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Lessons Learned from the Context of State-Building in Afghanistan

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“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

-Martin Luther King Jr

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Declaration

I, Sigrid Simensen, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

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Abstract

State-building is a popular approach to help states out of state weakness and state failure. Yet, state-building efforts have a long way to go to achieve desirable results. Reasons for inadequate state-building success have been discussed and assessed by many scholars before me. Commonly, lack of success is blamed on deeply embedded traditional structures, patronage politics and persistent insurgency.

Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCASs), where state-building measures are adopted, generally suffer from various internal problems, such as high levels of poverty, violent conflicts, derailed economies and widespread illiteracy. Conducting state-building in FCASs is therefore a difficult task. In Afghanistan, different state-building efforts by various national and international actors have been conducted for nearly two decades, yet Afghanistan still suffers from high levels of insurgency, weak democratic institutions and a weak economy.

Through a case study of state-building efforts in Afghanistan, this research explores what impact Afghanistan's local context has had on state-building efforts. Moreover, the study analyses how different stakeholders contribute to state-building and to what extent they acknowledge local context when carrying out certain state-building efforts. The thesis reveals that state-building efforts in Afghanistan have not been tailored adequately to the local context, and that this has constrained state-building's success. Deeply embedded traditional structures and forms for governance have been a major challenge to the goals envisioned by state-building policies. The thesis explains then how future state-building policies can benefit from using local context as a starting point and discusses whether traditional structures and patronage politics can be used as an asset in state-building efforts

Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
ASP	Afghan Stabilisation Programme
CN	Counter Narcotics
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DAD	Development Assistance Database
DDP	District Delivery Program
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPT	Democratic Peace Theory
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FCASs	Fragile and Conflict Affected States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPI	Good Performers Initiative
GoIRA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
ICRC	International Committee for Red Cross
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance

IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAF	International Security and Assistance Forces
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and Development
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PRTs	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction
SNTV	Single non-transferable vote
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States

WB	The World Bank
WOT	War on Terror
WW2	Second World War

Tables

Table 1. Data Collection

Table 2. Five Dimensions of Fragility

Table 3. Heads of State and their Contributions to the Afghan State

Table 4. Ethnic and Tribal Groups and their Size

Contents

Acknowledgements..... v

Abstract vi

Abbreviations..... vii

Tables x

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

1.1 Thematic Background1

1.2 Introducing the Case: Afghanistan1

Chapter 2: Objective and Research Questions.....4

2.1 Objective of the Paper:4

2.2 Problem Statement:4

2.3 Research Questions4

2.4 Structure of the Paper5

Chapter 3: Research Methodology6

3.1 The Qualitative Research Approach.....6

3.2 Qualitative Limitations.....7

3.3 Quality in Qualitative Research.....7

 3.3.1 *Criteria for Evaluating Quality: Trustworthiness*7

3.4 Research Design – Case Study8

 3.4.1 *Data Collection*9

 3.4.2 *Secondary Data*10

 3.4.3 *Interview*.....11

 3.4.4 *Analysis: Triangulation*.....12

3.5 Ethical Considerations.....13

3.6 Thesis Limitations13

Chapter 4: Literature Review - State-Building15

4.1 State-building in General.....15

4.2 History’s Influence on State-Building16

4.3 State-building in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States.....18

 4.3.1 *Defining Fragile and Conflict Affected States*18

 4.3.2 *State-building in Fragile and Conflict Affected States*21

4.4	Grounding State-Building in Theory	22
4.4.1	<i>A Constructivist Approach to State-Building</i>	23
4.4.2	<i>Democratic Peace Theory: Guiding State-Building Ideas</i>	24
4.5	The meaning of State-Building in this Paper.....	25
Chapter 5: The Role of Context - Afghanistan.....		26
5.1	Exploring the Case	26
5.1.1	<i>History of Afghanistan</i>	26
5.1.2	<i>Tribes and Ethnicity in Afghanistan</i>	28
5.1.3	<i>Religion</i>	29
5.1.4	<i>Economy: Poverty and Shadow Economy</i>	29
5.1.5	<i>Topography and Demography</i>	31
5.2	The Initial Approach to State-Building	31
5.3	Key Stakeholders in Afghan State-Building	35
5.4	The International Aid Community	35
5.4.1	<i>Setting the Stage for International Aid in Afghanistan</i>	36
5.4.2	<i>Creating an Aid Dependant State</i>	37
5.4.3	<i>International Aid and Legitimacy</i>	39
5.4.4	<i>What Good has International Aid Done?</i>	40
5.5	The US' Role in Afghan State-Building.....	41
5.5.1	<i>Motivations and Operation Enduring Freedom</i>	41
5.5.2	<i>From the "Light Footprint Approach" to US' Increasing Role in State-Building</i>	43
5.5.3	<i>The US and the Taliban</i>	44
5.5.4	<i>Back to Square One</i>	46
5.6	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and State-Building	48
5.6.1	<i>The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</i>	48
5.6.2	<i>The Judicial and Legislative Branch</i>	50
5.6.3	<i>Patronage Politics</i>	52
5.6.4	<i>A Move Towards Sub-National Governance</i>	52
5.6.5	<i>GoIRA and Improvements</i>	54
5.7	Warlords and State-Building in Afghanistan.....	55
5.7.1	<i>A Conceptual Explanation of Warlords</i>	55
5.7.2	<i>Warlords in Afghanistan</i>	56
5.7.3	<i>Warlords and State Legitimacy</i>	57
5.7.4	<i>Warlords and Economy</i>	59

5.7.5 <i>Warlords and Security</i>	60
Chapter 6: Discussion	62
6.1 Flawed State-Building Objectives	62
6.2 Modernising Traditional Structures.....	64
6.3 State-Building’s Democratic Desires	67
Chapter 7: Concluding Remarks	71
7.1 The Way Forward.....	72
Literature	73

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Thematic Background

Since the Cold War ended, and especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, failed and fragile states have been linked to both national and international humanitarian crisis and insecurity concerns. OECD's *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence* report, identifies that more than 1.6 billion people in 2016 lived in fragile states. Furthermore, they expect the number of people living in fragile contexts to exceed 3 billion people by 2050 (OECD, 2016). These states must therefore be helped out of situations of failure and fragility to obtain national and international stability and security (OECD 2015; MacClinchy and Scott 2016; Torres and Anderson 2004).

State failure and state fragility are primarily considered as a result of poor state capacity. Consequently, developing best approaches to restore functioning governments and political stability has been a major policy concern for many states and multilateral organisations. Thus, attempts to rebuild and restore functioning governments and political stability in conflict and post-conflict states have become increasingly popular, and such engagement is therefore commonly conducted in the name of *state-building* or *peacebuilding*. Despite employment of large numbers of military and police personnel, and attempts to rebuild governing structures, the majority of such efforts have been unsuccessful (Hameiri, 2009). Evidence has shown how the context and resilience of local informal structures of governance time and again constrains international actor's influence (Heathershaw and Lambach, 2008; Shankar, 2008; Suhrke, 2011).

The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 put Afghanistan on the forefront of state-building attempts. The terrorist attacks initiated a multilateral intervention, including a wide range of actors, stakeholders and funds devoted to remove international terrorist networks and stabilise the country. Despite nearly two decades of state-building in Afghanistan, state-building efforts remain limited in terms of success.

1.2 Introducing the Case: Afghanistan

Already before the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Afghanistan had been a proxy battle ground for over a century. The legacy of British control from 1839 to 1919 in Afghanistan left the country with national borders cutting across ethnic populations. Rising resistance and the anti-communist war during the 1980s left much of the Afghan countryside devastated, and propelled a large flow of refugees. Afghan resistance persisted until the

Soviet withdrawal in 1989. The US initially supported Afghan resistance to the Soviets by aiding guerrilla forces. Yet, shortly after the Soviet Union was defeated and the end of the Cold War, the US almost completely withdrew support to Afghanistan. Afghanistan was left war-torn, and more or less on its own to recover from decades of conflict and violence (Ayob and Koubo, 2008; Johnson and Leslie, 2008; Nixon and Ponzi, 2007).

Only three years after Soviet's withdrawal, the post-war Najibullah-led government, put in place by the Soviet Union after their retreat, collapsed under the pressure of continued political disagreements and increasing attacks from paramilitary factions. The Afghan state became made up of different Mujahedin¹ groups and divided into autonomous regions along the factions of commanders and regional groupings. Afghanistan became characterised by a flourishing struggle for political power. In the vacuum created by this struggle for control the Taliban rose to power, and due to continued internal conflict, the Taliban managed to control large areas of the country until the 2000s. With the events of 9/11, US' interest in Afghanistan re-emerged and this marks the beginning of modern international-led state-building in Afghanistan (Ayob and Koubo, 2008; Johnson and Leslie, 2008; Nixon and Ponzi, 2007; Suhrke, 2011).

Since 2006, Afghanistan has annually been on the Fund for Peace's top 10 list of most fragile countries in the world (The Fund for Peace, 2018). In 2008 the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan released its strategy for security, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction (Rubin and Hamidzada, 2007). This strategy was named The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), and demanded an average of 10 million dollars annually in international funding between 2008-2013 (ANDS, 2008). Military forces from 47 countries, as well as 60 donor countries were currently involved in the Afghan state-building project. Now, more than 17 years after the beginning of the state-building efforts in Afghanistan, the situation does not seem to be improving. Reaching 10 years into the US-led invasion, there were more than 150,000 soldiers from NATO and other allied forces in Afghanistan. This is more than Soviet had in Afghanistan at any point of their occupation. State-building efforts have resulted in some improvements. Suhrke (2011) explains how sectors such as health and education saw improvement, but improvements have been overshadowed by increasing riots, violence, far-reaching corruption, and poor governance. As

¹ Refers to Islamist militia fighters in the Soviet-Afghan War. Today it is also used to describe other actors performing jihad, for example the Taliban. For more detailed description please see; Bhatia, M. (2007) (full reference in reference list)

an example, during the 10 first years of state-building in Afghanistan, the number of battle related deaths (including both military and civilian deaths) rose by 43 %, and from 2011 to 2015, this percentage increased by another 142 % (FN-Sambandet [FNS], 2017a; World Bank, 2018). These numbers indicate pressing needs to tackle a deteriorating security situation. Despite the comprehensive international engagement and attempts to build a secure, well-functioning Afghan state, Afghanistan seems to be further away from this than it was in 2001.

The question thus arises; why have state-building attempts in Afghanistan failed so substantially? Several reasons for “unsuccessful” state-building attempts in Afghanistan have been discussed by academics and other involved actors. Reasons generally highlight aspects such as the large ethnic diversity in Afghanistan, the presence of warlords, and illegal narcotics economy (Rubin; 2006; Bijlert 2010; Marten 2006/2007). As noted above, these explanations focus mainly on obstacles and problems that lie within the Afghan state, rather than the dynamics of the specific state-building approach carried out in Afghanistan. This research seeks to investigate whether state-building attempts can be more successful if they are adopted more carefully to the specific local context where they are carried out.

Chapter 2: Objective and Research Questions

2.1 Objective of the Paper:

This research aims to assess and discuss how effective certain state-building approaches have been when carried out in Afghanistan, and learn about the importance of context when shaping state-building approaches and policies for Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCASs)

2.2 Problem Statement:

For many actors, such as Western states, EU, UN, NATO and international aid organisations, state-building is a popular approach to build stable, self-sustaining, and democratic governments to obtain international security and stability (Heathershaw and Lambach, 2008; Shankar, 2008; Suhrke, 2011). Before the state-building intervention in Afghanistan, state-building approaches had already been adopted elsewhere, such as in Iraq, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. These areas still face challenges with weak institutions, unstable economies and fluctuating insecurity. Similarly, 10 years after the intervention in Afghanistan, drug trafficking and Taliban forces had re-emerged, and there had been an annual rise in casualties (Suhrke, 2011). What are the reasons for the failure of this state-building project and what lessons can be learned from these reasons?

2.3 Research Questions

The study is built on one overarching question

1. What lessons can be learned from the context of state-building in Afghanistan and how can these lessons inform the meaning of future state-building policies?

With three sub questions

1. What impact has the initial state-building approach from 2001 had on state-building efforts in Afghanistan?
2. In what ways have different stakeholder actions affected state-building in Afghanistan?
3. How has the local Afghan context and prevailing conditions affected state-building efforts in Afghanistan?

2.4 Structure of the Paper

Chapter 1 and 2 introduces the topic as well as the objectives of the study. Chapter 3 explains the methodological approach. Chapter 4 describes the concept of state-building, in addition to providing insights about how approaches to state-building have changed historically and how state-building can be explained from a democratic peace perspective. Chapter 5 analyses approaches to state-building in Afghanistan by looking at the initial approach and how four key stakeholders have contributed to state-building in Afghanistan. In chapter 6 different state-building efforts is discussed. Last, the study will conclude by summing up the main findings in the study and provide suggestions for future state-building policies.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter will describe the various methodological approaches adopted to carry out this research. The chapter aims to explain the qualitative research approach. Additionally, the chapter will elaborate on the research design I have applied to sample and analyse data. Following this, I will explain ethical considerations when conducting research as well as limitations of this study.

3.1 The Qualitative Research Approach

When conducting this research, it was important to identify the most useful methodological approach. According to Bryman (2016), qualitative research is concerned with understanding a phenomenon and generating a theory through strategic sampling of data relevant to the topic of investigation. Qualitative research aims to make research question(s) and build an answer to that/those questions. Contrary to quantitative research, qualitative research generates meanings through analysis of words rather than quantification of numbers (Bryman, 2016). Bryman further identifies two more features central to qualitative research. First, the interpretivist epistemological position of qualitative research builds on the idea that the world should be understood and examined through how it is interpreted by its participants. Second, qualitative research's constructionist ontological orientation suggests that ideas are socially constructed through interactions between individuals, and are not outcomes of phenomena (p. 375). The research process in qualitative research is not fixed, but flexible and can be adjusted to suit the research's objective (Bryman, 2016).

The qualitative research approach suits this research for several reasons. First, qualitative research commonly seeks to answer "why" and "how" questions about human experiences. Qualitative methods also allow the researcher to adopt more than one method or source of data to explore social phenomena. The unstructured nature of qualitative research allows for flexibility, and to adopt different methods for data collection and analysis. This research is mainly a desk study based on secondary data to investigate the case of state-building in Afghanistan. In addition, I have conducted one video chat interview with Mari Skåre, Norway's ambassador in Afghanistan, which we will get back to.

3.2 Qualitative Limitations

The main critiques to qualitative methods covers three areas. First, qualitative findings rely excessively much on the researcher's subjective interpretation. Hence, qualitative methods are too impressionistic and subjective. One danger associated with subjective interpretations is that important findings might be overlooked or excluded. Second, qualitative studies are often conducted based on small sample units; small sample units make it difficult to apply findings to other relevant cases. Thus, the scope of qualitative findings is restricted which makes generalisation difficult. Third, difficulties with establishing what has actually been done, and how the researcher arrived to conclusions constrains transparency (Bryman, 2016; Johannessen, Tuftu and Kristoffersen, 2011). One way to cope with qualitative limitations is to ensure quality in research, which brings us to the next point.

3.3 Quality in Qualitative Research

3.3.1 Criteria for Evaluating Quality: Trustworthiness

When conducting research, the researcher should be concerned with the quality of his/her research. Despite *reliability* and *validity* being common tools for assessing the quality of quantitative research, application of similar measures in qualitative research is contested (Bryman, 2016). The main concern about applicability of validity and reliability in qualitative research is that these criteria bear connotations of measurement. Subsequently, Bryman (2016) and Johannessen et. al (2011) suggest trustworthiness to evaluate quality in qualitative research. The following four criteria can be used to evaluate trustworthiness;

Credibility

Credibility emphasises the many possible accounts of social realities. Credibility thus relates to ensuring that the research process is conducted in such a way that it will be accepted by the people whom the study is relevant for. This includes both that the research is carried out according to good practices, in addition to obtaining confirmation by the social world or setting that was studied. Two techniques to ensure credibility are **respondent validation** and **triangulation**. The former is "... a process whereby a researcher provides the people whom he or she has conducted research with an account of his or her findings" (Bryman, 2016, p. 385). The latter is a process where the researchers adopts more than one method or source of data to achieve greater confidence in findings (Bryman, 2016, p. 386). To ensure credibility in this research I have adopted triangulation both in data sampling by including both an

interview and secondary data, and in the analysis where I combined content analysis and case study analysis.

Transferability

Transferability is about producing enough detail about a culture, so that others have a rich enough database of information to judge possible transferability of the researcher's findings to other aspects of the social world (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). The research gives detailed accounts of the local context in Afghanistan, state-building in Afghanistan from 2001- onwards, as well as state-building literature. In this way, the reader can judge if this research provides useful suggestion for future state-building policies.

Dependability

Dependability is linked to reliability in quantitative research which relates to investigating data (Bryman, 2016). Testing data reliability in qualitative data can be done by providing an open and detailed description of the research process and the data and methods used for analysis. In section 3.4.4, the analysis process is described.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, the researcher is not expected to maintain complete objectivity. Yet, it is important that findings in qualitative studies are not a result of the researcher's subjective stance. Confirmability in qualitative research can thus be achieved by including the reader in reasoning throughout the research process, in addition to avoid letting personal values and theoretical inclinations overly influence the research process and findings (Bryman, 2016, p. 386). The findings in this study are based upon a careful analysis and discussion of secondary sources, and the reasoning to how I arrived at my conclusions are explained in Chapter 5 and 6.

3.4 Research Design – Case Study

In social research, the research design is the framework for data collection and data analysis. In this study a *case study research design* was applied. A case study is an empirical, detailed and intensive study of a single case, aiming to investigate relevant phenomena within its actual context, because the borders between the phenomena and the context are unclear (Bryman, 2016; Johannessen et. al, 2011, p. 199). A case can be interpreted in different ways; be it a location, a group of people, an event or an organisation. In this study, the case being analysed is state-building in Afghanistan. Central to case studies is to be clear about the

unit(s) of analysis. This research focuses on state-building in Afghanistan in particular, and aims to shed light on state-building policies in fragile and conflict affected states. Therefore, state-building measures in Afghanistan are the units of analysis.

