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International State Building: security threat impact for Afghanistan's stabilisation'

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Master of Science in International Relations

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Declaration

I, Daniel Hernández Iniesta, 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

***“Where there is a will,
there is a way”***

-English Proverb

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Abstract

A country's internal political stability allows the scenario where a state can develop its economy and relations with other states. However, this desired internal stability often goes hand in hand with a high level of desired security state citizens. The international community evaluates states according to their level of security threat to global terrorism, largely by Daesh and Al Qaeda. In previous years the international community evaluated states' ability to cope with security threats to a country's independence. In addition to states' interest to outwardly exercise influence for their own self-interest, it is very relevant to analyse how states gain UN support to intervene in another state (i.e. Iraq in 1990 and 2003, or more pertinently, Afghanistan in 2001).

Furthermore, the way the international community uses security threats to exercise influence in another country is a factor that impacts on a country's stability and state building. Therefore, the impact of security threats to justify an international community intervention in another country is not only a general aspect to study in international relations, but a factor that has historically influenced Afghanistan. Thus, the influence of security threats from the international community, on Afghanistan's state building is a relevant case to study for international relations and is the topic of this thesis. In order to evaluate the international community's influence over Afghanistan's internal stability, I identified the impact of security threats on Afghan governance and economic and social development as two areas that affect Afghanistan's state building.

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List of Abbreviations

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CDC	Community Development Council
CA	Comprehensive Approach
CIA	Central Investigation Agency
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COIN	Counter Insurgency
COMISAF Force	Commander of International Security Assistance
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
DDA	District Development Assembly
EU	European Union
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IS	Islamic State
GDP	Gross Development Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRNA	Islamic Republic News Agency
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISKP	Islamic State Khorasan Province

List of Abbreviations

ITGA	Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Trade Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMBU	Norges miljø- og Biovitenskapelige Universitet
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NUG	National Unity Government
ODA	Official Development Aid assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	The Organisation Islamic Cooperation
ORS	Operation Resolute Support
PRT ESC	Provincial Reconstruction Team Executive Steering Committee
SAARC	The South Asian Association Regional Cooperation
SCO	The Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar

List of Abbreviations

WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWI	World War I /First World War
WWII	World War II/Second World War
3D	Development, Defence and Diplomacy

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the research problem and case study

Over the centuries, security has been used as an indicator of the nature and maturity of inter-relationships within states. The definition of security threats relates to how some actors (states) perceive that their values are in need of protection from aggression, which justifies the use of measures to protect those values (McDonald, 2017). Moreover, a definition of security should consider the national or international level, the focus area (governance, politics or economics), the provision of a sense of stability, beneficial and desired by the population and national governments (Campbell, 2009).

A closer look at security utilising the abovementioned groups helps to explain the root causes of a country's internal stability, its economic influence, and international relations. The concept of the 'international community' will be referred to throughout this Master's thesis as a US-led western-centric alliance to support their 'geopolitical' interests, and more specifically in this thesis, how this impacts on Afghanistan through NATO intervention (Ruiz Palmer, 2005). This overarching influence from the international community to guide or exercise influence in other states, is what Tillman (2009) presents as states pursuing their self-interests.

In principle, the international community considers each state to possess the internal capacity to cope with security threats, and should act independently for independent state-building (Trobbiani, 2013). When this is no longer perceived as being so - for example, the international community's desire for internal stability - security threat issues (i.e. global terror threats from DAESH, Al Qaeda, Taliban) are used to explain why states decide to intervene into another country's internal affairs. However, the international community has used the excuse of contributing to stability and security threat reduction in Afghanistan to promote its own political agendas, often aimed at undermining competing nations or regional powers, as for example, the UK's involvement in the 2003 Iraq war (Ralph, 2005).

Thus, in order to evaluate how the international community has, and is, influencing the governance system and economic and social development in Afghanistan (as is the case study of this thesis), I will describe and evaluate the core research question: "*How does the international community use security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan?*".

I also developed a sub-research question in order to better understand the reasons for international community intervention and its influence on the state-building processes:

“How do security threats in Afghanistan influence internal governance, and economic and social development?”

In order to examine this, I will explain in the theory chapter the security threat concept, its impact on state legitimacy, and the principle of state sovereignty as factors that influence security threats for state-building in a country, and briefly describe how the international community exercises influence in other states.

To illustrate why certain states are interested in intervening in the security and stability of other states is very relevant to analyse, for instance, the way states seek UN support (mainly through resolutions) to justify their international political claims. The examples of Iraq in 1990 and 2003, Afghanistan in 2001, or over several decades ago with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in the 1930's, highlight state desire for United Nations support in legitimising intervention in other countries and the challenges faced (Dunn, 2013). Furthermore, United Nations support can provide greater justification and international recognition for new states and their state-building process. This was for instance the case of Israel, with the voting and recognition presented by the United Nations (1948) in resolution 181.

Additionally, the way the international community defines a state's security threat is as a factor that influences the state building process and its international recognition. In other words, states that seek independence from other countries look for the international community's support and recognition.

Throughout history, under these circumstances, the international community utilises international conferences, summits and alliances (i.e. NATO, Warsaw Pact) to define the ways to cope with international security threats. It is through these international community meetings and alliances that states look for common patterns to help define what is a security threat and its impact on themselves. Such perceptions of global security threat challenges (i.e. Daesh, Al Qaeda, Taliban) are used to justify an intervention in another state.

1.2 Empirical research, positioning and phenomena

Security threats are factors that impact on international relations, both on a country's internal stability and its economic and social development (NATO, 1999a). On the other hand, when the international community influences another country's development to achieve their self-interests, this can create problems affecting that country's future development. For example, a country's internal stability (governance system and institutions) helps to develop a country's economy and social cohesion.

Nevertheless, insecurity in a country influences its internal stability, deciding upon the peacefulness, or lack thereof, in the state-building process. Insecurity also means that a country cannot implement development policies, and instead settles on focusing on the provision of stability in the country.

This research specifically looks at the personal experiences that the interviewees from different areas (i.e. government, NGO's, refugees, academia) have provided. This diversity of opinion enriches the research process with people's real experiences combined with secondary data.

The research process works to substantiate the thesis statement and its validity with the information gathered from secondary data and interviews. Based on the correlation between the two areas analysed, internal governance and economic and social development, it was decided to combine both secondary data (i.e. articles, magazines, books) with interviews. The interview process and analysis will be described in the methodology section (chapter 2), including validity and reliability, based on information received. Moreover, the information received from interviews is available in the questionnaires listed in the appendices.

1.3 Hypothesis description

Core Research Hypothesis:

The international community uses security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan

The ways the international community influences securitisation in Afghanistan, evidence the relevance of the thesis hypothesis for international relations and in particular in Afghanistan's stability. To emphasise the relevance of this topic, I would like to note that I believe that there is a collusion of international community interests over Afghanistan's internal decisions, whereby security threats are factors to exercise control (directly or indirectly), which impact on the Afghanistan's development.

Throughout the research process there were some difficulties encountered in validating this hypothesis. Those problems were based on how complex it is to evaluate the different theories used, and the experiences from the interviewees. More simplistically, the perception that theories help to explain a phenomenon does not fully match with this study's experiences, but assist in highlighting their impact on Afghanistan's securitisation and state building.

1.4 Analysis process

1.4.1 General description

The research analysis will follow an initial introduction to the security threat concept, followed by a description from three different international relations theories related to security threats, state legitimacy and the principle of state sovereignty. The relationship of these theoretical approaches, in addition to inputs from respondents, will provide a better understanding of how the international community exercises influence in Afghanistan's internal stability and state-building.

This thesis will outline the impact security plays in Afghanistan's governance, economic and social development, and discuss potential improvements for the country in those areas enclosed in the discussion section (chapter 5). The objective is to observe a phenomenon (security threat in Afghanistan), and better understand how the international community exercises influence (country - micro level perspective) in Afghanistan's internal stability and state-building, from a macro level perspective (world).

The research process aims to better understand how security threats developed in Afghanistan, particularly since 2001, with the international community military intervention. The possibility that the Afghanistan case study is unique, or could have similarities in other countries or new state-building processes, will be discussed in the Conclusions (chapter 6). Due to the complexity of the security threat concept, this Master's thesis has been divided into two interest areas to analyse the security threat impact in Afghanistan from an international community perspective. Those two areas (internal governance and economic and social development) will help to better understand security threat impacts in Afghanistan, together with interviews conducted.

To reiterate, Bryman (2012) explains that reliability and validity are terms that help to understand a phenomenon, which will lead to confirm or reject the hypothesis in the Conclusions section (chapter 6).

1.4.2 Research process phases and steps

It is relevant to define the research process with secondary data and interviews followed by an evaluation process that started in June 2016 and finished in May 2017. To evaluate the hypothesis presented for its final approval or rejection, I followed a progressive (from start research until hypothesis evaluation) six-step process to better understand the hypothesis evaluation process. These 6 steps are further described in Table 1.

Table 1: 6 steps in research process

<p>Initial phase (Steps 1 and 2)</p> <p>Research process description</p>	<p>Step 1: Approach to understand the case study</p>	<p>Step 2: Learn about the approach</p>
<p>Planning phase (Step 3)</p> <p>Describe the possible outcomes based on the data collected</p>	<p>Step 3: Hypothesis description</p>	
<p>Development phase (Step 4 and 5)</p> <p>Test the hypothesis and describe its relevance to the Master's thesis topic and for international relations</p>	<p>Step 4: Testing the hypothesis</p>	<p>Step 5: Confirm or reject the hypothesis</p>
<p>Communication phase (Step 6)</p> <p>Communicate the results obtained in the research process</p>	<p>Step 6: Results communication</p>	

Source: Adapted from Hernández Iniesta (2014)

1.5 Literature review

The main sources for peer-reviewed articles online were Oria and E-International Relations, while the books used were 'Social Research Methods from Bryman (2012) and 'The Globalization of world politics-An introduction to International relations' from Baylis, Smith, Owens (2014). Besides these two main books and peer-reviewed articles, other online articles, magazines and books were utilised in the literature review. The sources and links from peer-reviewed articles (further explained within the secondary data, methodology chapter) can be observed in Table 2. In addition, to complement the literature, several tables and figures have been used to more effectively explain the results.

Table 2: Peer-reviewed article sources

Peer-reviewed article sources	Link online
Oria	nmbu.oria.no/
E-International Relations	http://www.e-ir.info/

Source: Author's elaboration

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design

2.1.1 General description

This study focuses on qualitative research with written sources (secondary data) and oral communication (interviews). First, in the research process there is an evaluation of Afghanistan's governance and security threat impact for state-building. Then analysed, were the research questions following Bryman's (2012) research methodology, which included a longitudinal design for interviews to use in the analysis. The longitudinal design helps to bring a more direct approach to the research topic, to, "allow some insight into the time order of variables and therefore may be more able to allow causal inferences to be made" (Bryman 2012, p.63).

In the case of this thesis, the longitudinal design explained above by Bryman (2012), describes the same setting (security threat) in Afghanistan from military intervention in 2001. In order to observe and describe the research setting noted above, the interviews aimed on obtaining informants perceptions of security threats from their personal and professional experiences in Afghanistan since 2001. Also, the causal interferences Bryman (2012) presents refer to the security threat respondents felt, determined by their personal perceptions of the country's instability (personal bias).

The next step in the research design process was to consider the research topic: 'International State Building: security threat impact for Afghanistan's stabilisation'. For example, in theory section (chapter 3), the research process describes the conceptual framework and assists in gaining a better insight into the research topic. Then, after considering the theoretical framework, the next step in the research design was to collect information from interviews. The information from questionnaires (as well as the pre-test questionnaire) is available in the Appendices.

After considering interviews and secondary data, the final step was to discuss how to conduct the interviews, and decide whom to interview. Firstly, the interviews were a combination of three Afghan people (directly related to security threat issues in Afghanistan), and two experts on internal governance and economic and social development. Personal accounts from interviews helped to describe to the interviewer the current situation in Afghanistan.

Although as there were a limited number of interviews, and without Afghan governmental representatives (however they were contacted, but refused being interviewed or didn't replied), the respondents did not qualify to be considered as a reasonable level of representation of the Afghan population.

