribal perceptions as well as ethnicity comprising the stable pillar of political competition in the country. The Khan and the elder of the tribe, called *Spinger* by the Pashtun, play nearly an official role among the Pashtun community. All regimes throughout history in order to solve conflict and exert official rule have leant on tribal elders. Since the formation of modern Afghanistan, Abdul Rahman in 1983 tried to stabilise its authority by paying the men and women to be tribal leaders. According to Faiz Mohamad Katib, Afghanistan was in such awful economic circumstances that Abdul Rahman made decisions regarding tribal leaders' and aristocrats' monthly payments (BBC, Ayub Arwin).

The tribal elders had a considerable role in the management of the fundamental projects in rural areas and were used as coordinators between the government and rural communities. Furthermore, the tribes' leaders and aristocrats could hold a Jirga for conflict resolution in rural areas. This role has been preserved by the government throughout history, at the same time, the tribal leader, landlord, elder of the people who held a traditional position among the people, had tangible roles in terms of state-building in Afghanistan "Although tribal leadership is decentralised and diffuse, tribal identities can still be mobilised by charismatic leaders. It is often the case, however, that those individuals who are able to mobilize tribes into cohesive political movements gain positions in strictly non-tribal organisations. Such leaders emerge as heads of political parties, business groups, or armed factions." (Dininio, & Carter, 2010).

The Taliban represent the pure tribal segment of Pashtun society in Afghanistan that follows the fundamental tribal principles of Pashtunwali: *Nang, Melmastia, badal, Turburwali, Jirga, nanawati* - these principles are not written - rather they are unwritten law that the elders by word of mouth used to preserve the Pashtunwali principles. However, these principles embodied in Sharia and Islamic principal 'Jirga' 'Shura Olama' mean religious leaders' decisions concerning the nation fate and political issues. (Mohiuddin, 2016; Zahid, 2013). According to Ruttig, "There are no permanently fixed places on the Pashtun genealogical tree and no eternal unchanging tribal institutions. Much of what is told about them are myths and idealised versions of a golden past that probably never existed in

a pure form and definitely not across the Pashtun areas in the same way. Versions of Pashtunwali differ by locale. They are locally called *nirkh* which means price and refers to the different prices used to settle blood feuds, i.e., '*badal*', which means exchange". (Ruttig, 2010). The Taliban on the one hand accommodates single ethnic principles or tribal values in the country and on the other hand, they accommodate the 'Sharia' law and speak of the 'Islamic Emirate system' or the Emirate political system of Islam, whereas the abhorrent and nonhumanitarian approach of the Taliban against the non-Pashtun ethnicities shows an ethnic rift in the country, rather associated with Islamic Fundamentalism or Islamic radicalism. In the tribal vision of the Taliban, Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara ethnic groups are somehow condemned for being an open society, more enlightened than the closed society of the Pashtun. Taliban and their governance are based on two values: tribal values and their view of themselves as superior to the rest of ethnicities, as throughout history the Pashtun leaders enslaved Hazaras and suppressed ethnicities.

In a recent book by Abdul Hakim Haqqani, one of the Taliban officials wrote regarding the Taliban ideological battle against the post-Taliban regime and the characteristics of Talib soldiers. He emphasizes Pashtun culture and defines "real Pashtun as the one who strictly fights and never accepts surroundings, never letting others get the upper hand, ultimately they are very offensive". These are the elements that exist in Pashtunwali (the cultural code of Pashtuns), however, Haqqani associates himself with good Muslim characteristics or the Mujahid. After taking power the Taliban committed numerous atrocities and killings of innocent people based on ethnic calculation. The society of Afghanistan and ethnicities unconsciously categorized the Pashtuns as possessing the Talib, and tribal identity. When mentioning Pashtun, everyone thinks of the Taliban. When mentioning Hazaras, people think of an enlightened ethnic. The society of Afghanistan according to the Taliban is strongly inclined towards Paganism and false Western social manners though, in the twenty years of Western allies' countries' presence in Afghanistan, the society's manners have changed to Western manners. In reality, the Afghan society's manners ought to be changed to Islamic and should steer the people towards an Islamic lifestyle. This argument rather relies on a more precise point of view of 'Sharia' than any other rational sources,. Rather, it relies on a tribal perspective regarding women.

The differences between the closed society and the open society in Afghanistan relate to ethnicities and the worldview of each ethnicity (Tajik, Pashtun, Hazara, and Uzbek)

varying from each other, though, they belong to different cultures, and each has its own worldview of modern phenomena. Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks also use the same method as Pashtuns to hold gathering for conflict resolution in rural areas. However, there is no precise cultural code to be observed in and named *Jirga* as the Pashtuns do. *Begs, Arbabs, and Khan* are common words for those who locally have natural authority in the sub-regions and hold gatherings (*Shura*) and these concepts are common almost in all ethnicities, with, however, different approaches and visions (The International Legal Foundation, 2004). The feature of the closed society that the Taliban represent is "A herd or a tribe in being a semi-organic unit whose members are held together by semi-biological ties – kinship, living together, sharing common efforts, common dangers, common joys, and common distress" (Balcerczyk, 2018; Ibrahimi, 2019, p. 47).

8.7. Summary

Tribalism and fundamentalism, as the two predominant phenomena in Afghanistan society, have been significant hurdles against the state and development throughout history. Fragility and collapse of the state have had social and political aspects. In both realms a compound of tribal and fundamentalist Islam was changed into an influential norm that changed the society in favour of radical Islam, albeit external factors have increased the radical and tribal notions in the country that led to a bottom-up change in the community. The bottom-up radicalisation from a religious perspective begins with madaras. *Mullahs* often led these institutions in the country and recruited young boys and girls to educate them with "Islamic knowledge." Poverty and lack of awareness of Islamic Knowledge among rural people caused religious agents to recruit them efficiently and radicalise the rural areas. Most of the religious institutions since 2001 were established in rural areas to manipulate the major segment of society where nearly seventy percent of Afghan people live in rural areas. However, the demand for the religious establishment and 'Islamic education' varies. The Southern part of Afghanistan which is predominantly Pashtun, is different from the central parts of Afghanistan where there are the Hazara, and where the Tajik and Uzbek community are not as willing to accept the establishment of religious schools as Pashtuns are.

The convergence between tribalism and fundamentalism in Afghanistan seems that both phenomena support each other and there is no rift between these values. In other definitions, tribalism and fundamentalism have had permanent associations that according to findings, they are the two fundamental challenges rooted in Afghanistan that both nurtured each other's values as opposed to modern values such as democracy, secularism, and the state as a rational mechanism. The political perspective is that leadership in a centralised political system has been under the control of Pashtuns as a tribal community that lives based on tribal values preserved officially in the country the norms of which could strengthen radical patterns. Secularism as a rational concept has been condemned from both fundamentalist and tribalist perspectives and is also considered an alien phenomenon. These concepts of believers have increased in society under political figures and populism, and both have been an object for external factors.

Chapter IX: Multi-ethnic Society and Political Culture Challenge in Afghanistan

9.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the political culture and deficiencies in Afghanistan whose improvement is still considered a fundamental need for the country. The first part of the chapter discusses multiculturalism and political culture in Afghanistan which the political system did not embed in order to demonstrate all ethnicities' values. The second part of the chapter discusses types of republics and democracies compared with Afghanistan's society. The third section discusses governance and political systems that have been introduced for the country, however, neither of them resolved the challenge that Afghanistan grappled with throughout history nor have they considered the diverse nature of the society.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Western bloc, many multi-ethnic societies faced conflicts stemming from the absence of equitable political systems capable of addressing interethnic divisions. While some countries managed to resolve these challenges through the adoption of federal systems, Afghanistan retained the concept of nationhood and nationality established during the formation of its modern state in 1880. Over its history, Afghanistan experienced governance through an emirate, monarchy, and absolute monarchy, with the republican system later introduced as an external influence. However, these systems failed to address the complex needs of Afghanistan's diverse society adequately.

Although certain scholars regard the period of Sardar Daud's Republic as a golden era for Afghanistan, that regime did not implement mechanisms to integrate all ethnic groups into the political system or reform its autocratic governance. Daud's Republic was characterized by a centralized and authoritarian structure, marked by the dissolution of institutions such as the Parliament, which further limited representation and inclusivity.