3.4.1 Data Collection

Different from quantitative data collection, which generally revolves around probability sampling, discussions of data collection in qualitative methods revolve around purposive sampling. Purposive sampling aims to sample data in a strategic way to ensure that sampled data is relevant to the study. One advantage of data collection in case studies is that data collection for case studies is flexible. Given the flexibility of choosing a case study research design, I had the opportunity to combine both typical case sampling and theoretical sampling. Bryman (2016) defines typical case sampling as “Sampling a case because it exemplifies a dimension of interest” (p. 409). Theoretical sampling on the other hand is a strategy to gather data to generate a theory. Both these sampling approaches are suitable to this research because the aim of the research is to explore state-building in Afghanistan to inform the meaning of future state-building policies. Typical case sampling can thereby help gather meaningful information about the case, and theoretical sampling can help guide sampling of necessary data throughout the research process to contribute to giving advice to future state-building policies. Commonly, the research questions can be good guidelines as to what data should be sampled. I therefore created the following table, identifying what information I needed to gather.

Table 1. Data Collection

Research question	Unit of analysis	Data from collection method
		Informants
What impact has the initial state-building approach from 2001 had on state-building efforts in Afghanistan?	Secondary data (interview)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the specific state-building approach - Understand initial implications of the approach
		Informants
How has the local context and prevailing conditions affected state-building efforts in Afghanistan?	Secondary data (interview)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge about local context and conditions - Reflections around a comparison of local context in Afghanistan and the dynamic of the state-building approach

Informants		
In what ways have different stakeholder efforts affected state-building in Afghanistan	Secondary data (interview)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify key stakeholders - Understand their role in state-building - Reflections around how their role has had positive and/or negative impact on state-building in Afghanistan

Informants		
What lessons can be learned from the context of state-building in Afghanistan and how can these lessons inform the meaning of future state-building policies?	Secondary data (interview)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the implications of local context on state-building in Afghanistan - Reflections around how the implications of local context and state-building in Afghanistan can contribute something to similar future aspirations

(Bryman, 2016)

3.4.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is data collected from archives, government documents, policy reports, books, internet sources, mass-media outputs, magazines and scientifically reviewed articles. Bryman (2016) discuss reliability of secondary sources. He argues that sources such as mass-media outputs are less reliable than for example scientifically reviewed articles, this is because authorship of mass-media outputs often can be unclear and therefore the authenticity of mass-media outputs can be questionable. With peer-reviewed articles on the other hand, authorship is easier to establish. Bryman also emphasises the researcher’s important role of carefully evaluate secondary sources. He suggests four questions the researcher should ask himself/herself when evaluating the quality of secondary sources;

1. *Authenticity*. Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?
2. *Credibility*. Is the evidence free from error and distortion?
3. *Representativeness*. Is the evidence typical of its kind, and if not, is the extent of its untypicality known?
4. *Meaning*. Is the evidence clear and comprehensible?” (Bryman, 2016, p. 546).

With Bryman’s advice in mind I have evaluated and reviewed a combination of academic articles, books, and official documents such as statistics, public announcements and policy reports deriving from states, statistical information and websites.

3.4.3 Interview

In qualitative research, interviewing is one of the most employed methods for data collection. Interviews are conducted to get rich and extensive information about the questions a study seeks to explore. At the onset of this research process, the potential for conducting interviews was discussed with my main supervisor and my co-supervisor. The security situation in Afghanistan made it impossible to travel there to conduct face-to-face interviews. But, in March I travelled to Florida to participate in my brother's Winging ceremony. Here I met Gen. Finn Kristian Hannestad who is Norway's Defence Attaché at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington. After telling him about my thesis topic he provided me with contact information for Mari Skåre. From 2008 to 2010 Mari Skåre was deputy at the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul, and from 2016 she has been Norway's ambassador in Kabul. I sent her an email, presenting both myself, the thesis topic and requested an interview. Mari Skåre's knowledge about, and experience in Afghanistan provided me with useful insights about broader issues in Afghanistan. However, because I rely my research mainly on secondary sources her insights have primarily been used to underscore information from these sources where it has been relevant.

The two main types of interviews in qualitative methods are *unstructured* and *semi-structured* interviews. The main difference is that unstructured interviews resembles more of a conversation where the interviewer might only have prepared one questions and lets the interviewee respond freely. A semi-structured interview on the other hand normally follows a pre-prepared interview guide, but the interviewee still has leeway in how to respond. Because I only conducted one interview, I considered a semi-structured interview to be most useful. Because the questions are prepared beforehand, it would give me more time to listen to the information provided. Additionally, it gave me the opportunity to tailor questions to the information I was seeking, but still enjoy the flexibility of making up questions as I went along, or rearranging the order of my questions. Because the interview was in March, I was already far out in the writing process. This enabled me to raise questions that I had discovered through the research process, as well as questions building on my research questions. Following Bryman (2016) and Johannessen et. al (2011) recommendations' I created an interview guide based upon my research questions as well as other questions I had discovered.

There are many ways to conduct individual interviews. Because Mari Skåre was in Afghanistan the most suitable way to conduct the interview, was via video-chat. There are some limitations to video-chat interviews. These include potential technological problems,

fluctuations in connection quality which can hamper the flow of the interview, and the interviewer has to transcribe the interviewees answers. There were some troubles with internet connection, which caused minor interruptions during the interview. Because of limited available equipment during the interview (that is, I was unable to record the video-chat), I took notes to document the answers I got. As recommended by Bryman (2016), directly after the interview, when I still had all the information fresh in mind, I transcribed my notes and made a coding table with the information Mari Skåre provided. The coding table helped me organise and interpret the information Mari Skåre provided, before I could analyse this information in addition to my secondary data.

3.4.4 Analysis: Triangulation

Triangulation and mixed methods approaches are increasingly popular in research. This is because triangulation allows for a more accurate and comprehensive analysis. This can be explained by the position that multiple viewpoints generate more accuracy (Kohlbacher, 2006). Triangulation can occur on different levels in a research. The first is when the researcher employs different sources of data, such as I did when I collected the data for this study. The second is when the researcher integrates both qualitative and quantitative steps for analysis, and the last is when a study includes different methods of analysis, such as content analysis and case study analysis (Bryman, 2016; Kohlbacher, 2006).

Content analysis is widely known as a method of analysing data and testing theoretical issues in order to better understand data by uncovering underlying themes (Bryman, 2016; Elo and Kyngäs, 2007; Kohlbacher, 2006). The analysis process consists of three steps: preparation, organizing and reporting. The **case study** approach to analysis is generally developed iteratively with data collection. One advantage with this process argued by Kohlbecher (2006), is that it allows for developing theories based on empirical evidence. In the analysis in this study I have combined these two approaches. I approached the data in an open coding matter as suggested by Elo and Kyngäs (2007). This included writing down headings in texts while reading it, thereafter reading through texts again to enable me to describe all aspects of the content. I tried different ways of coding data to find meanings, including organising data according to central themes in state-building literature, and organising data according to the context of state-building in Afghanistan. Through this process, categories emerged and I was able to group and interpret relevant data. As evident in my analysis, the categories for organising data mainly derives from my research questions.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Similar to any business, rules and principles of ethical responsibilities also apply in social research. The main areas of ethical responsibilities in social research can be broken down into four aspects; “1. Whether there is *harm to participants*, 2. Whether there is a *lack of informed consent*; 3. Whether there is an *invasion of privacy*; 4. Whether *deception* is involved” (Bryman, 2016, p. 125). Any researcher should consider these four aspects carefully to ensure that no steps of the research process harms participants, lacks informed consent, invades privacy or deprives anyone. During this research I have taken some main steps to ensure my ethical responsibility as researcher. First and foremost, I have followed the principle of citing data used in the study to credit the source. Second, when conducting the interview with Mari Skåre, I made sure to get verbal informed consent from her. Last, my research does not reveal any sensitive personal information that could harm or deprive anyone.

3.6 Thesis Limitations

As noted by Bryman (2016), qualitative case studies raise challenges in terms of external validity. These challenges are related to one case’s ability to yield representativeness for other cases. In accordance with Bryman’s argument, the findings in this study are therefore not necessarily generalizable for all state-building measures in FCASs. Alternatively, a discourse analysis of state-building could have been a suitable approach for this study. A discourse analysis would allow me to analyse the impact of certain state-building policies more thoroughly, and understand why certain policies are popular. In turn, this could be an asset when analysing certain state-building efforts in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the case study approach enabled me to look deeper into Afghanistan’s local context, and thus inform the meaning of local context when shaping state-building policies, which is this study’s primary objective.

The research identifies many flaws with state-building efforts in Afghanistan, and builds on these flaws to provide suggestion for future state-building policies. Considering that I aim to provide advice for how future state-building efforts can be more successful, the thesis could have benefitted from also looking into examples of successful state-building attempts, to substantiate my advice with examples of success. The study briefly explores how France to some extent built on existing local context during their democratic transition. Yet, considering that the democratic transition in France happened under very different circumstances, the comparability of France and Afghanistan is also somewhat restricted.

Due to security reasons, I was unable to travel to Afghanistan to gather primary in-country case study data. Primary data from Afghanistan could have helped to better understand the true realities of the local context, as well as state-building effort's local impact. Mari Skåre's knowledge about Afghanistan is also somewhat limited. Despite years of experience working in Afghanistan, her reflections also have an outsider perspective. Furthermore, relying mainly on secondary data was at times challenging. Secondary data is not necessarily created to meet the researcher's exact needs, as a result, searching for relevant data was at times inefficient. Also, similar to my research, much of the data reviewed and analysed also overly focus on state-building mistakes and flaws.

In many ways Afghanistan was a suitable case to investigate for the purpose of this study, both because there is extensive published material on the case which suited my methodological approach, and also because the local context is very complex. Yet, the complex local context, the large numbers of various state-builders and state-building efforts involved made it difficult to narrow down the main aspects to focus on in the research. Consequently, the research might overlook important aspects, such as state-building contributions made by other stakeholders than the four the research analyses. What can be drawn from this though, is that state-building in FCASs is complicated, both in terms of adapting best state-building measures, as well as grasping the true reality of state-building efforts in such places.

Chapter 4: Literature Review - State-Building

4.1 State-Building in General

Literature on state-building is largely divided over various assumptions about key state functions, but understandings and conceptions of state-building generally develop from the idea that nation states are the fundament on which the international system rests, and that state sovereignty must be preserved (Zartman 1995; Chesterman et al. 2004). Different state-building approaches can therefore be linked to the theoretical understandings of the state, and the state's core functions. To understand state-building, a good departing point is therefore to look a bit closer at how we can define a *state*. For long, the concept of the state has been equated with Max Weber's conception of the state. Weber defines the state as "... a human community that successfully claim the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Weber, Turner Gerth & Mills, 2009, p. 78).

Weber's definition emphasises a form of a central authority, and the authority's legitimate monopoly of violence, as a core state function. Consequently, the state is synonymous with a central government. Hence, state-building can be understood as strengthening government institutions. His definition also indicate that state formation is about depersonalisation and formalisation of political power (Fritz and Meoncal, 2007). This is what Lemay-Hebert (2009) refers to as an institutionalist approach to state-building. Lemay-Hebert further argues that the Weberian definition of statehood is the cornerstone of what state-building efforts aim to reconstruct. Furthermore, the Weberian states in the West are often used as comparison to which the strength of other states are measured. From this perspective, state-building can therefore be understood as "... a neo-liberal project to extend Westernised economic, political, and social systems to the developing world" (Grissom, 2010, p. 494).

Sarah Lister (2007) on the other hand explains how a Lockean approach views the state as "... the vehicle for fulfilling a social contract" (p. 2). The Lockean approach indicates that the state has certain obligations to the society. Joel Migdal further underlines this view by stressing the importance of state-society relations in state-building, "... the progress of state-building can be measured by the degree of development of certain instrumentalities whose purpose is to make the action of the state effective: for example, the bureaucracy, courts and military" (Migdal, 1988, p. 35). In his understanding state capabilities also include the state's capacity to penetrate society and establish good state-society relations (Migdal, 2001). Hence,

state-building is not just the technical strengthening of state institutions, but also a political process by which state institutions are consolidated through a cohesive socio-political process and legitimisation. This approach to state-building is what Lemay-Hebért (2009) calls a legitimacy approach. Other academics have also underscored the importance of legitimacy in state-building (Rubin, 2005; Fukuyama, 2004/2005; Suhrke, 2011). Legitimacy is about how power can be exercised in a way that is consciously accepted by citizens in a state (Gilley, 2006, p. 499). Legitimacy is important because when the state is perceived legitimate it can effectively extract capital through for example taxation, which in turn can fund provision of welfare services which strengthens the state's ability to carry out core state functions.

Most conceptions of the state identify three core functions of the state; providing security, providing representation and providing welfare. Approaches to state-building therefore often focus on strengthening state capacity in these respective areas, and that this in turn will legitimise the state. As Rubin (2005) explains, in short, state-building entails interdependent provisions capital, coercion and legitimacy. Accumulation of capital is necessary to produce income, which in turn can be extracted to support state functions and provision of state services such as welfare. Coercion is related to the state's ability to implement security institutions so that the state can exercise legitimate monopoly of force (Rubin, 2006, p. 178). Consequently, Francis Fukuyama, a central academic on foreign policy and state-building, describes the strength of a state as its ability to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws cleanly and transparently (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 7; Fukuyama, 2007). Another well-known academic on state-building, with particular relevance to Afghanistan is Astri Suhrke. Suhrke (2011) defines state-building as "... establishing a set of public institutions anchored at the central level that could provide security and basic services" (Suhrke 2011, p. 117). Many other policy makers and academics have offered different definitions and understandings of state-building. Despite minor variations the main focus of these people, similarly to Fukuyama and Suhrke, has been to strengthen a state's institutions so that the state can provide the expected levels of security and basic services (Bogdandy, Häubler, Hanschmann & Utz, 2005; Friis, 2010; Fukuyama, 2004; Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008; Menocal, 2011; Shurke, 2011; Grissom, 2010).

4.2 History's Influence on State-Building

State interventions have happened throughout time, but only more recently has the term state-building emerged. State-building has been on the international agenda for around five

decades. Through these decades, the discourse on state-building has been influenced by historical events such as the second World War (WW2), the management of decolonisation, Cold War politics and the War on Terror (WOT) (Pospisil and Kühn, 2016). The contemporary idea of state-building can be traced back to the end of WW2, but let's take a step back and review the historical context.

Historically, strong powers have intervened into their bordering spaces and periphery to expand their power, political interests and to maintain order and security (Rubin, 2005). When the Westphalian system emerged in 1648, nation states were created. With the evolution of demarcated nation states, the search for security and profit was also altered. European nation states pursued this quest by indirect or direct colonial rule, royal marriages, supporting subordinate buffer states and conquest, and thereby integrating these new territories into their political order (Rubin, 2005, p. 94). The European nation states also cooperated amongst themselves to make the system for intervention and the political order more stable and predictable. One example is the Berlin Conference (also known as the Congo Conference) in 1884-85, which attempted to regulate the colonial borders in Africa. According to Rubin (2005) this is the first example of states working together to implement a common global judiciary framework. He further notes that creating this system was the very precondition for transforming the system which eventually turned into more modern approaches of intervention such as state-building and peace-building (Rubin, 2005, p. 94).

After WW2, the contemporary global framework and institution for security was created, the United Nations (Berger, 2006). Before this change, state-building had primarily been driven by the quest for capital and coercion. WW2 ended both fascism and imperialism and gave rise to what Lemay-Hébert (2009) refers to as *the norm of territorial integrity*. This also changed the rules for intervening in other states and gave rise to a certain understanding of legitimacy, acknowledging every state's right to its own territory. Moreover, the previous, and frequent alteration of state-borders became condemned, and de-colonialization was initiated. States threatened by collapse in the post-1945 era became externally supported to be rebuilt within their national borders. To exemplify, shortly after the end of WW2, the Marshall Plan was launched. This US-initiative focused on economic assistance to rebuild states in Western Europe after WW2.

In the new post-colonial world order, competing Soviet and US interests during the Cold War shaped state-building attempts. During the Cold War-period, state-building was primarily

driven by foreign-aid projects funded by the US, Soviet, and their respective alliances. For US, the underlying goal of these state-building attempts were arguably to expand their liberal capitalistic politics. Contrary, Soviet's goal was to expand communism. As a result, states needing assistance occasionally adopted, or had to adopt liberal capitalistic, or communist structures to extract aid (Rubin, 2005, p. 95). The end of the Cold War in 1991 left a wide range of countries throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans with weak governance and in humanitarian and economic crisis. (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 18). Weak and failed states gave rise to global insecurity problems, which also altered the idea and nature of state-building attempts. In the following section I will elaborate on failed states emerged, which in turn created a framework for state-building policies in FCASs.

4.3 State-building in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

4.3.1 Defining Fragile and Conflict Affected States

In academics, concepts such as *weak states*, *fragile states*, *failed states*, and *collapsed states* frequently appear in literature about state-building. To give a clearer picture of what constitutes a fragile and conflict affected state we have to back up a bit and begin with the concept of failed states which in turn gave rise to FCASs.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the world experienced a global financial crisis. As a result of this crisis, in combination with the scars left by colonialization and de-colonialization, many countries in the global south were left with large and unmanageable debt. This debt-crisis soon became considered as a threat to international economic stability, and the countries subject to large debt became categorised as failed or weak states. Robert Rotberg (2002) outlines the main characteristics of failed states;

“a rise in criminal and political violence; a loss of control over their borders; rising ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural hostilities; civil war; the use of terror against their own citizens; weak institutions; a deteriorated or insufficient infrastructure; an inability to collect taxes without undue coercion; high levels of corruption; a collapsed health system; rising levels of infant mortality and declining life expectancy; the end of regular schooling opportunities; declining levels of GDP per capita; escalating inflation; a widespread preference for non-national currencies; and basic food shortages, leading to starvation (p. 132).”