In the discussion section (chapter 5), unexpected comments and information are presented from the interviews. Even though pre-empted information was provided, there was additional information relevant to the research topic that could be useful for future research on this thesis topic.

2.1.2 Study case evaluation

During Spring 2016 I assessed several case studies, such as Spain (state-building process on the early 16th century, with several kingdoms amalgamated), Germany (1870's state-building process) and Yugoslavia (several countries unified into one state after the First World War finished in 1918). With those cases, I understood key salient features related to securitisation and state building as being relevant to study, but were unable to apply them to the precise and complex Afghan context and consequently focused solely on Afghanistan as the case study.

Despite selecting Afghanistan as the case study for this research, the analysis of secondary data and interviews with stakeholders (stakeholders included people and/or organisations related to Afghanistan and experts in governance and economic and social development fields) brings a clearer perspective and information of security threats directly from Afghanistan, based on respondents' personal experiences. Interviews were conducted in Norway, either through personal contact, or e-mail questionnaires if in-person meetings or video-conference were not possible. The value added from these interviews to the research process is, as explained above, enrichment via real experiences in-country, or with those who worked with issues related to economic and social development for Afghanistan.

Also, the interview process was planned to take place between December 2016 and January 2017 (according to Master's thesis outline presented in June 2016). However, some interviews also took place in March and April 2017 due to agenda availability from the interviewees. As presented above, the main case study is Afghanistan, with Mr. Karim Merchant as co-supervisor, who has wide experience in Afghanistan security and development.

Additionally, I also contacted Professor Mahmood Mamdani who gave me some references from his work to look over, however he politely refused to be interviewed. Professor Mahmood Mamdani has broad experience in the peace process in South Sudan, making him a relevant actor to analyse security threats for state-building. In addition to Mr. Karim Merchant and Professor Mahmood Mamdani, I have conducted several interviews that are presented in the case study section (chapter 4) and the questionnaires in the appendices.

Lastly, in the Conclusion (chapter 6) I will analyse if there are similar factors or patterns between Afghanistan and other countries, based on security threat challenges for a country's internal stability and state-building process.

2.1.3 Research questions

The design of Table 3 follows Bryman's (2012) suggestions from Professor Elisabeth Molteberg from classes at NMBU during 2015-2016. The research questions in Table 3 are divided into main research and sub-research questions.

Both questions (analysis described in Table 3) have an aim and purpose to describe the influences on Afghanistan's governance and economic and social development (further explained in chapter 4) by international interventions since 2001. However, the research questions differ between them, in that while the first question relates to how the international community uses security threats in Afghanistan, the second question (sub-research question) focuses on the impact in Afghanistan of internal stability and the state-building process. As explained in the introduction chapter, the sub-research question was developed to better understand the reasons for international community interventions and its influence on state-building processes, through securitisation policies and strategies in addition to the core research question.

This influence could be either for instance, by political lobbying to the Afghan government, to support state self-interests (directly or indirectly), or in cooperation with other states. This cooperation with other states is for instance what formed the international community's intervention in 2001, and has shaped Afghan internal stability and development.

The two research questions are:

1. **How does the international community use security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan?**
2. **How security threat exercise influence in Afghanistan's internal governance, and economic and social development? (sub-research question)**

Table 3: Design Table

Research questions	Data collection methods	Data from collection methods	Sample. Unit categories/sizes (for interviews)
1. How the international community use security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan?	Interviews	Informants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understand the phenomenon ➤ Security threat specific experiences in Afghanistan ➤ Knowledge from Afghanistan's development situation 	5 people interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3 Afghan people - 1 NGO representative - 1 refugee from Afghanistan, studying at a Norwegian Higher Education institution - Afghan student in Norway, previously involved in Afghan politics ➤ 2 experts on internal governance /economic & social development interviews - 1 economist
	Secondary data		
2. How security threats exercise influence in Afghanistan's internal governance, and economic and social development? (sub-research question)	Interviews	Informants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflections about security threat impacts in Afghanistan ➤ Reflections about the Afghan government performance & ability to cope with security threats ➤ Reflections around factors that influence security threat perceptions as a factor for future development in Afghanistan 	5 people interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3 Afghan people - 1 NGO representative - 1 refugee from Afghanistan, studying at a Norwegian Higher Education institution - Afghan student in Norway, previously involved in Afghan politics ➤ 2 experts on internal governance /economic & social development interviews - 1 economist
	Secondary data		

Source: Adapted from Bryman (2012)

2.1.4 Sampling approach

The sampling used followed Bryman's (2012) recommendations to describe the units (people) to interview. Despite challenges of rearranging the interview schedule, face-to-face interviews were conducted according to the interviewee's plans. From those people interviewed, the sampling included diversity by the areas/expertise of the interviewees to get a broader perspective.

Despite not being representative of the total Afghan population (as mentioned previously), people interviewed were not from one area, but provided several perspectives relating to Afghanistan, including those of a refugee, workers in an NGO, administration, and civil society.

Besides the Afghan people interviewed, experts in governance and economic and social development areas were also interviewed in order to gain an insight into their expertise in these areas. People interviewed received the questionnaire in advance and the Master's thesis topic description, so they knew the research content. Moreover, the interviewees were informed that they could answer all or some of the questions, as well as being informed that their answers will only be used for the Master's thesis process.

Later, the interviewees were informed that if due to security issues they wanted to keep their names confidential, that this would be possible and they could decide how they wanted to be referred to. After the research process was finished and a final Master's thesis draft was completed at the end of June, all interviewees received a copy of the Master's thesis in order to obtain their approval on their comments made so that there are no misunderstandings.

2.2 Qualitative research analysis

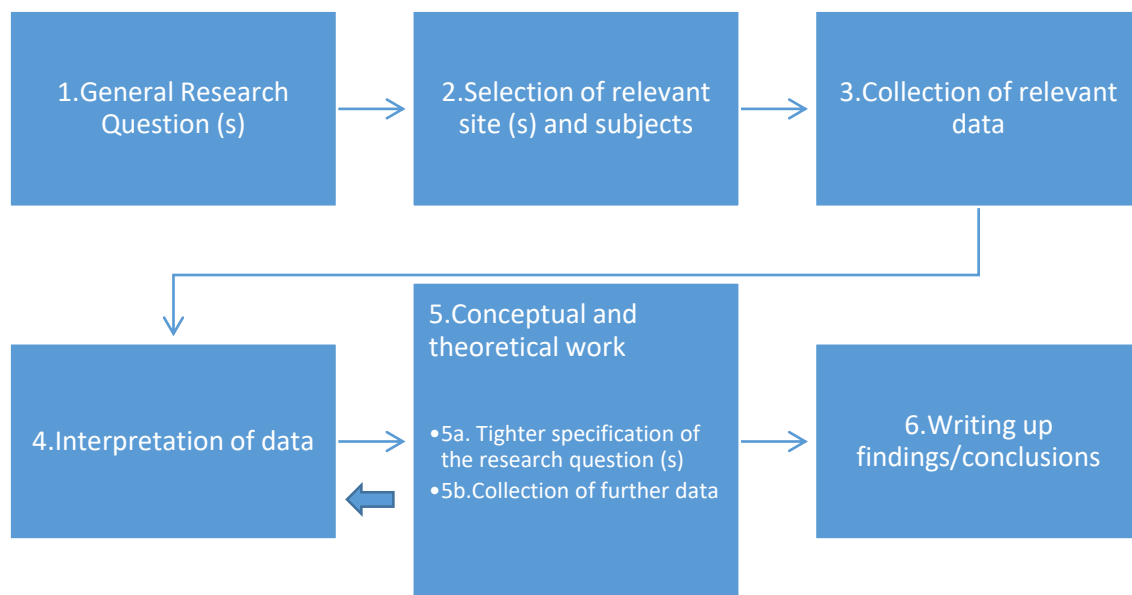
2.2.1 Qualitative research process

Bryman (2012) describes qualitative research methods as helpful in analysing documents rather than numbers. For instance, during the questionnaire pre-test for the first interview (December 2016), it was observed that the answers provided explained concepts and opinions, rather than a quantitative evaluation. This is relevant for the thesis, because the security threat concept analysed depends on interviewee opinions and provides more accurate information on the security threat situation in Afghanistan.

For instance, to understand how local populations provided stability for the country, informants described their experience in Afghanistan. This demonstrated that without interviews, information would have been based simply on numbers and theories, rather than opinions that provide more accurate and detailed information.

Therefore, and considering that the research process does not include any quantitative aspects, it was considered most useful to analyse the findings with qualitative research methods, rather than quantitative. Moreover, Bryman (2012) presents in Figure 1, the main steps to follow in qualitative research analysis.

Figure 1: Main steps to follow in qualitative research analysis



Source: Adapted from Bryman (2012)

1. General research question (s)

- *How does the international community use security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan?*
- *How security threat exercise influence in Afghanistan's internal governance, and economic and social development? (sub-research question)*

2. Selection of relevant site (s) and subjects

Described in the interviews section (later in this chapter), referring to interviewees.

3. Collection of relevant data

Data collection mainly took place from July 2016 until December 2016, however also during January-April 2017 relevant articles were found. Furthermore, aside from secondary data and interviews, registration in three courses at NMBU during autumn 2016 helped to get a better understanding of security threats, internal governance and economic and social development for a country.

4. Interpretation of data

From January until July 2017, the data collected was analysed from the secondary data and interviews.

5. Conceptual and theoretical work

Explained in chapter 3, the conceptual and theoretical work was presented to help understand the concepts related to governance and economic and social development in Afghanistan. These concepts were based on security threats that the international community uses to influence in a country's internal stability and state-building process.

5a. Tighter specification of the research question (s)

The outline presented in June 2016 included more general research questions. These were made more specific later in the process as the Afghan situation became clearer.

5b. Collection of further data

Until the final data collection was finished in late April, there was the possibility to add new information if it was considered relevant to the research topic, which did transpire.

6. Writing up findings/conclusions

The discussion and conclusions sections (chapters 5 and 6) were written in the last weeks of July 2017 once all interviews were finished in May 2017. When that step was evaluated and analysed, common patterns and differences between interviews were found.

During the interview process and in a pre-test questionnaire, that was used in the first interview with (Rovira, 2016), it was observed that the interviewee was more interested in discussing the questions and conveying her opinions than responding in the structured format originally provided. Consequently, asking questions that included numeric variables were not considered (as can be observed in the pre-test questionnaire available in the enclosure section). After this interview and upon agreement of a meeting in January 2017 with the theses supervisors', it was decided to only use qualitative measurements in the final questionnaire. There was however the limitation that only five interviews were conducted, although it is expected that further interviews would confirm the results of these interviews. More information about the interview process and evaluation is explained in the interviews section (presented later in this chapter).

2.2.2 Reliability and validity

Bryman (2012) highlights the importance of ensuring research process quality with reliability and validity, despite challenges in measuring qualitative research results. For instance, Bryman (2012) emphasises that the challenges in qualitative research in ensuring the transferability of correct results and validity of information collected. The following actions were implemented in accordance with the description in Table 4.

- To ensure validity: information from secondary data and interviews were combined. Despite some differences found between informant perceptions, there was a good match between responses and with theories related to security threats (discussed in chapter 3). These results can also be considered generalizable as respondents come from different social settings.
- To ensure reliability: by collecting data on the same concept (security threat impacts on Afghanistan) from respondents from five different areas, increased research validity was achieved.

In addition to the discussion of validity and reliability relevance in qualitative research mentioned above, Bryman (2012) define the concepts to analyse and describe the research process, which will help evaluate results obtained.

Table 4: Concepts to evaluate validity and reliability in a qualitative research design

Concept	Description
External reliability	Degree to which a study can be replicated
Internal reliability	When there is more than one observer, members of the research team agree about what they see and hear
Internal validity	Whether there is a good match between researchers' observations and the theoretical ideas they develop
External validity	Degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings

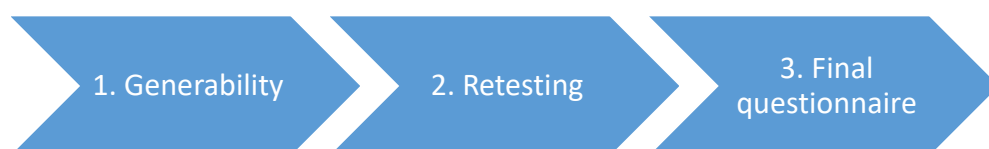
Source: Adapted from Bryman (2012)

Bryman (2012) also defines other criteria to evaluate qualitative research findings, considering that the four concepts explained above in Table 4 may be difficult to measure and transferred to qualitative research analysis: these are trustworthiness and authenticity.