Most scholarly assessments of Afghanistan's historical challenges highlight a recurring theme: the persistence of governance structures that have perpetuated political and social stagnation. In the context of its ethnically diverse society, many experts advocate for a political system that promotes equality, justice, and the inclusion of diverse values while

fostering democratic foundations. Nevertheless, Afghanistan has yet to implement a political framework that allows its citizens and ethnic groups to elect local officials, a hallmark of effective democratic practice.

Two critical aspects of state-building and democracy have been consistently overlooked in Afghanistan: the multi-ethnic nature of its society and the successful models employed by other multi-ethnic nations. While experts frequently propose political systems that advocate a hierarchical control from the national to local levels, such approaches—when implemented within a historically unitary system—have resulted in societal instability and chaos rather than peace and justice.

9.2. The Political Culture

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ascendancy of the Western bloc, many multi-ethnic societies encountered conflicts rooted in the absence of equitable political systems to address interethnic divisions. Nevertheless, several nations adopted alternative solutions, often implementing federal systems or other frameworks to accommodate diverse populations. Afghanistan, however, continued to adhere to the same concept of nation and nationality established during the formation of the modern state in 1880. Despite experiencing various governance models, including an emirate, absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy, and republican system, these approaches failed to effectively address the needs of its diverse society. Consequently, Afghanistan struggled to achieve social development or foster a coherent, ethical transformation from a traditional and tribal society.

Many scholars have yet to provide a definitive solution to Afghanistan's historical challenges. They often highlight the repetition of governance systems that have perpetuated decades of stagnation, maintaining control within traditional and fundamentalist circles. Given Afghanistan's mosaic society, experts argue for a political system that guarantees equality and justice among ethnicities, incorporates diverse values, and nurtures democratic foundations. However, Afghanistan has never implemented a system that allows ethnic groups and citizens to elect local officials, fostering a sense of connection and trust in the government.

Two critical realities of democracy and state-building have been overlooked in Afghanistan: the multi-ethnic composition of its society and the political frameworks adopted by other multi-ethnic nations, from the Balkans to Africa and the Middle East. These fundamental diversities significantly influence societal norms and attitudes toward governance and political decision-making.

The culture of any society, deeply rooted in traditions and ideas, profoundly impacts human behaviour and political decisions, playing a crucial role in shaping democracy. Political culture, defined as the collective awareness of a nation's rights, is a cornerstone of democratic governance, reflecting the people's will and aspirations. However, the expression of these rights varies across nations due to differing cultural attitudes, worldviews, and societal norms that comprise political culture.

As political culture becomes more rational and dynamic, societal responsibility increases, prompting governments to align more closely with the people's will and become responsive to their needs. The responsiveness of regimes and governments is closely tied to the level of political consciousness within society and the social contract that underpins governance (Rashidi & Zia, 2019). In Afghanistan's case, the lack of a rational and inclusive political culture has hindered its progress toward a democratic and just state.

Although the concept of political culture has long been recognized and studied in Western political and social literature, it remains underdeveloped in the context of Afghanistan. Despite efforts to understand societal political attitudes—a crucial aspect for political and social planners—political culture in Afghanistan is not well comprehended. This lack of understanding necessitates research into the inadequacies of Afghanistan's political culture and the factors that hinder its development.

Political culture encompasses various elements, including personalities, beliefs, values, norms, customs, traditions, and national heroes, which collectively shape a nation's political personality. However, defining political culture remains challenging due to its abstract nature, often requiring an analysis that integrates its two main components: culture and politics. Historically, the scope of politics was narrowly focused on governance and societal administration. Since the 1960s, however, behavioural research expanded political science to encompass broader topics, including gender, race, and class, emphasizing politics

as an integral aspect of all social relations rather than being confined to government institutions.

In cultural studies, political issues are often considered through the lens of cultural attitudes and perceptions. Charles de Montesquieu, in The Spirit of the Laws (1748), offered an analysis of political culture, emphasizing that cultural characteristics are more influential than legal institutions in shaping governance. Montesquieu argued that political culture is shaped by climatic conditions and forms the foundation upon which legal and political institutions are built, creating a relationship between the legal system, society, and government.

For underdeveloped societies, scholars often attribute societal stagnation to deficiencies in political culture. Political culture is now recognized as a vital factor in political development, a concept introduced into the political lexicon by Gabriel Almond after World War II. Almond's work sparked significant debate and led to the study of political culture as a means to understand patterns of political behaviour across societies. Lucian W. Pye defines political culture as "the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviours in the political system" (Shahrani, 1997). In Afghanistan, sentiments and beliefs about politics vary widely, shaped by religious values as the sole unifying element in a society otherwise marked by cultural and ethnic fragmentation. Ethnic groups prioritize their own interests over national cohesion, leading to a lack of trust and reliability in political interactions.

The absence of a coherent theory to link political behaviour with political culture in Afghanistan further complicates efforts to address these issues. While culture encompasses the ways of life, customs, and beliefs of various groups, its diversity, if not preserved and recognized through fair political systems, can lead to conflict. Huntington (1993) posits that culture will be a key source of conflict in the modern world, particularly due to divisions in language and religion. He cites historical examples, such as the collapse of Yugoslavia, where cultural diversity fuelled ethnic tensions and necessitated solutions like federalism, regional autonomy, or even secession. While federalism in Yugoslavia ultimately failed due to economic disparities, conflicting visions of centralization, and ethnic conflicts,

decentralization in other multi-ethnic societies has mitigated intense conflict and promoted stability.

In Afghanistan, successive regimes have maintained a centralized structure, neglecting to decentralize power in a way that could foster equitable political development and avoid conflict. Almond and Verba categorize political culture into three types: parochial, subject, and participant. In parochial political cultures, citizens are minimally aware of central government activities and have limited means of expressing demands or critiques, as seen in tribal and rural communities. In subject political cultures, citizens are more influenced by government decisions but lack avenues for opposition, characteristic of authoritarian regimes. In participant political cultures, citizens actively influence government decisions, reflecting a high degree of political awareness and the exercise of rights.

While no society exhibits these types in their pure form, Almond and Verba argue that the participatory model is the most conducive to democratic stability and advanced political systems. In Afghanistan, however, the dominance of parochial and subject political cultures highlights the need for a transformation toward greater citizen engagement and political awareness to achieve stability and development (Verba, 1965).

Political culture and political systems are deeply interconnected and mutually dependent, with political systems often deriving legitimacy from embedded symbols, myths, beliefs, and values (Inglehart, 1998). Pooja, citing Almond and Powell, highlights that political development is intrinsically linked to both political structures and political culture. Almond's developmental approach measures political development through role differentiation and subsystem independence, while political culture is evaluated through secularization and the process of socialization. This analytical framework examines political systems at three levels, drawing key theoretical insights from their interconnections (Pooja, n.d.).

According to Almond and Powell, the relationship between political systems, political development, and political culture is inevitable and cyclical. Political systems nurture and foster the growth of political development, which in turn reinforces political culture. In multi-ethnic societies, modern political culture emphasizes political integration, sustained by a robust political system that accommodates diversity. Almond posits that every political

system is rooted in a unique pattern of "orientations to political action," which he defines as political culture (Almond, 2001).

Contemporary political systems differ fundamentally from their historical predecessors. Among their key features is the extensive scope of responsibilities they bear. While this highlights governmental power, it also exposes vulnerabilities and crises when fulfilling these responsibilities. The interaction between citizens and political systems shapes public attitudes, which in turn influence individual and collective behaviour.

Political culture and ideology are often seen as closely linked. Marxists view political culture as favouring the ruling class, while scholars like Almond and Verba see it as transcending ideological values. Political culture emerges as a practical force when it moves beyond ideological constraints. The quality of interactions between the public and political systems shapes diverse types of political cultures. While some theorists argue against dividing culture into components like political culture, others find this separation necessary for systematically analysing the cultural dimensions of politics and the political aspects of culture.

In the context of Afghanistan, the lack of a fair political system has hindered the development of a sound political culture. The inability to address conflicts through equitable governance has perpetuated disorder in both social and political domains. Successive regimes have failed to establish a functional political system capable of accommodating Afghanistan's diversity, instead promoting centralized structures that stifle inclusivity. Autocratic rulers have historically sought to impose a homogenized national identity, often through assimilation policies and a strong central government.