Weak states on the other hand, Rotberg (2004) describes as states that are “... inherently weak because of geographical, physical or fundamental economic constraints; basically strong, but temporarily or situationally weak... (p. 4).”

To cope with failed and weak states, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) were implemented. SAPs consisted of conditionality attached to loans given to these countries, and were implemented under the auspice of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These programs aimed to build well-functioning economies, stabilise the international economy and foster economic growth in the failed states as means to help them out of state-failure (Babb, 2005, p. 209). Generally, these programs encouraged privatisation, liberalisation and downsizing of public sector. In later years, SAPs have been referred to as an extension of the liberal economic interests of the U.S., IMF and the WB (Babb, 2009; Davis, 2006, p 152-153; Fukuyama, 2004; Woods, 2014). SAPs have been subject to much critique, and the implementation of SAPs have generally been correlated with disinvestment, rising inequalities, unemployment and subsequent state-failures in many countries in the global south where they were implemented (Babb, 2005; Newbury, 2016). These consequences were arguably a result of the SAPs focus on reducing the state’s role in state matters. SAPs’ failure, in many ways re-shaped the way in which international assistance was provided and administered (Fukuyama, 2004; Marquette, 2011)).

From the mid -1990s, humanitarian and development actors reformulated their practices for state-building. Growing knowledge about connections between state-failure, state-weakness and conflicts and insecurity reintroduced the objective of strengthening state capacity to exercise monopoly of violence as a means to impose order and security. New concerns about vulnerability and fragility entered state-building policies by bringing the security dimension into the equation (Nogueira, 2017; Pospisil and Kühn, 2016). In recent years, concerns over the impact of weak and failed states has only increased. As a response to increased concerns the OECD began producing Fragile States reports from 2005. The OECD remains one of the main sources for data and analysis of fragile contexts, and they have adopted a multidimensional concept of fragility (Bately et. al, 2010). In the table below OECD’s fragility framework is provided. This framework built on five dimensions, which constitutes a mix of risks and capacities by which fragility can be measured (OECD, 2016)

Table 2. Five dimensions of fragility

Dimension	Description
Economic	Vulnerability to risks stemming from weakness in economic foundations and human capital including macroeconomic shocks, unequal growth and high youth unemployment
Environmental	Vulnerability to environmental, climate and health risk that affect citizens' lives and livelihoods. These include exposure to natural disasters, pollutions and disease epidemics
Political	Vulnerability to risks inherent in political processes, events or decisions; lack of political inclusiveness (including of elites); transparency, corruption and society's ability to accommodate change and avoid oppression
Security	Vulnerability of overall security to violence and crime, including both political and social violence
Societal	Vulnerability to risks affecting societal cohesion that stem from both vertical and horizontal inequalities, including inequality among culturally defined or constructed groups and social cleavages

(OECD, 2016, p. 23)

Building on the fragility framework, five factors which generally characterise fragile states are; poverty, weak government capacity, poor public service delivery and economic exclusion and marginalisation. A state characterised by these factors often suffer from weak institutions, poor infrastructure, high level of unemployment, out-migration of skilled and educated people and violent conflict (Bately et. al, 2010; OECD 2015; MacClinchy and Scott 2016). In OECD's report *States of Fragility 2016, Understanding Violence*, fragility is more simply summarised and defined as "... the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks (p. 21)." The report continues to state that fragility can cause violence, breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crisis and other crises. Torres and Anderson (2004), explains fragile states as "... those areas where the state is unable or unwilling harness domestic and international resources effectively for poverty reduction." (Torres and Anderson 2004, p. 3). In conclusion, one can define fragile states as states where the government is unable to deliver core functions expected of the state. Similar to the concept of state-building, the concept of fragile states is mainly established by donor countries and donor organisation, and these definitions are therefore influenced by the interest and priorities of such actors (Torres and Anderson 2004).

The second aspect of FCASs is the conflict aspect. Similar to that of fragile states, there is not one agreed upon definition of FCASs, but the variations of definitions are generally

concerned with the state's lack of ability to deliver core functions and services. Sebastian AJ Taylor (outdated) explains how FCASs "... implies both overt crisis (organised conflict and violent disruption of socio-political process), and latent fragmentation (contested political settlement, state predation, and failure to ensure basic rights and services)." (p. 1-2). In conclusion, FCASs are often fruitful grounds for violent conflicts, uprising of different terror groups, poverty and insecurity. These countries therefore pose a threat, both to the international community and to the people living in these countries who are affected by violent conflicts and poverty.

4.3.2 State-building in Fragile and Conflict Affected States

States characterised by violence, conflict and insecurity, such as Afghanistan inhibit environments where state-building is a delicate matter. In FCASs, state-building aims to end violent conflicts, and provide necessary conditions to create sustainable peace. The main focus to do this is to consolidate power and authority in developing states.

OECD's principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations provides ten recommendations for international engagement in fragile states (OECD, 2011). These recommendations are intended to guide actions to create positive outcomes and do minimal harm. The ten recommendations include;

1. Take context as a starting point
2. Do no harm
3. Focus on state-building as the central objective
4. Prioritise prevention
5. Recognise the links between political, security and development objectives
6. Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies
7. Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts
8. Agree on practical co-ordination mechanisms between international actors
9. Act fast... but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance
10. Avoid pockets of exclusion

Recommendation 1 and 3 are particularly relevant for this research. By taking context as a starting point, OECD means that all international involvement in fragile states requires a broad understanding of the fragile country's context. This includes understanding possible constraints such as political will, legitimacy and capacity. International involvement must then adapt their responses to the certain context to avoid blueprint approaches. OECD advises

to update contextual analysis regularly, strengthening local capacity to ensure adequate contextual knowledge. Furthermore, OECD recommends international actors to cooperate and share contextual analysis and create joint responses in fragile situations (OECD, 2011). More elaborated, state-building in fragile states according to OECD's recommendations encourage international actors to strengthen state functions. Other suggestions for state-building in fragile states include supporting the executive, legislative and judiciary branch of governments in fragile states. Last, international actors are advised to support dialogue between the state and the civil society (OECD, 2016). This last advice also resembles Joel Migdal and the Lockean approach to state-building, and their focus on state-society relations. OECD policy guidance from 2011 also underscores the importance of moving beyond simply institution building and also advocate better interaction between state and society for successful state-building in fragile states (OECD, 2016).

State-building efforts still focuses a great deal on the executive governmental branch, giving less attention to the legislature and judiciary branch. As a result, areas such as elections, public sector management and service delivery receives more support at the expense of domestic revenue and job creation. Yet, strengthening the scope of the state and its institutions remain at the forefront of state-building policies and surveys have shown how state-building remains most effective when the state holds authority over its territory (OECD, 2016).

4.4 Grounding State-Building in Theory

Social theories, like international relation theories, are used by scholars to make sense of a phenomena. International relation theories are concerned with explaining and understanding the behaviour of different actors in the international realm. Stefano Guzzini (2001) argues that we need theories to make sense of the social world, he states that

... a theory is the condition for the very possibility of knowledge. Without concepts that cut through the forest of empirical data, we would be unable to see the wood for the trees. Theories are not just the result but also the precondition for the possibility of empirical knowledge (p. 99).

In this section I will introduce *democratic peace theory* and *constructivism*, and explain how these two theories can guide our understanding of state-building ideas and approaches.

4.4.1 A Constructivist Approach to State-Building

In contrast to realism who deals respectively with security and material power, and liberalism who is concerned with interdependence, and the role of institutions and individuals, constructivism understands the international system as something historically and socially constructed. As explained by Emmanuel Adler (1997) “Constructivism is the view that the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world (p. 322). By this, he means that international relations are not just inevitable consequences of human nature, such as rationality or anarchy, but rather socially constructed through ideas (Epstein, 2013; Hopf, 1998; Wendt, 1992). Ultimately, constructivism presents the view that the world order and state actions are not based on self-interest alone. Rather states’ actions and organisation in international relations is best understood and explained by how we understand and attach meaning to the material world (Adler, 1997; Hopf, 1998; Wendt, 1992).

Adler’s interpretation of constructivism can also explain state-building’s historical evolution. Constructivist stress idea’s and collective understanding’s power and importance when understanding the world affairs. Ideas, argued by constructivism are the fuel for action. In this view, “international relations” is a social and constructed phenomenon, not something fixed and objective. Section 4.2 describes how state-building approaches through time have had different meanings attached to it. Simultaneously with historical and social changes in the international order, state-building has also changed. Most notable of such changes is the end of WW2 which gave rise to the norm of territorial integrity and ideas about sovereignty. As explained in point 4.2, these ideas were the very precondition for contemporary state-building.

Another important aspect of constructivism is identity politics. In terms of a state, identity refers to state preferences and the possible actions a state will take. More generally speaking, identities can tell you who you are, tell others who you are and tell you who others are. In a realist view, state identity is synonymous with self-interest, in constructivism on the other hand, each state can have many identities, for example sovereign, imperial power or hegemon. Constructivism also treats identity not as something fixed, but rather variable depending on historical, cultural, social and political context. In this way, identity is important for predictability. State identity is the basis for interest and can inform the possible course of action of states, and thereby avoid a world of complete chaos (Hopf, 1998; Wendt, 1992). One way to understand how identity politics influence state-building are changing state-

building approaches. For example, point 4.2 explains how Soviet and US' desires to establish themselves as world hegemony during the Cold War influenced their state-building approaches. When the Cold War ended and the global political context changed, so did state-building approaches. State-building guided by hegemonic interest was replaced with state-building guided by concerns around insecurity.

4.4.2 Democratic Peace Theory: Guiding State-Building Ideas

For decades, policy makers have promoted democracy and democratization to enhance prosperity, create economic growth, safeguard freedom and stop war and genocide (Reiter, 2001, p. 936). Connections between democracy and economy, culture and security was observed by scholars such as Immanuel Kant and Thomas Paine already in the 1700s.

Immanuel Kant (1795) argued that democratic republics would not go to war against each other, because people would never vote to go to war unless in the case of self-defence. Hence, a world of democratic republics would therefore be a peaceful world. This argument has become the central thought within democratic peace theory (DPT) (Gat, 2005, p. 73).

For states such as the US, the positive relationship between democracy and peace has become a truism. In 1994, US president at the time, Bill Clinton, stated "...ultimately the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere." (Owen, 1994, p. 87). To this day, many Western liberal foreign policies promote democracy and democratization in non-democratic states (Kant, 1795; Owen, 1994; Reiter, 2001). In short, state-building efforts boils down to reconstructing, implementing and strengthening central Western Weberian state-functions and institutions. Friis (2012) argues that this model for state-building has resulted in international state-building interventions designed to impose democracy as a measure to induce political stability. In many ways this design resembles a core idea within DPT, that is; fostering democracy ensures stability, security and peace.

DPT further argues that democracies are predictable and reasonable. This is built on the assumption that all people share a desire for peace, and that liberal democracies are governed by the citizens of the states, and these are all reasonable and predictable because they all wish for peace. Liberal democracies will avoid war because war is costly and dangerous, the only time a liberal democracy will only use war as a tool is when it is perceived necessary to safeguard democratic interests. Non-democratic or illiberal states on the contrary are perceived as unpredictable, unreasonable and potentially dangerous. Non-democratic states are more likely to suffer from internal conflict, which is potentially dangerous for the

country's citizens. Non-democratic or illiberal states can therefore be perceived as a threat both to internal and international security and peace (Owen, 1994).

The idea of non-democratic or illiberal states as dangerous links back to the motivations behind state-building interventions. State-building interventions are generally conducted based on the idea that fragile states pose a threat to national and international security and stability. This point is underscored by Karsten Friis (2012, p. 271). He argues that the idea of non-democratic states as potentially dangerous has guided state-building efforts in countries such as Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. In these countries, in line with democratic peace ideas, both democratization and liberalization have been central objectives of state-building efforts as a remedy to internal conflict and insecurity.

According to DPT, non-democratic and illiberal states are often characterised by despot-rule, patrimonialism and unenlightened citizens. State-building approaches generally discourage these very same tendencies, as they will hinder state legitimacy. Both Migdal (1988) and Fritz & Menocal (2007) stress depersonalisation of power and effective bureaucracy as key components for state legitimacy. DPT argues that democratic reforms, including democratic elections and stable political institutions can remedy the illiberal tendencies that undermine state legitimacy. The argument presented by democratic peace theory is also portrayed in US' definition of state-building. In US context state-building means establishing democratic governments and strengthening state institutions which are legitimised by democratic control (Monten, 2014, p. 175-176).

4.5 The meaning of State-Building in this Paper

With time, the idea of state-building has evolved, and the social context of states has been given more attention. In line with Migdal's (2001) emphasis on how good state-society relations are critical for state-building, state-building also includes social reforms. Common state-building activities include disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs (DDR), long term security reforms in police, military and border control, market liberalisation, and institutionalisation of government. The need for international assistance in state-building can best be understood as a result of the humanitarian problems that arose from the collapse of the bi-polar world order after the end of the Cold War, in combination with the rise of globalisation. In its simplest form, state-building undertaken by the international community can therefore be explained as actions carried out by national and/or international actors with the aim to establish, strengthen and reform state institutions (Caplan, 2005).

Chapter 5: The Role of Context - Afghanistan

Introductory, this chapter will give a brief outline of Afghanistan’s history. Thereafter, the local context in Afghanistan will be explained by looking at Afghanistan’s tribes, ethnicity and religion, as well as topography, demography and economy. After accounting for the local context, the initial approach to state-building in Afghanistan will be analysed. Last, it will look at four key stakeholders and their contributions to state-building efforts in Afghanistan.

5.1 Exploring the Case

5.1.1 History of Afghanistan

The internationalised conflict in Afghanistan is generally explained through the Cold War perspective (Ruttig, 2013). I argue instead that to fully understand state-building’s dynamics and impacts in Afghanistan, one must take a closer look at local context and domestic factors. Afghanistan’s local context did not come about as a result of cold war politics only, rather the local context in Afghanistan today should be understood through a broader historical lens. The Afghan state’s creation can be traced back to 1747, when Ahmad Shah Durrani and his army conquered much of what is known as today’s Afghanistan. In the table underneath, I present a brief timeline of the different heads of state in Afghanistan and their main contributions to the Afghan state from 1881 to the Soviet invasion in 1978.

Table 3. Heads of state and their contributions to the Afghan state

Head of state	Year	Main contributions
Abdur Rahman Khan	1881-1901	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Borders drawn by with Russia and British India - Modern state established: government with advisory functions
Amanullah Khan	1919-1929	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full independence from Britain in 1919 - First constitution was drafted and approved by all the leaders across the country - A national army was established - Education for both boys and girls was implemented - Religious opposition forced Amanullah to resign
Muhammad Nadir Khan	1929-1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional bodies were given more influence again - Women were included in politics - Political parties were developed, but not allowed to be registered
Muhammad Zahir Shah	1933-1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failed attempt at democratic reforms - Russian influence from late 1960s - Established formal trade relations with the West

Mohammad Daud Khan	1973-1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Came to power through a coup d'état - New constitution established in 1977 - Move from monarchy to republic
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(Ruttig, 2013)

Leading up to 1839, conflicting Russian and British geostrategic interests in Asia began threatening Afghanistan's independence, and in 1839 the British invaded Afghanistan. Although Afghanistan was not under complete British control, governing control in Afghanistan from 1839 up to 1919 remained largely controlled by Britain (Ruttig, 2013; Johnson and Leslie, 2013). With financial support from the British, Abdur Khan's army transformed Afghanistan from a tribal confederacy into a centralised state. Despite attempts to centralise the state completely, tribal areas managed to remain partly independent. Abdur Khan's internationally supported failed attempts at complete centralisation and persistent state weakness during his rule underscores the strong standing of the tribal society in Afghanistan. This story seems to keep repeating itself in more modern attempts at state-building in Afghanistan.

After Afghanistan's role as a buffer state between the Russian and British Empires, Afghanistan again became a buffer state for competing interests during the Cold War. Cold War politics between 1956 and 1973 turned Afghanistan into a rentier state (Johnson and Leslie, 2013). As a result, the state never had to build up a domestic taxation base. Moreover, incentives to build up governmental structures and control in the country remained absent. The foreign supported government in Kabul attempted neither to organize the rural majority nor to represent the rural majority's interests in the country. Instead, from the turn of the 20th century, state-politics generally resembled informal patron-client relations and kinship networks. In rural villages local leadership remained the governing structure, and the state had little authority in rural areas (Johnson and Leslie, 2013). The rural majority thus remained both fragmented and more or less autonomous.

Daud's short-lived rule ended in April 1978 with a new coup, this time by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). PDPA was a left-leaning party, who conformed to the socialist politics of Soviet. The coup thus triggered US armed support to the Islamist mujahedin resistance groups. In December 1979 Soviet sent in troops to save PDPA leadership, but instead of strengthening the current regime, they replaced the ruling faction with a competing faction (Ruttig, 2013). Subsequently, the Soviet experienced increasing resistance from the Afghan people until its withdrawal in 1989. Resistance continued with the

Najibulla-led government that Soviet put in place when they left. Due to continued internal conflict, the Taliban managed to control large areas of the country until the 2000s. Only a short month after the events of 9/11, the US alongside with its allies invaded Afghanistan and modern international-led state-building in Afghanistan commenced (Johnson and Leslie, 2013; Suhrke, 2011).

5.1.2 Tribes and Ethnicity in Afghanistan

Barfield (2010) explains how tribal and ethnic groups in Afghanistan are vital when interpreting current events in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, especially in rural areas tribal and ethnic groups, he argues, take primacy over the individual. Furthermore, tribe’s and ethnic groups’ organisation and behaviour have played key roles in Afghan history, and political institutions remain deeply embedded in cultural norms and values. All ethnic groups in Afghanistan today are products of history, and they have all brought new languages and cultural perspectives to the country. The table below presents different ethnic and tribal groups and their size.