In addition to analyse validity and reliability, Bryman (2012) explains the criteria to use qualitative research analysis. Qualitative data analysis provides different insights, which are extremely valuable, provided that they are framed through an appropriate framework that explain what they represent in a context (Bendassolli, 2013).

Furthermore, Øgaard (2012) describes the qualitative research process, used to prepare the final questionnaire for the interviews, explained in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Qualitative research process used to prepare interviews



Source: Adapted from Øgaard (2012)

For instance, the 'generability' concept Øgaard (2012) describes, relates to the fact that the results obtained in the questionnaires used in the interviews could be transferred (used), to all interviews. In other words, there is a need to prepare carefully the questions and the subject areas.

A first draft was submitted to the supervisors and was re-adapted to better suit the interviews and obtain as accurate information as possible. All questionnaires used, are in the appendices. Moreover, Øgaard (2012) presents the importance of what he calls “retesting” in qualitative research analysis. This concept explains that the prepared questions were tested with an interviewer in order to evaluate their accuracy to the research questions and Master’s thesis topic.

Consequently, the results from the retesting needed some adjustments in order to make the final questionnaire more accurate for the research topic. That was for instance the case utilised in the first interview with Rovira (2016), when all quantitative questions were removed, because the interviewee felt more confident to explain her opinions and not answer specifically quantitative questions.

2.2.3 Trustworthiness in a qualitative research design

Bryman (2012) presents trustworthiness in qualitative research design as the concept that provides confidence to people that participates in the research process (both interviewees and future readers). Moreover, Bryman (2012) argues that this information provided from secondary data analysis and interviewees should be collected in a professional manner and replicable for similar research studies or observations in the future. Thus, following Bryman’s (2012) recommendations to evaluate the trustworthiness in qualitative research, it is important to define a certain group of values or criteria that will ensure a high level of transparency for the research process.

These main criteria explained in Bryman (2012) are as follows:

- **Credibility**

Credibility ensures that other people will accept the findings obtained in the research process. To ensure credibility, the research process follows Bryman’s (2012) suggestion to use respondent validation. Respondent validation’s focus “is to seek information that the researchers’ findings and impressions are congruent with the views of those on whom the research was conducted and to seek out areas in which there is a lack of correspondence and the reasons for it” (Bryman 2012, p.391).

- **Transferability**

Bryman (2012) argues that qualitative research analysis focus on small groups or individual focus studies, rather than a bigger population. Therefore, transferability refers to the possibilities that the results obtained in the research process through secondary data analysis and interviews could be transferred to the population in Afghanistan. The research process focuses on describing the security threat situation in Afghanistan under the international community's influence. Therefore, the answers provided from interviewees were expected to be representative of the real situation and transferable to the whole population. Nevertheless, these expectations are detailed in the discussion section (chapter 5) and evaluated if the research questions are transferable to further research.

- **Dependability**

Bryman (2012) refers to the situation where all research process steps/phases are clearly documented and accessible for future use. The analysis process is described in chapter 1.4, and the interview structure and contents in this chapter 2.

- **Confirmability**

Bryman (2012) discusses the need to ensure that despite the existence of personal opinions or inclinations towards particular views on the analysis topic, maximum objectivity should be ensured. This was explained in the research process with a section on interview ethical considerations (later in this chapter).

Following Bryman's (2012) main criteria to evaluate trustworthiness in a qualitative research design, there were four concepts during interviews that would allow more information to be obtained from the interviewee, based on gestures and the simplicity of questions. These four concepts (explained below) focused on during interviews were to look into the respondent's eyes, description and content emphasis, process emphasis and low structure.

1. **Look into the respondent's eyes**

In face-to-face interviews, looking into the interviewee's eyes enables the interviewer to obtain answers of a higher quality, but also additional information from the respondent due to increased trustworthiness.

2. Description and content emphasis

It is important to understand the context of where the interview took place (if for instance it was in Afghanistan where there is a conflict that may influence interviewee's answers). But is also important to consider the political, social and economic context under which the respondent is interviewed, in order to obtain a deeper understanding from the respondents' answers.

3. Process emphasis

Process emphasis considers the significance of the entire process; from the moment the interviewee was contacted, until the moment the interview took place. But also it is important to focus on making the interviewee feel included and interested in research topic during the interview.

4. Low structure

Low structure aims to have the least complex structure possible for the interview, both the actual interview, for example informal introductions, but also the questions asked should be clear, easy to understand and simple to answer.

These criteria will ensure rigour and transparency in the qualitative research process, while providing more valuable and accurate information. Reliability focuses on measurements consistency, and validity focuses on ensuring that indicators devised to measure a concept, really measure those concepts. Lastly, within trustworthiness, complying with strict ethical guidelines ensures research rigour and transparency. Those ethical guidelines are included in the informed consent for interviews and explained later in this chapter.

2.2.4 Authenticity in a qualitative research design

Bryman (2012) refers to several criteria to ensure authenticity in the research process, and provides more practical factors to address throughout the research process.

- **Fairness**

The process offers different points of view, since there is diversity (NGO's, refugees, government, academics) between the interviewees.

- **Ontological authenticity**

The process helps to understand better the security threat reality for local population in Afghanistan.

- **Educative authenticity**

To include different perceptions from the interviewees helped to analyse different social settings. It also helps to describe how they individually perceived the security threat concept, in addition to possible implications in Afghanistan.

- **Catalytic authenticity**

The research process focused on engaging interviewees in answering the questions and obtaining their opinions in all areas, no matter their professional and personal diversity. Therefore, was ensured that the interviewees felt more included in the research process and gave broader perspective rather than just their area of expertise.

- **Tactical authenticity**

The research process worked to ensure that questions progressively became more engaging throughout the interview (explained in this chapter), in order to obtain more in-depth answers based on security threat implications.

2.3 Use of qualitative research methods

2.3.1 Secondary data

Bryman (2012) presents several documentary sources that are used in qualitative research analysis. These sources are books, peer-reviewed articles and other online articles and magazines. Additionally, Bryman (2012) emphasises the need to consider mass-media outputs as less reliable compared to peer-reviewed articles.

On the contrary, Bryman (2012) considers other online articles and magazines as 'mass-media outputs', helping to describe the case analysis. Such online articles and magazines focus more on being informative and help to better understand the concepts used in the research process. Their authenticity is however not as clear as peer-reviewed articles, and they are basically produced to reflect a concrete situation and not necessarily made to be representative outside their area.

2.3.2 Interviews

2.3.2.1 General description

Besides interviews being one of the most used research methods to collect qualitative data (Bryman 2012), it is also important to consider flexibility in the interviews. For instance, questions prepared may not suit the interview and that is why it is important to pre-test. Another option to ensure more flexibility in interviews was to allow more time for interviewee responses. This emphasises the need to consider Bryman's (2012) division of interviews into two types: the 'unstructured interviews' versus 'semi-structured interviews'.

According to Bryman (2012), the difference between the two is that 'unstructured interviews' have a different structure between one and the next, 'semi-structured interviews' provide more insights from the informants, as having a list of questions prepared allows the interviewer to really listen to the information being provided. This was the case in this thesis, because I believed I would obtain more information based on informants' personal experiences with a 'semi-structured interview' and better interpret their responses: it helped to "provide more insights into how research participants view the world" (Bryman 2012, p.471).

In addition to this explanation, Bryman (2012) explains that a semi-structured interview will ensure a certain flexibility, as changes may occur or questions may need to be re-directed during interviews.

Acknowledging possible challenges, Bryman (2012) highlights that semi-structured interviews should follow certain structures. In this research process, this included several group questions that matched the topic of interest, such as general information, security threat conceptualisation, security threats in international politics, and others (additional comments from the interviewees). More information on the questionnaires used in the interviews is available in the appendices section.

Besides explaining the research process, the question structure followed a process starting with an introduction to the topic and general comments, continuing with more concrete questions about security threat concepts. This progressive question structure followed Bryman's (2012) pattern of 'life history' interviewing, where the interviewees could express their own experience according to questions asked. But despite questionnaire preparation, a certain flexibility in semi-structured interviews is always important to consider and make interviewees feel comfortable to respond and elaborate.

Additionally, some challenges during the interviews were that interviewees wanted to talk for a longer time than expected, and therefore it was necessary to often go back and forward with the questions in order to get all the information needed. As stated, the interview schedule was adjusted to fit interviewees.

2.3.2.2 Ethical considerations in the interviews

Bryman (2012) presents the need to consider possible bias and expectations during interviews, due to possible pre-conceived ideas on what to expect (including within the interviewees' selection). Moreover, it was necessary to consider how to deal with sensitive issues in order to ensure proper security for the interviewees. It was observed that interviewees living outside Afghanistan were more interested in explaining their opinions based on personal experiences, that they said would not be so easy to provide if they were living in Afghanistan.

Above all, interviewees were informed in advance of the thesis topic and the questions asked during the interviews were voluntary to answer, all or partially, and that at the end of the interview their answers could be deleted if they felt security was an issue. In addition to that process, and in order to ensure a higher degree of trustworthiness, a copy of the thesis will be sent to interviewees after the final draft is complete. This is a way to confirm their quotes and comments, and receive additional remarks that they might be willing to add. Later interviewees confirmed the quotes and their inclusion.

Interviewees were informed that all information received (including both contents and names) would be kept confidential, if that due to security reasons they preferred not to publish their names. Therefore, all information about names and contacts will remain confidential unless stated or it is an official requirement from a Norwegian institution. If that happens, the interviewees will be contacted in order to get their approval and communicate that confidential information will only be for the purpose of data confirmation for the thesis contents. My supervisors were informed about all interviewees' names in private communication also, so they can confirm the trustworthiness and reliability of interviews.

2.3.2.3 Thesis limitations

Due to security reasons, the thesis supervisors and the Spanish Embassy in Oslo (compounded by an attack on the Spanish Embassy in Kabul in December 2016) did not recommend visiting Afghanistan. Research in Afghanistan could have provided primary in-country case study data (in addition to secondary data and interviews done in Norway or through e-mail) that would have helped to better understand the security threat impact.

Nevertheless, with the interviews obtained, I have worked to include as much direct information from Afghanistan as possible, knowing it was impossible to directly access primary data in-country.

Also, the number of interviews in this thesis (five) limited the information collected from interviews. Eleven people were contacted for interviews due to their relevance in security issues and/or experience in Afghanistan state building. Only five people responded positively to be interviewed, while 6 people didn't reply or politely refused to be interviewed. Moreover, the plan was to finish interviews between December 2016 and January 2017, but due to the agenda of some of the interviewees, it was not possible to finish the interviews until April 2017. Despite the limited number of interviews, their content was very useful to the research process, because they provided direct information from different areas, which is still beneficial despite the limited number of interviews. However, I would suggest more interviews to be included in further research as I consider more interviews to provide helpful additional information.

3. Theory

3.1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework discussion for security threats includes different theoretical approaches that help to understand the impact on a country's internal stability and state-building processes in Afghanistan. Theoretical approaches related to security threats include, realism and liberalism.

The theoretical approach of realism focuses on the states' self-interest, that is, the justification of the international community in intervening in another country and creating alliances between states, based on a threat for state survival (Riley, 2008). Alternatively, liberalism is a theoretical approach that helps to explain why states must cooperate in a collective security system (i.e. supra-national organisations).

Thus, the conceptual framework includes two main concepts that better understand the security threat impact on state-building, and more concretely as this thesis' case study, in Afghanistan. These two concepts are, state legitimacy and the principle of state sovereignty (both detailed later in this chapter). Moreover, security threats impact on several areas of a state's development. As stated, this thesis focuses on analysing the security threat impact in Afghanistan; specifically, governance, economy and social development. For an effective research process, several theoretical approaches (realism and liberalism) were used to analyse data.