Shahrani (2012) identifies four key factors that have negatively impacted Afghanistan's political and social fabric since the formation of the modern state in 1880:

Kingship (monarchic/unitary sovereignty): This legacy entailed exclusive sovereignty by rulers from a single ethnic group, predominantly Pashtun elites, over other groups.

Kinship (tribalism and familism): Authority in rural areas often rested with tribal leaders, creating a localized political dynamic that influenced national politics.

Pashtunwali (the Pashtun code of honour): This cultural code perpetuated patriarchal and tribal rivalries, particularly among Pashtun factions like the Durrani and Ghilzai tribes, whose historical conflicts over power, territory, and resources persist.

State dependency on foreign subsidies: This undermined Afghanistan's political economy and fuelled systemic corruption.

Kinship-based politics and nepotism have been particularly corrosive, fostering mistrust in governance and stifling efforts at nation-building. The dominance of patrilineal and patriarchal values in national politics has created persistent tensions and conflicts, especially among tribal factions vying for power. Shahrani (2012) notes that these internal rivalries have been a recurring theme in Afghan history.

Nepotism, deeply ingrained in Afghanistan's governance, has eroded trust in political institutions and fuelled corruption. In the past two decades, during the West's support of a democratic framework, corruption among political leaders, parliamentarians, and military officials became a critical challenge to state-building. The widespread nature of this issue was labeled a "cancer" by U.S. leaders and was a significant factor in the collapse of Afghanistan's governance structures (UNODC, 2012).

Addressing Afghanistan's political culture requires not only institutional reform but also the creation of a political system that reflects and respects the country's diversity. Only through such measures can Afghanistan move toward a stable and inclusive political culture that fosters national cohesion.
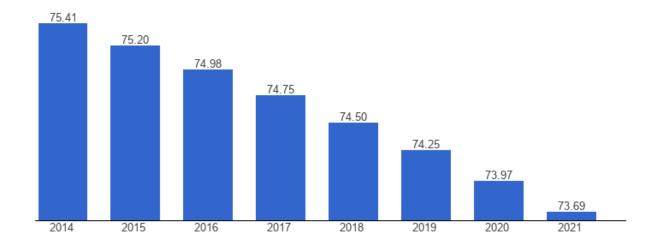
9.3. The Social Structure of the Country

Afghanistan's society, despite its ethnic diversity, has historically been organized into four primary modes of life: nomadic, rural, urban, and tribal. These categories provide insight into the structure of society and illustrate the interplay between these forms of life, political culture, and government attitudes, particularly in the context of the social contract. The dominant figures within these societal categories—clerics, aristocrats, and local lords— have historically wielded significant influence, often undermining the reach of government authority and political legitimacy in rural areas. In these regions, mullahs and aristocrats

maintain strong sway over the populace, who are largely unaware of their civic responsibilities or the concept of a social contract with the government.

Statistics from The Global Economy and various analyses of Afghanistan's political culture between 1960 and 2021 reveal that 73.69% of the population resided in rural areas, with the remainder living in urban centres. This rural-urban divide highlights a stark contrast in political culture. According to Almond's framework of civic political culture, rural populations in Afghanistan are largely detached from governmental processes and political decisions. They not only lack engagement with political activities but often fail to recognize the government and its official authority altogether.

The diagram and percentages underscore the challenges of fostering a cohesive political culture in Afghanistan, where rural communities remain isolated from the structures and expectations of governance. This disconnect has implications for state-building and the development of a more inclusive political system.

This deficiency stems from the dysfunctionality of the government and its inability to develop rural areas or integrate rural populations through foundational projects, which could have fostered a sense of affinity and civic responsibility among them.

The key variables shaping Afghanistan's political culture—religious culture, tribal culture, ethnocentrism, regional culture, and paternalistic values—significantly influence the political and social trajectory of the country. Religion, as a shared cultural element and institution, exerts a profound bottom-up impact on the political sphere. Moreover, there

appears to be a tacit understanding or alliance between tribal leaders, mullahs, aristocrats, and political leaders.

The government's preferential approach toward aristocrats, regional lords, mullahs, and self-styled nobility has further solidified the power and influence of these groups within society, often to the detriment of broader national development and cohesion.

9.4.   Patriarchal Culture

Patriarchal beliefs in Afghanistan have historically targeted women, restricting their participation in society, education, and public life. These restrictions are deeply rooted, particularly in tribal areas where women are often confined to domestic roles, and their education is deemed unnecessary. The societal taboo surrounding women's education and awareness has persisted across history. As Moghadam (2002) notes, "Historically, the public rights of men—their prerogatives, privileges, and power—were formulated in contradistinction to the disempowerment of women and women's relegation to the private sphere and to domesticity." Similarly, during the 1980s, Afghan women were "held hostage to the notion that women's rights were Western, and that the modernising government of Afghanistan was merely replicating the so-called bankrupt Western (or Soviet) model" (Hawthorne & Winter, 2002, p. 261).

Two primary factors underpin the restriction of women's rights in Afghanistan. The first is a tribal perspective that enforces such limitations, and the second is religious fundamentalism, often propagated by mullahs, local lords, and aristocrats, who justify women's subjugation using religious narratives and interpretations of Quranic verses.

Efforts to reform women's roles began in the 1920s, as nationalists and modernisers sought to include women in political and social life. However, these reforms faced fierce opposition, with women's political participation becoming a rallying point for conservative backlash. During the Marxist-Islamist conflict of the 1980s, women's rights became a contested battleground. Marxists advocated for women's emancipation and political involvement, while jihadist forces intensified restrictions against them (Moghadam, 2002).

Women's marginalisation in Afghanistan is also deeply embedded in cultural codes and endorsed by successive autocratic regimes, which often limited women's participation in political and state institutions. Shahrani (1997) highlights that these restrictions stem from cultural norms and a lack of political will to empower women.

According to Erfan's survey, Afghan women face two major obstacles in political and public life: illiteracy and cultural barriers. The survey also revealed ethnic and regional variations in attitudes. For example, Uzbeks expressed the most trust in political structures but the least trust in politicians, while Pashtuns largely opposed women's participation in politics. Notably, higher education levels correlated with more progressive views on women and democracy (Erfan, 2021, pp. 4–5).

The first significant effort to break societal taboos on women's roles came during King Amanullah's reign, which supported women's education and activism. The regime introduced Ershad ul Naswan, a women-led publication aimed at empowering women and advocating for their rights. However, to appease conservative backlash and end societal unrest, Amanullah ultimately compromised in 1929 by legalising practices like underage marriage and polygamy, undermining his earlier reforms (Fatima, 2021, pp. 5–7).

9.5.   A Historical Perspective of Political Culture in Afghanistan

Although political culture is a modern phenomenon pioneered by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, classical behaviourists, in the context of "Civic Culture" (1963), regarding the historical perspective of the political culture in Afghanistan goes back to the formation of modern Afghanistan (1747, 1880 and 1929) and after, where one autocratic regime after another sequentially inherited unstable ethnocentric regimes (Shahrani, 2012). Amanullah's socio-political reform could have paved the way for political development, political culture and social evolution, however, these steps toward changing from a traditional political culture to a participatory political culture in the country, caused the opponent segment (*mullahs*, aristocrats, and lord) to absorb the people's attention by condemnation of the amir's socio-political reform. The political culture and lack of such a nuanced phenomenon in the country traces its roots back to political instability in the country, such that the transaction of political power has rarely been peaceful.

Ethnicities and their historical associations to empires and power dynasties in the country are different, and each considers the inheritance of different powers throughout history. However, the political culture history in Afghanistan according to Daud Erfan ascribes to Ariana, Avesta, Achaemenid, and Kushani periods. Admittedly, societies and nations have been specified based on their historical values and heritages demonstrating their historical roots. As well as in Afghanistan, ethnicities ascribe their antiquity to the different empires and dynasties and consider them their the predecessors (Erfan, 2021). However, the intense challenge against political culture in the country is the identity dilemma, political system, and multi-cultural society that nationalities feel deprived of, according to de Montesquieu "its most fundamental element is that of identity, which combines a definition of the individual and his role within society with both complementary communities as well as geographical and ideological loyalties" (de Montesquieu, 1748, p. 561).