Table 4. Ethnic and tribal groups and their size

Ethnic/tribal group	Distribution
Pashtun	42 %
Tajik	27 %
Hazaras	15 %
Uzbeks and Turkmen	10 %
Non-Muslim, Sikhs and Hindus	Live in Kabul and other cities
Aimaqs	3 %

(Johnson and Leslie, 2006; Barfield, 2010)

Pashtuns have been, and remains the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan. Pashtuns have historically also dominated governments in Afghanistan, and for many the land of Afghanistan is considered synonymous with the land of Pashtuns. Pashtuns identify themselves according to Pashtunwali, which is a code of conduct. Other Pashtunwali codes of law (Loya Jirga) have later been translated as constitutional parts of the Afghan state, and will be discussed in greater detail in section 5.2. Translating traditional codes of conduct into the

constitution underscores the strong hold of ethnic values and norms. (Barfield, 2010, p. 24-26).

Shahrani (2002) argues that, together with Islam, tribes and ethnicity constitute the primary potential base for social formation and mobilisation of social action (p. 717). Continued failures to build a strong, sovereign centralised state is often explained by the conflictual and fragmented Afghan society. Both government officials and academics tend to blame state-building problems on topography, ethnolinguistic and religious cleavages, and tribal loyalties. These explanations imply that it is not the state-building approach that is flawed, rather the heterogenic characteristics of the Afghan society and culture that are blamed for the failed state-building attempts and state-building problems (Shahrani, 2002).

5.1.3 Religion

Afghanistan is a Muslim country, with a Sunni Muslim majority (85 %), and a minority of Shias and Ismailis (15 %). Despite Islam not being an ideology in Afghanistan, Barfield (2010) argues that religion nevertheless remains an all-encompassing way of life (p. 40). He continues to explain how all relationships, both social, political and economic are permeated by Islamic influence and validity. International actors such as the US have also turned to Islamist movements such as the Mujahidin during soviet occupation, as part of strategic political choices. The strong role of Islam is underscored in the 2004 constitution; Article 1, 2 and 3 which states that Afghanistan is an Islamic state and that no law shall contravene Islamic principles (Afghan Const. Art. 1, 2 & 3). The bewildering number of tribes and ethnicities in Afghanistan challenges social cohesion and the creation of national unity. Arguably, given the fragmented picture of different tribes and ethnicities, Islam represents a unifying symbol for the population.

In conclusion, the Afghan state was, and still is, characterised by a population split into different ethnic groups, and cultures. Additionally, the political order during the Mujahedeen period left a legacy of autonomous regions with regional decision making and power in the hands of local commanders. Ethnicity, religion, culture and power dynamics all impacts political and social organisation in Afghanistan. It is therefore important to recognise and understand their role in Afghanistan in any state-building attempts.

5.1.4 Economy: Poverty and Shadow Economy

Throughout history, Afghanistan has remained largely poor, and after decades of war, Afghanistan still remains one of the poorest countries in the world (Ruttig, 2013). Despite

available resources such as coal, copper, iron ore, oil and natural gas, the insecurity situation and lack of proper infrastructure has hindered efficient use of these resources. Over 70 % of the Afghan population is rural (WB, 2018) and between 60-80 % of the population still work in agriculture. The agricultural sector is constrained by unkind weather conditions such as drought, floods and soil erosion, underdeveloped infrastructure, and an un-educated population lacking appropriate technical knowledge (FNS, 2015; World Bank 2018a; World Bank, 2018b). Additionally, prevailing corruption, crime and weak state governance all constrains economic growth. According to the WB (2018a), finding sustainable sources of economic growth remain one of the biggest economic challenges in Afghanistan.

Moreover, lack of viable economic options has fostered Afghanistan's emergence as the world's largest supplier of illicit opiates (Ward, Mansfield, Oldham and Byrd, 2008). Afghanistan accounts for over two thirds of the world's opium production and trade (UNODC, 2017a), and in 2016 the value of opium production accounted for about 16 % of domestic product (GDP) in Afghanistan, and was worth more than two thirds of the country's agricultural sector (UNODC, 2017b, p. 6). Opium trade is part of what Goodhand (2004) refers to as Afghanistan's shadow economy or informal economy². Afghanistan's shadow economy has contributed to growing differentiation between land-less farmers and farmers who own land. Furthermore, Afghanistan is prevented from benefitting from the revenues produced by opium, because the international community refuses to legalise opium trade (Suhrke, 2011, p. 143). As Suhrke (2011) explains, the opium sector represents an illegal power structure fostering crime, corruption and violence. It is important to clarify here that the large illegal opium sector is not a result of domestic factors only. International markets contribute to a demand for opium, which keeps the opium sector alive. This point was underscored by Mari Skåre, who emphasised that combatting illegal opium trade in Afghanistan also should include dealing with international market's demand for opium. State-building requires poverty reduction, economic growth and transforming the shadow economy into a licit economy (Goodhand, 2005, p. 167-168). Therefore, state-building efforts in Afghanistan needs to address the economic challenges such as poverty, economic growth and opium trade in Afghanistan.

²Economic activities conducted outside state-regulated frameworks and are not audited by state institutions (Goodhand, 2004, p. 157)

5.1.5 Topography and Demography

Afghanistan consists mainly of mountainous terrain with deep valleys, high mountains and sparse forests. The arid climate makes Afghan summers warm, and the winters cold. Both soil erosion, deforestation, drought and lack of clean drinking water are major problems for the population. Despite available water sources such as melting water from the Hindu Kush-mountains, water irrigation systems are broken which makes water sources inaccessible to the population, and in 2001 only 32 % of the population had access to clean water (FNS, 2017b; Saba, 2001). Saba (2001) claims that the environmental challenges in Afghanistan destabilises the livelihood for the Afghan population, and she stresses the international community's need to put in place strategies that "... keep balance between resources, environment, population and economic development..." (Saba, 2001, p. 288).

Afghanistan's demography is also challenging. In 2005 the life expectancy for both men and women in Afghanistan was 47 years (FNS, 2017c; FNS, 2017d). In 2015 this number had increased to 51 years for both men and women (FNS, 2017c; FNs, 2017d). Despite a slight increase, these numbers are low (Mullen, 2010). In comparison, life expectancy for women in the US in 2005 was 81 years, and 82 in 2015 (FNS, 2017e). In 2011 less than half of the Afghan population between 15-24 years were literate (FNS, 2017f). In 2003, 20 % of the able-bodied population between 15-24 years were unemployed, and the overall unemployment percentage was 8,1 % (FNS, 2017g; FNS, 2017h). Despite steady decrease since the 1960s, infant mortality remains high with approximately 130 deaths per 1000 live births (FNS, 2017i; Mullen, 2010). Huma Ahmed-Gosh (2003) also explains how women's rights and status have been historically marginalised by deeply embedded patriarchal nature of tribal laws and sanctions. The weak central state's lack of ability to modernise the traditional society has further contributed to women's marginalisation.

5.2 The Initial Approach to State-Building

The 4370th UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting on September 12th 2001, the day after the 9/11 Al Qaeda terrorist attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, passed Resolution 1368. The resolution expressed the UNSC's commitment to combat all threats to international security, and "... expresses its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations" (UNSC, 2001). The Resolution further recognised individual and collective right to self-defence and urged

states to cooperate and increase efforts to suppress and prevent terrorist attacks. The Bush-led administration in the US also responded immediately to these attacks, and on September 18th 2001 the US congress passed a “Use of Force” resolution. The Use of Force Resolution authorised the US president to take any necessary measures to those he deemed responsible for the terrorist attacks on 9/11, including any persons that aided, planned, committed, authorised the terrorist attacks, or harboured such organisations or persons (Ayub and Koubo, 2008; Fields and Ahmed, 2011; Nixon and Ponzi, 2007).

On October 7th 2001, less than a month after the terrorist attacks, US military operations, better known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), commenced in Afghanistan. OEF’s initial military objectives were expressed by George W. Bush in his 20 September Address to a Joint Session of Congress and his Address to the Nation on Operations in Afghanistan. The goals included; destroying Afghan terrorist training camps and terrorist infrastructure, capturing Al-Qaeda leaders and combatting all terrorist groups of global reach (White House Archives, 2008, p. 65-77). The first round of military operations in Afghanistan supported the Northern Alliance fighters (also known as United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan)³, in their fight against the Taliban. Within short time, the Northern Alliance, with help from US military forces took control over the main city and commercial centre of Mazar-e-Sharif in the north of the country. In addition, the US-supported Northern Alliance took control of the capital, Kabul, and in December, the Taliban leader Mullah Omar fled Kandahar. Following these rapid unfolding of events, a conference was held in Bonn in Germany on December 5th 2001. Assisted and under the supervision of the UN, a diverse set of Afghan actors met at Hotel Petersburg to discuss Afghanistan’s political future. The meeting resulted in the Bonn Agreement (or Bonn 1), which set the course for US and NATO-supported state-building efforts in Afghanistan the coming years (Ayoub and Kouvo, 2007; Fields and Ahmed, 2011).

The initial state-building approach in Afghanistan in 2001 can be understood as what Astri Suhrke (2011) refers to as a “light footprint approach” (Suhrke, 2011; Sharon and Bose, 2016). Neither the US nor the UN had any incentives for a lengthy presence or more comprehensive state-building or nation-building operations. Even when US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, requested the UN to assist putting together a new interim government in Afghanistan, he urged this also to be a quick process. Despite the international community’s

³ A Taliban-resistance group formed in 1996. Mainly composed of non-Pashtun minorities (Rashid, 199)

reluctance for a more comprehensive approach, they recognised their obligation to create stability and a new representative government in Afghanistan. On November 13th, just over a month after OEF was launched, Special Representative for Afghanistan, Lakdhar Brahimi held a speech at the UNSC stressing that the formation of a new representative government in Afghanistan should be Afghan. Brahimi's speech was a result of ongoing negotiations with the UN, and his speech became a leading idea for the process of putting together an interim government in Afghanistan (Suhrke, 2011).

At Bonn 2001, Brahimi's suggestions became formalised. The plan was; an interim governing structure and a timetable for transition to a "broad based gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government". The plans formalised at Bonn implies a vision for modernity in a country that for centuries has relied on traditional mechanism for decision making and governance (Suhrke, 2007). The interim Authority elected at Bonn was to rule for six months. Thereafter, a traditional *Loya Jirga* was to elect a Transitional Administration, followed by democratic elections two years later (Maley, 2013). Choosing an Emergency *Loya Jirga* to elect a transitional administration can best be understood as an attempt to legitimise the process and make it "Afghan owned". Carter and Connor (1989) describes *Jirgas* as traditionally strongly embedded structures for conflict resolution among Pashtuns. Furthermore, *Loya Jirga* is a Pashto phrase, and is simply translated into "grand assembly". Historically, *Loya Jirgas* have been used as consultation forums between the monarchy and tribal leaders (Maley, 1987, p. 708). Saikal (1998) explains Afghanistan's long tradition with political order and governance organised along traditional structures; "In Afghanistan, political order and governance have always rested largely on a mixture of personalized, clientelistic politics, and elite alliance and elite settlement, legitimated through traditional mechanisms of consensus building and empowerment, such as the *Loya Jirga* (Grand Assembly)" (Saikal 1998, as cited in Moshref 2002, p. 29). In addition, the quote from Saikal implies that governance in Afghanistan has never been centralised, but instead has depended on local politics and elites

Hamid Karzai was elected as head of the Interim Authority. Karzai is Afghan born, part of the Pashtun Popalzai, and during the 1980s he supported the Mujahidin in their fight against Soviet (Suhrke, 2011; Johnson, 2006). Karzai was trusted by the US, and in a way he had one foot in both camps (Suhrke, 2007). Choosing Karzai as leader of the Interim Authority can therefore in part be understood as a strategic action from the US side, as a way to ensure that their interests in Afghanistan would be advocated through Karzai. The remaining

administrators and ministers for the Interim Authority were selected from the remaining representatives at the Bonn meetings. The result was an Interim Administration composed of the winning parities in the war. The Interim Government's three most powerful ministries were given to Panjshiri Tajiks of the Northern Alliance. Yunus Qanooni, who led the Northern Alliance's Bonn delegation was selected Interior Minister. General Mohammad Fahim, commander in Chief of the Northern Alliance was selected as Minister of Defence. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, previously the Northern Alliance's Minister of Foreign Affairs was selected as Foreign Secretary. The 30-member interim cabinet included eleven Pashtuns, eight Tajiks, five Shiá Hazara and three Uzbeks, and the remaining positions were given to other minorities (Johnson, 2006). Despite the international community advocating that patronage linkages and a governance built on clientelism hinders state-building (Suhrke, 2011), it seems as if the agreements made at Bonn to some extent created just that.

As chapter 4 explains, representation is a core part of state-building, and the idea of representation was translated into Bonn 2001's plans about a fully representative government. In countries where the population is homogenous, full representation is an easy task to achieve, but as described in point 5.1.2 and 5.1.3, Afghanistan is not a homogenous country. Characterised by deeply embedded ethnic and tribal fragmentation, establishing full representation is a difficult task. Arguably, the Interim Administration failed to do so and did not represent traditional power centres in Afghanistan. Furthermore, existing ethnic fragmentation seemed to be completely ignored and there were made no attempts to reconcile the war-torn country. Despite attempts to implement functioning state institutions and authority, problems with state institutions' legitimacy becomes evident already at this point. When Karzai was elected as Transitional President six months later by the *Emergency Loya Jirga* he attempted to gain support from the Pashtuns by increasing Pashtun representation in the new administration. He increased representation from eleven to sixteen Pashtuns in the cabinet. Yet, the most powerful ministries remained in Northern Alliance's hands and the government still remained to be seen as legitimate by other underrepresented tribal and ethnic groups (Johnson, 2006; Suhrke, 2007).

The timeframe for the agreements made at Bonn is also interesting. As I have already explained, Bonn 1 in many ways constitutes the framework for the initial state-building approach in Afghanistan. State-building in itself is not an easy or "quick-fix" task. It is a comprehensive approach which requires comprehensive planning. Nevertheless, the discussions leading up to the Bonn Agreement only started taking shape in October 2001 after

the US invasion of Afghanistan (Fields and Ahmed, 2011). The arrangements that were made were not only swift in making, they also resulted in swift arrangements lacking coherence and a more long-term plan. The two decades of war had left Afghanistan in desperate need of state-building and reconstruction, yet only limited resources were devoted to these specific needs. Instead, the swift arrangements focused on establishing a highly centralised democratic state, and that this in turn would lead to improvements of other challenges (Waldman, 2013). Consequently, the foundation for state-building exercises in Afghanistan overlooked the direct needs of Afghan people, focusing instead on creating institutions in line with what Western policy makers believed to be best suited to cope with the threat of terrorism.

5.3 Key Stakeholders in Afghan State-Building

Who intervenes, and whose interest does intervention serve? Given the broad gallery of stakeholders, all with varying aspirations and agendas, state-building in Afghanistan has been pulled in multiple directions. In the following section I will elaborate and discuss the role of four key stakeholders in state-building in Afghanistan; **The international aid community, the US, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) and Warlords**. There are of course many other central stakeholders in Afghan state-building. Elaborating on the full complex and heterogeneous gallery of relevant stakeholders would demand more than a master thesis. Yet, by including two Afghan stakeholders (Warlords and GoIRA), and two international stakeholders (International aid community and the US), and two state actors (The US and GoIRA) and two non-state actors (warlords and the international aid community), the four stakeholders analysed arguably allows for a balanced presentation of different perspectives.

5.4 The International Aid Community

Already in 1960, foreign aid constituted more than 40 % of Afghan state budget (Goodhand, 2002; Suhrke, 2011; Waldman, 2008). Astri Suhrke (2011) points out that one of the main dangers state-building in Afghanistan faces today is creating a rentier state through heavy aid dependency. James K. Boyce (2000) also notes that “Aid affects not only the size of the economic pie and how it is sliced but also the balance of power among the competing actors and the rules of the game by which they compete ... the political impacts of aid can help to decide whether the peace endures or war resumes” (p. 367). This indicates that aid certainly

has both economic and political consequences that most likely impacts state-building efforts. Therefore, it is important to investigate the international aid community's contributions to state-building in Afghanistan. Key areas where international aid is relevant to state-building are, **legitimacy and state capacity**. Before I continue analysing international aid's impact on state-building, I will define what constitutes international aid, and more specifically the international aid community in Afghanistan.

International aid can be explained as Official Development Assistance (ODA). OECD (2018) defines ODA as "... government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Aid may be provided bilaterally, from donor to recipient, or channelled through a multilateral development agency such as the United Nations or the World Bank." For this purpose, international aid refers to any financial aid given (including for military purposes) by governments and/or other agencies to support economic, social, political and governmental development.

Part of the analysis in this section is based on figures and numbers of international aid in Afghanistan. Hence, it is important to note that retrieving exact numbers and figures is difficult given the complex picture of international aid and a lack of numbers. As Astri Suhkre (2011) notes, even the Afghan government have struggled tracing exact amounts of aid that has been allocated. Despite the chance of imprecise numbers, they still serve as good indications for discussion.

5.4.1 Setting the Stage for International Aid in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has a long history with international aid. Already during the British occupation, external aid was used as a tool to maintain internal political stability. Since then, Soviet and U.S. competing interests and support have been a central part of state finances in Afghanistan (Goodhand, 2002). The long history of international aid in Afghanistan has created a system where the ruling powers in Afghanistan have relied on external support, which means the state never needed to develop a source of domestic accountability through domestic revenue. This implies that already at the onset of international aid in Afghanistan, provisions of aid were used as a political tool. Furthermore, the long history of international aid has served to undermine the creation of government that is held accountable to its citizens.