3.2 Theoretical approaches

3.2.1 Realism

3.2.1.1 General description

Realism is a theoretical approach that tries to explain why states behave in such ways, that authors as Mearsheimer (2001) base on analysing the concepts of power and security and how those concepts relate to state self-interest. Also, it could be argued that realism focuses on human behaviour that relates to states' self-interest. Major realist authors such as Morgenthau, Mearsheimer or Waltz emphasise the central role of states in international relations, in order to achieve their self-interest and international recognition. Moreover, this central focus of states to pursue their self-interest in international relations (Linklater, 2000).

For instance, there are two realist authors from the 20th century, Hans Morgenthau (with his book 'Politics among nations', Mearsheimer with the book 'The Tragedy of Great Power Politics' and Kenneth Waltz (with his book Theory of International Politics') that discuss some of the main concepts of realist authors, focusing on states self-interest, in addition to Niccolò Machiavelli with his book 'The Prince' in the 16th century.

Firstly, Waltz (2010) presents in the book 'Theory of International Politics', an interesting discussion of how state relations (i.e. political, economic) are built in relation to understanding state self-interest, and how they can survive in a competitive international arena where states defend their individual claims. Secondly, (Morgenthau, Thompson & Clinton 2005) discusses in the book 'Politics among nations' - the impact on several areas of interest for a state, but also understanding the importance of economics and diplomacy to achieve national interests. And thirdly, in 'The Prince', Machiavelli (2010) explains the ways Italian governors in the Renaissance period (princes) performed in order to achieve their states self-interests; historically referred to in German as 'realpolitik'.

3.2.1.2 Historical background of realism's self-interest

The connection between self-interest and politics, that influences global politics throughout history, is clear: "it is from the nature of man that the essential features of international politics, such as competition, fear and war, can be explained" (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.104). Realists explain why states act in ways to support their claims internationally, and achieve their self-interest or 'realpolitik' as Niccolò Machiavelli argued in the book 'The Prince'. This was true in the 16th century and can still be seen as the way states behave in the 21st century. Machiavelli explains that a new government (in the case of this thesis, Afghanistan), should cooperate with other states, to give their government legitimacy to maintain power and avoid instability that creates security threats, because "the government will know that it cannot endure without the friendship and power of the Prince [external power] who created it, and so it has to exert itself to maintain his authority" (Machiavelli 2010, p.20-21).

Despite realism being relevant as a theoretical approach to explain why states act in self-interest, the consequences of the First World War did not consider future conflicts or security impacts of new states that arose from the war (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland), or those who had a new political system, such as Germany or Austria-Hungary.

Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) did not describe subsequent confrontations that occurred after WWI: for instance, the states that won WWI forced those defeated to accept the results without considering their state-self-interest. Consequently, the political discrepancies during the 1920s and 1930s between participating states in the First World War, created a situation that can be described as 'competitive politics nature' between nations.

Moreover, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) argue that theoretical approaches of realism had a great impact during the First World War (WWI), specifically in explaining states self-interest and their decisions to intervene in other countries for their own security. In order to pursue their self-interest, alliances created between states that shared similar interests and fears, positioning themselves against other, contrasting alliances. The two main alliances during the First World War were Germany and Austria-Hungary, versus Russia, France and Great Britain.

3.2.1.3 Realism influence on state building processes in Afghanistan

Indeed, states self-interest, observed in the conflict situation of the First World War, is also comparable to other state situations in the world at the same time (1910s). That was, for example, the case in Afghanistan: due to its strategic geographic location in Central Asia, its state-building was influenced by the security threat of Great Britain and Russia's dominance in the same area. Thus, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) present the self-help concept to explain how states use security reasons to secure their own interests.

The increase of military capabilities by states is about strategies to gain more power than other states (like an arms race). Arms races do not imply interventions in other states by military force, but the accumulation of relative power (defensive: just enough to compare or surpass your opponent, or offensive: as much power as possible).

Additionally, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) argue that a realist approach also considers how to decrease states' security fears if they do not feel capable of succeeding in the conflict situation. This ability to balance a conflict situation between states includes what realist authors refer to as a 'balance of power'. This was the case in Afghanistan, when the balance of power between Great Britain and Russia accepted the existence of Afghanistan as an independent state, but only under those countries' influence.

In contrast to alliances between states sharing similar interests, there is an interesting debate to consider in the discussion section (chapter 5), this being, the use of the balance of power concept, not only between individual states but also in a collective way between alliances.

For instance, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) discuss the peaceful end to the Cold War; without a conflict situation or formal confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Nevertheless, the Cold War could be used to justify the use of security threats as a way to confront states self-interest and push intervention in another country, as occurred in Afghanistan with the Soviet invasion between 1979 and 1990.

Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) emphasise the importance of globalised concepts after the Cold War, to cope with security threats between states. Those concepts are regional integration and humanitarian interventions. But the political results expected from an international intervention (under regional integration or humanitarian interventions) do not necessarily imply a political change. Despite the unfounded expectation of political change, as in Afghanistan since the conflict between Great Britain and Russia, or the Soviet Invasion, “realists believe that the world continues to operate according to the logic of realism” (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.102). This interest influences the behaviour of states, using necessary tools to exercise influence in other states, such as the use of security threats as a coercion factor.

3.2.1.4 Realism influence of supra-national organisations on security threats

The discrepancy between international politics and human behaviour is an important factor: it relates to the absence of a supra-national hierarchy that provides authority to solve conflicts between states (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014). Therefore, neorealism with Jakobsen (2012) emphasise the need to discuss inter-state relations with a supra-national authority, helping to solve state conflicts. Also, they note that the reasons states behave the way they do is not because of human nature, but because they believe that the structure of supra-national organisations leads to an anarchic system where states compete for power (Tillman 2009).

On the other hand, it could be argued that this supra-national authority (i.e. the United Nations) is effective in solving inter-states conflicts. However, due to the veto power from the five permanent members of the Security Council, solving state discrepancies with diplomacy are not always possible.

Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) argue that states pay attention to others' strengths and interests in order to adjust their own international political strategies. This approach - to analyse other countries strengths - justifies the use of power (including war) if the security threat cannot be avoided with diplomacy (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014). But states need to show their strength internationally in order to provide to their population with a feeling of security.

3.2.2 Liberalism

3.2.2.1 General description

Hobbes and Rousseau are two of the major liberal authors from some centuries ago, that present the liberalist assumption that all state regulations and actions (also in relation to other states and supra-national organisations) should be justified while striving for the economic and political interests of citizens. A more modern school of liberal thought is that of Woodrow Wilson (former president of the United States early 20th century) and other authors such as Immanuel Kant, but particularly Adam Smith, consider the use of economics as a key factor of success for states self-interest.

Moreover, Nussbaum (2011) claims that other liberal authors focus on understanding better the relevance of community and shared interests between states, in order to pursue their self-interest. For liberalism domestic and social society drives interests and actions of states impacting on their foreign policy, and to the liberal principle to support economic development through state actions, understanding that for liberalism, economics determines a state's politics. From this, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) discuss liberalism theoretical approaches, influencing the world order with mutual benefits for states. Liberalism differs with realism in explaining how states solve international conflicts that may create security threat conflicts, as "liberalism seeks to project values of order, liberty, justice, and toleration into international relations" (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.115).

Liberalism is a theoretical approach that focuses on individual rights, private spheres and property to build collective interests for the state. Thus, liberals argue that cooperation between states is based on understanding individual needs to build states relations and consequently avoid possible conflict situations.

Jerven (2016) presents three main liberal assumptions, which help to understand the state-building process influencing international relations; these are as follows:

1. The principal units are individuals and groupings of individuals who use states to further their interests.
2. State preferences represent a sub-set of the interests of these actors.
3. State behaviour in the international system and the structure of relations between states are determined by the preferences of states across the system.

3.2.2.2 Liberalist influences on states

In addition to liberal assumptions to better understand the state-building process, Jerven (2016) discusses that for liberalists, states share an interest in harmony, cooperation and trust, based on common interests that can replace the balance of power supported by realists. Jerven (2016) further discusses that for liberalists, states focus on collective decision-making processes to solve their conflicts, and consequently relate to each other in a rational order with shared gains. The claim that to cooperate based on common interests follows, that states seeking stable relations to support their political and economic interests. Thus, Jerven (2016) explains that the results from state relations based on a harmony can benefit all states.

Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) discuss liberalism's influence in explaining states relations after a conflict situation, especially after grand historical events, such as the First and Second World Wars, the Cold War or the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Alternatively, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) explain that from the 1990s, Western states utilised liberalism as a way to explain the new order established after the end of the Cold War. Despite the democratic procedures explained by liberalism in solving international conflicts, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) highlight that theories cannot necessary explain the complicated internal state situations and interests in influencing other countries.

On the other hand, a factor that emphasises the liberal explanation about state relations to solve international conflicts is the use of international organisations, such as the United Nations. Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) however argue that this Western-country perception is not necessarily the same situation perceived in other countries. States cultural differences or ideological defeats, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union's communist system in 1991, could help to explain why international organisations struggle with complexity and effectiveness in solving international conflicts under a liberalist theoretical approach.

Liberalism however tries to explain that supra-national organisations are built to help solve state conflicts, although a state's core mentality is to focus on their self-interest: "the identity of the state determines its outward orientation" (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.114).

3.2.2.3 Collective security and the self-determination of all nations

Within liberalism there is an important related concept necessary for the purpose of this thesis. For example, Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) describe and compare the ideas of collective security and self-determination of all nations. Furthermore, the cooperation in supra-national organisations, such as the United Nations, can play a role in solving conflict situations between states with diplomacy.

Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) discuss the Woodrow Wilson self-determination concept and the value of supra-national organisations in solving international conflicts, as seen in his 'Fourteen Points' from 1918. From Woodrow Wilson's concept of self-determination for all nations, described later in this chapter by Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014), arises a discussion on the support of nationalism in Europe (for example Austria-Hungary Empire). This claim created future conflicts for states forced to accept territorial losses or the loss of international influence, such as Germany after WWI. This could be the case in Afghanistan; that despite being a formal independent and sovereign state, the country has been under the influence of other states and subsequent international politics since the 1800s. Some of the historical interventions of the international community in Afghanistan were the confrontations between Great Britain and Russia in the late 19th century, the start of the 20th century, and later between the Soviet Union and Western countries during the Cold War.

Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) discuss that if the principle of self-determination for all nations is a democratic process, who determines people's participation in the democratic system?

The discussion of this democratic system questions people from Pashtun tribal groups that are part of Pakistan, and are not able to participate in a democratic process in Afghanistan. The international borders of Afghanistan (based on the Durand Line established in 1893 in the country's south) are still contested by local tribal communities. This is the case with the Pashtun tribal groups, which have a common identity despite the Durand Line (border) between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

It is interesting to analyse how democratic processes can help solve security threat issues. For instance, in Afghanistan, could these groups be better included with a common national identity that respects their tribal belonging, across borders. Furthermore, the liberal principle of self-determination for all nations - a person's identity and sense of belonging - could assist in understanding current global desires for independence, as in Scotland, Catalonia, Bavaria, Padania (northern Italy), or the successful attempts of South Sudan with its independence in 2011 or South Timor in 2002. The liberal principle of self-determination presented by Woodrow Wilson in 1918 is problematically not formally accepted by states, which can create internal and international conflicts.

As explained by Rovira (2016) self-determination aspirations may require international legislation, as for example the Assembly Kosova (2008) - the 'Kosovo Declaration of Independence'. Rovira (2016) explains that the 'Kosovo Declaration of Independence' has a certain degree of legislation acceptance. This document could be an example for the international community to solve states conflicts with supra-national organisations, as demonstrated in this statement by the government of Kosovo: "we express our deep gratitude to the United Nations for the work it has done to help us recover and rebuild from war and build democratic institutions. We are committed to working constructively with the United Nations as it continues its work in the period ahead" (BBC, 2008).

Because of international community interests in its legality, in 2010 the UN Nations Centre (2010) informed that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) had discussed the Kosovo Declaration of Independence (2008) and concluded it didn't break any international law. Moreover, the ICJ informed that Kosovo Declaration of Independence followed the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 to end the war in Kosovo, including NATO (1999b) support with reference to the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.