The homogenisation of ethnicities by an autocratic regime and the ignoring of identities in Afghanistan often broadened the rifts and disloyalties of ethnicities regarding regimes and politics. According to Sadr's quote, Kymlicka has "nine policies that regimes one after another adopted which consider homogenisation in Afghanistan: (1) adoption of the official language; (2) construction of a nationalised system of compulsory education; (3) centralisation of power; (4) the diffusion of dominants groups languages and culture through institutions of state; (5) adoption and celebration of the dominant culture history and symbols; (6) the construction a unified legal system; (7) adoption of resettlement policies to dilute the density of minorities certain areas; (8) the seizure of land and forest formerly belonging to minority groups; and (9) the adoption of immigration policy that favours those how to know the dominant language" (Sadr, 202 p. 98).

Afghanistan experienced different regimes after the formation of the modern state. Each regime adopted a different approach and different policies over the society that in the previous chapter was mentioned as enforced nationalism. Just as the sub-nationalisms in Afghanistan were formed that each minority tries for its own interests and ethnic interest is preferred over national interest. The political culture can still be analysed just the same, as autocracy and tyranny leading to sub-nationalism and also sub-culture. The lack of political culture in Afghanistan is rooted in tyrannical tribal regimes and the formation of inappropriate nationalism in a multicultural society. Governments and regimes often

endeavoured only to maintain political power and the identity patterns in the country and it does not seem that regimes attempted political stability through a rational approach. Neither centralised nor authoritarian regimes, nor the lack of political stability led to a dominant political culture in Afghanistan. However, the political culture that revolutions developed especially after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is different. In a historical period, individual freedom and politics have been somewhat methodical, religious paradigms such as Jihad and Sharia orientation did not existed in society in an extreme way, and no government in Afghanistan had succeeded in forming the concept of political culture rooted in a political approach. This is because the concepts that shape the infrastructure of political culture and the patterns that contribute to the formation of political culture with respect to the plural society are absent in all regimes. Later, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, religious culture was introduced as a political culture, as religious patterns and systems based on religious principles prevailed in society. The Mujahideen government, the rise of the Taliban in 1994, and the introduction of fundamentalist models through religious institutions created a radical, dogmatic culture, whose political legitimacy was never based on elections. In the last 20 years when the West was present in Afghanistan, government efforts were still based on the patterns of the past, not based on the cultural and diverse reality of Afghanistan society. The underdevelopment of Afghanistan and the slowness of the process of modernity can also be found in the lack of political stability in Afghanistan in the absence of political culture. Political culture depends on changing the paradigm of governance and a centralised system to a decentralised one. When it comes to the underdevelopment of societies, a number of thinkers believe that the roots of this underdevelopment should be sought in their political culture. Today, one of the most important concepts in political development literature is the concept of political culture. The concept was introduced into world political literature after World War II by Almond and today has sparked much controversy.

Afghanistan has all the three types of political culture, enumerated by Almond and Reba: participatory political culture, nationality, and limited political culture. All three patterns of political cultures have differed at different times and regimes. Civilised nation-states dominate a participatory political culture and elections are considered the only conduit for political legitimacy; however, Afghanistan has always gained political legitimacy illegally through coup d'état or external power factors. In addition, Afghanistan lacks

electoral experience. Participatory political culture can be seen after 2001, because Afghanistan had no experience of participating in elections. The meaning, the way and the purpose of elections ought to have been explained beforehand. But what political culture exists in Afghanistan apart from what Almond defines is ethnic political culture, shadowing political and social affairs?

Afghanistan with a political culture where people have authority over the government cannot be given the opportunity quickly, unless the political system is changed. Society does not have a dynamic influence, and identity cannot be resolved, a decentralised system is not formed. The implementation of these basic issues will help Afghanistan to become a nation-state. In the absence of these concepts, the state remains fragile, and society involved. From the sociological and anthropological outlook in Afghanistan and the dominant structure in Afghanistan are distinct from other societies. In the first step 'people consider their own interests 'in the second step relatives, 'in the third step ethnicity, 'in the fourth step, the tribe 'in the fifth step the interests of the state are concerned.

According to Carrol and Anderson: "They see themselves as first belonging to their family, their extended family, their clan, their tribe, their ethnic group, and then part of Afghanistan. This further compounds ethnic divisions within the country and creates an atmosphere necessitating strong local governance. In fact, this has led to local governance and a dislike of external influence upon local authority. The Afghan local governmental system is based upon family, clan, tribal, and ethnic backgrounds. In many of its dynamics, it is very similar to a federal system in its make-up. They have a resolution of routine issues at the lowest level of government, raising major issues to a *Jirga* or a meeting of the clan leaders." (Carrol & Anderson, 2020).

9.6.   Federalism as an Ultimate System of Unitary

Nationalist leaders have had apprehensions regarding the decentralised structure of power in Afghanistan and based on this apprehension have often resisted and proclaimed that decentralisation of power led to disunity and disintegration of the country, as well as the federal system and decentralisation of power in the country emphatically nurturing the local warlords, creating further misogyny among ethnics, leading to the cessation of ethnics'

roles, and destabilising the country. Also, a misunderstanding of the concept of unity exists in certain non-Pashtun leaders who often emphasise convergency between ethnicity, nationalism, and preservation of the unitary system for the cohesiveness of nationalities emphasised by certain non-Pashtun leaders. However, this does not demonstrate all the nationalities' will. These apprehensions regarding the decentralisation of political power in the country among Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks originate from a fallacious notion of unity among ethnicities and the fact that they are reluctant to accept a federal system, whilst Federalism in multi-ethnic and rough terrain countries has resulted in cooperation. Would federalism lead to cession and disintegration of the country? From which perspective can federalism be cooperative and requisite for Afghanistan?

I argue that the challenge of Afghanistan is the governance system and federalism can be a suitable form for managing this challenge, reducing antagonism among ethnicities, by others stating federalism is also an option for governance for Afghanistan. From another angle, federalism can give authority to each ethnicity's political rights which are already inhabited in different zones and federalism enables local authority and local elections as well as creating a close link between local authority and the government. Decentralisation of political power in the context of the federal system would lead the country toward political development and boost rural development including minor facilities, which Afghanistan has been deprived of.

After all the revolutions and conflict, the new regimes once again follow the same approach and system and the same centralised political structure which caused revolutions. There has been no wide range of discussion on the distribution of political power, and the conflict did not allow a chance for discussion to get consensus regarding any political system. Even in the case of there being no conflict, the structure that accumulates power vertically seems passive for the country. From another perspective, the centralisation of power is incompatible with Afghanistan's mountainous, rough terrain. The country experienced governance which often focused on certain areas and centralisation did not provide grounds for development and opportunity for the people. Villages that were never visited by the police representing the law exist and live with the primitive conditions of the state of nature.

Afghanistan and its mountainous identity have not been discussed from a developmental perspective and have always been a core question for the state. According to Carrol and Anderson "In addition to ethno-centralism, the geography of Afghanistan lends itself to further isolation of ethnic groups. Afghanistan is characterised by large mountains and sweeping desert like expanses. These features isolate even smaller groups within the same ethnic group". (Carrol & Anderson, 2009). Flat geography can be manageable in a centralised system; however, such a system does not have enough efficacy and efficiency in rugged geography and rough terrain such as Afghanistan, from the perspective of local governance and the provision of facilities. In a centralised political system, legitimate violence is concentrated only in cities. However, the villages and remote areas remain undeveloped and unsecured, as the Taliban for almost 20 years after 2001 have controlled the villages and infiltrated rural areas. Rural areas of Afghanistan live with a scarcity of primary facilities, roads, schools, and clinics, and have in fact been deprived of basic amenities over the past 20 years. Undoubtedly, this is the weakness of local governance in a centralised system, which has failed in rough terrain and harsh geography.

After the Bonn Conference post-2001, the unitary system was chosen based on the monopoly of legitimate violence to prevent illegal violence and warlords' hegemony in Afghanistan, to control a war-torn country through a top-down system. However, the unitary system to the contrary did not end that cooperation for Afghanistan as expected by the West. According to Badakhshani narrated by Liphart, a unitary system in a multi-ethnic society is incompatible (Badakhshani, 2020).