In the early 2000s, the US was the main donor in Afghanistan (the US still is today). Other major donors are Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, European Commission

(EC), International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the World Bank. In terms of economic size, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands are also significant donors. The international aid community's complex picture raises challenges in terms of both coordination and accountability of international aid in Afghanistan (Goodhand, 2002).

Initially, foreign aid came in relatively modest quanta, that is between \$1.5 up to \$2.3 billion annually from 2001-2004. This aid was mainly in the form of emergency aid and reconstruction assistance (Suhrke, 2011). In the two years following the 2001-intervention, the average volume of international aid per capita was \$57. In comparison, Bosnia and East Timor received \$679 and \$233 per capita. The initially modest figures of reconstruction aid are even more evident when compared to US' war expenditure in Afghanistan. As of 2008, the US had contributed \$127 billion to war in the country. Despite aid's size being relatively modest, already during these first years, the WB raised concerns that the amount of aid was proportionally too large compared to national GDP for Afghanistan to absorb effectively (Waldman 2008; Suhrke, 2011). Needless to say, for aid to be an asset in state-building it must be effectively distributed to areas that support state-building.

5.4.2 Creating an Aid Dependant State

Despite the relatively modest initial flow of international aid, the flow of international aid increased rapidly over the next years. During the first international donors meeting in Tokyo 2002, the donors pledged \$5.1 billion for reconstruction in Afghanistan the following five years (Suhrke, 2011; Waldman, 2008). Only two years later, a new meeting for the donors were held in Berlin, for "Helping Afghanistan Move Forward". Here, the donors pledge to support Afghanistan with additionally \$5.6 billion. Donors' willingness can be understood as a recognition that state-building in Afghanistan is a lengthy and demanding task, but the train bombing in Madrid right before the conference in Berlin reinforced and underscored the threat of international terrorism. Ironically then, the plan for international aid, like many other aspects of state-building in Afghanistan became a rushed affair. Consequently, the World Bank's previous concerns seemed to be completely forgotten (Suhrke, 2011).

After the donor meeting in Berlin, the amount of international aid kept growing rapidly under pressure of international aid organisations and local NGOs in Afghanistan. Also, (at the time) Minister of Finance Ashraf Ghani advocated for more financial support. He argued that Afghanistan needed more support to avoid Afghanistan turning into a "mafia drug state". According to Ghani, a flow of international aid would create economic growth, stability and

an efficient state (Suhrke, 2011). Ghani's advocate for more funding is particularly interesting if we look at it through Jean-François Bayart's theory on extraversion. The theory, explains how elites in Africa engaged in external dependency relations to extract money to strengthen their positions (Bayart and Ellis, 2000). Ghani had good relations with the international aid community because of his previous work experience in the World Bank. Large flows of aid channelled through the government, which Ghani advocated, would strengthen Ghani's position as Minister of Finance. (Suhrke, 2011). This shows how Ghani benefitted from aid dependency, using international aid as political resource to strengthen his positions.

Aid dependency might benefit Ghani's individual position, but aid dependency does not benefit state-building. As Suhrke (2011) explains, aid dependency creates rentier states. Rentier states are characterised by dependency on foreign aid or extraction of raw materials and exporting commodities, instead of retrieving revenue from taxing and domestic production and trade. In Afghanistan, the heavy flow of international aid gave the government few incentives to tax the population or strengthen the Afghan administration (Murtazashuili, 2015). Suhrke further points out that political accountability tends to follow the money (Suhrke, 2011). Because the donors provide the necessary funds to keep the government alive, the government feels more obliged to fulfil donors' demands and preconditions instead of the population's. Considering the fact that the Afghan state budget is mainly financed by international donors, the government's accountability is driven towards donors instead of the Afghan population. Part of state-legitimacy rests on its ability to fulfil certain obligations to the population. When government accountability follows international donors instead of the population it thereby weakens state legitimacy. Moreover, it might be even more alarming how aid dependency damages the sustainability of the country's progress. When the government survival relies more on international funding than domestic revenue, how will the government survive if the donors withdraw their support?

After the donor meeting in Berlin, the next stepping stone was the London Conference in 2006 which resulted in the Afghan Compact. Despite continued concerns around the amount of aid, as well as Afghanistan's capacity to absorb aid efficiently, the Afghan compact established a framework for mutual responsibilities, and additionally \$8,7 billion more aid (Suhrke, 2011). It seemed as the strategic benefits of continued support outweighed persistent concerns. During the first half of the decade after the intervention, foreign aid constituted around 90 % of public expenditures, and Afghanistan was dependent on foreign aid to pay

government wages. This leaves the foreign aid community with leverage to shape and form politics the way they wanted, leaving Afghan government little or nothing to bargain with.

5.4.3 International Aid and Legitimacy

The relationship between international aid and state legitimacy in Afghanistan is complicated. The range of actors supporting Afghanistan with aid are mainly Western. Generally, international aid policies therefore correspond with Western state practices, and their perceptions about reconstruction and development achievement. As a result, aid projects have mainly been designed to deliver short-term and quickly visible results, at the expense of Afghan participation and capacity building (Waldman, 2008; Zürcher, 2012). For a state to be legitimate, it is not enough to merely implement functioning institutions. The implemented institutions must also fit the local context and be socially, historically and culturally appropriate to be perceived as legitimate. Aid projects in Afghanistan must therefore reflect the Afghan population's needs and wants for state to be perceived as legitimate. Thus, international aid in Afghanistan serves a contradictory role. International aid both strengthens state capacity by improving technical reconstruction but at the same time it undermines state-legitimacy, which is crucial to successful state-building.

Commonly, state-institutions and state budgets organise resource mobilisation, therefore the state budget is at the core of state-building. When money is disbursed from one place, preferably under one political authority, this authority can easily be held accountable by the nation receiving aid. This is different in FCASs such as Afghanistan, where the bulk of resources for public services are provided by international donors and aid agencies. In these cases, which also represent the Afghan case, donor countries and donor agencies keep their own spending mechanisms which are held accountable only to its own political authority. To exemplify, in 2005 the Afghan budget showed that less than one quarter of international aid contributions were disbursed by the central government (Rubin, 2005). Not only does this make it challenging to effectively organise aid and hold donors accountable, it also creates what Ashraf Ghani called a “dual public sector”, which creates a dual fiscal legitimacy.

The increasing size of aid flowing into Afghanistan from the first donor meeting in 2002 required functioning administrative infrastructure to be absorbed effectively, which was absent in Afghanistan at the time (Zürcher, 2012). In its place, the international aid organisations and consultants managed distribution of international aid (Suhrke, 2011). As a result, instead of building local competence and knowledge (which in turn could have supported state-building), competence and knowledge was imported through hiring

international advisors and consultants. Furthermore, leaving aid management and distribution in the hands of aid organisations and imported consultants created a parallel state administration of international actors. As Zürcher (2010) notes, in fragile states an important step towards state legitimacy is to transfer service delivery to the state. Instead, international aid donors became the main providers of goods and services, leaving the citizens with little incentives to trust and answer to the government. Because state-building requires provision welfare and services, this creates a vicious circle where state legitimacy is undermined.

5.4.4 What Good has International Aid Done?

Considering Afghanistan's humanitarian crises since the onset of state-building (Waldman, 2008), international aid serves an important role in humanitarian relief and long term developments such as fostering economic growth. Aid effectiveness is therefore directly related to wider state-building efforts. Despite problems with legitimacy, accountability and dependency, international aid has contributed to some important developments for state-building in Afghanistan. Major improvements have been made in sectors such as education, maternal health, and construction of roads and formation of security forces (Waldman, 2008, p. 10). In terms of Afghanistan's demography and economy outlined in point 5.1.4 and 5.1.5, these improvements are important. Improvement in infrastructure is vital to help the economy back on its feet and educational opportunities are long sought in the country where the majority is illiterate.

Improvement of health, especially women's health, deserves extra attention. UN Women underscores the importance of empowering women to foster economic growth and fully representative politics (unwomen, outdated). Women constitute nearly half the population (World Bank, 2018c), and women's role in state-building is therefore important. Since state-building began, women's role have improved in several aspects; maternal health has improved, as well as greater access to antenatal care and skilled assistance during child-birth. These are all considerable improvements, yet differences between improvements in rural and urban areas are still remarkable. As Mari Skåre explained, despite improvement in the health sector, provision of health services in rural areas are still far from the same standard as provision of health services in urban areas. To illustrate, over 70 % of the national budget is allocated to operations and maintenance in Kabul (Waldman, 2008, p. 10). Not only does this affect women, but it underscores the urban rural divide in Afghanistan, and a Kabul-centric government forgetting that state capacity must reach beyond the urban areas. This is especially important because the majority of Afghans live in rural areas.

In sum, evidence suggest that international aid in Afghanistan does some good in terms of improving many people's quality of life, which in turn boosts state-building efforts. Despite some positive contributions, the international aid community's overall nature and modality presents many challenges to successful state-building efforts. Problems with aid dependency, legitimacy and keeping track of aid must be dealt with adequately for international aid to contribute positively to state-building efforts. Furthermore, the complex international aid community combined with Afghanistan's complex context makes aid efficiency difficult.

5.5 The US' Role in Afghan State-Building

The US is a central actor in Afghan state-building in many ways. The US is the main contributor of foreign aid in Afghanistan, and the US also played an important role in the first negotiations at Bonn in 2001, which laid the foundation for state-building in Afghanistan. I have already defined state-building, but before we continue I will revisit what state-building means in US context according to Monten (2014). Monten explains how state-building in US context can be understood as "attempting to create stable, self-sustaining democratic governments in foreign countries that can survive withdrawal of external support" (p. 175). In other words, US aims to operate in a way that strengthens those institutions which ensures that their support will not be needed in the long run.

5.5.1 Motivations and Operation Enduring Freedom

One underlying motivation for US intervention can be explained by looking at the Bush Administration's foreign policy. The Bush Administration's central foreign policy objectives include; expand US core values, such as democracy, human rights, free market economy, eliminate hostile regimes, and establish a global "American empire" (Berger, 2006). The 9/11 terrorist attacks provided the opportunity to legitimately pursue these goals. In the name of "international war on terror", the US-led coalition, OEF invaded Afghanistan only a month after 9/11 in 2001 (Nogueira, 2017; Nuruzzaman, 2009; Williams, 2011). The US' initial approach in Afghanistan was limited to direct military involvement, aiming to remove the threat of terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and growing Taliban insurgency (Williams, 2011; Yamin, 2013). The onset of US' intervention in Afghanistan thus indicates that the approach was more an act of self-defence than a humanitarian intervention. Furthermore, the intervention can be understood as a strategy to ensure that Afghanistan could no longer be a source of insecurity for the US. Hence, not necessarily to promote security or stability in

Afghanistan, and questions about state-building at this point are absent. Thus, the US' initial goal can simply be understood as combatting the Taliban (Berger, 2006; Suhrke, 2012).

OEF was launched in October 2001 with the consent of the UN. It was a joint operation between the US, Britain and Afghanistan consisting of US air force, US special forces and ground support from Afghan militia, and was separated from the NATO-led international security and assistance forces (ISAF). The idea was quick in quick out. Nevertheless, in retrospect, what was supposed to be a "light footprint" approach turned out to be just an opening act in a long and multi-venue "war on terror" (Suhrke, 2011; Suhrke, 2012; Murray, 2013). The Washington administration argued that a lengthy and comprehensive military contribution after the defeat of the Taliban would be counterproductive. Reluctance for a more comprehensive approach can be understood in a fourfold matter. First, the Washington administration feared that lengthy military presence would delegitimise their presence, and they would be perceived as an occupying force. Given Afghanistan's previous experiences with occupations, this rationale seems logical. Second, the Washington Administration favoured an approach to "help Afghans help themselves", in other words stability could only be achieved by developing indigenous capabilities. An overly long military presence would undermine these attempts. Third, pressing concerns around Iraq indicated that US military forces would soon be needed elsewhere. Last, after defeating the Taliban, the US would already have done most of the work, the rest should then be left to others (Murray, 2013).

Suhrke (2011) explains two reasons for including local militia in OEF. First, given Afghanistan's history of previous military occupations, the US wanted to avoid being perceived as an occupying force, and thus delegitimise the whole operation. Second, locating possible fractions of the Taliban hiding in mountain areas required local knowledge. Both reasons underscore the importance of taking local context into consideration when developing strategies for intervention. Nevertheless, during OEF Afghan militia in the south Eastern parts were rarely informed in advance of military operations, due to security concerns. Suhrke (2011, p. 56) gives an example of an Afghan commandant who was only oriented about the whereabouts of his operation two hours' prior to the operation. This reflects only a halfway inclusion of local militia. Suhrke then explains that this halfway inclusion complicated the process of finding the remaining factions of Taliban members who had escaped and hid in the mountain areas. Despite recognising the importance of contextual knowledge, when a perceived conflict between local knowledge and security concerns occurs, security concerns

triumphs. Ironically, lack of adequate local knowledge and information would later on turn out to be one of the reasons for Taliban's resurgence.

5.5.2 From the "Light Footprint Approach" to US' Increasing Role in State-Building

Notwithstanding their initial unwillingness to get too involved, the US exercised a great deal of influence on the arrangements that were made at the Bonn meeting. In theory, the Bonn Agreement was a UN-brokered deal, but the deal was largely influenced by both the UN, and US motivations. In terms of US interest, choosing US-friendly Hamid Karzai as head of the Interim Authority might be the most significant. Despite their interconnected roles during Bonn negotiations, UN and US objectives in Afghanistan differed significantly. The UN's main focus was on drafting a new constitution, initiate a political process that were to be supported and owned by Afghans, including all ethnic and factional groups. In addition, UN's goals was to facilitate development and reduce the scope and resistance of the Taliban (Nuruzzaman, 2009). According to Nuruzzaman (2009), US objectives on the other hand can be understood more as military and strategic goals in Afghanistan and the larger Asian region. State-building at this point was absent, instead, US actions in Afghanistan were guided more along the lines of meeting US military goals than state-building in Afghanistan. In this way, the US' initial approach in Afghanistan was not state-building. At best, it was a half-hearted commitment to state-building.

US' reluctance to a more comprehensive approach was also mirrored in the arrangements made at Bonn 2001, which sought to make state-building in Afghanistan as "afghan-led" as possible (Ayub and Kouvo, 2008). The "Afghan-led" strategy also reflects aims to make the state-building process legitimate by trying to create an approach which would be perceived not as an invasion, but rather efforts to re-build the country. In this way it would be perceived as legitimate by its citizens. Interestingly, the Afghans that were elected to represent the Interim Authority were mainly faction leaders from troops that had supported the US in their military intervention a couple of months before. The interpretation of "Afghan-led" seemingly also included a dimension of "US-friendly". The question thus arises, whose legitimacy was most important to obtain, the international community and the US, or Afghanistan?

Furthermore, despite the faction leaders' questionable pasts, the US kept sanctioning their positions in government and security sectors. In state-building, internal legitimacy is just as important as external legitimacy. Instead of being held accountable for human rights violations, faction leaders were rewarded with powerful political positions. This marginalises questions about accountability and justice, which are crucial for legitimacy. Even though

these faction leaders might be perceived as legitimate in US' eyes, the question of internal legitimacy remains. Waldman (2008) underscores this point by explaining how the corrupt government in Afghanistan is a direct consequence of including these faction leaders in central positions in the government.

Despite initial reluctance to expand military commitment, the “help them help themselves” tactic necessarily required provisions of both US equipment and training, and in 2002 the US undertook training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) (Murray, 2013). Creating a legitimate state military is arguably a fundamental part of state-building. This is related both to state's capacity to provide security for its citizen, in addition to the state's capacity to exercise legitimate use of force and power. A US supported military can in this way undermine central principles of state-building. The only way US support to the Afghan military could be productive was if the military eventually could survive on its own, without any US support. According to Rubin (2005, p. 100), international support should only be transitional, otherwise it will eventually delegitimise the state. Therefore, military support should be conducted carefully and include measures to build up the military forces so that they eventually could survive US withdrawal. Beyond this, the US also found itself taking responsibilities in other important areas such as disarmament and setting up of the police. Thus, the US accepted that support for stabilisation became an essential part of the initial goal of OEF to fight terrorism. The return of the Taliban in 2005 also forced the US to readdress the issue of state-building, and this then became one of the main policy concerns for the US (Berman, 2010). This is underscored in the Department of Defence Directive No. 3000.05 (The US Department of Defence, 2005) which emphasises the importance of building up institutions to control and regulate post-occupations issues and complexities.

5.5.3 The US and the Taliban

Taliban's return has become one of the main security concerns in Afghanistan. How could it be that they returned after the US allegedly defeated them in 2001? This can partly be explained by US lack of local and contextual knowledge, and their failure to implement the right measures right away. In December 2001, when the Taliban had been defeated, and the Bonn meetings commenced, all major ethnic groups in Afghanistan were to some extent represented at these meetings. Ousted members of the Taliban on the other hand, were not invited to the conference (Stenersen, 2010). Many Taliban fighters deserted or assimilated into the new society, but the majority of Taliban leaders went underground in their free haven in Afghanistan's bordering areas to Pakistan. The new government, composing mainly of

Northern Alliances leaders and thus ignoring the long history of dominating Pashtun leadership, is arguably a reason for Taliban resurgence. As explained by Shahid (2008), lacking development results and a non-Pashtun dominance in the central government gave the Taliban incentives for renewed insurgency. US miscalculations, failing to take into consideration the Taliban friendly Pashtun base in Pakistan further underscored possibilities for the Taliban's return. Having enjoyed the benefits of refuge, the Taliban had time to regroup and reorganise.