3.2.2.4 Liberalism influence of supra-national organisations on security threats

For liberalism, states relate to each other to further their national interests, but they also consider the role of supra-national organisations (as the United Nations). The challenge is, when states use supra-national organisations to pursue their individual self-interest it can create security threats if there is not adequate balance between interests of individuals (states) and the global (supra-national organisations).

There has been a decline in the worldwide influence of the United States and Europe, in combination with other countries challenging the global system and supra-national organisations established by Western countries since WWII (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014).

The so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) do not feel fully included in the pre-existing international system or supra-national organisations, and are subsequently trying to find alternative ways to achieve influence internationally (Nossel, 2016) and (Käkönen, 2013). To illustrate BRICS countries rising influence worldwide, China created several economic institutions to compete with the World Bank and the IMF, liberal institutions established from the Bretton Woods system, these include the China Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) or also the New Development Bank (that BRICS countries established in 2014 and started operation in 2015) (The Economist, 2014).

Despite BRICS' institutions created to compete with Western countries, these new institutions are also perceived as supra-national organisations that can help support states self-interest or solve conflicts (as explained by liberalism). It could be however argued by realists, that if supra-national organisations assist in solving state conflicts, this can create security threat challenges (including war or intervention influencing state-building and development) by projecting their own self-interest into international arenas. This interesting debate is further explained in the discussion section (chapter 5).

Furthermore, liberalism values solving international conflicts with supra-national organisations, emphasised in the statement: "liberal institutions could strengthen to the point where individual state power and capacity becomes a much less significant determinant of stability" (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.115).

In the case of Afghanistan, NATO and the US alone are the two big decisions makers that guides to the rest of the international community influence in the country (Ghani, 2017).

3.2.3 Security threats relevance for international relations

3.2.3.1. General description

Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014) note that security threats and international relations diplomacy are tools that states use to influence other countries internal governance. During the course 'Afghanistan-Pakistan/conflict and state-building' at NMBU in January 2016, it was observed that internal stability assists Afghanistan's state-building. This internal stability desired by the Afghan government faces the challenging reality that the country is based on a multi-tribal and multi-ethnic population.

Moreover, Barker (2013) analyses the impact of religion and cultural traditions in international relations, and the use of those differences to justify possible threats for their internal security. Barker (2013) then considers the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the international community's intervention in Afghanistan, as clash of civilisations.

This clash of civilisations discusses the role of religious and cultural differences to justify external intervention (another country or international community). Therefore, politicians use self-interest to justify their intervention in another country, in order to solve state conflicts and security threat issues emphasised in the following quote that states: "were merely the vehicles through which political leaders pursued other kinds of objectives" (Barker 2013, p.17). (Ikenberry & Holsti, 2004) claims that states tend to pursue self-interest using concepts as sovereignty, territoriality, diplomacy or even international trade, to present a humanitarian discourse to justify an intervention in another country. For instance, one of those humanitarian interventions was the case of Eritrea, during its conflict with Ethiopia until its independence in 1991.

However, is important to consider a social behaviour approach that helps to understand similarities between states, to establish agreements and alliances, shared common interests or similar cultural backgrounds. Despite this social behaviour perception (or Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014), the complexity of how states relate to each other is emphasised by Mc Glinchey: "international relations, as it is presented in the flow of daily news, concerns a large number of disparate events" (2017, p.8). From this, the complexity to understand how states relate to each other includes the analysis of several factors, in order to avoid international conflicts between states.

In addition, Mc Glinchey (2017) explains that diplomacy is a tool to solve international conflicts, emphasising the importance of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations approved in 1961. Nevertheless, the United Nations (1961) presents the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations as a way to regulate states diplomatic relations, and help to cope with security threat conflicts between them.

Furthermore, Mc Glinchey (2017) argues that there are different diplomacy levels between states that assist in more effectively approaching the reality and interests of individuals (politics), groups (a country's population) or systems (dynamics from the political and economic system). While the first two levels (individual and group) focus more on national approaches, the other level (system) focuses on implementing the first two levels in the international context and to in supporting state self-interests.

Finally, the complexity of the international system and the need to understand cultural differences between states that Mc Glinchey (2017) presented, makes it challenging to achieve state goals in a short period of time.

3.2.3.2 Security threats relevance for Afghanistan

Once the relevance of state security threats in international relations is understood, the Afghanistan case study demonstrates that security issues clearly influence internal stability and state-building. For instance, Afghanistan's military intervention in 2001 influenced its state-building, delaying the introduction of a new governance system by three years, until a more Western-style system with two Parliamentary chambers, provincial, regional and district elected institutions, was established in 2004. This new governance structure didn't considered how religion and culture have shaped the country over centuries (Reychler n.d).

Mattelaer (2011) go on to explain that NATO asserted support for the international intervention in order to solve a global security threat. Post-9/11 feelings of the international community are highlighted in the following quote: "western civilisation has emerged as an exemplar that is to be emulated either by will or by force. The norms inherent in the 'Western' way of life, of which the US is the epitome, have increasingly become the bases of legitimacy for economic and military policies across the globe" (Shahi 2017, p.3).

However, one of the informants have a different opinion that the expressed above by Shahi (2017), as Ghani (2017) mentioned that her mother used to wear mini skirt in the 60s and 70s, so that there was already an influence of western civilization that changed with the Taliban rule in middle 1990s.

The need to better understand cultural clashes (Barker 2013) and differences in culture and religion elucidates how states may fail to implement their own ideas – as is the case in Afghanistan. Consequently, Shahi (2017) presents the importance of understanding Islam and religion shaping the Afghan identity over the centuries past, and that it is not necessary explained by theoretical assumptions. Shahi (2017) goes on to describe that understanding the conflict situation in Afghanistan requires also understanding the reasons behind the existence and actions of rebel groups, such as Al Qaeda.

Shahi (2017) argues that Islam and religion in general is used as a psychological tool to oppose the international community's intervention: "many al-Qaida militants also view the current US-led conflicts in the Middle East as proof of a clash between Islam and the West" (Shahi 2017, p.16). Those religious and cultural historical roots in Afghanistan are factors that have defined and continue to affect how state-building is perceived. Despite the existence of a complex tribal situation, ethnic differences continue to be viewed as a cohesive factor any time there was a foreign intervention. For example,

"the Islamic underpinning of Afghan nationalism has been historically evoked less for fostering unity amongst the various ethnic groups, than for mobilising them against foreign intruders. One can witness a comparative togetherness amongst the Afghans when threatened by a foreign enemy. The determination to remain free from foreign domination is a part of Afghan tradition" (Shahi 2017, p.34).

The use of religion mentioned by Shahi (2017) for political purposes, is proof of the need to understand religious insurgence and its relevance for security threats in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the Taliban's security threat to the international community was used to justify the initial intervention in Afghanistan (since 2001), because "the Taliban offered both overt and tacit support to a variety of terrorist organisations involved in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, China, Bangladesh, Kashmir, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the Philippines" (Shahi 2017, p.37). Thus, the Taliban's role was a success, but the movement has always been within the country, although it has created tensions in neighbouring countries (particularly with Pakistan) and globally, becoming a factor to justify external intervention (Ehsan Zia, 2017).

Simón (2015) presents the rising influence of Asian countries, particularly China and their influence in Central Asia, including Afghanistan. This rising influence of China in Central Asia and also as a regional power in the Pacific area has created tensions with the United States. This confrontation between China and the United States had an impact on Afghanistan's state-building process.

Thus, Afghanistan's strategic location in Central Asia has influenced the country's internal stability and state-building, as, "the geostrategic value of Afghanistan highlights the importance of Europe's contribution to Asian geopolitics" (Simón 2015, p.980). In international politics, Afghanistan plays a major role in state conflicts due to its strategic location; consequently, there is a need to ensure stability for political and economic interests globally.

3.2.4 Factors influence state-building

3.2.4.1 State legitimacy

State legitimacy can be defined as social acceptance or justice of the rules of operation, set by institutions (Tyler, 2003). The OECD (2010) presents that insufficient state legitimacy is a factor that impacts on state fragility, as this thesis case study shows happens in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Afghanistan's state building, which influences legitimacy, is based on factors that focus on local governance structure, Islam, and traditional influences in the country (Herbert, 2014).

Mc Glinchey (2017) emphasises the relevance international law has in justifying international claims; state legitimacy. States interpret law to justify their interests: "it is important to understand, then, that the question of whether and how international law matters depends not least on one's conceptual outlook on international life" (p.60). Mc Glinchey (2017) further claims that state legitimacy focuses on supra-national organisational (i.e. UN) recognition. However, when a country or even a state's coalition decide to intervene in another country, often using security threat reasons (such as was the case in Afghanistan), this challenges the principle of state sovereignty; specifically, Afghanistan being recognised as a self-determining country internationally.

3.2.4.2 The principle of state sovereignty

The way states respect others integral territoriality, is described under the principle of state sovereignty; it "is a practice that constitutes identity and authority in a particular manner" Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.178). The principle of state sovereignty is discussed by Baylis, Smith & Owens (2014), who present that states could be considered a political community, where citizens that share similarities (cultural, political, religious) are included in a political unit (state). Furthermore, state sovereignty considerations include "a division of the world into an 'inside' the state (where there is order, loyalty, and progress) and an 'outside' (where there is conflict, suspicion, self-help, and anarchy)" (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.176).

This statement implies that the 'outside' of a state (international relations) is what creates tension and conflicts between states. Meanwhile, understanding the historical roots of states assists in understanding the evolution of the principle of state sovereignty from the medieval ages. For example, Mc Glinchey (2017) presented the Medieval Age as a historical period where states decided to intervene (even militarily) in other countries, to justify their self-interests without respecting country borders.

Mc Glinchey (2017) details that during the Medieval era in Europe supra-national organisations such as the Catholic Church or The Sacro Roman-Germanic Empire, were used to justify one country's intervention in another's. The principle of self-determination by Woodrow Wilson in 1918, was conversely articulated by Mc Glinchey: "the principle of sovereignty expressed this supreme and exclusive authority of states over their territory, and it confirmed the equal status of all states" (2017, p.60). Indeed, it could be argued that the Westphalia Treaty from 1648 (that recognised the decision for non-intervene in other countries internal affairs) was de facto; it was the first time the principle of state sovereignty was internationally recognised.

The next historically important moment that relates to states territorial claims that Mc Glinchey (2017) presents, was the Congress of Vienna in 1815. States that won the Napoleonic Wars did not respect the principle of state sovereignty, and modified state borders previously established. Moreover, they established new borders and powerful states around France, to avoid future security threats. For instance, those were the cases of Belgium's cession to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, vast territories in Westphalia to the Kingdom of Prussia, or the re-establishment of previous borders to the Helvetic Confederation (currently Switzerland). Those territorial modifications did not respect the established principle of state sovereignty; to build new borders based on security threats from those that won the Napoleonic Wars, and to avoid strengthening France and possible further confrontation. A second historical moment is Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' from 1918. This concept represents the establishment of the League of Nations; a way to avoid future conflicts between states (including security threat issues) and solve territorial claims in a peaceful and neutral arena, respecting the principle of state sovereignty.

Finally, as in Afghanistan with the non-recognition of the Durand Line by the Pashtun tribal groups, the existence of security threats based on state borders is highlighted. In recent decades however, the influence of supra-national organisations' in international interventions is increasing, as, "while sovereign states are the principal legal actors, international organisations are increasingly important in helping us govern our world" (Mc Glinchey 2017, p.71).

4. Afghanistan case study

4.1 Afghanistan's historical context

4.1.1 Afghanistan's historical description

4.1.1.1 Historical and cultural background in Afghanistan

This chapter will provide insight into Afghanistan's historical context by way of a timeline of historical events that have shaped the country's identity. Discussing the country's historical background will allow a better understanding of the current drivers of its historical state building processes and its continued internal instability. Additionally, it will allow a better understanding of the international community's interest in exercising influence in the country, throughout history. Understanding a state's internal dynamics over time will clarify its current role and relations internationally. Afghanistan's strategic geographic location in Central Asia can be observed in Figure 3, displaying the country's capital, provinces and neighbouring countries, additionally providing insight into the ethnography and religious distribution. Afghanistan is a land-locked country (see Figure 3), surrounded by more powerful nations than its own. Its geographic location is a contributing cause of instability, as its neighbours continue to exert influence over it. This influence is explained briefly later in this chapter.