Insecurity in the country did not allow for the formation of a law-abiding society in Afghanistan. The main hindrance has been the regimes and a system that could not provide the people's fundamental rights, security, welfare, and justice. These essential elements could come out of a sound political system and a bottom-up governance system to distribute political power fairly and also highlight all minorities' rights, importantly welfare. This is the other part of the centralised system that has been savaged regarding its weakness compared with a decentralised system of political power.

However, federalism as a political structure is often proposed to resolve ethnic challenges over political power whereas Afghanistan as a multi-ethnic country suffers from

political fragility, identical issue and social instability. The request by some politicians to resolve political challenges in Afghanistan suggests decentralisation of the political system in the federal structure. Federal structure on the one hand removes the collective destiny out of the authority of the individual, the people own their rights and are enabled, as well as the local institutions find the authority to function, while on the other hand, identity issues in the federal structure seem to be considered manageable.

In the past chapters, the fragility of the government in Afghanistan throughout history was discussed, and the main problems of the government in Afghanistan were the lack of balance of power in the central government and the deprivation of the necessary authority of the provinces. Therefore 'the federal solution is often proposed to solve identity problems rather than the balance of power, division of political power and giving authority to the locals to appoint their local officials. Identity issues are a time-consuming topic that can be solved in the long run, even in the federal context.

What strengthens the federal theory in Afghanistan is the inclusion of ethnicities in different and distinct geographies, which simplifies the federalisation of the country, where Pashtuns mainly live in the South, Tajiks and Uzbeks mainly in the North, Hazaras mainly in the centre and other ethnicities in different villages and cities in the federal framework will have equal rights. In previous regimes even in the Emirate system, with a strongly centralised, stable system based on old ways and patterns, local did not have a minor role in appointing locals and half of the society, the women's segment were paralysed. In general, the main challenge in the regime of the last 20 years was the appointment of local officials by the central government, leading to major challenges and bloody events in the provinces, because people had no role in appointing local officers and local organs were not responsive to people's problems. Therefore, the federal system in Afghanistan enables local institutions and councils on the one hand, with people and government officials, on the other hand, coming into a harmonious, convergent existence. In fact the federalisation of Afghanistan is also more important in terms of governance because struggles for possession of political power and competition among the ethnicities have been shattered and have collapsed throughout history. Proponents of decentralisation believe that decentralisation of political participation will increase accountability and administrative and financial effectiveness and

argue that eliminating the centralised system will lead to budget shortages, 'macroeconomic instability'peasant' culture and the development of bureaucracy in the country. However, often the supporters of federalism in Afghanistan continue to propose federalism as a prescription for solving identity issues, but what is questionable is how will nationalism which is based on the identity of a particular ethnic group be resolved. According to Badakhshani, the federal government as an orderly structure can still solve the identity problem where sub-nationalisms already emerge, and zones are based on ethnic inhabitation. Afghanistan does not have the nationalism to demonstrate ethnic values, but a single ethnic value is recognised as the national pattern. In other words, the nation-state is introduced by nationalism. Such a nationalism to introduce a nation-state in Afghanistan has not been formed to embed all nationalities' values in Afghanistan. Therefore, what critics are concerned about with the federal system in Afghanistan is the disintegration of the unity among ethnicities, although there has not been unity and convergence in the political arena. Afghanistan 'as a multi-ethnic country' must experience federalism to prove it can solve ethnic issues and the political power conundrum in the country. Rahimi believes decentralisation of power on the basis of two other hypotheses is also necessary, but not within a federal structure, but in the context of a parliamentary system.

Administrative decentralisation signifies a set of policies that qualify for central and local administration of service activities in various fields. Similarly, financial decentralisation stands for a set of policies that increase revenues to local government or provide new grounds for taxation for local government. Political decentralisation means amendments to the constitution or amendments to the law. This includes elections to facilitate the representation and participation of local governments or the election of political actors at local government level, such as the election of mayors and governors, who were previously appointed from the centre by the prime minister or the president (Rahimi, 2020).

My argument is that the fundamental problem of regimes in the way of governance is wrongly viewed and involves neglect of a few basic issues that play a major role in state-building. Mountainous geography, regionalism and local institutions, the establishment of distant tribes and the lack of rural development have been other vacuums of governments especially during 20 years of a republic backed by the U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan. As for centralised government and administration under one individual 'the U.S. favoured

the establishment of a centralised republic 'and this was certainly in the interests of the predominantly Pashtun politicians who were reluctant to accept a system that divided political power. A centralised government in Afghanistan was also in the interests of the Americans 'and with this kind of government, they could work more quickly in coordination and closeness than with a non-centralised system. The Constitution after 2001 had significantly delegated major powers to the president. After the election of 2004, the president appointed cabinets of various ethnicities. In 'he first round of Karzai's rule, key ministries were largely in the hands of the Pashtuns. Polyethnic rights, as the weakest rights in Afghanistan, along with the recognition of individual and ethnic rights and values, focus mainly on the recognition of the multi-ethnic languages, cultures, and cultural values. However, in Afghanistan, ethnicity rights even in the post-2001 republic constitutions also ignored languages, except for two official ones: Persian and Pashtu. The remaining languages were not recognised.

Polyethnic rights often challenge two processes: that of assimilation which is the fundamental path and norm of autocratic states and centralised structures, and recognition of ethnic rights based on multicultural norms, including challenges to the integration process, (recognising and strengthening the cultural values of minorities. Autocratic regimes feel threatened for fear that the central government could lose its authority. Regardless of these patterns, it is not possible to form a nation-state in multi-ethnic societies, and the experiences of multi-ethnic states are shaped by what Adeney presents as a model. The idea of the constitution in Afghanistan as a multi-fabric society was fundamentally wrong and lacked a comprehensive analysis of the multi-layered society and historical events in Afghanistan where the regimes went from fragility to collapse.

"Kymlicka usefully distinguishes between several different types of political recognition: self-governing rights, representation rights, and polyethnic rights. The main institutional choices arising from these categories relevant to Afghanistan concerning whether the country should become a federation or a unitary state, whether it should be a presidential or parliamentary democracy, and whether consociationalism of power-sharing in elected and non-elected institutions of the state should be adopted." (Adeney, 2008)

Two major views have been expressed regarding Afghanistan as a multi-fabric society, one is that Adeney, quoting Kymlicka, believes that ethnic rights should be recognised in

any kind of federal, non-federal or presidential system. The purpose of recognising these rights would certainly demand the creation of a constitution based on pluralistic values and the sharing of political power, which often political experts consider the 2004 constitution free of values that trigger the creation of a nation-state and form a fair inclusive nationalism too. In order to strengthen constitutional democracy, it is necessary that the constitutions should be formed to pave the way for democracy, and the convergence and cooperation of the state and the nation in the issue of legislation on the part of the state and the regulatability on the part of the society is possible (Rahimi, 2020, Adeney, 2008).

Historically, the struggle against external phenomena and authoritarian regimes has been structurally federal, but fear about the establishment of a decentralised system in Afghanistan for fear that ethnic "unity" would collapse, emphasised on concentration of political power as the factor of unity. Bottom-up struggles and top-down management have been the constant contradiction of governance and political literature throughout Afghanistan's history. In fact, these two approaches fundamentally and structurally are in contradiction, however, attempts at a truce between the two contradicted each other, led to failure, and further broadened the rifts instead of unity which often emphasised and was expected to lead to a flagrant contradiction. The main fragility of the state in Afghanistan was rooted in this futile effort that ignored the differences and organic structure of ethnicities. Although due to encroachment and political instability after the 28th April 1978 Saur revolutions in the country, Afghanistan did not find an opportunity to change the political system, war existed sequentially. Following that, the Bonn agreement was not a fair opportunity for making a political system, rather after the Bonn agreement, it was considered a fair space for changing the political structure in Afghanistan and taking into account diversity and the political power dilemma. Americans apparently requested opinions from different figures, however, they were precisely looking for the advice which sees their interest in the dilemma and their desire to endorse it just for legitimacy, as well as in the Bonn agreement there was no discussion of the decentralization of power and the ethnic dilemma. The core discussion was the appointment of a transitional government leader and fundamental task for the new-born interim government and according to Carrol (2009) "The Bonn Conference neglected the development of lower level governance at the provincial and district level". According to non-Pashtuns perceptions, although they are aware of political history and the roots of conflict in Afghanistan, they still insist on the