Contrary to the US, the Taliban had the upper hand in understanding and using local and contextual knowledge to their benefit. From an outside perspective it seems strange that a group often characterised as terrorists, rebels, guerrillas, radicals and extremist can build the necessary base of support, even among Afghans, to exercise the degree of power and insurgency that the Taliban do. If we look a bit closer at Taliban's organisational features, this might not seem that strange anymore. Taliban primarily consist of rural Pashtuns, and their roots can be traced back to the hundreds of Mujahedeen groups arising during the Soviet period in Afghanistan. Despite their religious orientation, ethnic and tribal lineages play an important role in their organisation. Recruitment processes often use loyalties, tribal lineage, personal friendships and other social networks to their benefit (Johnson and Mason, 2007, p. 74-76). In other words, despite often being treated as a uniform group with shared objectives, it is important to remember that the Taliban does not represent one unified mass, and individual goals and objectives might differ. Taliban generally recruits from madrassa⁴ students and local tribal youths, motivated by feelings of revenge (which are especially underscored whenever US miscalculations causes civilian deaths), promises of glamour and financial inducements (Johnson and Mason, 2007; Shahid, 2008). Furthermore, as a result of the decades of war in the country the majority of the Pashtun tribal society generally have some basic military skills. The Taliban also used traditional Afghan cultural codes such as Nanawatai to for example obtain shelter. Nanawatai which is a tenet of Pashtunwali code is traditionally used to request sanctuary, whether you are a friend or an enemy and the other party is obligated to grant this (Shahid, 2008). Juggling the growing discontent with the Pashtun-underrepresented government in Kabul, the Taliban friendly Pashtun base in Pakistan and their advantageous tribal and clan linkages, the strong return of the Taliban became a fact in 2006 (Johnson and Mason, 2007). Taliban's return shows us how important local and

⁴ typically refers to religious schools typically dedicated to study Islam, although there are some madrassas who also teach modern curriculum

contextual knowledge can be. The US' lack of adequate contextual knowledge, combined with the Taliban's in depth contextual knowledge have resulted in major insecurity threats. Insecurity remains one of the greatest challenges to successful state-building in Afghanistan.

Sufferings caused by US war in the country has also affected US legitimacy in the country (Mullen, 2010). Amnesty investigation (2014) reveals that sufferings caused by the US war in the country are not investigated and reported satisfactorily. When US' military operations cause civilian deaths or injuries, the US are rarely held accountable or forced to pay adequate compensations (Shahid, 2008; Mullen, 2010)). Lack of accountability creates an impression that the US have been granted some sort of impunity by the Afghan government. It also implies that Afghan civilian lives have no value to the US, and that the US are entitled to commit human right abuses. Not only does this undermine the principles of the rule of law in the country, it also creates public resentments towards US actions in the country, and delegitimises US presences and actions. Furthermore, when people lose their family or loved ones by the hands of the US, the road to join the Taliban for vengeance is short. In a way, US actions and the Afghan government's management of US actions serves a simultaneous role, by both undermining US legitimacy and legitimising Taliban insurgency. Considering the great insecurity impact of Taliban insurgency on state-building, this poses a great challenge to successful state-building in Afghanistan.

5.5.4 Back to Square One

The first decade of state-building efforts witnessed countless civilian losses, as well as deaths of international soldiers, huge additional costs and renewed Taliban insurgency threats (Surhke, 2012; Yamin, 2013). Despite attempts to gain local Afghan support, the number of casualties increased misgivings about the US and international operations in Afghanistan (Waldman, 2013). An evaluation report published in May 2018 by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) relates the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan to US's stabilisation and security strategies. One strategy flaw identified in the report is failure to amend the counter insurgency strategy (COIN)⁵ to the Afghan context. Instead of being tailored specifically to the Afghan context, COIN actions in Afghanistan have been informed by COIN measures in Iraq (SIGAR, 2018a). Initially the two US' approaches in Iraq and Afghanistan differed significantly. Most notably, the military actions in Iraq, aiming to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime and destroy alleged weapons of

⁵ Counterinsurgency actions designed as comprehensive military and civilian efforts to contain insurgency and address the root causes of insurgency (US government, 2009)

mass destruction, were more massive than military actions in Afghanistan, aiming overthrow the Taliban regime (Doge, 2013). Within three weeks the U.S.' COIN operations in Iraq, supported by allies (mainly Great Britain), managed to take control over Iraq's major cities. The upsurge of insurgency arising after Saddam Hussein's fall was battled by sending another 28,000 troops to Iraq in 2007. Already in 2008, COIN measures in Iraq were successful enough to begin withdrawing US forces (Doge, 2013; Suhrke, 2012). As Doge (2013) explains, the success in Iraq can in part be explained by the overestimated rationale for intervention.

In Afghanistan on the other hand, the initial more limited military approach resulted in weaker military control in large parts of the country. Initially US military operations focused nearly exclusively on combatting the remains of Taliban and Al Qaeda members, targeting only the areas with highest demographic concentration (SIGAR, 2018a, p 11-12). Only in late December 2002 the US expanded their focus to include localized stabilisation efforts by inaugurating Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The PRTs were interagency teams, varying from 50-100 people, aiming to extend the state's legitimacy in provinces by improving security and facilitate development and reconstruction in these areas (SIGAR, 2018a, p. 12). Yet, by time these teams were incorporated in US overarching COIN strategy in 2003, the swift control established by US military forces in 2001 was already challenged by increasing insurgency (SIGAR, 2018a; Suhrke, 2012). Subsequently, as violence was decreasing in Iraq, it was growing in Afghanistan.

In May 2008, Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan, Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, together with a team of advisors travelled to Afghanistan and witnessed the deteriorating security situation. After being informed about the deteriorating security situation, President Bush began planning for a new strategy in Afghanistan. This new strategy resembled similar measures to the ones taken in Iraq, a "fully resourced" counterinsurgency strategy, with a troop surge (Keane and Wood, 2016). It was left to the new Obama-administration to pursue this new strategy. Based on the widely held belief that COIN had been successful in Iraq, to deal with the upsurge of violence and insecurity in Afghanistan similar measures to those in Iraq a few years before were therefore implemented (Doge, 2013; Mullen, 2010; SIGAR, 2018a).

To cope with growing insurgency in Afghanistan, the number of US military personnel deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan converged after 2009 (Doge, 2013; Mullen, 2010; Suhrke, 2012). Yet, the contextual differences between Iraq and Afghanistan appears to be forgotten

when using success in Iraq as a measurement for possible success in Afghanistan. In contrast to the context in Afghanistan described in point 5.1.5, in Iraq before 2003 67 % of the population resided in urban areas, 87 % of the population had access to clean water, and more than 70 % of the population were literate (SIGAR, 2018a, p. 32). In many ways, state-building measures in Iraq was a matter of rebuilding, whereas in Afghanistan they are a matter of building from scratch in many areas. Thus, applying same measures in the two situations seems unlikely to work. The *Stabilization: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan* report, especially underscores problems with illiteracy when implementing stabilisation measures. Illiteracy challenges both the ability to read artillery manuals and maps, as well as drafting budgets and other documents. These profound differences between the two cases were only briefly discussed when shaping the new COIN strategy in Afghanistan in 2009 (SIGAR, 2018a).

5.6 Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and State-Building

As I have described in section 4, state-building can be understood as strengthening of government institutions at the central level to expand state-capacity and state-society relations. The Kabul government has played a central role in Afghan state-building exercises, and still does. Therefore, it makes sense to analyse the role of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) in relation to state-building in Afghanistan. Much of the initial arrangements for the formation of the government was explained in point 5.2, but this section will begin by taking a closer look at the Afghan constitution, which in many ways sets the precedents for state organisation and state governance.

5.6.1 The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

In addition to setting a timetable for the formation of a Transition Authority at Bonn 2001, there was set a timetable for a *Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ)* to adopt a new Afghan constitution. When the constitution was finalised in January 2004, it laid the foundation for a strong presidential system where the president serves as both the head of state and head of government, and appoints nearly all powerful government positions (Afghan Const. 64; Sharon and Bose, 2016). Such a high concentration of executive power in the hands of one man arguably makes government performance subject to personalisation, and free and fair elections are thus crucial for a viable democracy. As Johnson (2006) tells; strong presidential systems in countries where political elites are severely divided creates a system of winners

and losers. The different ethnic groups in Afghanistan all battle to gain political power, often at the expense of other ethnic groups. Furthermore, attempts at gaining political foothold is commonly taken from an ethnic approach instead of a national approach, which leads to continued ethnic fragmentation of the society (p. 14). In this way, a strong presidential system in Afghanistan seems like a recipe for disaster. Afghanistan faces a great challenge of unifying the fragmented society and creating a national identity for this system to work effectively.

There was established a bicameral National Assembly as the highest legislative organ, consisting of two houses: House of People and House of Elders. The House of People is responsible for proposing laws, ratifying treaties and approve budgets. Furthermore, considering that the House of People have power to reject or accept budget and the president's choice of cabinet, the House of People represents one of few government institutions that can place limits on the president's office (Afghan. Const. Art. 92, 93, 94). For example, in 2010, the House of People rejected 17 out of 24 people proposed for ministerial appointments, and another 10 out of the 17 new ministers proposed. Yet, the 10 people that were rejected the second time managed to take up their positions, simply by the president labelling their appointments as "temporary". Thus, even the House of People is limited in the constraints they can place on the president's power. Mari Skåre underscored how the strong presidential system, and overly focus on strengthening the executive branch constraints state-building in Afghanistan. The uneven power distribution between the president and the parliament exemplified by the president's ability to overrule decisions made by the parliament thus undermines the rule of law which is central for the state to be perceived legitimate.

Looking back to Migdal's emphasis on state-society relations in state-building and the importance of state's capacity to penetrate society, such a high centralisation of power also challenges Migdal's notion. Through high concentration and centralisation power, the society becomes alienated from the state. For example, until late 2009 all budgetary and most staffing decisions were made in Kabul. This made it difficult for regional officials to make decisions that suited the region's realities. Moreover, it made it difficult for regional government officials to gain any local support because their employment was disconnected from the areas they worked in. It appears that much attention is given to the technical functioning of government institutions, yet Migdal's argument, that state-building is not just a technical process, but also includes a cohesive socio-political process by which these institutions are consolidated and legitimised seems overlooked and forgotten. Additionally, despite

participants at Bonn 2001 arguing that a centralised government was necessary in the fragmented country, it seems as if this happened at the expense of depersonalisation of power. What appears to have happened instead is a form of formalisation of personal power.

5.6.2 The Judicial and Legislative Branch

As Bonn 2001 envisioned; “a fully representative government” relies on democratic institutions to provide popular representation. Democracies are built on three government branches; the executive, the legislative and the judicial. In Afghanistan the President has the executive power, legislative power is vested in the Parliament, and the Supreme Court with lower Appeal Courts and Primary Courts forms the judiciary branch. A core component of the democratic state is the state’s ability to execute policy and enforce laws cleanly and transparently (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 7). To achieve this, OECD emphasises that state-building efforts in FCASs should strengthen both the judicial, legislative and executive branch of the state (OECD, 2016). The executive power vested in the President was discussed in the previous section, but let us take a look at the legislative and judicial branch.

The parliament is elected by using a single non-transferable vote (SNTV), by which every Afghan voter can only cast a single vote for one candidate instead of voting for political parties. The SNTV-system was implemented by Karzai supported by the US. Suhrke (2007) explain’s US endorsement of the SNTV-system by the idea that this system would shield the president’s executive power from the Parliament, and in this way enable the US to streamline its relationship with Karzai. UN and other international advisers on the other hand advised against this system, and advocated a more commonly used party list system for the parliamentary elections to ensure proportional representation (Sharon and Bose, 2016; Suhrke, 2007). When voters vote for individual candidates as opposed to political party leaders, this possibly marginalises political leaders and leads to an underrepresented parliament consisting of local leaders with no incentive to cooperate with each other or the government. Because the state depends on international aid, the president’s accountability aligns more with donors than the Parliament, which has fostered weak parliament with little capacity to support local interest or establish a clear line of accountability (Suhrke, 2006).

The parliamentary elections in 2005 are worth giving some attention. This was the first time the SNTV-system was practiced. These elections only had a 49.8 % voter turnout, and the voter turnout was highest in the north (around 60 %) and lowest in the Pashtun speaking regions in the South-Eastern areas, especially those areas still suffering from Taliban insurgency. The low voter turnout can in part be explained by the system not being

appropriate for a population lacking basic writing and reading skills, in addition to not having voting experience. For many, the system became too confusing. There were around 6000 candidates, and confusion about whom the voters were actually voting for, resulted in many candidates being elected by mere chance instead of based on the politics they represented (Johnson, 2006, p. 11-19). Johnson also sheds light on another problem with the parliamentary elections; “The aggregate nationwide votes collected by all *Wolesi Jirga* winners represented only 35.8 per cent of the total vote. Put another way, 64.2 per cent of the Afghan voters supported losing candidates” (Johnson, 2006, p. 20). The quote from Johnson implies that the continued political climate would consist of a legislative body which is not supported by the majority of the Afghan population. Considering that the Parliament is one of the few institutions that can place limits on the presidential power, the parliamentary elections results and nature of the election process itself raises challenges. Both in terms of consolidating democracy and national unity to legitimise the state and the government.

McCullough (2006) explains that a strong and just judicial system is important because it strengthens the citizens’ trust to the state and thereby increase state legitimacy. Her stance is underscored by Ledwige (2009) who argues that justice is a necessary component of legitimacy. Because budgetary decisions made in Kabul has mainly devoted funds to strengthen institutions in Kabul and other large cities, Afghanistan’s judicial branch is divided between the state and the traditional justice system (McCullough, 2006; Suhrke, 2006). Subsequently, there are few courts in rural areas where the majority of the population resides. Rural Afghans thus turn to traditional Jirgas to solve their legal disputes because they lack necessary transportation to take them into the main cities where state courts are located. In other words, the state’s judicial power and authority remains restricted to urban areas. McCullough tells how even state courts use customary law instead of statutory law.

The statutory judicial system is also not without flaws. Overall absence of properly educated judges, corruption and outside interference all constrain the justice system. Both the Afghan government and international organisations made attempts to increase the insufficient size of the legal profession, but projects, such as training camps for legal staff, were Kabul centric and thus difficult to attend for people outside big cities. Additionally, low salaries and late payments fostered corruption amongst legal officials (McCullough, 2006). Regardless of corruption’s real magnitude, public perceptions that state legal officials could be bribed undermines the judiciary branch’s legitimacy. Last, existing traditional power dynamics, such as warlords’ and local commanders’ authority makes legal officials subject to outside

interference and pressure. The justness of the judicial branch thus to some extent depend on warlord and local commander's interests.

5.6.3 Patronage Politics

The overly centralised focus on state-capacity building also brought along other problems for state-building efforts in Afghanistan. The regional government officials being detached from the central government, ethnical fragmented groups battling to gain power and a central government composed of warlords and previous faction leaders, have all created a system of political patronage networks (Doge, 2011; Newbury, 2016; Sharon and Bose, 2016)). Martine van Bijlert (2009) explains how patronage networks and personalisation of privileges leads to corruption because patronage relations require unofficially provided funds, which in turn generates rent-seeking and extortion by government officials. As explained in point 5.2, government officials all the way up to the president have long held patronage linkages. The deeply embedded patronage system in Afghanistan can also be exemplified by the 2004 elections. Bijlert describes how Karzai's victory can be explained by his powerful international patrons (e.g. the US). Karzai's good relations with powerful international actors made him an attractive patron for many tribal and political networks in Afghanistan, thus he was elected as president (p. 159). The 2005 Parliamentary elections also indicate a similar voting rationale. Despite misgivings about allowing former warlords and commanders to run for office they were allowed to run. Because these leaders weren't marginalised, they remained most accessible patrons, and thus were elected (Bijlert, 2009).

Not only has government patronage politics caused widespread government corruption, in addition, the patronage-run government has led to an increasingly skewed distribution of privileges (Mullen, 2010). To keep their base of support, government officials allocate resources along their patronage networks. Furthermore, the patronage-system is kept alive by pervasive political corruption (Newbury, 2016). When political corruption runs through the government, the chances of getting caught doing something unethical are close to none, this is what Doge (2011) calls "inefficient corruption". He then explains how inefficient corruption undermines the judicial system in Afghanistan because the whole judicial system lacks autonomy from the ruling elite in the country.

5.6.4 A Move Towards Sub-National Governance

Creating state-building approaches in FCASs is often difficult. As with the case of Afghanistan, central governments often encounter problems such as extending state capabilities beyond the central government, weak national integration and weak service

delivery (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009). Sub-national governance as a method to expand state capacity, state legitimacy and distribution of services can possibly be a solution to these problems. The initial approach to state-building in Afghanistan illustrates a case where centralisation and central institution-building have taken precedence over building up local institutions and local governance. The local governance-void created by this approach have given warlords, Taliban fighters and faction leaders the opportunity to fill this space, and undermine state legitimacy in rural and regional Afghanistan.

2010-11 saw a shift in NATO's, UN's and Afghan government's approach to state-building in Afghanistan. For example, in 2010 the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) launched a District Delivery Programme (DDP). The DDP programme aimed to improve governance and service delivery to 80 districts in the country to improve communication and links between regional governors and the central government (Chadhuri and Farrell, 2011; Doge, 2011, p. 13). The shift may be understood as a realisation that the original plans for state-building were not realistic given the historical context of Afghanistan, nor were the international community's abilities in assisting state-building. Renewed Taliban insurgency, rise of civilian casualties, declining government legitimacy and widespread allegations of fraud and corruption in both government, the police and the ANA, all indicated that state-building in the country was faltering.

