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Rebel Governance in Afghanistan: the Consequence of Resource Extraction

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Declaration

I, Werner Johnsløy, 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.....

Acknowledgements

Completing a degree in International Relations has taught me more than I could have imagined. I have experienced challenges and setbacks, but having arrived at the end, the experience has been invaluable.

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Abstract

Rebel governance and resource extraction are two fields of research which have mainly crossed paths in regards to funding of insurgencies. Therefore, there is a lack of exploration in terms of how resource extraction can be used for the purpose of furthering rebel governance. For that reason, the objective of this thesis was to analyse and research how illicit mining can create further opportunities for insurgent groups within Afghanistan. By presenting two case studies on the Taliban and IS-KP (Daesh), the aim was to explore how they are using resource extraction to their advantage beyond that of capital gains.

The findings in the thesis are based upon the results from qualitative research. The data therein comes from the two case studies alongside a literature review and a theoretical analysis. The objective of the paper was to create an awareness towards how insurgencies operate in terms of interactions with civilians and the state. My findings show that the insurgencies are exploiting weak institutions and a lack of presence by the state, especially in the case of the Taliban who are taking advantage of the traditional decision making mechanisms in the country. This paired with their historic presence in Afghanistan has led to a strengthening of their perceived authority due to their increased activity in the mining sector, which is conceptually a legal industry. In terms of Daesh and their presence in Afghanistan, my findings are rather different. Given that they have become a more fragmented rebel group with less funding from ISIS, my results demonstrate that one of the few justifications for their continued insurgency is their mining operations. Furthermore, as inter-relationships between the various stakeholders in Afghanistan remain fluid and unreliable, this has provided a political space for insurgent groups who hold a great deal of power to also be recognised as stakeholders in governing a future Afghanistan.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| ANDFS | Afghan National Defence and Security Forces |
| AREU | Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit |
| CCAP | Citizens Charter Afghanistan Program |
| CDC | Community Development Council |
| EU | European Union |
| EUPOL | European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan |
| FCAS | Fragile and Conflict Affected State |
| IGO | Intergovernmental Organisation |
| IS | Islamic State |
| ISAF | International Security Assistance Force |
| IS-KP | Islamic State Khorasan Province |
| MT | Metric Tonnes |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NSD | Norwegian Center for Research Data |
| NSP | National Solidarity Program |
| PKR | Pakistani Rupees |
| SIGAR | Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction |
| SLM | Sudan Liberation Movement |
| SNTV | Single Non-Transferable Vote |
| US | United States |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| UN | United Nations |
| USIP | United States Institute of Peace |

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Topic and Problem Statement

Afghanistan is a country which for decades has been involved in conflict, this coupled with weak institutions and a challenging geography have allowed insurgency a degree of agency they never had before. Rebel groups are becoming more influential and powerful at an alarming rate and as the Taliban and the Islamic State (IS-KP, known locally as Daesh) are becoming more capable, they are also perceived as being a legitimate authority amongst the civilian population. The insurgents are engaged with what is known as *rebel governance*, which is defined by Huang (2016) as “a political strategy of rebellion in which rebels forge and manage relations with civilians – across civil wars” (p. 9). This is a serious problem for the state, which is slowly losing ground to the rebels and their ongoing pursuit for power (SIGAR, 2018).

The Taliban and Daesh have for a long time used the narcotics trade as a key resource for financing the insurgency in Afghanistan (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2018). However, the extractive industry has also proved to be an important source of income, either by controlling mining operations or through taxation of mines. The country has a vast number of mining operations and an unprecedented amount of untapped resources nationally, which the Taliban and Daesh are taking advantage of for their own gains (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2018).

The increasing interest in resource extraction by these insurgent groups is problematic as it provides them with further funding (Giustozzi, 2018a). Overall the state is losing influence over its own country because of the authority insurgents are projecting on the population. Thereby, I argue that the increased engagement in the extractive industry can lead to more favourable circumstances for the insurgent groups. Further involvement in resource extraction by the Taliban and Daesh could lead to a greater perception of legitimacy in the eyes of civilians. Because there is a lack of government presence within Afghanistan, it could lead to a higher degree of authority amongst the insurgency because of their presence. Rebel governance within Afghanistan is becoming a relationship which rebels are making with civilians that are to a lessening extent based on coercion and rather created by mutual interests. Therefore, this study may shed new light on rebel governance in regards to the role of the extractive industries in the Afghan context.

1.2. Thematic Background

Although not a new phenomenon, rebel governance is something which has changed the face of warfare in recent decades. According to Mary Kaldor (2005), the time of traditional warfare amongst nation states are abating, and armed conflicts are now “fought by networks of state and non-state actors, often without uniforms” (p. 492). This ‘new war’ era which has increased in the aftermath of the cold war has gained recognition in the eyes of academia. However, previous research has primarily been focused on aspects of funding. With regard to Afghanistan in particular, established insurgency groups known as the Taliban and the more recently established Daesh have their primary means of funding from the production, processing, and taxing of opium alongside illegal resource extraction (Avdan, 2019). Mineral extraction within Afghanistan is a major industry considering the vast number of mines which are located around the country. The insurgent groups are capitalising on resources gained from illegal resource extraction, and given the scale of operations within Afghanistan (Global Witness, 2018), the extractive industries could be considered a source of legitimacy for rebel governance by the civilian population.

Research on rebel governance is not something new in itself. Where conflicts have occurred in the past, rebels or insurgents have occasionally prevailed as a dominant governing actor. There is according to Arjona (2016) a clear distinction on how this is achieved: there are two perceptions held by communities towards insurgents in times of conflict which are dominant: one is concerned with the criminal nature of their actions and the use of coercion towards the population in order to be considered an authority figure. The second is that of winning the ‘hearts and minds’ and how local communities view insurgent groups as freedom fighters and will therefore gain popular support. Although being an uncomplicated notion, it nevertheless suggests that to win over local communities it is a vital precondition for successful rebel governance.

Mampilly (2011) also agrees with the notion that rebel groups will often try to abstain from the use of coercion and violence in the case of locals for their popular support. Mampilly (2011) also notes that in the case of the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) in Sudan, civilian compliance was considered important for the insurgents. Furthermore, it became evident that an effective system of rebel governance could only emerge once the insurgency had “penetrated deeply into society” (p. 210). The theory would

therefore suggest that the rebel rulers will need to uphold the needs of the people in order to attain compliance. Within Afghanistan, the Taliban have been quite successful in upholding institutions for the benefit of the population in the areas they control. According to a recent report on the south-eastern region of Afghanistan, “[h]ealth and education in Taliban areas are a hybrid of state- and non-governmental organization-provided services, operating according to Taliban rules” (Jackson, 2019, p. 6). As such, the government is not undermining their authority as they are willing to work alongside the Taliban for the sake of the people. As stated by Bergen & Tiedemann (2013) “The weakness of the judiciary and police forced many to turn to the Taliban’s provision of law and order” (p. 2). This suggests that there are previous accounts of insurgents who are perceived as legitimate authority figures in conflict affected states. Lastly, for an insurgent group to assert their presence within a local community, there should be a motivating factor involved, which brings relevance to the extractive industries.

Afghanistan has vast mineral deposits which are located throughout the country. In areas such as the Helmand province where high quality gemstones and marble is present, the insurgents control the majority of areas where mining sites are located (Weir & Azamy, 2015). Furthermore, Weir & Azamy (2015) also interviewed a government official who stated that “marble [is] one of the reasons for continued insurgency in some regions” (p. 81). The mining activities in these areas also experienced evidence of locals joining the insurgents in aiding the smuggling of marble and gemstones. This could suggest that illegal mining activities are motivated not just by financial gains, but also that their presence allows for an increased perception of authority.

Within the Helmand province, it is reported that the Taliban controlled 11 out of the 14 districts where illegal mining is their primary objective (DuPe  , 2017). Furthermore, the government has effectively no say and little control over extractive industry activities in the region. Within the Taliban, there is a tangible and authoritative set of institutions with a clear command structure which is evident in their operations.

For Daesh, the situation is different from that of the Taliban. Where the Taliban have strongholds scattered across Afghanistan and an objective centred on Afghanistan, the Islamic State is less concerned with national borders. They are also more fragmented than the Taliban and are often lacking checks and balances in their operation. Furthermore, according

to Ibrahimi, & Akbarzadeh (2019), the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (or Daesh) many believed would not be able to settle in the region due to its foreign origin and varied interests. However, the group has managed to secure a foothold in spite of competing jihadist interests and according to Giustozzi (2017) having suffered an internal split due to the disputed decision to make Aslam Farooqi the new governor of Khorasan (who incidentally was captured in April of 2020 by Afghan intelligence). Therefore, their interests are not entirely aligned and this is evident through the way they are funding their activities.

The majority of the funds that are raised by Daesh are primarily from taxation and to some extent externally driven from donors (Giustozzi, 2018b). Given the opium ban as of late 2015, which according to Giustozzi (2018b) was in part incentivized by the Taliban to restrict potential funding to Daesh, financing has become more difficult. Thereby, Daesh have taken control of a number of mining operations primarily in Nangarhar province and to a lesser extent in the Helmand province which collectively does provide a steady stream of income.

Although there are several differences between Daesh and the Taliban in terms of rebel governance, they are also perceived differently by the local populations. With the mining operations Daesh have become increasingly involved with, locals are afraid of their extreme ways (Global Witness, 2018). According to Global Witness (2018), the Taliban is an extreme insurgent group, but Daesh are much more inhumane and relentless which only leads to coercion and brutality. As a result, albeit Daesh are in a position where they see capital gains from the mining sector, they are a far cry from winning the people's hearts and minds.

Chapter 2: Objectives and Research Questions

2.1. Objective

In Afghanistan, there are currently insurgent groups which are considered the legitimate authority within, but not excluded to, the southeast region of the country. The Taliban and Daesh are with the aid of illegal resource extraction upholding their presence in local communities which provides a means to operate in terms of funding, but more crucially and for the sake of this paper, legitimizes their presence and authority within the population. My aim was to research how the use of the extractive industries by insurgents will aid the acceptance of rebel governance and thereby legitimize their actions as the considered authority in Afghanistan. Mineral extraction is a growing industry in Afghanistan as there are

vast untapped resources throughout the country (Shroder, 2015). As the Taliban and Daesh are taking control of more mining operations, there is a possibility that this will aid in maintaining their presence and improve their roles as the legitimate authority.

2.2. Research Questions

The study is based on one main research question:

- Does illegal resource extraction create more opportunities for rebel governance within Afghanistan in the case of the Taliban and IS-KP?

Following three sub-research questions:

- Is the income from illegal extraction used by insurgent groups to strengthen their legitimacy?
- Are the community demands acknowledged by the insurgency? And if so, are their demands met to a greater degree than by the government?
- From a community perspective, what are the main differences between traditional, state and rebel governance?

2.3. Hypothesis

I hypothesised that this research will unveil a connection between rebel governance and resource extraction in south eastern Afghanistan. Illegal extraction of resources could therefore be a determining factor for continued support for rebel governance in Afghanistan. The Taliban and Daesh could also be seen as providing elements of localised governance beneficial in the eyes of local communities, and as such, it could provide further opportunities for rebel governance in the country.

2.4. Outline

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and gives the problem statement alongside the thematic background. The second chapter introduces the main objectives of the paper following the research questions and the hypothesis. The third chapter is the research design of the paper which begins with an explanation of the choice of

research method alongside the case selection including use of sources, analysis, ethical considerations before finally the limitations of the thesis. Chapter four describes the theoretical framework following chapter five which gives an overview of the three types of governance being considered in the thesis. Chapter six contains the empirics which is divided into two sections which describes the two case studies. Chapter seven is the overall analysis which is then followed by Chapter eight which is the conclusion following on with a section on further research.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1. Qualitative Research Approach

This chapter describes the methodological aspects of my research. It begins with the reasoning behind using a qualitative method of sampling and its qualities, following a section on its limitations. From there it will explain the case selection and the chapter ends with a section on the limitations of the thesis.

3.1.1. Qualities

For my study I have done qualitative research where I have used a qualitative content analysis alongside triangulation for cross-checking purposes and reassurance. The reasoning behind my choice of using a qualitative method is that I needed to acquire information derived from in depth interviews and research which is not possible with a quantitative approach. Furthermore, according to Bennet & Elman (2007), qualitative method in studying the subfields of international relations are most appropriate as case study methods are advantageous in studying a social phenomenon. I have used secondary analysis as this allows me to utilize high quality data alongside it being both cost and time saving allowing for more time with data analysis as stated by Bryman (2012, p. 315). Moreover, qualitative research aims towards understanding the reasoning behind certain circumstances, as stated by Berg & Lune (2017) “[q]uantitative work leans toward “what” questions, while qualitative tends toward “why” and “how”” (p. 12). Given that my research was based on a social phenomenon, a qualitative means of inquiry would provide more suitable results, which is why I did not engage in a quantitative research method. Furthermore, the use of a qualitative content analysis in this case I found to be suitable as the research conducted was of a sensitive nature and primarily based on a country which is considered inaccessible. As such,

a qualitative content analysis based on a select number of publications will allow me access to research which I would not be able to generate myself. Therefore, by using purposive sampling, or *judgmental sampling* (Berg & Lune, 2017), it is possible to select material which will have the desired attributes I need for my research, while not spending time on that which do not.

3.1.2. Limitations

Every research method will have its limitations and the case of qualitative research methods is no different. Research derived from qualitative methods is often based on smaller focus groups or individual informants than for example in quantitative research, and as such, it is not ideal for generalisability. Qualitative research is meant to be used for obtaining detailed and rich information on a specific subject (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, qualitative research can become overly personal, and it can be difficult to be entirely objective in terms of analysis. In the case of using purposive sampling, it is useful for attaining specific information, but as stated by Berg & Lune (2017), it is lacking in that it can never be used for wider generalisability, of which the researcher needs to be aware. Furthermore, given that my research is based on a qualitative content analysis, it is important to be realistic in terms of what examined documents contain. According to Bryman (2012), the reality in documents can be contextual, and as such they represent a reality which may not always be the absolute truth. Therefore it is important to be aware of the potential bias which is therein. Beyond the scope of limitations in qualitative research, there is also the collection of data which needs to be addressed.