centralised and autocratic regimes for the sake of unity. Fear and delusion of decentralisation one way or another indoctrinated by nationalist leaders throughout history and the existence generally among ethnicities of elites who consider it a taboo to decentralise political power, even discussion of federal system for most of leaders was deemed personally degrading for fear of not appearing localist or separatist. However, struggles and resistance to external factors and revolutions throughout history have been from different zones based on ethnicities, each ethnic group has been successful in its territory, in the same way that it is taking shape today. Tajik and Pashtun follow Uzbeks and Hazaras who are standing fast on their fronts versus the Taliban, as well as during the Jihad against the Soviet Union, have resisted the Taliban in both periods before 2001 and today. Their separate stand has been successful enough, however, after the all triumph, for the sake of unity and prevention of disintegration, often insisting on a top-down system. After the fall of the Soviet Union which the Mujahideen considered a big success, in the last stage after a Communist regime, factions tangled with each other to make a unitary system and endeavoured to achieve the unity, which was considered a political taboo, and never matured in Afghanistan. The de-centralisation of political power, emphatically federalism in multiple ethnic countries is a form of modern nationalism (Gerken, 2014). In the centralised structure and autocratic regime the nationalist form based on autocratic values in diverse society is conditional, however. Ignoring the society norms and making nationalism is flogging a dead horse.

9.7. Summary

Afghanistan is a multicultural society with different lifestyles, society and political visions. The cultural values and world views of the ethnicities and attitudes of nationalities vary regarding fundamental issues, such as religion, women, politics and the state. Although there are numerous commonalities among ethnicities, autocratic regimes could not bring cohesion among ethnic groups and support the values of nationalities in the country. Democracy often fails in a country due to the incompatibility of some nationalities' democratic values as the prerequisite of democracy - the social stability and literacy of the Afghanistan society due to political instability and dysfunctionality of the regime throughout history, deprived of education and awareness regarding government. On the

other hand, the regime's dysfunctionality and politics have broadened the ethnic rifts. These rifts, which originate in politics, have caused a sub-political culture. Political culture in Afghanistan based on multiethnicity changed to multi-cultural political culture in each ethnicity, focusing on their belonging to a race and belonging to regions, a language and a tribe. Each nationality has its heroes, leaders and patterns; no national value exists. This is the result of ignoring the multiculturality of the country and the assimilation of the ethnicities in the country through regimes and politicians that ignored the reality of the society in the country throughout history since the modern state of Afghanistan. Religion, as the typical culture, strengthened traditional law and diminished the role of government in rural areas, even in the cities. Religious circles, not wanting to lose their nobility in society, felt it necessary to preach negatively regarding democracy, state, human rights, women's rights, and politics; instead, they endeavour to strengthen the customary laws in the society that preserving the customary law guarantee the religious circle authority and nobility in the society. Thereby, the influence of clerics' circles compared with a politician or, according to Gramsci, organic intellectuals, has been dominant enough in a society that led people's minds against any alien phenomenon. On the other hand, the community of Afghanistan has not inherited a reliable, responsible government throughout history to create loyalty to the citizens and strive for education and the literacy of the nationalities.

Chapter X: Summary

10.1. Summarized Conclusions

Afghanistan's political history has been controversial and full of ups and downs. Governments in all forms of emirates, monarchies, prime ministerial systems, and republics, yet the political trajectory and the foundation of these regimes have always aimed at reinforcing Afghan identity and nationalism. Many books articles have been written about Afghanistan's identity, independence, and nation-state. However, this research in addition deny being a nation state, seeks the approaches and legacies of Afghanistan's political regimes and to identify the fundamental gaps: where the weaknesses, fragility, and collapse of regimes originate.

Afghanistan established under the Pashtun rulers with the current boundaries, despite transitioning from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, policies of ethnic marginalization and authoritarian rule persisted across regimes until today. Constitutions were used primarily to uphold the dominance of the ruling ethnic group. The monarchies from Abdur Rahman to today's Taliban aimed at maintaining stability and preserving the authority of the single ethnic by any cost. The period in which monarchic regimes relatively worked on governance and administration came after Amanullah. It can be said that the state institution, along with the expansion of ministries, parliament, and the senate, became more familiar to the people after Amanullah's reign, only in capital. However, the parliament and the senate had no real popular authority to enact rules; they were merely symbolic, as decisions and laws were ultimately approved by the king's decree. Giving authority to any institutions was a threat to Pashtun political power dynasty, thus, from Amanullah to Zahir Shah Parliament and Senate did not have authority of enacting. In other saying balance of power threaten the royal family, thus, it was symbolic institutions. Beside Parliament the Jirga (assembly) were prevalent then, however, the jirgas member were appointed by the king. Electoral system from Amanullah till 1919 does not exist, the Shura/Jirga (assembly) system was the common.

This research found that unlike movements for reform in other nations, Afghanistan did not experience a true movement for reform as most author narrate of "constitutional movement" and "democratic movement". Constitutionalism and reform had two enemies back and even today: the autocratic government and the tribal society which often affiliate to Pashtun society both consider enemies of reform. Thus, the connotational individual dialogue, then could not find social support to subdue the government to accommodate. In existence of constitutional movements in Afghanistan seems exaggeration not true while the government and society both were opponents of constitutionalism and reforms. The rural population remained disconnected from state affairs, relying on a traditional economy independent of government influence. Governance shortcomings, including weak state control beyond urban centres, contributed to long-term political fragility. Based on this finding, central government in Afghanistan stayed in capital with relative bureaucratic.

Afghanistan, since its inception, has lacked a national government. Nationalism, which serves as the fundamental foundation for shaping nation-states, has not taken root in Afghanistan. The basic and essential element which is nationalism still does not exist in the

country. The imposition of the values of one ethnic group on all others has failed to create a national identity. What is evident instead is fragmented ethnic nationalism or sub-nationalism. Different ethnic groups strive for their own rights and consider every available means and approach to achieving those rights as legitimate and lawful. There is no national affiliation or perspective among the ethnic groups. Afghanistan's history does not record any dynamic and innovative regime that has worked towards nationalism. Critics of the government and tribal policies have always been suppressed and condemned by the autocratic regimes. The absence of nationalism in Afghanistan stems from two major factors: first, the tribalism of the Pashtuns which coerced on rest of the nationalities, what Afghan nationalist architected in history did not led to unity of ethnicities and all regimes once after another followed to institutionalize a single ethnic nationalism. Second, the dominant miss perception of religion and traditionality of the society itself, where 70% of the population resides in rural areas under the management of tribal elders or landlords. The miss perception of religion injected by Mullahs in society and the government have not been involve of directing religious issues. Literacy was equated with religious knowledge— anyone who understood the basic principle and foundations of religion was considered educated and literate person. Religious nationalism has been the only unifying factor, especially against foreign interventions, with Jihad historically mobilizing all ethnic groups. Amanullah attempted to introduce certain of reforms, however, the regional rulers, who were in reality clerics and tribal landlords, resisted these reforms and incited the people to rebel against the government. His reforms could have created opportunities for the growth of certain values and tolerance, however, the society were not prepared of such reforms. The second point regarding modern values failure in Afghanistan from early state building was social unawareness which still rural areas are in lack of understanding religion and modernity. Modernity and democracy, rational reform institutionalizations need to literate and aware society of all values. However, Amanullah's hasty decisions and failure changed a successful slogan and honour for the religious ones and institutionalized a notion in tribal areas that Amanullah evil plan abolished.

The ethnic-centric approach to political power and the preservation of tribal values has remained unchanged from the Emirate of Abdur Rahman to the Taliban's Emirate, with little difference between them. The state as an institution lacks long-term planning for society. The ruling governments have been authoritarian and oppressive in the urban

centres, while the rural areas of Afghanistan have been administered by tribal elders, landlords, and clerics. During the monarchical periods, governance remained extremely rudimentary, and the people were largely unaware of the government's role. For years, they had no knowledge of their political leader or leader of the country. The people were preoccupied with the hardships of rural agricultural life. The regimes in Afghanistan never had any significant developmental, or economic fundamental policy to bring change in rural areas. The livelihood of the people depended on traditional subsistence farming. Economic plans, even in minimal level, were only visible in city centres. Rural areas inculpabilities and illiteracy from inner perspective in Afghanistan considered a fundamental challenge of all regimes.