The revised state-building plan shifted towards developing subnational governance. Previous attempts at subnational governance had already been made, such as the National Solidarity Program (NSP) launched by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development in 2003 (Chaudhuri and Farrell, 2011, p. 280). The NSP can be considered as one of the more successful attempts of local governance and state-building (Bately et. al, 2010). Around 2010, the NSP had facilitated 22,500 community development councils, and financed around 50,000 development projects. It has later been acknowledged that promoting democracy and facilitating development in rural areas is central to increase local legitimacy, which in turn is a crucial asset for state-building. A Randomized Impact Evaluation of Phase-2 of Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme concludes that the NSP has had positive impacts on local legitimacy, local democracy, transparency and empowering women (Beath, Christia, Enikolopov and Kabuli, 2010). This report's results further underscores the importance of sub-national and local governance as an asset in state-building in Afghanistan, as it serves to provide both legitimacy, development and democracy in areas where the government and other actors has previously been unable to reach. As Ghani and Lockhart (2008) write "... when a

lower level of government can handle a particular function, higher levels can stand back to monitor, plan and set the agenda.” (p. 165)

The new Ghani-led government from September 2014, also recognised the importance of subnational governance for effective state building in Afghanistan. At the London Conference in 2014, the government presented a “Realising Self-Reliance” document. In this document, the government established its commitment to review subnational policy to improve clarity on roles and responsibilities of subnational officials (Blunt, Mamundzay, Yama and Afghan, 2015, p. 276). Despite attempts to improve the quality of subnational governance in Afghanistan, as of 2015 there were still many challenges to Afghan sub-national governance. The main challenge according to Blunt et. al (2015) relates to conceptual clarity (or rather lack of clarity) about subnational governance in Afghanistan. Blunt et. al further describe subnational governance in Afghanistan as deconcentrated. Because services are delivered sub-nationally through disperse unites, the political and fiscal decisions are still controlled from the centre, which puts limits on decentralisation. Furthermore, subnational governance in Afghanistan also relies on the wants and desires of donor countries, which constraints sub-national governance’s nature (Blunt et. al, 2015). Sub-national power distribution is also influenced by insurgency and the limited state authority beyond the centre in Kabul also puts constraints on subnational governance.

5.6.5 GoIRA and Improvements

Notwithstanding challenges associated with GoIRA and state-building, there have also been some improvements. First and foremost, Mari Skåre highlighted how the new constitution has empowered women in politics by providing them a place in politics. Constitution Article 83 states that at least two women from each province elected to the House of People must be women. Additionally, Article 84 states that 50 % of the presidentially elected members to the House of Elders shall be women. Given women’s historically marginalised position due to the patriarchal tribal and ethnic nature, these improvements are important. Mari Skåre also credited President Ashraf Ghani for articulating politics which includes women.

Additionally, through international assistance GoIRA has been able to strengthen both the health and education sector, as well as building out infrastructure. In urban areas, training camps for legal officials have increased the body of legal officials. Subnational governance has also extended the scope of democratic institutions and service delivery.

5.7 Warlords and State-Building in Afghanistan

Since the onset of state-building in Afghanistan, warlords have been key figures government positions, and throughout history they have controlled many regional areas in Afghanistan. Before I continue I will define what warlords mean in the context of Afghanistan.

5.7.1 A Conceptual Explanation of Warlords

Commonly, warlord is a term describing actors who challenges state monopoly. Related to the Weberian conception of the state, Weber describes warlords or “elected war lords” as charismatic leaders, whose legitimacy depends on his/her charisma (Weber, 1986, p. 85).

Building on Weber’s ideas, Kimberly Marten (2006/2007) describes warlords as charismatic elites who benefits from the lack of state legitimacy and use this to pursue personal economic gains by the means of force. In the context of Afghanistan, Ana Pejcinova (2006) describes warlords “militant entrepreneurs”. By this, she means that warlords are agents who operates using a mix of militant power and profit. She further claims that Western perceptions of warlords commonly bears a negative connotation, because they are described as “gangsters”, “thugs”, “guerrillas”. In Afghanistan, warlords are by many simply seen as “... ethnic representatives and defenders within their own community” (Pejcinova, 2006, p. 36)

Furthermore, warlords in Afghanistan today can be considered as patrons for security when the state is unable to provide it. Pejcinova consequently describes warlords as “... authoritative militants who fulfil a range of societal roles within the local communities, and who develop specific modes of economic, military and political operations and exchange under extreme circumstances” (Pejcinova, 2006, p. 36).

Pejcinova acknowledges that even within the same country warlords can differ in terms of their type, size, level of legitimacy, their relation to the government and their access to sources of economic stability. Given their possible differences, she identifies six common features that can describe warlords in Afghanistan:

- 1) They command private, or privatized military forces; 2) their rule is connected to specific territory, usually their ethnic community; 3) they possess some legitimacy among the local population; 4) they have a more or less symbiotic economic and military relationship with at least a part of the local community; 5) they participate in the global economic system, engaging in one or more forms illicit or informal economy; and 6) they

challenge, privatize or supplement the state functions, resources and instruments on their territories (Pejcinova, 2006, p. 37).

Roger Mac Ginty (2010) underscores Pejcinovas description of warlords by claiming that despite warlords not being a uniform group of actors, warlords rely on "... the maintenance of a private army, the use of coercion or the threat of coercion and an economic means to sustain the warlord" (Ginty, 2010, p. 583). Four key components ensures the warlord system's survival; resources, legitimacy, support and state weakness. Warlords' survival thus rests on reinforcing these mechanisms. Following Pejcinovas notion of warlords as patrons for security, the most prominent of such mechanisms is insecurity. This is true in the context of Afghanistan where warlords, through co-operation with international actors such as the US and the UN provide security, and simultaneously through increased use of violence on their behalf create a space for insecurity, making sure their services are needed. Bringing together the characteristics of warlords, Kimberly Marten (2006/2007) boils down warlordism to armed men who takes advantage of the weak states central authority to seize control over small spaces of territory. They do this based on self-interest, and they are able to do this based on their charisma and patronage ties. Last, he concludes that warlordism causes political and economic fragmentation across the country (p. 48)

5.7.2 Warlords in Afghanistan

Warlords have a long history in Afghanistan, but modern warlords can be dated back to anti-Soviet Mujahedeen military commanders. These commanders received significant empowerment through military and financial support from the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. When Soviet withdrew in 1989, many of these commanders had become powerful regional warlords (Ginty, 2010; Stanski, 2009; Marten, 2006/2007). In addition, some of these commanders developed opium trade as a source for economic resources, and built up power bases independent from foreign support. Historically Northern Alliance warlords have controlled regional armies and economic zones. They have used their assets to provide public goods and services to the population living in the regions they control (Marten, 2006/2007). One example is Ismail Khan who controlled all the trade in the Herat regions (Ginty, 2010). By providing local communities with necessary services they have gained support and legitimacy amongst local populations, and warlords still have a strong standing amongst the Afghan population.

At the time of state collapse and civil war during the 1990s, warlords thrived in the political climate characterised by insecurity and lack of control. In the absence of any control, warlords in a dual manner both engendered insecurity and provided security and they remained the most important political and military actors until Taliban gained foothold from 1994 and onwards (Malejacq, 2016). The Taliban were effective in their work against warlords. Through military measures and campaigns against the lawless nature of warlords, they managed to push most of the warlords to the north eastern parts of the country by 1998. The Taliban managed to keep the military upper hand for a long time, but the 9/11 terrorist attack and the following international state-building intervention re-empowered warlords (Stanski, 2009; Ginty, 2010; Malejacq, 2016)). The US empowered warlords through financial support and armament to fight the Taliban and Al Qaida. After the Northern Alliance fighters helped the US combat the Taliban they were rewarded by named as local commanders during the 2002 transition period.

When the international coalition began looking for members to the new government warlords claimed that they should be guaranteed a role in the government. Justified by the fact that they had lived and fought the war, they felt they were entitled to run the state (Giustozzi, 2004). during the 2005 parliamentary elections former warlords and leaders of the Northern Alliance were elected to minister posts, governorships and chief police positions (Marten 2006/2007). Ironically, the Bonn conference in 2001 scripted a transition to a state built on core liberal principles. A centralised, democratic functioning state, open economy, a new constitution and extension of human rights (Ginty, 2010, p. 587). Yet, after 2005 parliamentary elections, over 80 % of the parliament were linked to human rights abusers and armed illegal groups (Marten, 2006/2007). Since then, warlords have been known to manipulate the security situation in Afghanistan by for example initiating local riots. They thus created a perceived need for their assistance to provide security in a way that the US and NATO are unable to guarantee (Marten, 2006/2007, p. 57). Ginty (2010) explains how warlords have maintained and increased power by operating in the name of anti-Taliban activities to retrieve financial and military resources from ISAF and the US.

5.7.3 Warlords and State Legitimacy

State-building efforts in general, and state-building in Afghanistan aims to reconstruct a system which leaves little room for warlords and warlordism. Restoring state-legitimacy, security and monopoly of violence would necessarily remove the mechanism ensuring continuation of warlords in Afghanistan. Barnett R. Rubin (2006) argues that the onset of

state-building in Afghanistan implied that Afghanistan would undergo what he calls “warlord democratisation”. By this he means that by co-opting them in the state-building process, warlords would demobilise and learn how to resolve security dilemmas through elections rather than resorting to violence. This is not a simple task, and requires both confidence-building and transparency.

The idea to co-opt warlords in the state-building process can also be understood as a step to legitimise the process. As Rubin notes, state-building conducted in FCASs must include DDR measures (Rubin, 2006, p. 180). The Mujahedin groups advocated that new Afghan security forces should mainly consist mujahedin militia who were to be given both new weapons and new training. The UN feared that giving control over security to the former Mujahedin warlords would undermine state-building efforts (Ginty, 2010). Yet, US and European reluctance to commit to a more comprehensive military involvement initially left the UN with little leverage to negotiate with faction leaders of the mujahedin groups. The only incentive left to negotiate with the former warlords was to offer political incorporation. As a result, the main strategy to the former warlords became co-optation instead of marginalising the warlords (Rubin, 2006, p. 180).

Co-opting warlords in the government can also be understood as a meaningful contribution to extend state authority and governing capabilities. Firstly, outside the main cities the rest of the country is sparsely populated (Marten, 2006/2007). Considering state capabilities, governance beyond these main cities is a demanding task. Through US support during the battles against Taliban, Northern Alliance warlords managed to reinstate their militia and patronage networks, and they again enjoyed power in rural territories (Stanski, 2009; Ginty, 2010). Rewarding warlords like General Abdul Rashid Dostum with government positions can therefore be understood as getting the warlords on their side, and was therefore an important asset to expand governance to the areas controlled by warlords. This is further underscored by the position of customary and traditional law in Afghanistan. Throughout time, local leadership has been the main form for governance. In the wilderness of ethnicities and tribes in remote areas, local leaders and warlords are the only actors who are considered as a legitimate authority (Pejcinova, 2006; Marten, 2006/2007). Hence, warlords are important powerbrokers between the state and people living in these areas. Warlord’s positions in the government enables the state to govern and marshal support beyond the state centre.

The relationship between western modernist approach to state-building, and the strong hold traditional realities of Afghan society is also put to the test when including warlords in the

government. On one side, including warlords in the government manifests the importance of recognising local context. On the other side, including warlords in state administration was not well-met by international stakeholders who favoured a western bureaucratic structure for appointments in state-administration. As the state became more institutionalised, international pressure to clean-up the state administration increased (Ginty, 2010; Stanski, 2009; Marten, 2006/2007). International resentment towards a state-administration including traditional leaders cannot be explained solely by the view that modernist western bureaucratic state administration would be better. Additionally, criticism to the warlord infested state-administration grew simultaneously with growing concerns about the state-administration's legitimacy due to stigmatisation of the warlords by human rights organisations. The new tactic became to bolster state authority and marginalise warlords to increase state legitimacy. Seemingly, the importance of traditional power structures in state-building are only taken into consideration when it is absolutely necessary.

5.7.4 Warlords and Economy

Getting state economy back on track is also a core component of effective state-building. A transparent, sustainable and functioning economy is important not just for state legitimacy, but also for the state's ability to provide necessary public goods and services. Aid dependency is not the only challenge at the forefront to a well-functioning economy in Afghanistan, as point 5.1.5 explains, another major challenge is the illegal opium sector. Poppy growing, opium production and opium trade are all controlled mainly by warlords (Pejcinova 2006). For warlords, the opium sector is an important source for their survival. Revenue from opium trade enables warlords to provide services for the population which legitimises their presence. Moreover, the opium sector also creates a large portion of informal jobs. Considering widespread poverty and high rates of unemployment, for many, the profit and employment created by poppy trade are what keeps them out of extreme poverty (Pejcinova, 2006; Ginty, 2010). In this way, the warlord-controlled poppy trade both reinforces warlord's assets necessary for survival, and legitimises their presence by enabling them to provide a way out of poverty for a big part of the Afghan population.

For successful state-building on the other hand, poppy trade not only constitutes a problem because it is illegal which undermines especially external state legitimacy. As of 2005, Afghanistan alone was responsible for over three quarters of heroin sold in Europe (Pejcinova, 2006, p. 42; Marten, 2006/2007). External economic legitimacy could boost international investment and thus help the economy to get on the right track. With no real

profitable alternative to opium production, the problem of external legitimacy remains. The state is also unable to benefit from the revenues of poppy trade. 79 % of the total income generated by opium trade goes directly to the traffickers who are the warlords, and 21 % goes to the farmers (Pejcinova, 2006, p. 42-43). Because warlords are the beneficiaries from poppy trade, they also become the main service providers. A task, according to state-building discourses, should be managed by the state. When warlords step in as service providers at the expense of the state, they contribute to undermining state-legitimacy. In this way, the warlord-controlled opium sector is a problem both for state economy and for state legitimacy. For as long as another better alternative to poppy trade to create jobs and revenue is absent, warlords will remain a challenge to successful state-building.

5.7.5 Warlords and Security

As I have explained, warlords also rely on certain resources to maintain their positions. At time of state-building in Afghanistan the country had suffered from many years of violent conflicts and occupations. The many years of conflicts left the country with limited available resources, even for the warlords. This challenges warlords' legitimacy as service providers for the civilian population. That is not to say that warlords in Afghanistan has benefitted greatly from illegal opium trade to economically enrich themselves, and to have an economic foundation is crucial for warlords and their power. But, and as argued by Antonio Giustozzi (2006, p. 3), warlords in Afghanistan share more similarities with politicians than with businessmen. Especially related to the context of Afghanistan, where one of the main challenges the country faces has been (and is) insecurity, social status depends more on control of security than money. This is further underscored by deep roots of warlordism in the country, which can be explained mainly by the great demand for security in the country, most notable by village populations.

State monopoly of violence is a central part of state-building efforts. After helping US fighting the Taliban, warlords in Afghanistan were left in possession of military arms and equipment. Furthermore, warlords survive on the fine balance between security and insecurity. Because of this, warlords are often both the source of security and insecurity. Ismail Kahn, who rose to power as warlord during the Soviet-Afghan war, was previously the governor in Herat. During his years as governor he managed to keep the Herat province rather safe for the people living there. The Herat province is located far from Kabul in the Western part of Afghanistan. It is therefore unlikely that the central state government would be capable to maintain security in Herat without the help from Ismail. In this way, warlords are useful

assets for the state's ability to provide security. Contrary, territorial disputes between Abdul Rashid Dostum and Atta Mohammed resulted in violent conflicts and insurgency for people living in Mazar-i-Sharif. Warlord's personalist and subjective nature therefore also poses challenges when they are given positions within the state administration, military and the police.

All things considered, warlords have in many respects both boosted and undermined state-building efforts in Afghanistan. On the one side warlords who have been co-opted in the state have helped expand state-capacity, and their role as power brokers have also expanded state-legitimacy. Warlords also contribute to welfare and service provisions, and some warlords have managed to improve security in rural areas. On the other hand, warlords also contribute to insurgency, the illegal economy and patronage politics. All which undermine the goals envisioned by state-building efforts in Afghanistan.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The previous chapter analysed by whom and how different state-building measures has been carried out in Afghanistan. This chapter will discuss the implications of state-building approaches and state-building efforts in Afghanistan.

6.1 Flawed State-Building Objectives

The analysis in chapter 5 shows how state-building efforts in Afghanistan have been constrained by various contextual factors such as patronage politics, insecurity, and aid dependency. The questions thus arise, have state-building objectives in Afghanistan been wrong considering the local context?

For example; while it is clear the US managed to meet their initial objective, that is they managed to overthrow the Taliban regime, and engage a democratic transition. The, “quick in, quick out” objective, soon showed unsustainable. They failed to acknowledge that this objective did not fit well with the local context, nor did it lead to long-term stability. Despite the low levels of insecurity right after Taliban’s defeat, the power vacuum was not used to reinstate a formal security sector. First, merely defeating the Taliban did not mean that there were not other forms for ungoverned spaces. When state-building efforts began, warlords still exercised a great deal of control and power. In other words, there was not an absolute lack of control and power in Afghanistan, rather control and power was control vested in non-state actors. Thus, efforts to vest control and power in the state meant removing this from someone else (such as local commanders and warlords). To obtain legitimacy OEF thus included the local militia in their operations.

Including local militia in OEF as an attempt to gain legitimacy had detrimental effects on efforts to build a formal security sector. Not only did this inclusion serve to legitimate warlords as security providers, it also strengthened the hold of patronage networks and patronage politics. Due to their support during OEF, Warlords also managed to leverage a place in politics, the military and the police, thus challenging the formation of a formal security sector. Because warlords are kept alive by traditional forms of governance, state-building efforts and state-administration has included actors who partly worked against state-building’s democratic desires. When insurgency revoked, the US had to admit the unsustainability of their initial objective. The renewed objective, a more comprehensive

security approach, took the Iraqi context as a starting point instead of Afghanistan's context. The US' new security strategy is also relevant when looking at OECD's recommendation to take local context as starting point to avoid blueprint approaches. Instead of creating a new strategy specifically adopted to the local context, the US implemented a similar COIN strategy as the one used in Iraq. Failing to recognise contextual differences between Afghanistan and Iraq, such as levels of illiteracy, this strategy too did not work as planned, and insecurity remains one of the main challenges to state-building efforts.