3.2. Data Collection

Because my field of research has been on the effects of illegal resource extraction and rebel governance, I have employed a strategy of purposive sampling. According to Bryman (2012), this is a non-probability form of sampling which is not based on randomly selected units of analysis. Given that my area of study is very specific and to some degree sensitive in nature, using case studies allowed me a certain level of adaptability in my data collection which was useful since I have relied on secondary sources. The majority of the material being presented have been researched and collected in the period between October of 2019 and February of 2020. The research has been carried out through open source research tools like search

engines alongside databases for academic research and libraries. In certain cases I have found reports from IGO's own websites, like that of USIP and USAID.

3.2.1. Secondary Sources

When conducting my research, the degree of authenticity in my secondary sources have been a point at issue. According to Bryman (2012), secondary sources are often of great value as they provide data which would be very difficult as a researcher to generate by myself.

However, it also means that there can be less of a familiarity with the data, and sometimes it can be difficult to assess the validity and trustworthiness of said data. In the case of my chosen sources, I have relied primarily upon secondary source case studies which have been based on qualitative research. Furthermore, I have also relied upon a selection of scholarly reviewed journal articles, policy reports, statistics, and official documents from well renowned sources. Bryman (2012) states that for the purpose of analysis, secondary sources which include newspaper articles and mass-media are to be considered less valuable.

However, for purposes of information, I have deemed it necessary to incorporate a select number of mass-media sources as they can be of good value in terms of awareness.

Collectively, my sources have been subject to a content analysis where my findings have been triangulated to ensure that my results are more reliable.

3.2.2. Data Analysis

My data analysis has been reliant on a qualitative content analysis. This method is according to Bryman (2012), one of the most prevalent methods of qualitatively analysing documents within research. My analysis was made possible with the aid of open coding, where I organized my data according to its relevance as per my research questions. By doing this, themes emerged based on the case studies and I was able to develop my final analysis.

Given that my research has been based on secondary sources, I have relied heavily on secondary analysis. By using other researchers' data there are many advantages such as cost and time saving, access to high quality data sets, longitudinal analysis, and reanalysis of existing data (Bryman, 2012). This form of analysis has also allowed me to crosscheck my data with the aid of triangulation. The benefit of using a secondary analysis have been of great value for my research as I believe theoretical saturation is very difficult to achieve

without it. In order for me to obtain more nuanced results, triangulating my findings have allowed me to become more knowledgeable with my data and uncover familiar themes that were relevant for answering my research questions.

While I have done a comparative study between the Taliban and Daesh within Afghanistan, it is not for the purpose of comparing two insurgent groups within the same country. For the purpose of attaining a more nuanced picture of insurgencies in Afghanistan, the two case studies were chosen. While the rebel groups are very different in terms of capabilities, size, aims, and operational capacities, it is the collective findings which the analysis has been based upon.

3.2.3. Ethical Considerations

According to Bryman (2012), there are four ethical principles to be focused on in social research which needs to be addressed. The first one is whether there is harm to participants, the second is lack of informed consent, the third is invasion of privacy, and the fourth is whether deception is involved (p. 135). I have also made sure that my work does not reveal any harmful information and I have not shared or published any findings which could potentially be harmful for any of my sources. Furthermore, I have collected my data in line with the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD). With that I have made sure that my research follows the research ethics guidelines of NSD and that I am responsible for having my research meet the required regulatory guidelines. Any material being used which is not my own have been correctly cited as plagiarism is and must be considered a serious offense alongside being highly unethical as it is effectively theft. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 3.1.2., it is important to understand that texts being analysed do not demonstrate a reality, but rather a view which is written with a distinct purpose in mind. As such, the findings presented are not based on what information the select documents convey, but rather the underlying themes that they collectively present.

3.3. Thesis Limitations

When conducting research, it is very rare that the findings being presented are representative of an absolute truth. The case of this thesis is no different as it does not present research which is without flaws. In terms of research methodology, no research is perfect and as stated

by Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001), if the validity and quality of research would be judged based on sample size, objectivity, and generalisability, most research would be deemed as failures. And according to Bryman (2012), in qualitative research, there will always be limitations when using a secondary analysis.

Given that my research has been largely based on other peoples' research, there is a degree of unfamiliarity with some of the data as confirmation beyond the trustworthiness of their sources is difficult to achieve. Moreover, as I was unable to travel to Afghanistan to conduct my research, there is an inherent disadvantage as I have not experienced the region first hand. The amount and typology of data available on Daesh was also rather limited compared to that of the Taliban which would have benefitted from primary sources from the affected regions in question. Finally, because my research on rebel governance is primarily based on insurgent groups within the borders of Afghanistan, my findings are quite geographically specific where for instance the Taliban have a long historic presence. Therefore, although I deem my results to have a certain degree of validity, it is questionable whether or not there is transferability to other cases of rebel governance in other areas of Afghanistan, let alone beyond its borders given that rebel governance exists in varying degrees of geography and precepts.

For future research, should the country in question allow for safe travels, it would be advisable to go there for a more fundamental understanding of the situation being examined. Finally, the amount of data available on the issue is quite substantial with the exception of Daesh and its level of interest should lead to future research materialising in the not too distant future.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

In social research, to attain insight of any given issue, international relations theory will aid in understanding the concept behind any given circumstance. Thereby, for the purpose of comprehending rebel governance in the case of the Taliban and Daesh, I shall present two different theoretical concepts that will assist my research. Given that international relations theory is not always applicable to every scenario, I will introduce a constructivist approach as well as a meso level analysis in this section.

4.1. Constructivism

In international relations theory, the classical approaches like liberalist and realist theories are not great at helping to understand rebel governance and resource extraction. However, a theoretical conception is valuable and as stated by Guzzini (2001), “no empirical analysis is without theoretical assumptions” (p. 98). Therefore, the study of rebel governance in Afghanistan would benefit from a constructivist approach as it explains how the collective understandings in society could potentially allow for rebel governance to take place.

Afghanistan is a country which for a very long time have been plagued by foreign influence and conflict. As a result, it is understandable that the population will be affected by the historic situation of a state in disarray. For the purpose of understanding how rebel rulers will attain legitimacy in the eyes of locals, constructivism can demonstrate how the mind-set of a population will acknowledge rebel rulers as both sensible and legitimate. Just as Wendt (1992) stated that capabilities are not merely a result of physical strength as seen with the breakup of the Soviet Union- which effectively meant that their militaristic capacity became less consequential as the US and Soviet Union would no longer be regarded as enemies. The same could be applied to rebel governance: If the population and rebel rulers would no longer consider themselves two competing groups within a society, the actions of the rebels would in effect become legitimized and would therefore be considered rightful rulers. According to Gawthorpe (2017), a constructivist approach to rebel governance can therefore be understood as how identity is not fixed and can become manipulated to support a certain governance systems through productive social planning.

Because of this, constructivism describes the world as something which is not fixed, it is the notion that structures in society are based on collective understandings and will always be in motion. According to 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). Thereby, every structure or institution in the world is based upon a collective understanding, similar to the previously mentioned case regarding the US- Soviet situation. The Afghan case could thereby benefit from a constructivist theoretical approach because it helps to understand the social underpinnings in society and how the population come to view the insurgent groups.

4.2. Meso Level Analysis

Using traditional international relations theory will in the case of studying rebel governance and opportunities from resource extraction not necessarily be sufficient. Therefore, I posit that the best course of action in this case is to pair it with a meso level analysis.

In a setting where civil war is present, an insurgent group will typically be weaker than the governing state and should therefore use its resources for the conflict itself and their own survival. However, a surprisingly high number of rebel groups have engaged in governance at an early stage in a conflict scenario (Mampilly, 2011). The interactions this leads to between the civilian population and the rebel groups are in the category of meso level analysis.

By examining the group level interactions between the insurgents and the local population, observations should lead to a greater understanding of the effect that resource extraction will have on rebel governance. Previous research has confirmed that examining these interactions prove to be worthwhile in understanding stereotypes and hierarchical structures within a conflict scenario. The research by Arjona et al. (2017) on rebel governance is the first of its kind where they examine and compare the structures and relationships between rebels and locals in conflict scenarios in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Furthermore, Arjona (2016) utilized meso level analysis to gain insight into the relationship between rebels and locals and how rebel governance became strengthened through cooperation from the effect of living under 'rebelocracy'. In the case of Afghanistan, I believed this was the best course of action to aid in my research and understanding of the relationship between the rebels and the civilian population.

Chapter 5: Governance

This section will describe the varying degrees of governance which exists within Afghanistan. Different forms of government will have various degrees of governance. Within Afghanistan there are three bodies of control: firstly, there is typical state governance, which is under the control of the state itself and in its current form has existed since 2003. Secondly, there is traditional governance, which is based on tribal law and is dependent on community councils and assemblies which have functioned regardless of changes to national policies, alongside having been a part of Afghanistan for centuries. Finally, there is rebel governance,

the control exerted by both the Taliban and Daesh throughout the country, which first emerged after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. These are three very different approaches to governance which are all competing for jurisdiction within the same country. Therefore, by presenting an overview of these types of governance in Afghanistan, how the rebels have attained a certain degree of legitimacy becomes easier to comprehend.

5.1. State Governance

The Afghan state has been subject to changes throughout history as seen with the centralised governance through the rule of Abdul Rahman in the 1880s and the hybridised governance and socialist leanings prior to the Soviet invasion during the 1970s (Magnus & Naby, 1995). After the Soviets were expelled from Afghanistan began a tumultuous period for Afghanistan which culminated with the Taliban seizing power in 1996. Following the events on 9/11, the US believed that Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden was being harboured within Afghanistan by the Taliban. Therefore, the US government saw it fit to invade Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime and attempt to implement a new constitution via the Bonn agreement. The Bonn agreement was a process, with the aid of the UN, made to help Afghanistan with a transitional government (Deledda, 2006). A Loya Jirga, which is a traditional Afghan Assembly, was summoned by the Bonn Agreement to elect a president for the interim government until the political elections that would follow two years later. Proceedings happened promptly for the purpose of getting Afghanistan operational as a country, and as such, the Bonn Agreement ensured that Afghanistan realised a functioning government very quickly. Moreover, the Bonn agreement was the process which laid the foundation for the current state governance in Afghanistan and as a result, a new constitution was established by 2004 (Rubin, 2006). The current State of Afghanistan is an Islamic Republic with a democratically elected President and a National Assembly with an elected lower house with 249 seats and an upper house with 102 seats. Thereby, the three pillars of governance are based on the executive- which is the President, the legislative- which is parliament, and the judicial- which consists of the Supreme Court, lower courts and magistrate courts. Collectively, the three branches of government all have varying degrees of authority for the purpose of checks and balances to ensure that no single body of government has too much influence and power. This current model also reflects the needs of the time including the division of political capital between the stakeholders, which is questionable as the model itself is not truly of Afghan origin.

The first branch of government in Afghanistan is the executive, which is the President who serves as the head of state. Currently, Afghanistan is made up of 34 provinces and a total of 395 districts (Child, 2019). All chiefs, judges, and attorneys in all districts are appointed directly by the President. Accordingly, there are between 5,000 and 6,000 positions which are appointed by the President nationally, meaning that the structure of government and role of the President must be considered somewhat arcane (Miakhel, 2009). For the purpose of this paper I shall not outline every element of state governance in Afghanistan, but rather focus on certain elements of the governance landscape that has led to distrust of the government by the community. With that, I will start by considering the election process which eventually landed Hamid Karzai as the head of state on the 22nd of December, 2001. Given that Afghanistan is built upon traditional governance structures and processes, which will be covered more extensively in section 5.2., the Bonn agreement saw it fit to call for a Loya Jirga to decide who would become interim president for the remainder of the transition period. This Loya Jirga of more than 1,600 delegates from an array of ethnic groups from the entire country were present. However, where it was considered appropriate to elect the previous king, Zahir Shah, for the role of president, the US intervened at the distaste of the Jirga, and made certain that Hamid Karzai would be chosen (Suhrke, 2008). Furthermore, when later discussing the elections, rumours of the proceedings had trickled down to villagers and it was according to some, no point in taking part in the elections as ‘they’ had even prevented the king from being elected, so the elections were not considered to be free or fair (Johnson et al., 2003).

In the legislative branch of government, the Parliament in Afghanistan has a lower house (Meshrano Jirga) and an upper house (Wolesi Jirga). The lower house are the primary lawmakers in the country while the upper house has more of an advisory role, albeit, with a certain degree of veto power. The election process for parliament has been subject to a certain degree of scrutiny as it culminated with questionable results during the elections for the new Parliament in 2005 (Katzman, 2006). Karzai managed to implement the rarely used Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV), which is a voting system that meant voters could only vote on single candidates in multi-member constituencies but without party affiliation (Suhrke, 2008). This meant that no party lists were permitted and there was no party identification. Moreover, the voters could only see a name and a photograph from an overcomplicated ballot list at the polling stations, and it must be mentioned that a great deal

of voters were illiterate (Suhrke, 2008). There were a total of 2,815 candidates (Katzman, 2006), which coupled with the SNTV meant that it was possible to secure a seat in parliament if a candidate had the backing of an extended family or clan. According to Suhrke (2008), the majority of the 33 winners in Kabul received between 1 and 2 percent of the votes, meaning that the results were not representative of anything resembling a fair election. Furthermore, while a number of candidates were removed from the ballots due to alleged ties with militia, according to Katzman (2006), an unprecedented amount of known militia leaders ended up as members of parliament in various provinces. As a result, the National Assembly cannot be considered to be a political success story for Afghanistan.