Figure 3: Afghanistan map



Source: CNN (2017)

In Table 5 there is a summary and timeline of the most important historical events for Afghanistan, that Barfield (2012) and Nyrop & Seeking (2001) present as reasons to better understand security threats in a historical context. Pahle (2017) however argues that mutations of Afghan politics are as challenging as the ethnic conflicts before the United States intervened in 2001, and discusses the way that security threats have shaped the country and influenced the way the Afghan state is perceived internationally, particularly by Afghan citizens.

Table 5: Summary of main Afghan historical events and their influence on the state building

Title	Description	Time
Alexander the Great	Passed through Afghanistan	330 BC
Arab and Islamic influence	Shura as system for advice and conflict solution	700
Genghis Khan	Created a world empire	1200
The Great Game	Conflict between Russian Empire and the Great Britain	From 1870s-1920s
The Cold War	Conflict between capitalism (led by the United States) and communism (led by the Soviet Union)	1949-1990
The War on Terror	Al-Qaeda, Taliban, ISKP (Islamic State Khorasan Province) and insurgent influence	From 2001

Source: Adapted from Barfield (2012) and Nyrop & Seeking (2001)

Afghanistan's democratic origin was reinforced with Alexander the Great passing through the country in 330BC. Alexander the Great respected the traditional local Jirga system¹ as a representative system for conflict resolution (Gant & Mc Callister 2010).

1 The local Jirga system (Council of Elders) is an assembly of village elders, that through Pashtun traditional assemblies, meet to discuss issues relating to village affairs, and resolve local disputes (McCallister 2010).

Later, the Ghaznavid Empire occupied the country establishing a more formal state system between 977 and 1186, and by 1200, Genghis Khan invaded Afghanistan to create a world empire. Indeed, Genghis Khan also had an interest in the country's strategic location (between Central Asia and South Asia), as well as the trade importance of the Silk Road. Some centuries later, Afghanistan was established as an independent nation and a single political entity in the 17th century (Afghanland.com 2010a).

The next historical period that helps explain drivers leading to the current instability in Afghanistan, was known as the 'Great Game'. The purpose was to gain influence over the country due to its strategic location in Central Asia, and for Great Britain to control access to the Indian Ocean, and the Russian Empire to reach it (Ghiasi, 2017). This conflict between the Russian Empire and Great Britain took place from the late 1870s until approximately the 1920s, with both countries struggling for influence in Afghanistan's internal affairs (Afghanland.com 2010a). During this period, Afghanistan became a nation state as the result of a strategic and defensive measure in 1747 under the rule of Ahmad Shah Durrani (Afghan Emir of the time) (Afghanland.com 2010b).

Rahi (2014) argues that the conflict situation between these two powers forced the establishment of the Durand Line in 1893. The Durand Line created a conflict with the Pashtuns, as the tribal group was divided by this created-border between Afghanistan and Great Britain. The British Empire wanted to draw the Durand Line mainly to provide security for its territories in India, and Afghanistan was located in the border area. "By 1893, the British had concluded that formal borders needed to be established between Afghanistan and British India, so that everyone would know where they stood and the Russian advance could be held off from the British Empire in India" (Omrani 2009, p.183). On the contrary, the Afghan Emir supported the Durand Line to provide stability and security in its borders, because, "the Afghans secured some strategic strongpoints, notably Asmar, which gave them access to Nuristan and various of Afghanistan's eastern regions" (Omrani 2009, p.185).

Decades later, the Cold War between the communist block (led by the Soviet Union) and the capitalist block (led by the United States) instigated a conflict in Afghanistan from 1979 until 1990 (despite the formal end of the Cold War in 1991 with the fall of the Soviet Union). Following the 1990 Soviet withdrawal, the Mujahedin did more than influence Afghanistan, as the country was essentially divided up into fiefdoms run by different commanders/warlords or factions (Shaikh, n.d).

The Mujahedin influenced the country's internal affairs until Kabul fell to the Taliban in 1996, supporting a war (jihad) where Wahhabism was an imported reinterpretation of Islam brought in by returning mullahs predominantly based in Kandahar (Crooke, n.d). The reason for the Taliban's rapid success, especially over the southern portion of the country, was the promotion of an easily understood codex that combined Pakhtunwali, superimposed with Islam (Khan, 2010). It is important to understand this, as the Taliban are still a key driver/creator of instability in Afghanistan despite their old fashioned ideologies in comparison with the more modern global jihadist movement (Carter & Clark, 2010). Moreover, and in response to foreign invaders, Afghanistan's ethnic groups and rebels such as Al Qaeda, the Taliban, the ISKP (Islamic State Khorasan Province), found a common cause to confront foreign influence over the years (Wunische 2017).

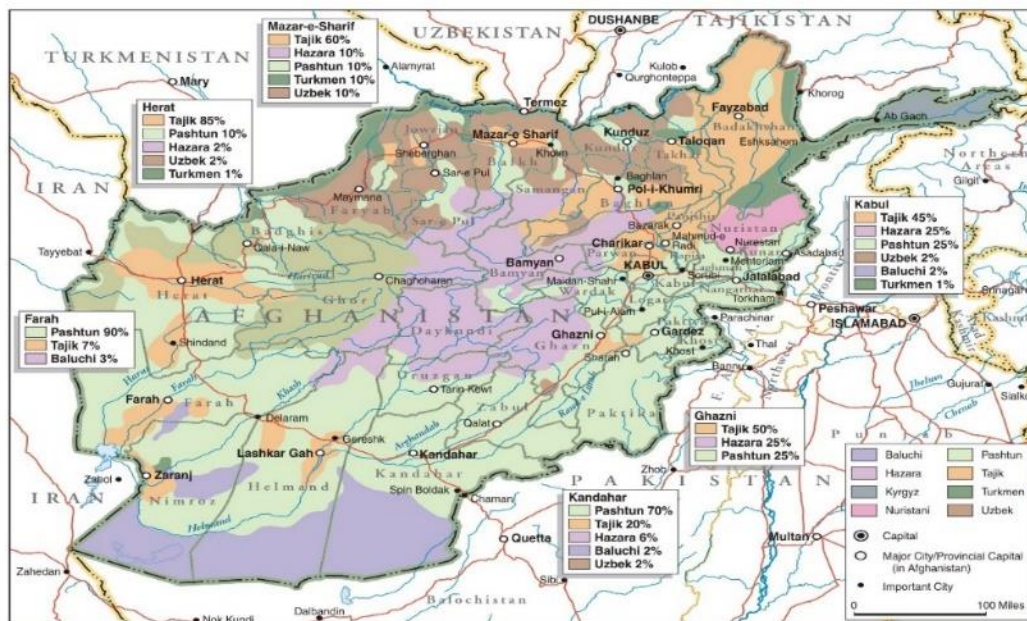
4.1.1.2 Ethnicity, tribes and religion's influence on Afghanistan's history

Johnson & Leslie (2004) discuss the difference between ethnic groups and tribes, in order to better understand their influence in Afghanistan's state building process. For instance, Johnson & Leslie (2004) describe a tribe as a society characterised by distinctive language and culture with a political identity but not centralised or hierarchical institutions. This cultural background that shapes a state, emphasised by Rovira (2016), demonstrates the relevance of a democratic system that supports human rights, which helps to succeed in conveying national aspirations internationally, and state building recognition. But the case of religion and tribal influence in state building is not unique to Afghanistan.

This religious and tribal influence was also presented by Mamdani (2009) in the book 'Saviors and Survivors'. In that book, Professor Mahmood Mamdani discusses the challenges of tribal differences in Darfur region that caused political turmoil in the country, which negatively impacted on its internal stability and state building. The cases of South Sudan and Darfur mentioned by Professor Mahmood Mamdani in his publications, highlights the use of religion and tribalism as factors that influence a country's internal cohesion and instability. This use of religion and tribalism in other countries, mentioned by Professor Mahmood Mamdani, are relevant to study, as they have similarities with the situation of tribalism in Afghanistan.

Additionally, in an interview with Zaki (2017), the geographical distribution of different ethnic and tribal groups in Afghanistan were emphasised as factors that shape Afghan identity, and can be observed in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Map of Afghanistan's ethnic and tribal group distribution



Source: Acaps (2017)

In Table 6, Barfield (2012) presents the predominance of different ethnic groups and tribes in Afghanistan, which assists in understanding their influence in each region (as presented in Figure 4). Moreover, as Pahle (2017) emphasised, ethnic and tribal influence in Afghanistan's identity is connected with international community interest in the country's strategic location in Central Asia.

Table 6: Afghanistan's ethnic and tribal locations and predominance in Afghanistan

Ethnic/tribal group	Predominance in Afghanistan
Pashtun	The largest group with 42% and the dominant group since 18th century
Tajik	The second largest group with 27%,
Hazara and Uzbek	With 9-12% each and the predominant groups in the North Central Afghanistan
Non-Muslims, including Sikhs and Hindus	Living in Kabul and other cities
Turkmen	4% reside in northwest with border to Turkmenistan
Aimaqs	3% mostly found in the mountain territory of east of Herat and west of Hazarajat
Nomadic (Kuchis, Ghaljis), Baloch, Qizilbash, Arabs, Pamiris and Nuristanis	3%

Source: Adapted from Barfield (2012)

Lastly, Barfield (2012) explains that Pashtunistan is the area considered by the Pashtun tribe as their territory, including territories in Pakistan (approximately 27,000 km²). Despite religion's role and influence in Afghanistan's state building, the population in Afghanistan is fragmented into different cultures, linguistic, religious and regional groups, and these are what primarily define the Afghan state. Barfield (2012) moreover presents that Islam represents a common unifying symbolic system, as 99% of the population is Muslim (Sunni 80-85% and Shia 15%). In addition, Nyrop & Seekins (2001) emphasise Islam's role as a cohesive factor between ethnic groups and tribes in Afghanistan's state building. Barfield (2012) further contends that in keeping with the Afghan Islamic tradition, the Taliban have transformed traditions with an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam.

4.1.2 Afghanistan state building process

4.1.2.1 General description

In its state building process, Afghanistan has encountered challenges: to find a balance between the Western conceptualisations of a modern and democratic state, and Afghanistan's traditional values based on culture and religion. In addition to these influences in the state building process, Fukuyama (2004) presents a difference between nation building and state building, assisting in understanding Afghanistan's state building process.

For instance, for Fukuyama (2004), state building relates to the foundations for legitimacy and structure; constructing or structuring a national identity using state power and influence with its citizens.

It is additionally important to understand Afghanistan’s state building process throughout history to discuss how theories help to predict future conflicts, while focusing on understanding possible future developments for Afghanistan. The first point to understand in Afghanistan’s state building process is how statehood is legitimised.

Legitimising statehood is about establishing a set of public institutions anchored at the central level that can provide security and basic services for citizens (Hameiri 2010). But on the other hand, this contextual definition of legitimised statehood does not properly define Afghanistan’s reality, since the country is defined by clans, tribes and ethnic groups, upon religious and Islamic traditions are superimposed. Secondly, the principle of state sovereignty and the right to self-determination (explained in chapter 3) identify the key points under which states are built, as the case of Afghanistan demonstrates.

4.1.2.2 Heads of state influence on Afghanistan’s state building

Table 7 shows the heads of state in Afghanistan from 1881 until 1978 (before the Soviet Union invasion in Afghanistan), and their main actions that supported the state building process.

Table 7: Heads of state influence in Afghanistan (1881-1978)

Heads of State	Main support to Afghan state	Timeline
Abdur Rahman Khan	Borders drawn with Russia and British India Enforcing the state & Sunni Islam Establishing a modern state	1881 – 1901
Amanullah Khan	Full sovereign state 1919 First constitution 1923 Professionalised administration	1919-1929
Nadir Khan	Constitution of 1931 Loya Jirga to approve Constitution	1929-1933
Mohammad Zahir Shah	More liberal Constitution from 1964	1933-1973
Mohammad Daud Khan	Transition from monarchy to republic	1973-1978

Source: Adapted from Merchant (2016a)

With the historical presence of Afghan rulers (with the exception of one short-lived leader, Dr Najib Ullah), the Afghan state has always been synonymous with Pashtun tribal leadership (Rubin, 2002).