The objective of top-heavy centralisation of the state also had damaging effects on state-building efforts. Contextual aspects such as widespread illiteracy, historically deeply embedded forms of traditional governance, especially in rural areas, and insurgency did not fit well with the objective. Instead of fostering a viable well-functioning Western version of democracy, the strong presidential system fostered personalisation of power, corruption throughout the government, patronage politics, and a disconnected parliament unable to carry out effective legislative duties in rural areas. Not only has this objective damaged state-legitimacy, additionally the effectiveness and capacity of both the executive, legislative and judicial branch has suffered from centralisation. As explained in point 5.6.1, the strong presidential power has created an uneven power distribution between the executive and legislative, and weakened state-society relations. Centralisation has also limited judicial capacity, and rural areas still use traditional justice systems.

The most important flaw of the centralisation objective is that the fact that most Afghans live in rural areas. A strong state requires state abilities to deliver services and expand authority to all the citizens in the state for it to be perceived legitimate. Despite believing that centralisation is an important first step to reinstate state-authority and curb with powerful local leaders, the overly focus on central areas has weakened state capacity in rural areas, and gaining state legitimacy in rural areas has thus been difficult. To cope with this, a renewed objective has focused on sub-national governance. Sub-national governance efforts have had mixed results (Lister, 2007). The NSP for example, which was a multi-actor World Bank-funded and community driven program, was concluded successful in terms of extending local legitimacy, democracy and transparency (Beath et. al, 2010; Lister, 2007). On the other hand, the GoIRA launched the Afghanistan Stabilisation Programme (ASP), was far from successful. The ASP aimed to strengthen sub-national governance and increase local civil administration capacity. Yet, constrained by political and administrative problems the only

goals that were actively pursued were infrastructure components, and attempts to reform and restructure local civil administration remained more difficult (Lister, 2007).

Despite various actors managing to fulfil their initial state-building objectives, these objectives have not created the state envisioned by state-building. Yes, the Taliban was initially defeated and Afghanistan underwent a democratic transition, yet in the longer term the initial objectives have not worked well. Why are these objectives flawed? Let us take a closer look at the role of traditional structures in Afghanistan and state-building's democratic desires to discuss this.

6.2 Modernising Traditional Structures

Generally, state-building efforts in Afghanistan resemble attempts at changing the originally traditional local context into a modern society by implementing modern institutions such as bureaucracy and democracy. Seen through a democratic peace perspective, democratisation in non-democratic or illiberal states constitutes an important aspect of state-building efforts; that is to end violent conflict and create a stable international order. Yet, the analysis makes it clear that subverting traditional structures have not worked. Instead, implementing modern structures in Afghanistan has been met with resistance from warlords, state politicians and fragmented ethnic groups. Moreover, the assumption put forward by democratic peace theory, that citizens in democratic states all share a desire for peace, security and stability fails to acknowledge that this is not necessarily true in all places. This is evident when we look back to the analysis of warlords in Afghanistan. Implementing democratic structures in Afghanistan did not simply remove warlords' incentives to create insecurity. Instead, warlords managed to achieve powerful positions, such as minister posts, in the new democratic order but continued to extract military resources from the US and NATO by manipulating the security situation. In turn, these resources were used to reinforce their traditional patronage networks.

GoIRA's approach to state-building resembles to some extent both modernising state-building aspects as well as a more traditional approaches to building the state. The constitution includes both elements of traditional governance such as the Loya Jirga, the House of People (Wolesi Jirga) and the House of Elders (Meshrano Jirga), as well as democratic presidential system. The plans for the government were largely planned under international influence, and including traditional forms for governance recognises that this was important for the state to be perceived as legitimate by the Afghans. Despite recognising that historic and deeply

embedded forms for governance are important to take into consideration when developing state-building approaches and apparatus, when the Interim Authority was put together at Bonn, existing ethnic and tribal fragmentation was ignored. Attempts to modernise traditional structures were also challenged by the strong hold of traditions. Instead of a smooth transition to a modern democracy, patronage politics continue to haunt the government. Both elections, distribution of public services and state government appointments continue to be influenced by patronage networks.

Ironically, despite advocating modernisation, to some extent, US state-building actions specifically has reinforced traditional patronage structures. Two such strategies can exemplify this. First, unintendedly or not, by supporting Northern Alliance warlords as part of their security strategy, warlords managed to reinstate their patronage networks, especially in rural areas. Long traditions with local leadership in rural areas, combined with limited state capacity legitimated and reinforced warlords' power base. Second, the US Counter Narcotics strategy (CN) to deal with problems such as insecurity, illicit economy and drug trafficking, has not been flawless. One example is the Good Performers Initiative (GPI). According to UNODC (2007) the GPI aimed to encourage provincial and local actors to halt cultivation of opium poppy. In order to do so, the initiative rewarded poppy growing provinces when they reduced poppy cultivation as an incentive for provincial counter narcotics activities (SIGAR, 2018b). As explained in point 5.7.4, poppy growing and opium trade is mainly controlled by warlords. Thus, the warlord governed opium provinces received funds and support, at the expense of poorer provinces who have not grown poppy nor previously benefitted from opium revenue. Consequently, US' CN strategy serves to strengthen locally governed areas that have been hard to put under state-control.

The analysis of US contributions to state-building also shows how restoring security in fragile states is a difficult task. US' overly focus on the security aspect of state-building undermined a more holistic view of the local context. Wrongfully assuming that restoring security could be done merely by defeating the root cause at the time (e.g. the Taliban and the Al Qaeda network) and implementing modern democratic institutions served to overlook other important components contributing to state challenges and insecurity. Insecurity in Afghanistan is not a problem that happens independently from other contextual factors, and Taliban has not been the only root cause for insurgency. As Mick Moore (2001) tells, insurgency and riots are commonly results of ineffective governance, mistrust and misgivings of state authority. Thus, restoring security also relies on perceptions about state capacity and

state legitimacy. State legitimacy for example is not achieved solely by implementing state institutions. State legitimacy also rests on whether these institutions are consciously accepted by the citizens in the state (Gilley, 2006). In Afghanistan, traditional structures and forms for governance still remain legitimate in many rural areas. Are traditional structures so bad after all?

Contradicting common state-building beliefs that monopoly of violence and provision of public services should be controlled by the state, traditional structures and warlords' role in Afghan state-building provides an interesting case to investigate. A core state-weakness in Afghanistan today argued by Mari Skåre, is centralisation and the state's inability to expand governance and capacity beyond central areas. Despite sub-national governance attempts, the state remains highly centralised, and she argues that the new President, Ashraf Ghani centralises even more than Karzai. Maybe then, instead of working against traditional structures, some of these structures could be welcomed. For example, in the Afghan context, where the state's capacity was largely limited, security in provinces such as Herat was maintained by Ismail Khan. Furthermore, because warlords' survival to some extent rely on their provisions of services, warlords' patronage networks are useful assets to extend the state's provision of public services. In this way, keeping some traditional structures (such as patronage networks) alive, might actually create a securer and more legitimate state. Yet, concerns about traditional structures are not unprecedented. This is especially evident if we look at GoIRA's role in state-building. Persistence of patronage politics in the government continue to foster corruption and uneven distribution of privileges.

The strong hold of traditions in Afghanistan are not solely to blame for persisting traditional structures. Rather, the strong hold of traditional structures combined with the strong presidential system that was implemented has strengthen traditional structures. When the strong presidential system was implemented, the argument was that this was a necessary first step on the road to centralisation, which is considered a central aspect of state-building. Instead of the presidential system serving as a tool to formalise power and move away from the traditional personalisation of power, the system in many respects did the opposite. The overly centralised focus on state-capacity detached parliamentary officials from the regions, making them unable to meet the needs of the rural population. As a result, state-society relations have been damaged, and the state lacks legitimacy, especially in rural areas. In addition, due to centralisation, the judicial system is both corrupt, and unable to carry out its functions in rural areas. Consequently, rural areas continue to use a traditional justice system.

This was also underscored by Mari Skåre who tells that the legal system is weak and governance is guided by informal structures, instead of the formal structures Western policy makers wished to implement.

6.3 State-Building's Democratic Desires

A great deal of state-building efforts in Afghanistan has focused on implementing democratic state structures. Looking at democracy through democratic peace perspective, democratisation as part of state-building efforts is a logical measure to induce peace and stability. However, what democratisation efforts in Afghanistan have mistakenly failed to acknowledge is how democratisation should be conducted in the Afghan local context. Democratic transitions have historically happened under very different circumstances (Ottaway, 1997). The same Western democratic model state-building efforts aim to replicate in Afghanistan, happened in distinctive sequences and took decades, if not centuries to achieve in Europe (Fukuyama, 2007). Furthermore, democratic transition in Europe was a violent process, and in many cases included rulers who had to cooperate with different societal groups to build strong institutions (Schröder and Kode, 2012). Despite attempting to implement a European democratic model, state-builders seemingly forget their own violent and complicated history of democratisation. Trying to achieve a similar transition in Afghanistan within a timespan similar to the blink of an eye compared to the time it took in Europe seems rather irrational. This does not necessarily mean that the end goals of state-building efforts are wrong. However, the Afghan case and all the challenges that have arisen in Afghanistan suggests that, at the minimum, the road to achieve these goals should be altered more realistically. This is true both considering Europe's history of democratisation, as well as whether the European democratic model really is the right fit for Afghanistan.

Deeply embedded ethnic and tribal loyalties, sustained by lack of democratic experience and international presence have also challenged democratic reforms. The democratic reforms that were implemented were foreign to the Afghan population. More prevailing was the legacy of ethnic fragmentation and the urban-rural divide. Divisions between ethnic groups, tribes and urban and rural population had been deepened by both years of warfare and Taliban rule (Suhrke, 2007). Instead of democratically voting on candidates whose politics the voters agree with, voters allocate votes to candidates they perceived as powerful patrons to safeguard their interests in the fragmented society. Consequently, warlords became powerful members of the Parliament after 2005 parliamentary elections. This shows that it is not simply enough to

implement democratic structures; these democratic structures must be tailored specifically to the local context to work as they are supposed to.

The OECD's emphasis on acquiring local knowledge is also relevant when looking at democratisation efforts (OECD, 2016). Democratisation efforts in Afghanistan overlooked contextual aspects such as the security situation, illiteracy and lack of experience with democracy. As explained in point 5.6.1, state-building's democratic reforms in Afghanistan relies heavily on free and fair elections to be consolidated. Insecurity preventing people from voting has hampered voter turnout already from the first parliamentary elections where voter turnout in the South-Eastern areas were constrained by Taliban insurgency. The past months leading up to parliamentary elections in Afghanistan in October this year, originally scheduled to be held in October 2016, have also witnessed a series of deadly attacks on voter registration centres. News centres, such as Al Jazeera, have reported attacks on voter registration centres in Kabul and Baghlan Province killing more than 60 people (Al Jazeera, 2018). Additionally, the SNV Parliamentary electoral system implemented by Karzi and advocated by the US policy advisors, is arguably not well-suited for a largely illiterate and fragmented population. Not only did the system become too confusing and difficult for the illiterate population, the system also reinforced a marginalised and underrepresented government.

According to Fukuyama (2004/2005), Western democratic institutions are not necessarily universally applicable. In contrast to many Western well-functioning democracies, Afghanistan does not have a homogenous population with a common national identity. Ethnic and tribal fragmentation runs through the country. Creating a representative democratic state is thus more difficult in the Afghan context. OECD's recommendation that broad contextual knowledge about possible constraints to international engagement is relevant here. The democratic system that was implemented; a strong presidential system sustained by free and fair elections, overlooked how deeply embedded ethnic and tribal identity in Afghanistan really was. Point 5.6.3 explains how, instead of consolidating democracy, the strong presidential system gave rise to a government - run by patronage politics. State-building policy views the ideal state as one where power and institutions are formalised, and attempts to get the state to work according to bureaucracy instead of patronage politics. Yet, time and again patronage politics triumphs the idealised Western forms for governance. Seemingly, patronage politics are unlikely to disappear, and are patronage politics that bad after all?

The democratic transition in France underscores how patronage networks can be an asset in democratisation. A key component of democratic consolidation in France was not abolishing existing patronage networks, but rather using these networks to their advantage by putting them at service of the state (Berman, 2010). Instead of viewing patronage politics as purely a challenge (which it undoubtedly can be in many ways), existing patronage politics can provide useful institutions and forms for governance that state-building efforts can build on instead of working against. Warlords for example have provided both services, security and legitimacy in rural areas in Afghanistan through their patronage networks. Alternatively, instead of seeking to implement a complete replication of the Weberian state, state-building efforts can seek to achieve a state that combines traditional forms for governance and modern forms for governance. In this way, state-building efforts would be allowed to draw on already existing strengths of the social order instead of first breaking these down and implement a new set of structures that are foreign to the state's citizens.

How then can building on existing forms for traditional governance inform state-building efforts. Instead of a modern democratic political order, Clements et. al (2007) suggest a form for a hybrid political order as a possibility in places historically governed by traditional customs. A hybrid political order blends and builds on the strengths of both traditional and modern institutions and cultures. In Afghanistan, the majority of the population live in rural areas, and the analysis shows how traditions still have a strong hold in amongst Afghans. In this way, including traditional forms for governance and traditional institutions, such as the Loya Jirga, can be an asset for extending legitimacy. Furthermore, instead of breaking down existing traditional institutions before building new democratic ones can save state-builders for much resistance met by actors such as warlords.

It is important to recognise that state-building efforts have not failed entirely. Some important improvements have come along caused by state-building efforts. Better infrastructure, improvement in health and education sectors, formation of security forces to name a few. Sub-national governance has also contributed to better service delivery in rural areas, as well as strengthening the scope of democratic institution beyond the major cities. Yet, problems such as crime, corruption and insecurity continue to haunt Afghanistan and state-building efforts.

In sum, there are many reasons why state-building efforts in Afghanistan have not succeeded. The broad gallery of international and national actors that are involved, sometimes with conflicting agendas (e.g. warlords and the US), has pulled state-building efforts in multiple

directions at the same time which in turn has led to an absence of a common rationale for state-building efforts. Furthermore, continued insurgency constrains both state-legitimacy and the Eurocentric version of democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation is also constrained by the strong hold of traditional structures which seemingly almost always take precedence over modernising efforts. Additionally, as I have discussed, the initial state-building objectives were not tailored well enough to the local context. Plus, the analysis underscores how failure to consider local context has continued to halt state-building efforts.

In conclusion, what state-building efforts in Afghanistan aims to do is seriously constrained by the conflict between modernising attempts and the strong hold of traditional structures. State-building efforts' failure to acknowledge the strong hold of traditional structures has made these challenges even more substantial. Moreover, failure to account for other contextual aspects, such as illiteracy, patronage politics, the true reality of the insecurity situation and power politics derailed state-building efforts. This indicates that knowing the local context is important when adapting a state-building approach. In contexts where traditional structures have been/are the dominant forms for governance, these should not be perceived only as challenge. In Afghanistan, traditional forms for governance remain effective in terms of delivering both services, security and legitimacy. Thus, following Clements et. al (2007) suggestion about a hybrid political order can be a fruitful departure for further research and investigation.

Chapter 7: Concluding Remarks

By analysing and discussing state-building efforts in Afghanistan from 2001-onwards, this thesis has looked at the issue of local context and state-building policies. The local context in Afghanistan is complicated. A combination of insecurity challenges, a largely uneducated population with poor health services, shadow economy, state-weakness, ethnic fragmentation and the strong hold of traditions have all made it difficult for state-builders to adopt right measure when conducting state-building in Afghanistan.

The review of the initial approach to state-building in Afghanistan shows how the initial approach was constrained by state-building objectives that were not suited to the local context. The initial objectives underestimated contextual aspects such the strong hold of traditional structures, as well as overestimating long term effects of the measures that were imposed. Problems with the initial approach can also be linked to the complicated situation in Afghanistan at the onset of state-building. There were a wide range of problems that needed to be dealt with. Insecurity, poor health, illiteracy, female marginalisation and poor infrastructure all constituted part of the problems in Afghanistan. Addressing these issues were done by implementing a strong presidential system and strengthening state-institutions, believing that this in turn would lead to improvement in all these areas. Some improvements were made for example in terms improvement in the health and education sector, as well as infrastructure. Yet, both the analysis and discussion show how other problems remain far from being solved.

The analysis of the four different stakeholders found that despite a lengthy, costly and (after some time) comprehensive state-building efforts, state-building efforts in Afghanistan has not come far enough. Most prominently, lack of contextual knowledge and the strong hold of traditions, traditional structures and forms for governance have clashed with the modernising aims of state-building efforts in Afghanistan. Notwithstanding continued attempts to modernise state-structures, patronage politics continue to take precedence over the Western bureaucratic model. State-building's top-heavy approach with the strong presidential system has also reinforced patronage politics.

7.1 The Way Forward

Given the current number of people living in fragile states, and even more so, OECD's expected rise of this number to 3 billion people by 2050 (OECD, 2016), fragility is a major global issue and will most likely continue to be. The Afghan case shows how state-building policy still have long way to go to deal with the fragile states problem successfully. I do not wish to discredit state-building as an approach to cope with FCASs states. Instead I suggest that state-building policies must be developed in an appropriate matter for it to be solution to help states out of fragility.

How then, can this study of state-building in Afghanistan inform the meaning of future state-building policies? Arguably, state-building policies are largely based on the idea that western democratic states are peaceful stable states. Thus, replicating the Western state-model in FCASs will create peace and stability in these states too. What becomes evident from state-building efforts in Afghanistan is that state-building efforts have failed to recognise that state-building efforts cannot be blueprint approaches, and that local context matters when shaping state-building policies. The fact that democratisation has been successful in many Western democracies did not make it a successful blueprint in Afghanistan. This does not necessarily mean that strengthening democratic institutions as a core part of state-building efforts is the wrong approach to state-building. In the Afghan case, implementing modern democratic structures has served an important role in terms of empowering women for example. Rather, this research suggest that more efforts should be devoted to investigate the possibilities of hybrid political orders as an approach to state-building.

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