The last branch of government is the judiciary, which is extremely important as it is the form of political practice which a community needs to trust for sake of legitimacy. The judicial system in Afghanistan has developed a great deal since the implementation of the new government, although it still faces serious problems. According to Wardak (2011), the state has been successful in training new judges, correctional officers, police personnel, and prosecutors. The list also includes prisons, police stations, and courtrooms which have become more widespread since 2005. The state has also been given a great deal of technical support from IGOs, the UN, the EU and certain bilateral governments such as the US and Germany- in particular for the police reform which was subsumed under EUPOL (Gross, 2009). However, there is still very little in terms of cooperation: the judicial system in terms of the police, the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court, and the Attorney General's Office sees very little interaction between them and are therefore not working together like a "system" (Wardak, 2019). Systems like these are imperative in maintaining law and order as without it, disorder and confusion prevails at the peril of the community. Furthermore, unfortunately the progress which has been prevalent in recent years is overshadowed by the extreme level of corruption which still plagues Afghanistan, as it is ranked 173 out of 180 on the corruption perception index (Transparency International, 2019). There have been anti-corruption efforts implemented, but it has not been considered successful as Afghanistan is still regarded to have one of the most corrupt judicial structures in the world (Mohamadi et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to Sopko (2019), the problem is not because of a lack of capacity, but rather because of a lack of political will of the Afghan government. Also, according to Integrity Watch Afghanistan (2018), the level of corruption in Afghanistan is on the rise, and most people do not have faith in their own government, which "is giving credence to the idea that people may be turning to the Taliban as an alternative source of

leadership” (p. 50). As a result, research has shown that in certain provinces where the Taliban have a notable presence, there are mobile courts which conduct trials by Taliban *ulama* (religious scholars) as the formal judiciary system is considered secondary (Integrity Watch Afghanistan, 2018b). And if that is the case, it is difficult to see how the community will ever view the judicial system of the state with a sense of trust or legitimacy.

Accordingly, the three pillars of state governance in Afghanistan are made up of the judicial branch, which is effectively a compromise between traditional and modern law making models. The executive branch of government which is very similar to other countries and is dependent upon political landscapes, historical issues and both internal and external support alongside political capital. Finally, the legislative branch is unrepresentative in many ways as it is run by the elite and led by historical, geographical and ethnic ties.

Finally, state governance in Afghanistan does not only cover the country’s urban cities, but the entire nation. So the question becomes, how important is the state, or state governance for the rural farmer living disconnected as so many do? According to Ibrahimi (2019), there is an historic precedence with scepticism for state practices and policies amongst those who reside in Afghanistan. State run institutions and even policing have typically not had much of an influence amongst those who live in the countryside. One example which has been cited repeatedly is the story of Haji Farooq, a notorious land grabber who was earmarked by President Ashraf Ghani on a visit to the province where he resided. Farooq was quickly arrested but when the President left, Farooq was promptly released by the local government officials (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2017). Episodes like these depict how state governance is not always effective, and Afghanistan has long traditions of governance on a more local level making the newly founded governance of the Islamic Republic perhaps unsuitable for such a traditional society.

5.2. Traditional Governance

Within Afghanistan, governance is not a concept which is straightforward and uncomplicated. It is a landlocked country with a long history and traditions which have endured through conflict and unrest. Today, Afghanistan is comprised of 34 provinces, each with their presidentially appointed Governor, and underneath each Governor is a series of branches which holds ties with the central state ministries (Coburn, 2011). Although the state

has the *de jure* authority and control over all aspects of these Provinces, this does not reflect reality in Afghanistan. Historically, Afghanistan has long traditions of community councils for the purposes of governance. And as such there are informal gatherings which acts as de facto management of local strategy regardless of national policy. There are also the more modern community development councils (CDC), which were created for local districts to improve their communities from within. Beyond the CDCs, there are three decision-making institutions which will be specified and they are known as Shura, Jirga, and the Loya Jirga, which will be preceded by a brief historical account of Afghanistan's use of traditional governance.

Traditional forms of governance are not something unique for Afghanistan. For as long as people have been involved with social, economic, and political relationships, traditional governance structures has been prevalent. In Afghanistan, this tradition has long roots and as such they are still very much in practice today. According to Miakhel (2009), the first usage of the phrase *Loya Jirga* was in 1707 under the leadership of Mirwais Khan Hotaki, a notable tribal leader from Kandahar who declared Southern Afghanistan independent after his Loya Jirga resulted in the establishment of the Hotaki Dynasty. Historically, the word Jirga is a Pashto word, meaning "a gathering of a few, or a large number of people" (Wardak, 2003, p. 3). The incorporation of Loya in this context means Grand Council- or Assembly and is traditionally called for by the government or collectively by all tribes for a nationwide concern (Miakhel, 2009). Traditional governance has historic roots in that it was considered predominantly as an effective means of resolving conflicts, either between individuals or even between tribes. The reasoning behind its continued usage is only partly because of historic precedence as it continues to be considered a highly valuable method of law and order in a country where state governance is considered challenging.

Loya Jirga is in a sense connected with state governance as it has always been affiliated with national concerns. It generated a certain amount of interest during and after the Bonn Agreement as it was used for the purpose of choosing who would become president during the interim government in 2002. This particular Loya Jirga was according to Nixon & Ponzio (2007) a great example of how to bridge two competing understandings of authority as it allowed for existing political entities to come together. Loya Jirgas are only held on a needs basis, and prior to the one in 2002, it had been 24 years since the last one was held. The Loya Jirgas are of great historical significance to the Afghans and they are valued as they bring

together tribal leaders from all of Afghanistan. It is therefore also considered that the Afghan people view the rulings by the Loya Jirga as highly legitimate (Wardak, 2003). Granted, it is difficult to assess the degree of perceived legitimacy of historic Loya Jirgas, and there have been cases of when the Mujahedeen and the Afghan Marxist government in the 1980s tried to manipulate the Loya Jirga for imposing a totalitarian government (Wardak, 2003). However, Loya Jirgas are in the eyes of the majority of people in Afghanistan, considered valuable as a mechanism for political practice.

The Jirga system is a more local system of government for use in districts where state controlled authority is typically not reasonable or to a certain extent available. As previously mentioned, Jirgas are primarily used for conflict resolution as they provide a swift and mutually agreed upon accord on the issue at hand. According to Miakhel (2009), using the formal system for conflict resolution is more expensive, less accessible, less representative, slower, and considered highly corrupt compared to that of using a Jirga. Using the formal system is also not always considered being legitimate, which could increase the chances for retaliation by the losing party in a formal dispute. While when using a Jirga, both parties will have agreed beforehand to participate for a unanimous ruling. However, there are distinctions to be made in terms of the word *Jirga*. Firstly, there is a local Jirga, which are institutions localised in villages throughout the country and they primarily cover the less serious problems within that village. The latter is a tribal Jirga which covers more serious matters that are all-encompassing for an entire tribe and can cover anything from intertribal conflicts to even murder (Wardak, 2003). Jirgas are made up of men known as Marakchi who are well known individuals within their community and who are renowned for their abilities to make decisions. All members of a Jirga are free to speak their mind and the number of members needed varies, as well as the length of the proceedings (Khurram & Rea, 2004). Jirgas are very much an important part of Afghan culture and it has been recognized as a deciding political instrument for centuries.

Shuras and Jirgas are sometimes explained as being indistinguishable, but while they are similar in nature, there are certain differences. Where Jirgas are explained as being exclusive to Pashtuns, Shuras are not. According to a report from the U.S. Institute of Peace (2010), the role of Jirgas and Shuras are based on the same principles of conflict resolution and co-exist within Afghanistan. However, there are conflicting views on the role of Shuras in the Afghan context. They have also been described as being more of a short term council of elders,

khans, landlords, and military leaders that have an advisory role which is very often in regards to conflicts and military issues (Carter & Conner, 1989; Wardak, 2003). Finally, there are others, like Ingalls and Mansfield (2017) who use the term Shura interchangeably with *Tribal Council*, suggesting there is no distinction between Shura and Jirga.

Beyond the historic and traditional governance structures in Afghanistan, there is the more recently created Community Development Councils (CDC). Since the 1980s, community driven development have become popular amongst governments which have struggled with the ‘top-down’ methodology towards meetings the needs of locals (Beath et al., 2015). In the context of Afghanistan, it was a program which became implemented after 2003 by way of the National Solidarity Program (NSP) through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development which was funded by a collection of donors alongside the World Bank. The idea behind it was that since nearly 80% of the population in Afghanistan reside outside the provincial centres, it would help them to organize themselves with their most pressing needs (Noelle-Karimi, 2006). The one thing that made these CDCs different was the implementation of being elected by secret ballots, which could include women. Given that the state has limited control over large areas in Afghanistan, this NSP was meant to create closer ties with the local communities and the state. As mentioned by Noelle-Karimi (2006) “[t]his process thus aims both at lessening the “perceptual distance” between Kabul and the regions and rendering government presence more tangible on the ground” (p. 2). The program has now been in effect for close to 17 years, and recent numbers suggest that the program has been a great success story for development programs and it continues with the more recent Citizens’ Charter Afghanistan Program (CCAP) (Baqir et al., 2020). The CCAP is the current effort by the government in Afghanistan which is built upon the lessons learned from the NSP. Its aim is to further lessen the distance between the people and the state and it provides a set package of services which includes clean drinking water, education, basic healthcare, and certain basic infrastructure. Given that Afghanistan is still very much relying on their own traditional forms of government, programs like the CCAP are to be considered very important for the state. The approach taken is appropriate in that the government is trying to adapt to the ways of the locals by being more inclusive, rather than becoming alienated as a vast majority of the population would rather not become involved with the state.

Traditional governance in Afghanistan has a long history, making the continued use of Jirgas and Shuras a logical inclusion in Afghan politics. Unfortunately, given the polarisation between local and state governance, the state does not always have the perceived legitimacy in the eyes of the locals, leading to community outreach programs such as the CDC and CCAP. Finally, the lack of outreach by the state can be a justification of the increased communal reliance on rebel governance.

5.3. Rebel Governance

Rebel Governance is a form of governance which has historically been linked with civil war and in relation to decaying states and governments. According to Péclard & Mechoulan (2015), the most dominant theories in relation to rebel governance have until recently been in connection with armed conflicts in Africa where the predominant motive for rebels have been devastation and pillaging. However, conflicts involving rebels and their aims for conquering land, has led to a more interesting field of study, namely rebel governance- or rebelocracy as coined by Arjona (2016). Thereby, this section will present rebel governance in terms of what it is, how it is structured and funded, its connection to legitimacy, and finally its relationship with civilians.

Rebel governance is according to Huang (2016), a political strategy where rebels build relations with civilians over civil wars for the purpose of governing a sovereign state. According to Arjona et al. (2017) there are certain preconditions that an insurgent organization must meet for rebel governance to exist:

First, it must hold some territory within the state against which it is rebelling, although its control over specific territory may fluctuate temporally and spatially. Second, civilians must reside in that area. Third, the group must commit an initial act of violence to become rebels and then either continue hostilities or credibly threaten them in the territory it governs (p. 25).

As a result, an insurgent group does not automatically become engaged with rebel governance. For example, the rise in civil wars which occurred during the 1990s was not considered to be connected with rebel governance as it was primarily because of weak states and political institutions. Péclard & Mechoulan (2015) describes the guerrilla wars of the time to be results of a desire to plunder the leftovers of decaying states, and as a result had no political agenda. More recent analysts have also paid a great deal of attention to how civil

wars engage with their surroundings. When an insurgent group secures territory, how they choose to interact with the civilians are of great importance when considering what their intentions are (Arjona et al., 2017). Furthermore, research by Arjona & Kalyvas (2012) have shown that a great deal of insurgent groups are opting to engage in some sort of governance. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between insurgents and civil war, with rebel governance, as the latter has an agenda that exceeds material gains.

Rebel governance is not something which is considered steadfast. Various insurgent groups who engage in rebel governance will approach it differently and as such there is no dedicated structure which they all abide to. However, Péclard & Mechoulan (2015) refers to research that shows that there is a divide in terms of resources. Where a rebel group which is resource-poor will be better at cultivating social, ethnic, and religious practice, those who manage to gain riches fast will often be more violent and less disciplined, with more short-lived aspirations.

In terms of funding there are various ways in which rebel groups are able to raise capital. Like previously mentioned, exploiting natural resources is a very common method of staying operational as a rebel group engaging in governance. Production and sales of narcotics can be another very important source of funding. According to Mampilly (2011), when committed to rebel governance, the dexterity for variability in funding is also impressive. Taxation, racketeering and kidnapping to name a few which are readily available for rebel rulers to engage with. However, although rebel rulers will have a plethora of potential methods of funding, not everything is necessarily wise to bring into operation. Rebel governance is seldom an uninterrupted state of affairs, and if the main aim is to rule, coercion and violence can only get you so far.

Given that violence is something which is at the heart of rebel governance, it is unmistakably considered to be necessary for the rebels. Nonetheless, Arjona (2016) and Mampilly (2011) both maintain that for rebel governance to be successful, the rebels will need popular support. Coercion and violence will not be able to provide genuine legitimacy in the eyes of the people. As stated by Péclard & Mechoulan (2015), coercion makes it possible to bend people at your will, but “the use of violence also has delegitimizing effects for rebels” (p.7). That is a very real problem for rebel rulers, as one of the most important aspects of a rebel government is legitimacy. Should a rebel group manage to establish themselves as legitimate

rulers, they will need to be able to win peoples' hearts and minds. Furthermore, successful rebel governance will also be predicated on a certain level of institutional maintenance. As stated by Mampilly (2011), civilian compliance and legitimacy will only be achieved if the rebel rulers manage to replicate some of the functions of the nation state.