The failure of Amanullah reform in Afghanistan stemmed from three key factors: the incomplete development of a bourgeois social order, the absence of a structured class society, and the dominance of the tribal system. While tribal and Sharia values were intertwined, challenges to the authority of absolute monarchs—not Islamic fundamentalism or ethnic divisions—posed the greatest threat to their rule. Conversely, reforms perceived as undermining Sharia and tribal traditions provoked national resistance. Conservative society and reform Amanullah offered was inevitable, on the other hand any reform diminished the tribal, Mullahs and Arbabs authority in the region. As much conservative the society that tribal leaders benefited the people. Lack of strong administrative and bureaucratic support to enforce the reform and shed light on rules to the people. Military weakness was the fundamental challenge of the Amanullah to implement certain reforms. Poorly trained military counter revolt consider another point of failure. The relative governance which managed was rely on person not on institutions and rule. Understanding of administration did not exist in Amani regime and also after Amani until Zahir Shah's last decades. The government policy were introduced by tribal leaders and this bureaucratic approach legalized by the regimes somehow.

Unlike revolutions in other nations, Afghanistan did not experience a true grassroots movement for reform. Reform efforts were dictated by rulers rather than driven by social activism, largely due to the population's lack of literacy and awareness about governance. The rural population remained disconnected from state affairs, relying on a traditional economy independent of government influence. Governance shortcomings, including weak state control beyond urban centres contributed to long-term political fragility.

The collapse and fragility of the Afghan state since the formation of the modern state in 1880 have deep structural roots. Repeated conflicts and violent power transitions stem from weak nation-building efforts. Unlike other countries, Afghanistan's instability is closely linked to a centralized political system, ethnic divisions, tribalism, and fundamentalism.

Successive regimes suppressed opposition and new ideas, resorting to violence against rivals. Political power was concentrated in the hands of a single ruler, leading to constant bloodshed. Early conflicts among Pashtun tribes weakened Amir Abdul Rahman's authority, while later regimes continued policies of ethnic oppression, including the enslavement of Hazaras. Though Amanullah Khan and Zahir Shah introduced reforms that could have fostered dialogue, ethnic dominance, particularly by Pashtuns, remained a persistent issue.

Pashtun rulers prioritized their ethnic group, displacing and confiscating lands from Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Hazaras, which contributed to state fragility. Additionally, religious leaders (mullahs) played a crucial role in resisting modernity and suppressing intellectuals. While Amanullah pursued reforms, traditionalist mullahs retained strong influence, mobilizing society against change. This struggle between intellectuals and conservative forces has been an ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.

Although constitutions from Zahir Shah to Dr. Najibullah emphasized democracy and equality, actual governance remained ethnically biased. True equality in Afghanistan's multi-ethnic society could only be achieved by granting meaningful political space to all ethnic groups.

A turning point came in the 1960s, during Zahir Shah's "Decade of Democracy," when parliamentary democracy was introduced, offering potential for Afghanistan to evolve into a nation-state. However, earlier constitutional movements, particularly under Amanullah Khan, faced resistance from religious groups who opposed rapid modernization. The so-called constitutionalists, mainly religious figures and poets, failed to form a popular, inclusive movement, and their vision for governance remained unclear. Consequently, Afghanistan's constitutionalism remained a discourse rather than a transformative constitutional movement. Many researchers attribute Afghanistan's state failure primarily to external factors. However, this study identifies internal factors as the main contributors to the country's fragility and state failure. These include tribalism, fundamentalism, and

widespread illiteracy, which have persisted as dominant challenges for years. These three factors are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, creating societal norms that promote radical Islam, particularly through grassroots religious institutions like madrasas. Mullahs have played a pivotal role in recruiting and indoctrinating young rural populations, with poverty and illiteracy increasing susceptibility to radicalization. Since 2001, the majority of religious institutions have been established in rural areas, home to 70% of the population. These institutions have found greater acceptance in Pashtun-majority southern regions compared to the central areas inhabited by Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks.

Tribalism and fundamentalism in Afghanistan remain closely interconnected, jointly resisting modern values such as democracy and its associated principles. Secularism, in particular, has been widely rejected by tribal and fundamentalist groups, perceived as an alien and incompatible concept. Based on the research finding, the post-2001 state-building in Afghanistan was plagued by significant shortcomings. The failures of the Afghan government over the past two decades stem from historical factors and ethnic dynamics which all regimes committed. Ethnic divisions, Pashtun totalitarianism, centralized governance, the dominance of tribal leaders, and the deprivation of fundamental rights in rural areas were key structural weaknesses of the government.

Repeat of previous regimes policy as Ghani often alleged that he follow Dawood and Amanullah's policy, with this policy he lost, economic, military and political cooperation f of the West provided for Afghanistan. As well as sympathy with the Taliban due to ethnic ties with them exacerbated the situation. The Taliban, as an armed opposition group, received support from ethnic affiliates within the government. Ashraf Ghani and Hamid Karzai, both Pashtun presidents, exhibited a degree of leniency toward the Taliban, which contributed to the weakening and eventual disintegration of Afghanistan's security forces. An inclusive governance system that encompassed the entire country never materialized. Rural areas of the country, much like during the monarchical eras, remained beyond the reach of legal authority, governed instead by tribal elders, landlords, and clerics. Consequently, the population lacked exposure to legal frameworks, and the limited laws that existed were largely enforceable only in urban centres.

According to the findings of this research, the fundamental issue was that, although institutions were established, they suffered from mismanagement and a lack of

transparency—problems that have historically plagued Afghan governments. The absence of effective governance and a legal framework that concentrated power in the hands of the president, combined with the role of the Loya Jirga (which undermined the legitimacy of the parliament), posed serious challenges to the post-2001 government. Although the parliament and senate were intended to serve as authoritative decision-making bodies on national issues, however, they lacked the necessary institutional power and influence.

10.2. The New Scientific Results

- This research demonstrated that a social contract between the state and the society has not existed throughout post-1880 history formation contemporary Afghanistan, and the components of a nation-state have not yet formed in Afghanistan. Regimes has been individual, ethnical and tribal based instead of rules and institutions.

Regarding the first hypothesis that the social contract, as a fundamental principle in the formation of modern states, establishes a relationship between the state and the people, whereby the legitimacy of the government is derived from the consent of its citizens. In Afghanistan, this concept has never been fully realized, and the absence of a stable social contract remains one of the primary causes of the country's historical and contemporary crises. The most fundamental and essential factor for the qualitative development of a nation is literacy and education. Without education, the process of nation-building and the formation of nationalism consider impossible, unless the society not understand the social contract, civic values and their responsibility as the citizen. Afghanistan's mountainous geography has resulted in the majority of its people living in valleys and remote mountainous areas with minimal resources and infrastructure. Many have been deprived of education and schooling, and religious knowledge alone has not been sufficient for understanding political affairs. The key elements of state-nation formation in Afghanistan include the rule of law based on the will and collective values of all ethnic groups. This research highlights constitutional laws and the approaches of different regimes, showing that from 1880 to 1973, during the monarchical period, a repressive government was in power. Efforts toward state-nation building were Afghan-centric, defining Afghan identity

as exclusive to a single ethnic group, while other ethnic groups retained their own distinct identities, languages, and cultures.

- Nationalism as the fundamental concept have not been formed, the nationalism which architected by Mahmoud Tarzi and other Afghan nationalist, does not refer to all ethnicities in Afghanistan and the Sub-nationalism is outcome of single ethnic nationalism.