Abdul Rahman Khan helped to establish the borders between the Russian Empire and Great Britain with the Durand Line in 1893, drawing distinctions with Pakistan (in 1893 Pakistan was part of the British Empire). Under those circumstances, Abdul Rahman Khan reinforced the state with support from tribal leaders and Sunni Islam as a cohesive factor, additionally establishing the Loya Jirga as the governing body for the country. In 1919, during Ammanullah Khan rule, Afghanistan was established as a full sovereign state after a war with the Great Britain, which led to the first Constitution in the country being approved in 1923. This Constitution established land reform, offered more religious flexibility and more professionalised administration. However, due to his religious openness, Khan was not well-accepted by religious traditions and was finally forced to resign (Afghanland.com 2010c).

Nadir Khan who ruled between 1929 and 1933, approved a new Constitution in 1931 that set up Loya Jirga to approve the Constitution. This new Constitution helped combine religious traditions with the modern Constitution, reducing internal conflicts in state building for Afghanistan. The next monarch from Afghanistan was Mohammad Zahir Shah, who ruled between 1933 and 1973 and influenced Afghanistan's state building particularly with the 1964 Constitution. The 1964 Constitution established a constitutional democracy with two chambers, the freedom of expression, right for education and health services and a legally based society with the right to establish political parties. Mohammad Daud Khan, who ruled between 1973 and 1978, made a noteworthy transition from the last Afghan monarch to a republican system. However, Mohammad Daud Khan had several internal conflicts due to political influence from the Soviet Union. Between 1979 and 1990 with the Soviet Union's invasion, internal instability and security threats played out in the country, with influences from the Mujahidin and the Cold War (Afghanland.com 2010c).

The current context of instability should be viewed in light of the 1990 Soviet withdrawal: a much more complex global political issue; "the result of an alliance gone sour, 9/11 needs to be understood first and foremost as the unfinished business of the Cold War" (Mamdani 2004, p.13). For instance, Mamdani (2004) explained that the United States expected their intervention in the country during the Soviet invasion would create a challenging situation to their troops, comparable to Vietnam for the United States some decades before.

Due to Soviet withdrawal in 1990, and despite the Taliban's rise (since 1993), the situation remained tumultuous until international community military intervention in 2001, led by the United States. Also, Saikal (2012) argues that between 2002 and 2014 Hamid Karzai (first established provisional Afghani president under the 2001 Bonn Accord (see Table 7) and later confirmed as elected democratically president) worked to transition to internal stability, away from the security threat of the Taliban and international intervention.

Cassidy (2012) analyses the role of former Jihadist Warlords in the stabilisation process that took place since 2001, which thereby legitimised their position to negotiate with the state.

The 2004 Constitution was set up under the influence of Western countries' without consideration of Afghanistan's existing traditional religious and cultural governance systems. The challenges between the two governance systems will be further explained in the next chapter (4.2 Internal Governance). Table 8 displays the international conferences that have discussed Afghan stability, highlighting the international community's interest to meet and discuss stability and future development in the country since 2001.

Table 8: International conferences to discuss Afghanistan's stability and future development (2001-2014)

International Conference	Year	International Conference	Year
Bonn Accord	2001	Moscow	2009
Tokyo	2002	London	2010
Berlin	2004	Kabul	2010
London	2006	Bonn	2011
Rome	2007	Tokyo	2012
Paris	2008	London	2014
The Hague	2009		

Source: Adapted from Saikal (2012)

The withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan, began gradually under the Karzai administration in 2011, and ended under the National Unity Government NUG with Professor Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai as President and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah as CEO in 2014 (NATO, 2015).

Nevertheless, a limited number of troops remained in the country to support Afghan national training forces, under the Operation Resolute Force (ORF) strategy, considered important to ensure security and stability in the country (NATO 2016a) & (NATO 2013).

After this the NUG started a debate on electoral and Constitutional reform and established, among other issues, the prime minister's position. The position of the Prime Minister would provide a clearer division of roles and responsibilities with the President so that although power remains centralised existing instruments of state in Afghanistan could manage it.

Furthermore, Zaki (2017) explained in an interview that security problems are the most significant threats (besides other threats such as corruption, etc.) to Afghanistan's stabilisation and state building. According to Zaki (2017), corruption in the government, low literacy rates among citizens and consequently weak political culture are considerable threats to state building in Afghanistan.

4.2 Governance influence on security threats and international relations

4.2.1 Global governance

4.2.1.1 General description

Global governance is the perception that people have about organisations with an international mind-set (Anderson Gold, 2009). Therefore, global governance is crucial for international relations and a concept related to politics (a country's governance) and linked to trade and business (economic development) that helps to cope with global challenges. "Global governance is a product of neo-liberal paradigm shifts in international political and economic relations" (Jang, McSparren & Rashchupkina 2015, p.1). Thus, global governance influences a country's internal affairs, but it is clear that it also has a worldwide impact, as "global governance has become a topic of interest to many contemporary political theorists. Issues arising from the nature of global markets and multinational corporations can no longer be locally contained" (Anderson-Gold 2009, p.209).

Nevertheless, global governance has some cultural clashes between countries, because "genuine global governance, as distinguished from the extant hegemony of the 'West over the rest', would be possible only if and when truly universal norms and values defined through sustained intercultural dialogue among all living civilisations across continents becomes the foundation of the governing institutions" (Babu 2017, p.181).

Birsdall (2016) discusses the importance of a middle class for a country's governance and economic development, so that a population should perceive growth in their economy, but also feel included in the governance system. For a population's effective development, "history suggests that a large and secure middle class is a solid foundation on which to build and sustain an effective, democratic state" (Birsdall 2016, p.25). Therefore, governance and economic and social development are factors that are connected, which establish and maintain a country's internal stability.

4.2.1.2 Participatory methods in global governance

As Chin (2012) explains, participatory methods in global governance focus on positive inclusion from the local population to build trust in the governance system. Conversely, Chambers (1999) discusses that local population participation in governance systems are very ambiguous, and therefore the systems are not very effective. Equally so, Lüscher & Lewis (2008) stress that governments tend to have more resistance to increase participation from local populations because their input is perceived in contradiction to government interests.

Shirzad (2017) argues that future Afghan stabilisation through local participation will be complicated, as the national government is currently attempting peace with warlord Gulbuddin Hakmatyar. Even if the government succeeds in brokering a deal, it is unlikely that such an agreement will put an end to the turmoil in Afghanistan (Shirzad 2017). Despite this opinion, according to (BBC, 2017) the final deal created greater animosity within Kabul but became a good opportunity for further stabilisation in Afghanistan, such as 'Hezb-e-Islami' (led by Gulbuddin Hakmatyar) will renounce its ties with extremist groups (Hauser & Watson, 2017).

Rovira (2016) notes that despite desired peace negotiations, all states (including those with international recognition aspirations) will principally concentrate on maintaining security, order and democratic participation in institutions. New states will follow the existing international order and maintain international agreements in terms of security to support peace processes, for example in the case of Catalonia (Rovira, 2016).

For instance, Guijt (2014) presents the benefits of participatory methods internationally, outlining that fluent communication between states and stakeholders (supra-national organizations as the UN) must be developed to solve global conflicts.

This should lead to a more inclusive and participatory method reaching out to the populace (such as in a democratic governance system), which instigates a learning process engendering citizenry; as local populations “have the capacity to analyse their own reality and take action based on their analysis, given the opportunity” (De Haan 2014, p.162).

4.2.1.3 Security state impact on states governance and international relations

A country’s performance internally, but also externally (internationally), is defined by whether a local population’s beliefs and traditions are positively included in the system because governance is embedded into a country’s institutional system. It is also important to explain as Nanda (2006) presents that a country’s internal relations are shaped by their interactions with other countries. Pindado, de Queiroz & de la Torre (2015) present in detail the benefits of inclusive and positive internal governance for a country, described later in this chapter by example of how inclusive benefits from governance helps economic and social development in Afghanistan.

4.2.2 Foreign policy influence in international relations and security threats

4.2.2.1 General description

Petrič (2013) argues that international diplomacy assists in communications and negotiations with other states, but also influences internal politics. This is due to the fact that state interests internationally focus on national priorities, which consequently affect the population. Petrič (2013) further claims that although foreign policy shapes international relations for a country, governments claim that international political experience will be beneficial during national elections in competing against other inexperienced political parties.

In addition to regular citizens, governments should include inputs from other actors apparently involved in diplomacy, such as NGO’s, celebrities, and private companies (Petrič, 2013). Finally, the way a country conducts its foreign policy impacts directly on its state building, and should include a more democratic, transparent communication process, to solve and/or avoid conflicts that negatively influence on a country’s internal stability.

4.2.2.2 Foreign policy and small powers

Foreign policy challenges for international relations focus on the need to include several ways to better understand how states relate to each other and how a country’s size impacts on their foreign policy, as is the case of Afghanistan. Thus, small states recognise the challenges of their small size in acting internationally.

However, cooperation with bigger powers could also be positive due to their significant resources available (Shionoya & Yagi, 2001). For example, the 2006 hurricane in Haiti saw the United States assist in the recovery from this natural disaster in the role of a 'big power' supporting a small state.

On the contrary, small states use security maximisation to confront global security threat challenges that may affect their countries. For instance, the global rise of Islamic extremism influences countries such as Afghanistan in their internal stability and state building processes, as presented by Barnett (2003) and Zamir (2003). In addition, big powers can easily cooperate with small powers if they share the same interests based on liberalism and support trade and business operations, such as in the small power of Afghanistan. Therefore, foreign policy states that size is a factor that helps to understand relations between states and their consequent strategic adaptations for international relations. (Mohamed, n.d)

4.2.3 Internal governance in Afghanistan

4.2.3.1 Afghanistan's internal governance and decentralization impact on the country's stability

Afghanistan's internal governance is a relevant case to understand why other countries influence its internal affairs - based on a long history of invasion from other countries. Some examples include Alexander the Great (330 BC), Genghis Khan (1219) or the 'Great Game' in the 19th century between Great Britain and the Russian Empire that shaped the country's internal structure. However, in 1747 under Ahmed Shah, Afghanistan formally united after a long period of fighting between the Moghuls and Safavids. This emphasises the need to understand Afghanistan's history in order to understand how the country has been shaped (Hosseini, 2003).

The Constitution approved in 2004 established a decentralised democratic system of governance, similar to Western countries (as can be observed in Figure 1), which has created internal conflicts with the existing traditional system. The insurgency in Afghanistan perceives the modern system of governance from 2004 as a Western-based concept, as opposed to one based on the country's religion and history. Nixon (2008) argues that a decentralised national administration is more effective to work towards its citizens' interests, but still in keeping with the westernised view of state structure and function. Moreover, Scott (2009) explains that this decentralisation of the governance system in Afghanistan creates better cohesion and trust from the local population with the national government in Kabul.

Despite the co-existence challenges, the governance model established in 2004 had approval from the traditional 'Loya Jirga', a traditional governance structure that meets to discuss important changes in Afghanistan (Gant & Mc Callister 2010).

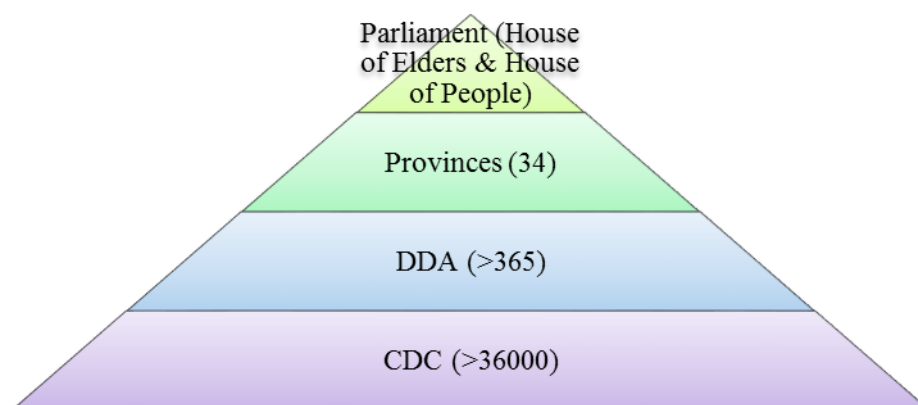
4.2.3.2 Afghanistan's governance system approved in 2004

The new governance system established in 2004 is based on four levels (see Figure 5): the national, with Parliament members (House of Elders and House of People), provincial, district and community (villages) levels. The most important institutions are the Parliament Chambers organised as the House of Elders (Meshrano Jirga), which has 102 members, at least 16% of which must be women, and acts as an advisory body to the government with limited veto powers. The other parliament chamber is the House of People (Wolesi Jirga) with 204 members, which at least 68 must be women, acting as a law-making institution in addition to validating presidential edicts (Ahmadi & Ruttig, 2016).