Rebel governance is crucially dependent upon the relationship rebels will have with the civilian population. As previously mentioned, coercion will not lead to legitimacy, and legitimacy is necessary for gaining support by the people. However, according to Terpstra & Freks (2017), it is possible to rule by coercion, but it is not sustainable as instilling fear does not lead to continuous civilian compliance. Therefore, rebel governance is most effective when rebels and civilians are not engaged in conflict. Furthermore, a rebel government will face similar issues as an incumbent government- if successful, as expectations of the population will increase under their rule, which is not possible under violent circumstances.

Collectively, an understanding of the various degrees of governance is necessary to be able to grasp how the government in Afghanistan is losing ground to the rebels. Accordingly, state governance in Afghanistan is characterized by a certain degree of westernization, albeit with an attempted addition of Afghan traditional politics. Furthermore, Afghan traditional governance has long historic roots which to this day has a very high level of legitimacy within the country. Research shows that rural Afghans have more faith in the traditional ways of governance than the more recently established governance instruments upon which the current Afghan state is based upon. Finally, the theoretical approach to rebel governance is relevant as it portrays how rebel rulers in Afghanistan could theoretically win ground from the state. Rebel governance is increasingly becoming a problem of the modern world, and to be able to prevent it, we first need to understand how it develops.

Chapter 6: Empirics

The following chapter will be exploring the two case studies of the Taliban and Daesh. It is divided into sections where the Taliban will be analysed first starting with its economy followed by illegal mining, civilian perception, rebel governance, and finally the US-Taliban peace treaty. Section 6.2. will first cover Daesh's economy, followed by its illegal mining and rebel governance.

6.1. Case One: The Taliban

The Taliban has a long history as it stems from the remnants of the Mujahedeen after the collapse of the Soviet Union following their failed occupation of Afghanistan. According to Jackson & Weigand (2019), between 60 and 70 percent of Afghanistan is now under the control- or have a substantial influence by the Taliban. And given the recent peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, the rebel rulers have gone from being a disreputable insurgency to a fully functioning political order. The Taliban are operating throughout vast areas, where they are considered the de facto authority by the communities. The Taliban is therefore a powerful organisation, and as such, understanding their economy is an important part of comprehending their legitimacy.

6.1.1. The Taliban's Economy

The Taliban has since 2014 in particular been able to expand their territory and influence throughout Afghanistan (Giustozzi, 2019). While Bacon (2018) claims that while the Taliban is not necessarily considered a profit seeking organisation in the corporate sense, their economy is still a cause for concern. Their level of financial freedom has allowed them to increase their influence and operations, which is problematic for the state. Although the Taliban does not publish any records of their finances, their annual budget is estimated to be between US\$500 Million to US\$2 Billion (Jackson & Weigand, 2019), although this is difficult to verify with an absolute certainty. While the Taliban are renowned for their production and export of opium and hashish, their economy is based upon several other sources of funding. They have been dependent on external sources alongside extortion, kidnapping, and finally extraction and smuggling of natural resources.

The Taliban's most acclaimed source of capital is derived from the production and export of opium. Afghanistan is the largest producer of opium in the world and it is estimated that more than 80% of the world's heroin originates from within Afghan borders (Bacon, 2018). Poppies are an easy crop to grow on a vast scale, and rural farmers are often strong-armed into poppy cultivation. Furthermore, according to Mansfield (2017), farmers who cultivate poppies are more prepared to pay a clearly defined amount as tax on their yields to the Taliban, than wheat production which may vary and in amount, timing and changing conditionalities. Mansfield's research also illustrates that the reported level of coercion of farmers by the

Taliban to cultivate poppies are highly overstated as their “priority is to maintain a level of taxation that does not alienate the rural population, a mistake made by previous governments in Afghanistan” (Mansfield, 2017, p. 43). As such, opium production for the Taliban is still considered to be a valuable commodity for farmers in Afghanistan, and so arguably it is still in the best interest for farmers to maintain cultivation. According to Bacon (2018), certain estimates calculate that about 60% of the Taliban’s funding is from the illegal drugs trade, which also includes hashish.

Although hashish is not produced in the same scale as opium, Afghanistan is still one of the biggest producers and exporters of hashish worldwide. Cultivation of cannabis has a long history in Afghanistan as the Indica strain of cannabis is native to the country. Furthermore, according to Bradford & Mansfield (2019), although cannabis was outlawed during the 1950s, Afghan authorities rarely enforced the law prior to the 1970s. Bacon (2018) asserts that the Taliban are very much in control of the current Afghan cannabis industry although as mentioned by Bradford & Mansfield (2019), the Taliban have continuously tried to ban its cultivation claiming that it is the state and Daesh who are the main actors. Nevertheless, Afghan hashish is still a bankable commodity for the Taliban although it is difficult to assess how much of their earnings are attributed to it.

Besides the financial earnings from the narcotics industry, the Taliban are also seeing capital gains by the means of extortion and to a lesser extent by kidnapping. While it does occur, kidnapping is not something which will ‘win hearts and minds’ of the community, although according to Bacon (2018) it is still considered a source of funding for the Taliban. However, according to an Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) (2019) report, kidnapping is becoming more widespread in villages where local elites with no affiliation with the Taliban are using kidnapping as a means of debt collecting. For the Taliban, extortion is a more common method of acquiring funds for their continued insurgency. Extortion for protection money- or otherwise considered ‘taxation’ is a widespread tactic for rebel governance in one form or another. In the case of the Taliban they tax farmers, shopkeepers, and other smaller businesses by collecting *zakat* and *ushr* (Terpsra, 2020). This is essentially traditional forms of taxation in Afghanistan where *Zakat* is considered as a religious obligation to Muslims alongside being one of the five pillars of Islam to donate parts of their income to the poor. “*Ushr* (...) is a traditional Islamic tax on agricultural productions and the sharing of 10% is seen as a religious duty” (Terpstra, 2020, p. 15).

Hence, the Taliban's funding is framed within traditional means of contribution which is not unfamiliar to the communities, which again helps the insurgency in not being perceived as rapacious, which is useful in terms of legitimacy. Moreover, beyond the scope of taxation, the Taliban also have a long history of being a donor driven organization.

Although it is being categorically denied, the Taliban has a history of receiving donations from various countries and factions. According to Giustozzi (2019), the Afghan state have for a very long time accused neighbouring Pakistan for providing not only safe havens for the insurgents, but also logistical and financial support. Also, given the threat of IS-KP within the region, Russia have also been providing support as the Taliban is one of the few who are actually fighting Daesh (Bacon, 2018; Giustozzi, 2019). Furthermore, the external backing has seemingly developed quite rapidly in recent years. As Giustozzi's research led him to discover that since 2008 in particular, the Taliban have become more dependent on external funding as the Arab Gulf countries alongside Iran and Russia having been exposed as financial endorsers to the insurgency (2019). However, in light of the growing interest by the Taliban in resource extraction, according to Global Witness (2018) they are becoming less dependable on foreign financial support.

While the Taliban receives a great deal of funding from external donors, taxation, and drugs, the vast amounts of mineral deposits in Afghanistan are proving to be a valuable resource for the Taliban. According to Global Witness (2018), by 2018 the Taliban earned between \$200 and \$300 million annually from illegal resource extraction. Given that resource extraction is an industry which can be compared to a legitimate operation, the Taliban's ongoing extraction could have the potential to make them become perceived as a more legitimate political movement.

6.1.2. Illegal Mining

Before outlining the particulars of the Taliban's mining activities, it is important to acknowledge what illegal resource extraction actually is. The definition of illegal mining depends on which part of the world you are focusing on, and whether or not there is a differentiation on certain types of mining activities, such as artisanal mining. According to AEITI (2019), illegal mining is "the mining activities undertaken without licence and contract by armed opposition groups, individuals or leaders" (p. 25). This definition is area

specific to Afghanistan as it originated from the Afghan Mines Protection (AITI, 2019), which is why it is the most appropriate one to use.

The mining sector in Afghanistan has been subject to a great deal of publicity in recent years. Following the reveals of untapped riches which claims that natural resources throughout Afghanistan could bear the riches needed for rebuilding the country (U.S. Geological Survey, 2015), reports of mismanagement have been exposed (Risen, 2010). Beyond the misconduct by disloyal servants of the state, the Taliban have seemingly become heavily engaged in the mining industry, albeit unauthorised by the government. Furthermore, the Taliban are in a position where their activities are becoming increasingly viewed by the population as being legitimate as the de facto authority in the areas they operate by having a clearly defined set of institutions coordinating and controlling all mining activities. Moreover, illegal resource extraction is likely the one aspect of Taliban funding which could have the potential of furthering rebel governance within the region. The insurgency is currently in a situation where legitimacy is vital for further development, and the natural resources of Afghanistan could be the one thing that leads to further validity of them as the rightful authority. The Taliban have been heavily engaged with the illegal extraction and smuggling of marble, talc, lapis lazuli, and chromite alongside smaller scale operations on various other natural resources.

Before outlining the particulars on the various minerals which are the centre of attention for the Taliban, the inner workings of Taliban's mineral authority will be acknowledged. The Taliban have created what is called the Dabaro Comisyoon (Stones Commission), acting as a commission of mining which operates under the authority of the Taliban Maali Comisyoon (Financial Commission) (DuPe  , 2017). This was established in 2009 and its role in the mining industry is tax collection on a perceived legitimate level. The Dabara Comisyoon is tasked with supplying mining licenses for mines in Afghanistan similar to that of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. It operates outside of the law and is of course not recognised by the state as being a legitimate body. According to a UN report, "the Taliban are acting as "service providers" for unlicensed mining operations in the country" (United Nations Security Council, 2015). However, in terms of the actual management of mines in Afghanistan, its implementation has aided the Taliban in legitimising their activities within the country by providing a code of conduct. Where some mine owners will operate with licenses from both the state and the Taliban, given the lack of oversight by the state, many are

content with having Taliban issued permits (Dupeé, 2017). Where the initial taxation by means of mining licenses are considered quite reasonable, the Taliban are still taxing on other levels throughout the extraction and smuggling process which constitutes the supply line from the mine to the Pakistani border. Global Witness (2018) also noticed that the level of taxation is no higher than that of the royalty rates set by the government, albeit the Taliban does operate with the aforementioned *ushr* and *zakat* alongside other set rates based on which cargo is being smuggled.

The Taliban are involved in illegal mining operations throughout Afghanistan and not confined to their original constituency areas in the south of the country. However, some regions are more renowned for specific natural resources such as marble in the Helmand province which borders to Pakistan. According to DuPeé (2017), the Taliban controls the majority of marble extraction in Helmand province, where several hundred metric tons (MT) of marble is smuggled into Pakistan on a daily basis while an estimated two percent of the marble ends up in the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah for legitimate purposes. Marble is a sought after mineral and given the vast deposits which are present in Afghanistan, it is no surprise that Weir & Azamy (2015) have claimed that marble alone is a justification for further insurgency in the region. In terms of taxing beyond licenses, it is reported that the Taliban charges the trucks per MT of marble and it ranges from 25,000 Pakistani Rupees (PKR) (\$238) to 60,000 PKRs depending on the quality (DuPeé, 2017).

Beyond extraction of marble, talc is one of the main minerals which the Taliban have been involved with. According to Global Witness (2018), talc exported from Pakistan make up more than twice the amount which Pakistan can mine- and Pakistan is accordingly also consuming roughly about the same amount as they extract. Thereby, the estimated 500,000 MT of talc exported from Pakistan on a yearly basis is believed to have come from Afghanistan. Moreover, about 100 percent of all talc production in Afghanistan originates from illegal extraction, the majority of which comes from insurgency groups like the Taliban. Taliban controlled Nangarhar has been considered the province where the majority of talc mines are located, and as such they are considered to be behind the majority of talc extraction within the country (Global Witness, 2018). Taxation operates in a similar fashion to that of the marble mines of the Helmand province, where trucks are taxed based on their load alongside mining licenses.

A third important mineral for the Taliban is the gemstone lapis lazuli. The gemstone has historic precedence in Afghanistan as it has been sought after since antiquity. Within Afghanistan it is primarily mined in the northern province of Badakhshan in which the Taliban have expanded their presence in recent years. According to Global Witness (2016), there are reports of taxation by the Taliban and although the exact figures are unknown, traders and miners are reportedly paying a substantial amount to the insurgency including that which originates from mining licenses. There have also been evidence that suggests the mines themselves have seen investments by the Taliban for further development, although the Taliban have not been actively engaged with the mining themselves. “Either way, it seems increasingly clear that, whoever formally holds the mines, the Taliban are their real masters” (Global Witness, 2016, p. 21). Furthermore, as of 2019, it is still considered that the majority of the world supply of lapis lazuli originates from Taliban controlled mining operations (Periz, 2019). As a result, the Taliban are heavily involved with the extraction of this gemstone and there is little evidence to suggest their engagement is subsiding.

There are a number of other natural resources which the Taliban are capitalising on. They range from small scale and artisanal mining of natural resources such as gold, assortments of metals, mineral fuels, copper, iron, and gemstones besides lapis lazuli (DuPe  , 2017). However, the last major natural resource which the Taliban is extracting on a large scale is chromite. Chromite is a natural ore which is used in the production of steel alloys, and stainless steel in particular. There have been evidence of Taliban facilitated extraction and smuggling of chromite in the Kunar province in Eastern Afghanistan (Integrity Watch Afghanistan, 2013). While the reported Taliban activities surrounding chromite is dated, it is pertinent as it was largely an operation which was situated in a rural part of Afghanistan where the Taliban were reportedly working alongside local Afghans in terms of smuggling, which leads me to the next section on civilian perception of the Taliban.

6.1.3. Civilian Perception

One important aspect for the Taliban in terms of their activities and especially for their involvement in extraction of natural resources, is their relationship with civilians. As previously mentioned, Arjona (2016) has stated that a successful insurgency is dependent on winning peoples ‘hearts and minds’. This is because instilling fear will never lead to trust and sincere cooperation. By providing opportunities for the communities which are out of reach

by the state, there is a greater incentive for civilians to support an insurgency. In Afghanistan and for the Taliban in particular, this has proven to be true as they have been seen to provide rural Afghans with a reason to support the insurgency.