The pursuit of nationalism in Afghanistan traces back to a series of initiatives led by Mahmud Tarzi, who sought to shape nationalism in the country. The primary challenge faced by Tarzi and his associates was the incompatibility of modernity with Afghanistan's tribal traditions and Islamic values. Although Tarzi rejected the argument that religion was the cause of backwardness in Islamic societies, he firmly believed that Islam and modernity could be compatible, provided that Afghanistan's modernization program extended beyond the European-exported values that were exclusively designed for European colonies. However, prior to Tarzi's efforts, the reforms and foreign-imported values that Amanullah Khan attempted to introduce and implement in Afghanistan had sparked a conflict between modernity and traditionalism. Unlike Amanullah, Tarzi believed that Afghanistan's backwardness stemmed from internal divisions and the country's isolationist position, which led to cultural and intellectual seclusion. Based on this misguided interpretation, Tarzi sought to create nationalism in Afghanistan. However, the successive regimes that followed Tarzi's architected nationalism, remained unstable, and ethnic groups felt no attachment to their homeland but continues coercion, suppression and humiliation by the autocratic regimes.

- The study revealed that Pashtun tribalism and fundamentalism, both of which have endured over time, are the outcomes of weak, fragile, and tribally oriented regimes. Following Amanullah Khan's failure, subsequent regimes avoided interfering in religious affairs and did not challenge cleric-dominated territories. Instead, they opted to pay tribal leaders and clerics to ensure that rural areas remained loyal to the monarchy. These regimes believed that any reform affecting the traditional norms of society could provoke a popular uprising against the government. This perspective was reinforced by Abdur Rahman Khan, who advised his successor on Afghan society's resistance to reforms and modernity.

After the Durand Agreement of 1883 with the British, which left a large portion of the Pashtun population beyond the Durand border, Abdur Rahman Khan believed that he lacked the ability to control the rebellious Pashtun tribal leaders. As for the remaining Pashtun tribes within Afghanistan after the agreement, he partially suppressed them and partially entered into agreements with tribal leaders. These leaders received privileges from the state to prevent them from inciting revolts against the king.

This dynamic led to clerics (mullahs) and tribal elders gaining traditional legitimacy among the people, which elevated their status. Post-1880 regimes held the belief that maintaining close ties with tribal leaders and clerics was essential for governance. In reality, religious figures and traditional tribal leaders became sources of the state's hegemony, receiving benefits from their alliance with the government. However, whenever the state's authority threatened their power, they would mobilize uprisings against the government. As a result, no regime had the courage to challenge the authority of tribal elders and traditional leaders.

During the monarchy of Zahir Shah, Dawoud presidency and communist regimes clerics actively collaborated with the state on religious programs, and numerous councils were established to consolidate the political power of the government while reinforcing the local authority of religious leaders.

Thus, tribalism and the authority of fundamentalist clerics remained legitimate sources of power in Afghanistan, and successive regimes—whether communist or democratic—did not attempt to dismantle this deeply rooted policy of the government.

- Another key point finding is that Islamic Republic after 2001 were the same as followed by the previous regimes, same notion of state nation-building in the country. The state building after 2001 was lacking of historical and social understanding.

The post-2001 state-building effort in Afghanistan, carried out with the cooperation of the United States and European countries, was essentially a repetition of past regime structures and policy. Any system imposed without proper sociological evaluation in Afghanistan inevitably leads to collapse. Key issues such as ethnic conflicts, balance of political power, and national values were not considered. Tribalism remained intact, and fundamentalism—which had always posed a threat to governments—was still active.

Institutions that facilitated radicalization and jihad against the West in Afghanistan continued to operate without any governmental restrictions.

What was new after 2001 was the existence of numerous institutions, but they lacked commitment and transparency in management, corrupt institutions. The 2004 Constitution granted extensive powers to the President, while the Senate and Parliament had limited authority to implement legal reforms.

The collapse of the government and the Taliban's return to power were directly linked to Pashtun tribalism. Over the course of twenty years, it became clear what the fundamental challenges and primary issues of Afghanistan were. Western countries arrived in Afghanistan with all their resources, yet historical conflicts created an environment where the state was vulnerable to threats. The Taliban, as a terrorist group and armed opposition to the government, were released from prison based on ethnic considerations.

In the area of rural development, the government implemented only short-term programs, and in many parts of Afghanistan, schools and clinics remained inaccessible.

10.3. Recommendations

Afghanistan, as a multi-ethnic country that gained its independence from the British in 1919, is still considered one of the most underdeveloped nations in the world. This research explains the flawed approach to state-nation building, which has led to the weakness, fragility, and collapse of the state, as well as the failure to develop nationalism in Afghanistan. Based on this, the following recommendations are proposed to establish a strong and national government that can fill historical gaps in the future.

1. Decentralization of political power: Political power in Afghanistan must be decentralized to create a balance of power. Whether through a federal or parliamentary system, the most urgent necessity is the decentralization of the political structure. This would allow people to elect their local officials and, in turn, foster a sense of responsibility among the population. This research has demonstrated that, over the past 100 years, a bottom-up governance structure has led to instability and the collapse of the state.

2. Democracy resistance and war against modernity: The findings of this research indicate that resistance to democracy and the struggle against modernity still exist in Afghan society. In other words, Afghan society is not yet ready to embrace democracy. Establishing democracy and institutionalizing this culture and political system is challenging. Before any efforts to introduce democracy, access to education and basic facilities must be provided to the 70% of the population living in rural areas. Additionally, rural communities must be freed from the dominance of religious clerics, landlords, and tribal leaders. In Afghanistan, the influence of fundamentalists is far greater than that of the state.

3. Religious institutions and fundamentalism: Religious institutions that promote religious fundamentalism in Afghanistan, including madrassas, should gradually undergo reforms and adopt an educational curriculum. Religious institutions have held society hostage and have fostered a culture of lawlessness. People tend to adhere more to customary laws recommended by these institutions rather than formal state laws.

4. Local governance in Afghanistan: Local governance plays a crucial role in providing public services, fostering economic development, and maintaining security. Given Afghanistan's multi-ethnic structure and complex geography, a strong local governance system could have a positive impact on stability and social growth. However, Afghanistan has faced significant challenges in local governance, including excessive centralization, corruption, lack of sufficient resources, and weak local institutions. This research also highlights that the absence of effective local governance has been a major shortcoming of past governments. Weak states have failed to enforce the law in rural Afghanistan, leaving rural populations deprived of even the most basic rights.

5. A unified national identity: A single national identity that all ethnic groups can relate to is the most fundamental element of state formation in Afghanistan. The artificial identity imposed on people during monarchical regimes through coercion is no longer viable in an era of awareness and critical thinking. Non-Pashtun ethnic groups cannot be expected to accept an identity that disregards their own history and values. Without addressing the identity issue, Afghanistan will remain in deadlock. One of

the key reasons for the absence of nationalism and the rise of ethnic micro-nationalisms in Afghanistan has been the lack of a unified national identity.

10.4. The Practical Applicability of the Research Results

The potential applications of my research findings are multifaceted. There are apparent implications for Afghanistan, however the recognized findings may be utilized by the instructional network and might help international locations with inside the Middle East and Central Asia going through comparable state-constructing demanding situations in a post-battle political context. The on the spot consequences of the studies will be beneficial for a post-Taliban government.

On the other hand, my research truly provides a scholarly overview of the historical background of state-building in Afghanistan and the challenges of state-building that contains information that can be applied to other members of the academic community and can be used as a researchable source.

Furthermore, several nations in the area that have experienced or are now experiencing post-conflict or post-civil war circumstances can utilize my findings to inform government policy because of the nature of the study. Afghanistan might serve as an example that illustrates the various reasons for failure, i.e., the complex difficulties of state development, because of its diverse ethnic and religious makeup.

Countries in the Middle East and Central Asia, such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, or Iraq and Syria, are the main ones taken into consideration in terms of usability.

10.5. List of the Publications on the Topic of the Thesis by the Applicant

Title	Type	Language	Journals and Years of publications
1- The US State-Building Failure in Afghanistan	Research paper	English	*European Scientific Journal, ESJ Vol 17 No 33 (2021): ESJ Humanities*

2-	Multiethnic society and lack of political culture in Afghanistan	Research Paper	English	Journal of Politics and Law, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2023)
3-	Sub-Nationalism and Nationalism: the dilemma of power and ethnicity in Afghanistan	Research paper	English	*Beijing Law Review* Vol.14 No.2 , June 5, 2023
4-	Tribalism and Fundamentalism: The Two Fundamental Hurdles of Democracy after 2001 in Afghanistan	Research paper	English	*Beijing Law Review* Vol.13 No.2 June 30, 2022

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