Because the Taliban are becoming less dependent on external sources of funding, they are becoming more autonomous within the regions they are controlling. With this development, comes the political economy of Taliban ruled areas. There is a higher degree of inclusion with civilians as the Taliban's sources of funding will require labour which will be provided by the communities they hold. Overall, the situation in Afghanistan is grim as the state still have little control in many areas, which leads to further insurgency and legitimacy by lack of oversight. Furthermore, the Taliban's mining activities ensures that locals are likely to gain employment by the insurgency, and where the narcotics trade will do the same as witnessed by farmers. "Materializing the economic potential of the region is an essential component to combat the present state of insurgency, especially for the rural, impoverished Afghan countryside, where an entrenched war economy has become the greatest incentive for association with the Taliban" (Weir & Azamy, 2015, p. 83). However, that does not necessarily mean that the Taliban's methods are without violence and coercion. Where a farmer will cultivate poppies for the Taliban, he will likely not have a choice in the matter although it will provide an income, and the same rule is applied for miners.

Although the Taliban are considered to be a rebel group who are waging war in Afghanistan, they are meeting the basic needs of the population in areas where they are the de facto authority. One case is that of a contemporary education, which initially the Taliban was against as state run schools were believed to indoctrinate western ideals. However, through uproar and protests by communities, alongside a growing lack of support, the Taliban did eventually allow schools to resume classes, albeit- with Taliban approved curriculums (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2019). Moreover, according to Minatti & Duyvesteyn (2019), the Taliban have themselves emphasised their ability to provide for the communities as seen by their maintenance of health clinics and school buildings.

In regards to community perception of the Taliban throughout Afghanistan there are varying views. According to Weigand (2017), when having interviewed students in Jalalabad, the overall perceptions were very negative concerning the Taliban. However, when having interviewed middle-aged men in both Jalalabad and other areas of Nangarhar, people

mentioned how the security situation under the rule of the Taliban was far better than during the present administration. Furthermore, in the same study, nearly everyone who was interviewed, regardless of their personal opinion towards the Taliban, had respect and appreciation for the Taliban's mobile courts. As a result, indifferent of personal resentment, the Taliban are considered to have a certain degree of authority which people tend to respect.

Given that nearly 80 percent of Afghans reside in rural areas, government oversight and outreach is limited and sometimes non-existent. Where there are no state run institutions or aspects of control, it becomes easier to have a certain level of appreciation for the Taliban. As stated by an interviewee in Weigand (2017) from the Sherzad district in Nagarhar: "I think it is much better in Sherzad than in Jalalabad. Because in Jalalabad there are two governments in one city, in Sherzad it is only the Taliban. And all people in Sherzad are happy with the Taliban" (p. 373). Obviously, there will be less conflict in an area where there is only one perceived authority, although it will create a falsified image of the Taliban as being superior to the state.

Lastly, as Afghanistan is ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world, it would suggest that there could be a perception of hope amongst the civilians towards the insurgency. According to Giustozzi (2019), the lack of job opportunities and no perceived future have led to increased recruitment into the Taliban. With promise of payment comes promise for a better life, and there is little to suggest that these recruits are acting based on a genuine desire to wage jihad. Furthermore, according to Giustozzi (2019), salaries are consistently paid alongside being in line with the amounts that the government would pay. Civilian perception of the Taliban is then varied, and it is understandable that they are able to engage in rebel governance.

6.1.4. Rebel Governance

Given that the Taliban are in control vast areas in Afghanistan they are engaging in rebel governance. Since they are the de facto authority in a number of areas they control, they have chosen to operate as the incumbent government. Just as the incumbent government, the Taliban will therefore face similar issues such as meeting the needs of the people, providing healthcare and education. Thereby, as mentioned in section 5.3., rebel governance is largely affected by the relationship the rebel rulers will have with the civilians. And as for the

Taliban, they have a strong identity which is recognised by the local, rural communities as Pashtuns. Although the Taliban are perceived in the eyes of many as a violent rebel group, they have a history in Afghanistan. Their governance structures are considered fairly stable and their decision making process is based on checks and balances. The tribal traditions in Afghanistan are steadfast, and therefore, wherever the Taliban will establish themselves, their governance structures will find adherence should there be discontent with state run governance models, which is the case in large parts of Afghanistan.

Although the figures are difficult to confirm with certainty, Jackson & Weigand (2019) claims that realistically the Taliban have control or influence in about 60 to 70 percent of Afghanistan and have a populace of anywhere from 70,000 to 100,000. When an insurgency reaches this sort of control and presence, their need to govern thus becomes a necessity. The Taliban's role as administrators of government has therefore become quite widespread. As per Jackson & Weigand (2019), the structure of government for the Taliban are as follows: at the head of the Taliban sits an emir, who is currently Sheikh Haibatullah Akhundzada. The emir also has two deputies and they are all advised by a leadership council, or shura, which is made up of people from across the movement. Furthermore, under the leadership there is a military branch with their own regional management. Adjacent to the military branch is also civilian delegations who manages everything from finance, media, health, and education. Finally, "[s]enior leadership structures are based in Pakistan, primarily in Quetta but also in Peshawar" (Jackson & Weigand, 2019, p. 144).

The reasoning behind the Taliban being able to engage in governance is largely due to the perception of a corrupt state. As mentioned in section 6.1.1. the level of taxation by the Taliban is similar in terms of expenses for civilians, which is also the case for businesses paying state and or income tax. Education has also been a noteworthy case for the Taliban. Where state run education is reportedly a corrupt institution where "[o]ne in twelve schools is a "ghost school" that exists only on paper" (Jackson & Weigand, 2019, p. 145). This means that the Ministry of Education alongside provincial governors and district militia, are siphoning money through their funds which are largely based on foreign assistance. As a result, Taliban controlled education ensures that teachers actually go to work, alongside ensuring quality control (by their own standards often related to education being un-Islamic in nature). Furthermore, one of the most prominent arguments for Taliban's successful rebel governance is based on their justice system which has been mentioned previously. Given that

the Taliban have followed traditional mechanisms of governance in this respect, the flawed and corrupt state system allows for the insurgency to have a superior judicial system in the eyes of the people.

As an insurgent group involved with rebel governance, the Taliban is not considered to be very violent. Jackson & Weigand (2019) argues that the Taliban have an inherent advantage because of the situation in Afghanistan concerning civilian casualties in air strikes and unfaithful servants of the state, making use of violence less necessary to obtain civic compliance. Granted, the Taliban are engaged in violence by way of attacks on state offices and state security forces, but in terms of the communities, they are seldom very violent. However, where they are not considered brutal as such, coercion is present when collecting taxes, generally leaving people no choice but to pay. Still, paying of taxes is not considered too costly as mentioned in section 6.1.1. Furthermore, the Taliban-occupied areas are largely consisting of Talibs, and those who are not, are generally not contesting their legitimacy.

In terms of governance regarding mining operation within Afghanistan, the overall perception by mining operators and civilians are generally positive. Research conducted by Giustozzi (2018a) confirms this as those employed in the mines consider Taliban tax collectors and shuras as being very fair and understanding. “Some mining operators also pay ‘voluntary contributions’ to the Taliban on top of tax, presumably in order to help the Taliban expand their influence and their business with them” (The Taliban’s ‘Mining Department’, para 2). The Taliban are therefore perceived as the necessary mechanism required for continued growth by those occupied with the mining industry- albeit illegally. Hence, the level of rebel governance by the Taliban has become well established in regions of control, which accordingly is not seeing any signs of remission in the current situation.

6.1.5. State Building

State building in Afghanistan is not an easy task, not for the state, nor for an insurgency like the Taliban. Given that Afghanistan is considered a Fragile and Conflict Affected State (FCAS), there are several issues which will impede progress. According to Torres & Anderson (2004), the problems associated with FCASs are numerous and range from poverty and humanitarian crises, to security threats and conflict. The case with the Taliban is also unique in that the country is experiencing weak institutions and a strong culture opposed with

two governing actors at opposite ends trying to govern. All the while being juxtaposed with the traditional governing structures in Afghanistan which has a strong historical precedence in the country. Therefore, the Taliban needs to find favourable circumstances to cement both existing districts alongside evicting current governance structures where they are scarcely represented.

FCAS will experience a number of problems which can be beneficial for an insurgent group in the context of state building. Poverty is one of the major implications of a FCAS as it leads to a situation where basic necessities such as water, basic healthcare and education become limited, which in turn can lead to a humanitarian crisis. Afghanistan is currently ranked as 9th on the fragile states index (The Fund for Peace, 2019) and as a result, the state is fighting an uphill battle to gain full control of the political landscape in the country. As such, there is high degree of perceived corruption which is beneficial for the Taliban as it allows them to be recognized as the better of two halves. Furthermore, FCAS are also susceptible to conflict and security threats. Afghanistan is a country which for decades has experienced conflict and weak institutions. Although there is precedence in claiming that the Taliban are to blame, the current situation is beneficial for the insurgency as they have the possibility to consolidate existing governing structures which the state is unable to.

Afghanistan is a country which has very strong historical roots in terms of governance. The traditional forms of governance, which was mentioned in more detail in section 5.2., are an example of governance which adheres to the political nature of the Taliban. Therefore, the Taliban are gaining ground because of their historical roots and Pashtunwali codices which are recognised by the people, contradictory to the more western style governance structures by the state. The Afghan people have a strong and long-lived culture who see value in the traditional jirgas and shuras as means of government, something which the Taliban also conforms with. As a result, the Taliban is allowed certain degree of perceived legitimacy in the areas they control, and also in the areas they choose to establish themselves whether or not there are existing governance structures therein.

The existing governance structures of the state are considered to be weak. The large rural based population generally sees very little of state run institutions and intervention in their daily lives. Bizan (2019) also claims that the failures of the state in Afghanistan in their ability to rebuild the country is, amongst other things, based on the domestic policies therein.

Given that the country is large, and the majority of people are settled in rural areas, institutions such as police, courtrooms, schools, and health facilities outside of the big cities are often limited. The people of Afghanistan has a way of life which is considered to be strongly rooted in traditions and culture. The culture at odds with the state will therefore trump state operated provisions. And as such, insurgent groups like the Taliban, which operates and governs in a familiar manner to the people will experience success.

6.1.6. US-Taliban Peace Agreement

Given that the Taliban and the state have been in growing contention ever since the interim government was replaced by President Karzai's first administration in 2003, they have both achieved legitimacy. The current situation comprised of the state run government and the US-recognised Taliban have led to these governing structures to effectively work as a hybrid political order. The Taliban have achieved a great deal of authority and in certain areas of Afghanistan are almost considered the autonomous rulers. The state has now also been sidelined in the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban to be instigated for the purpose of withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan. The lack of political will to negotiate with the Taliban has allowed an external power such as the US to take the lead in negotiations without state ownership (and possibly consultation) and handed them a fait accompli.

The war in Afghanistan is the longest in in US history. With little success it is understandable that the US are attempting to find solutions for their military withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, instigating a peace agreement with the rebels with the exclusion of the state will see ill effects as the Taliban are likely to benefit beyond the notion of the US retreating. "Trump's inclination to pull out US troops at this juncture has exaggerated the Taliban's importance in the Afghan political landscape at the cost of the Kabul administration" (Buhuria et al., 2019, p. 131). The actions of the Trump administration is also believed to boost the morale of Taliban fighters who see the situation as a justification for further rebel governance. Furthermore, according to Buhuria et al. (2019), between 2015 and 2018 the number of civilian casualties have risen substantially at the hand of NATO and ANDFS (Afghan National Defence Security Forces). This is clearly beneficial for the Taliban and it explains why they are agreeing to engage in peace talks, the situation facilitates the expansion of the insurgency.

The peace agreement between the US and the Taliban is also diminishing the overall perception of the war for the state. The Taliban are thus being viewed as the winning force in the conflict. According to Buhuria et al. (2019), the perception of the Taliban as the winning party in the conflict also makes the state look tentative by comparison. As such, the Taliban have become a formidable force in the region and are perceived as the only faction which can bring peace to Afghanistan.

The overall situation regarding the Taliban is concerning for the state. Where the Taliban's economy is growing and becoming less dependent on external funding, they are becoming more autonomous within Afghanistan. The mining activities are thus becoming a formidable and perceptually legitimate activity as resource extraction, illegal or not, brings about funding for the insurgency- in the same manner as it would have for the incumbent government. The governing nature of the Taliban which has become very proper given their leadership structures, are now considered legitimate in nature. The most recent developments regarding the peace agreement has therefore achieved in cementing the Taliban as a formal authority, which with the aid of a more perceived legitimate income by resource extraction could lead to further opportunities for the Taliban.

6.2. Case Two: IS-KP

IS-KP, or Daesh, is an insurgency group which has close ties to IS. They are based in the Nangarhar and parts of the Helmand province of Afghanistan, where they are in control of a number of select areas. According to Giustozzi (2016), Daesh became a notable rebel group after 2014, when they were on peaceful terms with the Taliban who allowed them to settle as their interests were aligned. However, as conflicts transpired, Daesh managed to persuade a substantial amount of Taliban fighters to join their cause which has since been a point at issue for the Taliban. Although there are different figures, according to Global Witness (2018), Daesh are comprised of between 1000 and 3000 fighters, where the majority are based in Nangarhar.

6.2.1. IS-KP Economy

Daesh in comparison to the Taliban have not had the same level of success in terms of their economy. Daesh has less of an historic presence within Afghanistan and as such they have

not been able to experience the same level of capital return from their opportunistic operations. Furthermore, ISIS has previously seen a certain level of success with their oil exploration in countries such as Syria and Iraq, albeit with very poor management, production, and overall sales (Hansen-Lewis & Shapiro, 2015). Within Afghanistan, Daesh has experienced an unstable economy, where at times they have even been unable to pay their own fighters do to their unsteady income. They have been relying on taxation and extortion, a certain level of trade in narcotics, external funding, and lastly their increasing involvement in illegal resource extraction.

Daesh have not been able to reach the same level of foothold in Afghanistan as the Taliban. As such, their territories are more limited, which have led to their taxation to be less consistent and coordinated than that of the aforementioned Taliban. According to Giustozzi (2018b), when Daesh emerged in Afghanistan, they were notified by ISIS that they needed to create their own revenue streams, but it proved to be a difficult task. The traditional zakat and ushr would prove to be one of their first ways of generating an income. However, Daesh did not tax the poor in their areas, they focused rather on the shopkeepers and the wealthy (Giustozzi, 2018b). This proved beneficial for Daesh as it gave them the appearance as a sympathetic organisation amongst those who were impoverished. However, Daesh had a reputation for being violent, who did not take lightly on missed payments from those who were imposed with taxes. Still, Daesh was not considered to be very consolidated as it was widely believed that the majority of funds generated went unreported (Giustozzi, 2018b). The lack of transparency in the organisation therefore led to a necessity to expand their operations in order to acquire more funding.

Daesh involvement in the narcotics trade also became a point of competition for the Taliban. Given that Daesh tried to enhance their stature in Afghanistan, they saw opportunities in the poppy production within the country. Therefore, it has been argued that the Taliban banned poppy production in 2015 on the basis of stifling the potential revenues that Daesh would generate, which in terms of Daesh's weakened economy, worked quite well. However, according to Giustozzi (2018b), Daesh also placed a ban on cultivating narcotics as it was considered against the principles of Shar'ia, although there were known cases of personnel who continued trading in narcotics despite the ban. These would then become dependent on the ongoing trafficking, as they would charge smugglers upwards of 20% of their cargo (Giustozzi, 2018b). Hence, narcotics has been a sensitive issue for the insurgent groups,

although the majority of opium in the world still originates in Afghanistan- proving that the revenue streams will trump ideology. Beyond the scope of illegal drugs, Daesh in Afghanistan was also largely funded by external means.

ISIS in Syria and Iraq originally saw vast amounts of revenues from their oil exploration, which at the time of Daesh settling in Afghanistan was a source of funding. However, when ISIS's oil export became a point of issue for the stability in the region, they experienced a reduced income as their refineries and operations underwent strategic targeting by International Military Forces. According to Global Witness (2018), by 2015 ISIS's annual income was approximately US\$550 Million. By early 2017 the figures were closer to US\$4 million per month, a substantial reduction. As such, by 2016, ISIS had begun to reduce support to Daesh at the same time as external funding became more prominent. It is reported that notables in Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iraq, and Syria have secretly contributed to ISIS and Daesh (Giustozzi, 2018b). However, external funding is not something which is reliable for a continued insurgency. For a long term operation where power and influence is key, it becomes necessary to achieve a certain level of sustainability.

While taxation, narcotics, external funding, and ISIS support have benefitted Daesh, the interest in resource extraction have captured their attention as well. According to Global Witness (2018), the figures are difficult to assess, but it was estimated that Daesh's capital gains from illegal extraction was between US\$1 and US\$2 Million per year as per 2018. Not immense compared to the Taliban, but considering that there are far less insurgents from Daesh, the figures are still severe. Therefore, the numbers would suggest that resource extraction is very important for Daesh, and without it, they may very well have had to leave Afghanistan altogether. As a result, resource extraction could be considered a possible rationale for furthering their influence in Afghanistan.

6.2.2. Illegal Mining

While the Taliban are considered to be vastly more invested in the illegal mining industry in Afghanistan, Daesh have recognised the potential riches from natural resources as well. While ISIS have been able to exploit natural resources in Iraq and Syria, Daesh established themselves in Afghanistan without a sustainable means of funding. Given that the Taliban have been devoted to the extractive industries for some time, for Daesh to suddenly become

involved as well has been no easy task. Now however, Daesh has seen capital gains from illegal mining of natural resources such as talc, marble, and chromite in certain areas of Afghanistan, and accordingly are gaining traction as a rebel group who is considered brutal in nature.

The strategic interest by Daesh of Afghanistan's mines have been increasing ever since they settled. During an interview of a senior Daesh commander by Global Witness (2018), he was recorded saying "[t]he mines are in the hands of the mafia (...) At any price we will take the mines." (p. 28). Daesh showed a keen interest in the region of Nangarhar where it was noticed that the armed sieges between the Taliban and Daesh was considered to be over the control of a number of mines. South in Nangarhar, in the Khogyani district there have been extensive fighting, which as of late 2017 had resulted in the displacement of 60,000 residents. According to Global Witness (2018), a majority of the fighting between the Taliban and Daesh have been in a valley called Waziro Tangai in Khogyani, and while there are no confirmations regarding that nature of the inter-insurgent conflicts, it is safe to assume that it was related to control of local mining operations. Moreover, near Waziro Tangai lies one of the more renowned talc deposits in the region. While in the opposite direction are the marble mines of Tora Bora. Alongside being a very resource rich area, it is also strategically in a very good location. It is one of the main corridors from Nangarhar into neighbouring Pakistan which is notorious for smuggling. As such, Khogyani is one of the main hubs for Daesh in Afghanistan given that they have been successful in overthrowing the Taliban from a select number of mines.

Talc has been one of the main natural resources for Daesh as it is in abundance in both Khogyani and Achin districts, which is the first location where Daesh settled in Afghanistan. However, whereas talc is mined in great abundance, it is not very valuable as such. According to the U.S. Institute of Peace (2017b), the price is about US\$200 dollars per MT when exported, which leads to very high transportation costs. While using locals for labour, Daesh are often involved with the mining operations themselves. Furthermore, besides being actively involved with the extraction, it is common to tax mines and trucks used for smuggling. As mentioned in section 6.1.2., there is systematic evidence of large quantities of talc being smuggled into Pakistan on a daily basis. While the Taliban are behind the majority of the illegal extraction in Nangarhar, Daesh are still considered to make substantial amounts of capital from the talc industry.

Other commodities which Daesh are extracting on an industrial scale are chromite and marble. Marble is a highly sought after mineral and for scale: it is estimated that 25% of all marble imported to the US originate from illegal extraction in Afghanistan. As such, marble mining is a great source of funding for the insurgencies, and Daesh have managed to become a strong competitor of the Taliban in Nangarhar. Chromite is another natural resource which, just like marble and talc is highly accessible in the areas where Daesh are located in Nangarhar. In some cases, according to Global Witness (2018), chromite extraction is convenient as it can be extracted from the same districts as where marble and talc is present. Again, figures are not available as to how much Daesh are extracting from Nangarhar, but as mentioned in the previous section, a rough estimate would be between US\$1 and US\$2 million annually (Global Witness, 2018).

Although the majority of mining activity by Daesh are concentrated in the Nangarhar region of Afghanistan, there are cases of mining activities in other areas as well. The research conducted by Global Witness (2018) revealed that there was a growing activity in the Zurmat district in Paktia, where Daesh had reportedly taken over four Taliban operated mines where magnetite, coal and chromite was being extracted. Furthermore, in the province of Logar there has been a growing presence, and the Mohammad Agha district, which incidentally is home of the massive Mes Aynak copper mine that lay dormant, has seen an increased presence of Daesh fighters. The overall understanding is that Daesh are only actively engaged in mining in Nangarhar, but their growing influence is leading them to expanding their territory which is troubling for both the Taliban and the state, not to mention the overall population, which generally consider Daesh the worst of two evils (Global Witness, 2018).

6.2.3. Civilian Perception and Rebel Governance

The overall relationship insurgents have with the general population should not be overlooked. As mentioned in section 6.1.3., there is an inherent importance to be able to win peoples' hearts and minds. Securing cooperation by the people for the purpose of achieving an improved perception of legitimacy should be considered a priority. However, in the case of Daesh this is not necessarily true. Where Daesh have been able to expand their influence within Afghanistan, they have also received less financial support from ISIS. This has led to a necessity to become more self-sufficient, which means that they have become more

dependent on the mining industry than before. As a result, their aggressive tactics are considered necessary as they have been lacking sufficient funding, which has led to worse relations with the population.

The mining industry have therefore become a very important part of Daesh's insurgency, as it is one of the crucial methods by which they are seeing capital gains. However, they are not perceived as being friendly with the people, they secure their funds and run their insurgency with a heavy hand and rely on coercion more so than the Taliban. According to Global Witness (2018), executions and beheadings of civilians have become a trademark of Daesh and the list of human rights abuses go far beyond that of other insurgent groups. Furthermore, they have been known to hang flags by houses where unmarried women reside for the purpose of forcefully wedding them with Daesh fighters. Accordingly, Daesh are not considerate towards the people in their areas.

In Nangarhar, Daesh rule is represented by fear and extreme violence as they have little regard for civilians. Moreover, they have been described as being "more a deadly nuisance than strategic threat" (Lushenko et al., 2019, p. 266). Interviews of civilians by Global Witness (2018) have also revealed that people are genuinely frightened of Daesh, should civilians not comply with their demands, the punishments can be severe and will often result in death. Furthermore, one of the major problems within the organisation is that there is a lack of synergy. Daesh commanders often act on behalf of themselves and their own selfish motives, which can lead to an increase in violence as they only answer to themselves.

In terms of mining activities, Daesh are considered very different than the Taliban, which does lead to different social relations with the population. Where the Taliban are very organised and are known for investing in village elders, alongside having an extensive network that allows for complete control from the mine sites to the traders, this is not the case for Daesh. Daesh does not have the necessary presence and resources to be able to provide any services as such. A result of this is that Daesh mining operations are more contract dependent, which is why in some cases, they are perceived as being more generous when paying the mine operators (Global Witness, 2018). However, while Daesh may pay more in terms of a flat rate for operators, they are still considered ruthless against those who are unable to pay their taxes. And as mentioned, there is little in place for meeting the needs of

the people, and while they are able to control their areas, it is solely due to their level of violence and coercion.

Collectively, the manner in which Daesh operates does not bear any resemblance to the Taliban or the state. The research by Arjona (2016) on rebel governance gives food for thought as to how Daesh as an organisation considers further expansion in regards towards civilians. History teaches us that should a rebel group have no support from the people they are trying to govern, they will be operating on borrowed time and their rebel governance will be a failed endeavour.

Since Daesh are in control of relatively large areas surrounding Nangarhar province, they are effectively engaged with rebel governance. The areas they control are largely absent of any state run authority and as such, Daesh have ousted the existing power brokers and Taliban members leaving the de facto jurisdiction with Daesh commanders. While Daesh are lacking in cooperation within their own organisation, they will still have a degree of hierarchy and governance structures. Furthermore, they are able to undertake the role as rulers largely based on violence, the effectiveness of intimidation and being the perceived law.

In terms of structure, Daesh seemingly has a very hierarchical leadership design. The current caliph is Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, who after the death of Bakr al-Baghdadi in October of 2019 received command of ISIS. According to Garcia-Hervás (2017), ISIS themselves have proclaimed their leadership structure, which is reportedly hard to confirm: “it is difficult to tell how much of this structure is real and how much is a figment of the collective imagination of the movement – a future vision that they would like to see realized rather than the current state of affairs” (p. 42). However, ISIS have claimed to have a total of 35 provinces where they exert their control. These provinces would each have their own governor, whom refers all important matters to a board of trustees working directly under the caliph. Moreover, there is a delegated committee which in turn has a number of offices and ministries. There is also very little in terms of checks and balances as the caliph wields a great deal of power. This power can only be circumvented by way of a shura council, which consists of a group of scholars, who incidentally are all appointed by the caliph. Granted, this is the case of ISIS as a whole, and not specifically in terms of Daesh in Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, Daesh have claimed to have influence in the eastern provinces of Logar, Laghman and Kunar, in addition to Nangarhar. In these three provinces there were according to the U.S. Institute of Peace (2016), shadow governors, but with an unknown number of fighters and Daesh commanders. Within Nangarhar, the majority of Daesh presence was centred around the districts southeast in the province: Achin, Nazyan, and Dur Baba, for the purpose of easy access to safe havens in Pakistan as its situated alongside the border.

The structure of ISIS, and by extension Daesh, also acts according to how the leadership is constructed. According to Garcia-Hervás (2017), the leadership of Bakr al-Baghdadi was as per psychological analyses, socialist in nature. The reasoning for this can be explained by how commanders and fighters are empowered, and thereby are able to operate without the explicit guidance of the central command. This is also evident by accounts of the early insurgency in Nangarhar, where the population saw Daesh rebels in a different light than more recent ones as mentioned in section 6.2.3.: “This would change dramatically from about mid-2015 onward; but in this early period, (Daesh) was generally seen as positive for the economy and respectful of locals” (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2016, p. 7). Arguably, this sentiment could have set the stage for Daesh, and allowed them a certain degree of consideration, which ultimately would lead to their expansion.

Daesh’s later governance has been viewed as something which is much more violent in nature. Their illicit mining activities reflects this as it is an expression of taking what is wanted, without the consideration for anyone. However, it can also be argued that their level of violence in terms of illicit mining and governance is varied. Afterall, commanders and fighters are known to operate on individualist motives. Accordingly, Daesh in Afghanistan are not a ‘model’ insurgency. They are not considered to be organised and there is little to suggest that they have a concrete plan for their continued insurgency. Lastly, “Afghanistan did not give rise to the Islamic State” (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2016, p. 6). Rebel governance is hence a difficult achievement as ultimately, Daesh have no historic presence in Afghanistan, unlike the Taliban who has been strong force ever since the end of the cold war.

6.2.4. State Building

While the Taliban is an insurgent group which is considered an avid state builder within Afghanistan, the same cannot be said of Daesh. While the country is suffering from the

pitfalls of being an FCAS, Daesh are not reaping the benefits of controlling a population who is struggling. Afghanistan is already suffering from hybrid governance between the Taliban and the state, and asserting their power as a result becomes all the more difficult for Daesh.

Although the country is struggling with poverty, corruption, and weak authority structures, Daesh are battling against the odds as they are clashing with two opposing governance structures for authority. The Taliban are achieving legitimacy in the areas they control because they are able to provide where the state is unable to. While the state may not be present in the districts where Daesh are located, this does not suggest that Daesh are able to fill the void. There may be a lack of state run institutions, but Daesh generally have very little to offer the people and the majority of interaction has been based upon religious teachings.

Daesh's outreach strategy has been relying on Salafism. According to the U.S. Institute of Peace (2016), it is a school of thought based on the practice and interpretation of Islam as it was during the time of the Prophet Mohammed. In practice this means that Daesh have been conducting face to face interplay with various families in their districts alongside having conducted preaching in houses and mosques. Daesh have been using this rhetoric for the purpose of justifying their extreme ways, although as per the U.S. Institute of Peace (2016), Salafis are not generally perceived as being violent.

Beyond religious teachings Daesh also have quite aggressive recruitment programs. According to Lushenko et al. (2018), they have introduced the 'Cubs of the Caliphate' program which is designed to indoctrinate children between the age of 6 and 16 "through a regimented pedagogy prescribed by Islamic State educators" (p. 270). Furthermore, Daesh are inherently violent as they encourage attacks and as per Lushenko et al. (2018), their main strategic interest is based on instilling fear by means of violence. Therefore, it could be argued that their ideology is based on not creating a good rapport with the population and engage in governance and ultimately state building. There seems to rather be a battle between good and evil where Daesh is encouraging adolescents to commit to the organisation on the promise of being part of something, which in reality has no basis for existence in the region (Lushenko et al., 2018). After all, there is nothing in Afghanistan's culture or history which suggests that Daesh should have any success in their expansion within the country, their operations are mainly rooted in violence and coercion.

There is only one suggestion for their continued expansion within Afghanistan in terms of building relations with the people. The interaction between Daesh commanders and soldiers with mining operators and owners is the only case of interaction which is not based on indoctrination. The lack of state building by Daesh leads to illegal resource extraction as one plausible way in which Daesh can expand their insurgency.

Chapter 7: Analysis

The following chapter will be consisting of the overall analysis. It is divided into sub-chapters for the purpose of attaining a more nuanced saturation in the subject matter by separating the Taliban and Daesh respectively. The purpose of the analysis is hence to answer the research questions which were declared in chapter 1 and which are outlined below. Following the analysis, a section on the limitations and potential biases will be discussed before the final conclusion in chapter 8.

The study was based on one main research question:

- Does illegal resource extraction create more opportunities for rebel governance within Afghanistan in the case of the Taliban and IS-KP?

Following three sub-research questions:

- Is the income from illegal extraction used by insurgent groups to strengthen their legitimacy?
- Are the community demands acknowledged by the insurgency? And if so, are their demands met to a greater degree than by the government?
- From a community perspective, what are the main differences between traditional, state and rebel governance?

7.1. The Taliban, Illegal Mining and Rebel Governance

The case of the Taliban, the new war era as stated by Mary Kaldor (2005) is here most relevant as it revolves around non-state actors. Research by Arjona (2016) on rebel governance sees a correlation with this ‘new war era’ as the conflict in Afghanistan is less

concerned with the military power of the Taliban, but more with the civilian perception of the insurgent groups and how they engage with the public. This is further supported by the idea of constructivism which according to Gawthorpe (2017), aids in the understanding of rebel governance as the theoretical assumption is that the world is not considered fixed. As such, understandings and structures in a society are always in motion, and the collective consideration of a rebel group could easily lead to the actions of an insurgency being considered legitimate. It is this perceived legitimacy which according to Giustozzi (2019) led to the reduction in Taliban initiated attacks in Afghanistan and their subsequent “glide towards a political settlement favourable to them” (p. 176).

The Taliban have become a rebel group which is on the brink of becoming an operational political movement which is not to be underestimated. They have made gains recurrently with the period following the ISAF troop drawdown in 2014 being most successful. Furthermore, the increased attention to resource extraction by the Taliban is worrying as it represents a shift in income generation. Resource extraction in Afghanistan have proved worthwhile for the Taliban to the extent that other sources of funding may not be deemed necessary should the current circumstances allow for further exploration and extraction. There is a high probability that the current success of the Taliban is a result of their perceived legitimacy by the communities as the rightful rulers in the areas they control (Giustozzi, 2018a). The interaction between the rebels and the population clearly indicates that the research by Arjona et al. (2017) is correct. The engagement of governance by the rebels are a result of the group level interaction which is evident through their increased perceived legitimacy. The rebel governance at the hand of the Taliban is therefore arguably a fallacy based on the insurgents wrongfully recognised jurisdiction. Their ‘rebelocracy’ (Arjona, 2016) is finally unfolding into something which has the potential to bring the Taliban into the 21st century for good, which unlikely would have happened without Afghanistan’s natural resources.

This brings relevance to the illegal extraction of natural resources by the Taliban. Where mining activities by the insurgency keeps a steady stream of income and influence aligned with selected community interests, the civilian population are increasingly viewing the Taliban as the de-facto authority figures where they assert their control. The reality for the Taliban is that their illegal mining activities is the only source of income which is derived from perceived legitimate activities.

The mining operators and labourers under the Taliban are operating with permits obtained from the Dabara Comisyoon. As such, their mining operations are considered to be licensed and are not in violation of any laws, state issued or not. Furthermore, the permits acquired from the Taliban are also considered reasonable (Global Witness, 2018), and therefore mines would rather pay their licence fees to the Taliban than the royalty rates to the state. This is the problematic nature of the illicit mining activities of the Taliban. Resource extraction by the state would be a perfectly legal and conventional manner in which to make state generated funds, so when the Taliban are the perceived authority, there is nothing strange or immoral for them to do the same. Because of this anomaly, the Taliban are able to further their rebel governance with ease.

However, the hierarchy structure of the Taliban is also interesting as it is effectively a pecking order which is ambiguous. This is evident from the Taliban's military commission, which according to Giustozzi (2019), was operated in a similar manner where crisis ensued due to a failed polycentric governance system. The Taliban were seen as unable to promote reform as they had no clear leadership structure in place. According to an interview of a former Taliban member by Giustozzi (2019) "[w]e are independent people and we do not want to work under someone's control" (p. 112). The traditional hierarchical structures were not favoured by commanders as they would rather be more independent in their pursuits. This suggests that the success of the Taliban by way of meeting the needs of the people is largely dependent on which areas are being considered. As a result, certain areas would experience more coercive methods of tax collecting and considerations for the people than others, and the perception of the Taliban in general would be varied in Taliban operated areas.

Thereby, rebel governance is a difficult achievement should the insurgency in question not be able to attain the support of the population. According to Arjona et al. (2017), group level interactions between insurgents and civilians are crucial when considering to engage with rebel governance. This is something which the Taliban in Afghanistan have been able to benefit from. Research shows that Afghans in Taliban ruled areas are content with them as the leading authority figures (Weigand, 2017). Furthermore, the traditional governance structures are an inherent advantage for the Taliban as they are relatable for normal Afghans and are often more trustworthy than the state run institutions. The overall perception of a corrupt state leads to an increase in the positive attention which the Taliban will hold by the

general population. This positive attention is less likely to hold merit should they only be regarded as producers and traffickers of illicit narcotics. The legitimacy which the Taliban has managed to uphold is then likely connected to their involvement in the mining industry.

According to Giustozzi (2018b), those employed in the mining sector in Taliban-controlled areas are overall happy with the Taliban, and find their taxation and Dabara Comisyoona to be both fair and understanding. The research by Arjona et al. (2017) also gives reason to suggest that the overall rebel governance by the Taliban are worth studying: by comparison, other rebels around the world who are classified as “negative cases” (p. 23), which are rebels without a need to pursue governance, are rarely seen as being successful. The idea of greed over grievance (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004) rarely constitutes much achievement by the rebels in question- beyond short-sighted riches at the expense of a helpless population.

Because of their role in the mining industry, and the manner in which they pursue authority, the Taliban are using their position within the extractive industry to further their insurgency and create additional opportunities. According to Gawthorpe (2017) this is achieved due to the sociological nature of human beings who will seek to find an understanding of their given situation which is in constant flux. As such, “identity can be manipulated and an ideational commitment to a particular governance structure can in effect be created through effective social engineering” (p. 841). The mining operations controlled by the Taliban are therefore examples of fostering wealth for the population and this has the potential for other, non-Taliban affiliated mine sites to view the Taliban with a degree of optimism. Furthermore, according to Mampilly (2011), historic accounts of Mobutu’s natural resource management shows traits that will be familiar to Afghans: the fact that corruption by the state is so widespread, that the income generated from apparent legal mining operations will only serve to deepen the pockets of corrupt officials. As a result, Taliban controlled mining operations could be viewed as a better option; they may be a rebel group, but at least there is transparency in their organisation which may not be first-rate, but at least its forthright. Furthermore, this transparency leads to the role of civilians and rebels changing, they will no longer be perceived as having different interests. The collective understanding of what the rebels are, is therefore subject to change, which could have the potential to make the population see the Taliban as something positive. Thereby, Taliban involvement in the extractive industry has the potential to lead to further development for the insurgency. Their candid demeanour towards both the mining sector and their authoritarianism are aiding in the

expansion of their perceived legitimacy and lack of disturbance towards their insurgency. Accordingly, as mentioned in section 2.3., the elements of localised governance is hence proving to be beneficial in the eyes of the people, and the extractive industry is becoming the gateway for further insurgency.

Next to mining creating more opportunities for the Taliban, the extractive industries provides funding for the insurgency. This income aids in increasing their legitimacy as their capital is not used for accruing personal wealth by the members of the Taliban. Instead, as the organisation is considered well-funded, they are able to pay their fighters well. According to Giustozzi (2019) the Taliban are paying their fighters similar amounts to that of government officials, which employment in the private sector or agriculture in Afghanistan would never be able to. Thereby, following Giustozzi's research (2019), the assurance of payment and encouragement of a better life, have led to the Taliban seeing a substantial increase in recruits. As such, the Taliban are channelling revenues from the extractive industry in a useful manner which strengthens their legitimacy.

A very important aspect of the insurgency is whether or not they are meeting the needs of the people. In terms of the Taliban this is largely the case. The most apparent example of this is the widespread use of mobile courts throughout Afghanistan. Ibrahimi (2019) clearly states that the inherent scepticism in the countryside of state run practices have led to a respect and understanding of the Taliban as they are practicing in a way which has historic precedence. Furthermore, as per Integrity Watch Afghanistan (2018b), in areas where the Taliban are present, the formal judiciary system is not seen as valuable and is considered inferior to the *ulama* (religious scholars) who conduct trials. As such, certain aspects of Taliban governance are considered superior over the state as they are not always able to provide such services for the population. Moreover, recent developments regarding the ongoing COVID-19 threat which has also reached Afghanistan, shows that the Taliban are attending to the crisis with the best intentions regarding the population. According to a publishing for the U.S. Institute of Peace (2020), the Taliban are urging aid workers to assist in Taliban-controlled areas claiming that they are promising them safe passage. The article also states that the Taliban have launched awareness campaigns to alert of the potential health hazards regarding the virus and they have also assisted in transporting suspected COVID-19 victims to state run hospitals. Furthermore, the lack of action by the state has according to U.S. Institute of Peace (2020), led to further distrust of the government by the population, leading to further

permissibility of the Taliban as the correct authority. As a result, “it may require cooperation between the Taliban and the Kabul government to implement a comprehensive and effective response” (Responding to the Spread, para 7). Overall, in Taliban controlled areas, they are in a position where they are meeting the needs of the people to a larger degree than the official government due to the lack of state oversight and presence.

In terms of governance, the population are experiencing vastly different approaches towards how political control is exercised within Afghanistan. Where the state has implemented an increasingly westernised form of rule since the implementation of the interim government in 2002, the people in Afghanistan has long withstanding roots of a more traditional form of government (Miakhel, 2009). As such, the Taliban will experience a great deal of support based on the fact that they are adhering to a more traditional form of governance which the state is seen to be leaving behind. Therefore, it is easier for the population to adhere to the rules and governance structures of the Taliban as the more recently implemented ruling body of the state could be considered alien. This is particularly true for the rural population of Afghanistan who are the majority (Noelle-Karimi, 2006). A response to this has been community driven outreach programs through the NSP which are based on a top-down methodology which is meant to decrease the polarization between the people and the state (Beath et al., 2015). To a certain extent the program has seen successes, but the people are still experiencing a distrust of the state, which leaves traditional governance as the most familiar and trustful form of political control. Furthermore, in districts where CDCs have been developed, according to Bhatia et al. (2018), dispute resolution has become one of its many functions. However, Bhatia et al. (2018) also argues that in areas where the Taliban has a foothold, “the Taliban itself is a far more significant provider of justice and dispute resolution than the CDCs” (p. 1059). Taliban exercised authority is based on historical accounts of rule, which are familiar to most Afghans and are in the eyes of many, the correct way to rule as it is a system which unlike state governance, does not allow for corruption in the same manner.

According to Arjona et al. (2017), rebels govern by way of violence and coercion, and protracted violence is used for gaining territory and political control. As such, rebel governance differs from traditional governance in the case of Afghanistan. Although as per the theoretical assumption that rebel governance is led by violence does adhere to the Taliban, they do act on the principles of traditional governance structures. As such, the

people often consider the Taliban as the de-facto authority given that they do provide for the people in their communities, which sometimes supersedes that of the state.. Therefore, as per Adler (1997), “the human capacity for reflection or learning has its greatest impact on the manner in which individuals and social actors attach meaning to the material world and cognitively frame the world they know” (p. 322). Accordingly, for the people of Afghanistan, I believe it to be easy to blur the lines between traditional and rebel governance in the case of the Taliban. This also adheres to my initial hypothesis that the insurgents are able to provide for the people through localised governance. The people are seeing a rebel group with historic precedence in the region, who are using familiar forms of governance which are well respected by the communities. As a result, the Taliban are achieving a certain level of legitimacy, especially since the perception of a corrupt state is evident throughout the country.

The Taliban’s level of legitimacy is also seeing a surge in recent months given the current peace agreement with the US. The peace deal which occurred on 29th February 2020 has aided them in achieving a greater sense of legitimacy in the eyes both the US and the Afghan state, and to a certain degree within the international community. According to Pilster (2020), the only way forward is through power sharing, which in itself makes the Taliban a legitimate political force. This peace agreement brings forward a political space within domestic politics that will be shaped by a form of a governance anomaly that could become historic. Previous accounts of rebel governance which have managed a coup d’etat are different. The Taliban are currently in a position where they are actively engaging themselves in a hybrid governance structure, maintaining a keen interest in both the state and their own governance network.

7.2. IS-KP, Illegal Mining and Rebel Governance

Since the expansion of IS into Afghanistan and their creation of IS-KP or Daesh, they have managed to grow substantially since 2016. While the long-withstanding oil endeavours by IS have been brought to a halt, Daesh have been compelled to become more self-sufficient in their exploits (Global Witness, 2018). Their operations have therefore led to the increased interest in resource extraction in Afghanistan. As a result, they have become an insurgency which rules their territories with a heavy hand for the purpose of achieving legitimacy in their areas. However, according to Mampilly (2015), legitimacy involves more than a normative

compliance by civilians, it is more of an interactive relationship which requires political authority that provide a collective understanding of its actions by the population. A concept that Daesh have failed to appreciate as their presence and continued insurgency have been largely based on upholding their role in the extractive industry.

The mining activities by Daesh have become more widespread as they are continuing to fight the Taliban for mining operations. According to Global Witness (2018), the increased attention by Daesh commanders on mining activities have led to an increase in violence. Daesh's rule is more physically enforced than that of the Taliban, and their ideology is not favoured amongst the Afghan population. Daesh may be preaching for religion and ideology, but the culturally ingrained decision making mechanisms in Afghanistan are still more unyielding. Therefore, Daesh are running their insurgency largely based on fear. As mentioned by Arjona et al. (2017), fear alone will only get you so far. Without the peoples' hearts and minds it is impossible to gain their confidence. And as for the assumption that social manipulation will lead to a population who are content with the situation they are in, it is not necessarily the case for Daesh. Although there is an inherent distrust of the state and their corrupt ways in Afghanistan, the problem for Daesh is that they are not the only faction within the country trying to exert their control. While they are considered the de-facto authority in their areas, they are proving to be unable to provide for the population they are controlling. Moreover, according to Lushenko et al. (2018), their main strategic interest is that of instilling fear, which leads to the aforementioned notion of 'negative cases' (Arjona et al., 2017). By examining Daesh's activities in Afghanistan, this particular promotion of their ideology of a united Khorasan is not very realistic.

The hierarchical structure of Daesh is one that does not lead by chain of command. The ideal leadership structure of IS have not proved to exist in the case of Daesh in Afghanistan. Daesh fighters and commanders are mostly operating on individualist motives where furthering the insurgency could seem questionable. According to research by the U.S. Institute of Peace (2016), Daesh has no historic affiliation in Afghanistan, and as such they would be unable to attain the same level of local support as the Taliban.

When Daesh lost their financial support from IS they became dependent on the natural resources of Afghanistan in order to maintain their presence. According to Giustozzi (2018b), the fact that Daesh were relatively small in size compared to other insurgent groups such as

the Taliban, they were initially unable to collect taxes with the same efficiency. Furthermore, the ban on narcotics in Afghanistan as of November 2015 led to Daesh in need of finding new methods of generating funds (Giustozzi, 2018b). Therefore, “acquiring control over mining operations as a potential source of revenue” (p. 46) became a subsidiary aim of Daesh. As such, their main motive became to generate funds, not to govern. The current situation is therefore that the extractive industry is the only thing which is upholding Daesh presence in Afghanistan. Without the mining activities, they would have little incentive and no funds to maintain their operations. As per Global Witness (2018), exploitation of natural resources in Afghanistan is nothing new in itself, but from their research it became apparent that the only objective for Daesh was control over various mining operations. As a result, it is safe to assume that the extractive industry is one of the few things which furthers Daesh’s insurgency as their foreign support is dwindling. However, there is no evidence that the funds generated are channelled into the organisation for further expansion. Given the relatively flat hierarchical structure of Daesh, it is more likely that the money remains in the possession of the various Daesh fighters and commanders.

Daesh may be a comparable insurgent group to the Taliban. However, there are vast differences between them. Primarily this is centred around their existence in Afghanistan, meaning that the Taliban have an historic presence within the country, while Daesh do not. Moreover, Daesh are nothing more than an idealistic insurgent group trying to exert their power over a region which according to an interview of a Daesh commander by Giustozzi (2018b), holds strategic value: “We want to transfer the IS headquarters to Afghanistan, because Afghanistan is a mountainous country and we can defend ourselves very easily” (p. 46). Furthermore, the Taliban has become a political grouping with functioning institutional and structural mechanisms alongside a system of checks and balances therein. Daesh is a fragmented organisation comprised of members who are operating based on personality driven ambitions with little sense of a common goal. Lastly, the Taliban have become a vast political grouping within Afghanistan who are capitalising on their exploits other than illicit mining, whereas Daesh are seeing little in terms of funding besides donations and their gains from resource extraction. While they are both insurgent groups, they are so different in terms of their abilities. The Afghan culture gives reason for the sustained presence of the Taliban, whereas the more heavy-handed Daesh has no merit for attaining the support of the people.

Where Daesh are competing against two opposing authority figures for control, they are lacking in capacity to uphold any form of state- and relations building. Their insurgency and outreach towards the people are mainly based on religious teachings, or Salafism (U.S: Institute of Peace, 2016). This means that meeting the needs of the people are not a priority, and as such, the people will never consider them as anything but a rebel group. Accordingly, Daesh will be unable to attain the support needed by locals as the people will view their insurgency from their own point of view. Their perceived identity will provide the basis for their interests (Zehfuss, 2001), and Daesh's interests does not move far beyond their search for funds. Unlike the Taliban, Daesh's mining operations are not examples of fostering wealth for the population and creating new opportunities. Their involvement in the extractive industry only allows for furthering the insurgency because of the funds it generates, not by gaining any form of legitimacy beyond that of fear and coercion. Therefore, according to Arjona (2016), the insurgency must be considered short-lived. As a result, in the case of Daesh, their income from illegal extraction does not strengthen their legitimacy, it merely upholds it.

The manner in which Daesh operates brings a clear distinction between rebel, state, and traditional governance structures. Daesh are not engaged in governance, their interests are not based upon being administrators of government, and in reality they do not have the capability to do so, especially since the support from IS has dwindled. The theoretical premise of rebel governance by Arjona (2016) therefore proves scientific: without the acceptance of the general population, it becomes necessary to maintain control by way of violence, which unlikely allows for long-term success. This is particularly true in the case of Afghanistan where Daesh are not the only rebel group making an effort for exerting control.

Lastly, the extreme ways of Daesh are in actuality providing further opportunities for the Taliban. Global Witness (2018) uncovered that the overall population is generally more frightened of Daesh fighters than that of the Taliban. Therefore, as per Gawthorpe (2017), constructivism explains how identity can be manipulated to support certain governance structures, in this case the Taliban. Furthermore, it is not necessarily through social planning, but rather by how the Taliban are perceived by comparison. This has also led to the consideration that the Taliban are actually one of the few factions who are actively fighting Daesh (Bacon, 2018; Giustozzi, 2019). As a result, the Taliban have received support from other governments such as Russia, Iran, and the Arab Gulf countries for the purpose of

eradicating Daesh from Afghanistan (Giustozzi, 2019). Collectively, Daesh are living on borrowed time. The strengthening position of the Taliban alongside the subsidiary goal of making funds having become a primary objective for Daesh, which should eventually lead to their demise.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Through analysis and deliberations on the effects of illegal mining by the Taliban and Daesh, this dissertation has shown that resource extraction have aided the insurgents in becoming considered a legitimate authority within Afghanistan. The country in itself is complicated as it is comprised of factions other than the state which are fighting for authority alongside various governance structures rooted in Afghan traditions.

Furthermore, the ‘new war’ era (Kaldor, 2005) rings true for Afghanistan and the insurgent groups as the role of civilian perception is increasingly becoming a powerful mechanism in rebel governance. Where resource extraction has become a reasoning for further insecurity and violence, it has led to rebel groups increased presence and capabilities. As such, the extraction and profiteering from natural resources for strengthening their presence and authority has become a new reality in Afghanistan, as is most clearly evident with the most recent successes of the Taliban in their peace talks with the US.

Thereby, the illegal resource extraction does create more opportunities for the Taliban and Daesh in Afghanistan. In terms of the Taliban they are effectively becoming legitimised through their mining operations. Illicit mining operations which are perceived as legitimate by the population given the use of Taliban issued mining licences are leading to other sources of funding for the insurgency as being less essential. Moreover, mining operators are content with the Taliban as it ensures their mines’ survival, and as such there are accounts of mines not affiliated with the Taliban who see it in their interest to become aligned with the Taliban. In terms of a more fragmented Daesh presence, the situation is different, although illicit mining still creates more opportunities for rebel governance, they are largely dependent on their income from resource extraction and are therefore driven to such activities primarily for economic gain. Given their lack of funding from IS, one of the few things which is maintaining their presence in Afghanistan are their mining operations, as without them they would have little income and would effectively be forced to disband.

The income generated from resource extraction is also aiding in their pursuit for legitimacy. For the Taliban, the income generated is clearly being used to further their interests in becoming perceived as a legitimate alternative to the state in Afghanistan. There is evidence that the taxes paid to the Taliban from resource extraction are reasonable, and as such, mine operators prefer to pay the Taliban rather than the state. Furthermore, the Taliban are paying their fighters and commanders similar rates to that of state officials, and as a result, they are attracting new recruits. For Daesh, income generated will also aid in their pursuit of legitimacy. Given that Daesh are not organised to the same level as the Taliban, they are known to use their funds to accrue personal wealth more so than the Taliban. However, since Daesh does not have the resources or capabilities to engage with any form of state building, their mining operations are often contract dependent. This means that in some cases they pay mining operators very well, meaning that although they are known to be more violent and brutal than the Taliban, they are sometimes highly regarded by miners. Moreover, the income generated through illicit mining is considered quite substantial, leading to further pursuits of other mining operations, which indirectly leads to their expansion.

In terms of community demands, my findings prove that they are indeed upheld, and in some regards more so than that of the state. The Taliban for example is providing employment in their areas in terms of mining and similarly in the narcotics trade. There are also reports of the Taliban taking on various functions of the state, having launched awareness campaigns regarding the ongoing COVID-19 threat alongside having aided in transporting infected to state run hospitals and encouraging NGOs to assist in infected areas. Furthermore, the most obvious case is that of mobile courts, which are well respected in Afghanistan as they provide a service which is considered more trustworthy than that of the state. Moreover, Daesh are also providing employment for those working in the mining sector in their areas, and although the working conditions are not ideal, when there is little alternative, it becomes a rational choice, even when there is no choice. There is a similar notion in regards to governance structures. From a community perspective there are definitely differences in governance. Where the newly implemented state governance is struggling to impose their authority in the rural parts of Afghanistan, the traditional decision making mechanisms which have existed for more than a millennia will triumph. This is then exploited by especially the Taliban who are superimposing themselves on traditional governance structures which the majority of the population recognise and identify with. This system of governance which is a

mixture of traditional mechanisms and rebel governance may not be the ideal situation, but it is at least agreeable to a certain extent. What becomes evident is that the incumbent government which was implemented in 2002 was made without the consideration for the people. The Karzai regime which was realised with the help of the U.S. failed to take into account that implementing a western style government in a country with very strong ties to its traditional heritage was controversial at best. It is through this U.S. supported government, the civilian perception of a corrupt state have allowed insurgents like the Taliban and Daesh to prevail, which then was given the opportunity to prosper due to their exploitation of Afghanistan's natural resources.

8.1. Further Research

Given the current situation in Afghanistan where especially the Taliban have achieved a great deal of legitimacy and authority, there is clearly a lack of research in joint thinking about rebel governance. In Afghanistan there are a number of stakeholders which have not had their roles and linkages clearly defined. The state which is struggling to uphold an authoritarian role over their own territory is troubling but perhaps not a revelation. Furthermore, the traditional power brokers who have existed for a millennia, are beyond that of community development councils, isolated from state affairs. Lastly, the insurgent groups, who in the case of the Taliban have very recently managed to incorporate themselves with the state due to the ongoing peace proceedings instigated by the U.S. Collectively, the interrelationship between the state, the traditional powerbrokers, and the more recent insurgent groups have been almost non-existent.

Therefore I posit, that there needs to be better mapping and more focus on the inter-relational dynamics between these stakeholders. If the state of Afghanistan would like to become the perceived authority throughout the country, it is necessary to recognise that these various stakeholders do exist within Afghanistan and they do possess a great deal of power.

Enforcing a modern system of government in a country which has been involved with armed conflicts for the past 50 years, alongside the fact that 80% of the population reside in rural Afghanistan, is challenging at best.

In the case of the Taliban, based upon their newly-found legitimacy on the world stage emerging from a peace agreement and the gradual progress towards inter-Afghan dialogue,

they are in a strategic position to mainstream their hybrid governance approach and become part of the Afghan state under their own terms.

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