In addition to parliamentary chambers, the next administrative body in Afghanistan is at province level (34 in total), with a politically appointed province governor and partially-elected provincial council to implement measures approved by the Kabul government and the parliamentary chambers, of which at least 25% of provincial council members must be women. The next administrative body is the DDAs (district development assemblies). There are 450 DDAs - each province has between 9 and 29 depending on the population of each province, and acts in support of the province governor and council to implement different measures in the districts as the province decides (Merchant, 2016b). Also, DDA district elections delayed due to insecurity in the country will be held in July 2018 (U.S.News.com, 2017).

The last administrative body are CDCs (community development councils), and have more than 35,000 in the country. The CDCs are volunteers, while selected members serving in the DDAs and province governor and council are paid. The CDCs are elected in the different villages, and usually include a chairperson, treasurer and an elected secretary, acting for the needs of their villages (Merchant, 2016b). The CDCs experience less security threats from insurgents, as their members tend to be well known and respected locals. Nevertheless, Zaki (2017) emphasises the governance challenges to be effective due to security threats; with the example from a project he worked on, regarding local governance in Afghanistan.

Figure 5: Modern Afghan internal governance system since 2004



Source: Adapted from IDLG (2010)

4.2.3.3 Afghanistan's traditional governance system

In contrast with the modern governance structure established in 2004, there also exists a more traditional governance structure based on religion and the long history of Afghanistan, prior to Islam (Hosseini, 2003). That traditional system includes the 'Shura', 'Jirga' and 'Loya Jirga'. (Gant & Mc Callister 2010).

The 'Shura' is the main traditional decision-making body located in the villages and formed by members elected from among the most prominent families or personalities (and was commonly inherited generationally). The Shura and the CDCs have enormous potential to resolve local community problems and resolve a range of conflicts, for instance insurgency based on religious issues.

Religion, which has gained influence in recent years in Afghanistan (Hosseini, 2003), explains the Afghan identity; it is a "key to understanding the Afghan notion of identity is that is formed in relation to others; to family, to community, to tribe or ethnic group" Johnson & Leslie (2007, p.30). Also, is important to consider that religion influences the Pashtun tribal group and 'Paktunwali' drives codes of conduct and behaviour (Aftab Ali, 2013). In the case that the Shura cannot decide on a particular matter or one of the participants does not agree with the decision, the Jirga is called (members have the same structure as the Shura, but more experienced), thus making a decision to solve the conflict that the Shura was not able to make.

A local Jirga has the same format as the Shura, but it tends to be called to deal with a specific issue and comprises of members of the community best suited to pass an opinion (Gant & Mc Callister 2010).

Issues discussed at the Jirga can range from a water dispute to finances or to marital issues that require different Jirga members to meet (Gant & Mc Callister 2010).

Both Shura and Jirga have a more local/provincial focus. Issues that are important for the nation, such as the Constitution approved in 2004, require the meeting of the Loya Jirga as the highest body in the traditional governance structure. The decentralised system of governance helps to more effectively solve localised conflicts, although there are challenges associated with the coexistence of the two governance systems. The reality is that neither governance structure has solved the complicated internal situation of different ethnic and tribal group tensions and international interference (such as the Durand Line that still remains a significant problem between Afghanistan and Pakistan).

4.2.3.4 Governance systems co-existence challenges in Afghanistan

As confirmed by Saltmarshe & Medhi (2011), the two governance structures present have proved challenging to solve international and national conflicts, including insurgency. Moreover, Saikal (2012) explains that the local population in Afghanistan perceives the governance system established with the 2004 Constitution, as imposed by Western countries. The local population does not perceive that their traditional values are viewed as legitimate and rather that the 2004 structure is imposed upon them: the “western secular, materialist values are increasingly rejected by those seeking to regain or preserve their own unique cultural identity” (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2014, p.361). However, a theoretical approach cannot fully explain the cultural reality of the Afghan situation, however helps to understand it: “The difficulties faced in efforts to developing greater capacity may in part be cultural in Afghanistan” (The Asia Foundation 2007, p.36).

The international community should aim to better understand the effectiveness of the Shura and CDCs (as they are a Western governing body imposed with the 2004 Constitution) at a local level, and that they are capable of improving effectiveness from the lower level up to the highest governance bodies. The main outcome from the research that Zaki (2017) presented in the interview (this study), was that local government in Afghanistan shall be elected and given authority to decide and plan based on local issues. Zaki (2017) and Ghani (2017) note that local staff should conduct and participate in interviews so that rich accounts can be provided/obtained, as insecurity is perceived less critically at the local level (CDC), as opposed to higher levels of governance.

In summary, both governance bodies (traditional and modern) can co-exist in Afghanistan, as long as they work together towards the practical needs in their area. This cooperation should include proper funding and the ability to decide on certain issues in the relative province and council's and DDAs' right to decide, as opposed to decisions made in Kabul.

For instance, Anten, Briscoe & Mezzera (2012) analyse the different levels (international, national and sub-national/regional) from a country internal stability perspective (focusing on political and economic structures), to help understand how Afghanistan can adapt its development strategies more effectively, according to each level of action. Ghani (2017) also explains that she has been working in Afghanistan since 2002, but that insecurity has increased since 2006 and 2007 and even more so since 2014. Ghani (2017) explained that they have to be careful moving around, or use locals to carry out certain work, because travelling to some provinces is very challenging and at times impossible.

For these reasons, local populations and the Afghan government need to cooperate to avoid and/or reduce security threat challenges for the country, emphasising the need for a dialogue between all parties to understand clearly that "stability in Afghanistan will remain elusive unless disputes between individuals and among communities can be resolved through peaceful and equitable means" (Dempsey & Coburn 2010, p.1).

Additionally, Merchant (2016c) presented the need to include macro-economic factors to help with economic and social development, besides increasing trust and effectiveness in the stability policies and actions from the Afghan government, as can be observed more detailed in Table 9.

Table 9: Actions to work for internal stability in Afghanistan

Factors to achieve internal stability	Actions to achieve factors
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counter Narcotics - COIN (Counter Insurgency) - Peacebuilding & Reconciliation
Democratic structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elected representatives (electoral reform for forthcoming Parliamentary Elections, District and Community body elections) - Rule of Law
Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democratic framework - Equity and stability - Women's rights - Prime Minister's Role
Macro-Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private sector import substitution, surplus production for export - Regional: WTO, etc.

Source: Adapted from Merchant (2016c)

Lastly, the historical influence of the international community in Afghanistan highlights the need for cooperation between all agents within a country (government and local population) and external (international community) for the country's internal stability, because "governance concerns ways of organising resources and responsibilities toward collective ends" (Nixon 2008, p.1).

4.2.3.5 Islamic Republic and the presidential system in Afghanistan

The economic and social influence on global governance also includes outside country's realities that influence the larger scale. In order to understand Afghanistan's governance impact globally, it is important to note that the presidential governance system is based on the principles of an Islamic republic (Lewis 1955).

The Islamic influence in a country's policy leads to recognise the importance of 'Political Islam' in a country's internal governance. In the case of Afghanistan, "the [Iranian] revolution of 1979 had a profound influence on the conduct of the Afghan War. The Iranian Revolution led to a restructuring of relations between the United States and the Political Islam" (Mamdani 2004, p.120). This and the later Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 increased 'Political Islam' in international politics, where, due to its geographic and strategic location, Afghanistan played a key role in the Cold War. Moreover, Afghanistan follows a presidential system, as Pradhan (n.d) explains, the head of state (president) has executive power from the Constitution and elected for a concrete period.

In addition to the executive power based on the Constitution, there is no prime minister in Afghanistan currently; there exists however a unity government that is proposing to change this and elect a prime minister based on the Loya Jirga. Moreover, there is a discussion about the role of the CEO, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, and is based on an agreement between the two parties and not on a Constitutional basis.

4.2.4 Stabilisation in Afghanistan

4.2.4.1 General description

Stabilisation in a country is a tool to perform a country's foreign policy and help in their peace building process and conflict solving. Zaki (2017) presents a situation where the insecurity that challenges stabilisation (by the Taliban) in the South and Southeast parts of the country, which delegitimises the current government. The Taliban have their own courts and officials in certain parts of the country which impacts on future stabilisation; discussed further by Zaki (2017), Shirzad (2017) and Ghani (2017). Ghani (2017) presented in an interview (this study) that everything is affected by insecurity in Afghanistan.

However, Shirzad (2017) explained that people's illiteracy and lack of faith in the democratic process influence their decision to support the Taliban, and impacts securitisation and undermines the legitimacy of the current government and its presence outside of the main cities. Furthermore, for Shirzad (2017), increased education in urban areas will develop regions and strengthen security and stabilisation in the country.

Also, it is important to better understand the role of former warlords and fighters in the country's stabilisation process. For instance, Shirzad (2017) referred in an interview to the case of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar who was a former warlord and vice president of the Afghan government after the Soviet Union withdrawal. Shirzad (2017) presented that the current Afghan government is discussing stabilisation with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in order to support future peace.

The role of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in the previous conflict in Afghanistan during the Soviet Union invasion can be describe by Mamdani: "when introduced to the CIA by the ISI, Hikmatyar was leading an armed guerrilla force called 'Hizb-i-Islami' that had little support inside Afghanistan. Over the next decade, his group received "more than half of all arms" supplied by the CIA" (2004, p.144). This influence during the Soviet Union's invasion and his later non-help during his term as part of the Afghan government, doesn't suggest that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar can provide stability to the country in 2017 (Shirzad 2017).

From Hekmatyar's influence in Afghanistan's internal stability it is easy to understand former warlords and fighters' roles in the stabilisation process, but also in the ongoing conflict situation and the need to better understand how they can contribute to stability in the country.

The level of insecurity that impacts stabilisation in the country is highlighted by Ghani (2017) who explains that working in Kabul, visiting provinces and moving around is difficult, and that often in her work as a freelance consultant, and also volunteer with several NGOs in the country, she sometimes could not reach those she wanted to assist.

Moreover, Zaki (2017) argued that stabilisation requires both civilian and military support to cope with conflict and security threats in Afghanistan, besides working together for future cooperation to benefit longer-term development in the country. In more detail, and in order to help stabilisation in Afghanistan, Zaki (2017), Shirzad (2017) and Ghani (2017) emphasised the need for the Afghan government to focus on solving security challenges that impact on stabilisation strategies with the following points:

- Government shall fight corruption at the higher levels; creating capable and committed leadership
- Instead of quantity of the security forces with better equipment and military logistics, government shall focus on the quality and training of the security forces, especially the Air Force.
- Confront Daesh, to help solve the internal civil war in Afghanistan.
- Government shall gain the support of the people through improving second level governance in the provinces and districts.
- Afghan government shall reconsider its regional foreign policy and follow a multilateral foreign policy to use regional opportunities for the establishment of peace in the country.

Lastly, a more theoretical definition of stabilisation presents that

“the process that supports states which are entering, enduring or emerging from conflict, in order to prevent or reduce violence; protect the population and key infrastructure; promote political processes and governance structures, which lead to a political settlement that institutionalises non-violent contests for power; and prepares for sustainable social and economic development.” (United Kingdom-Ministry of Defence 2014, p.1).

In order to achieve desired stabilisation for Afghanistan, Merchant (2016d) presents three different models or approaches to work towards internal stability. Those three approaches presented below are the 3D approach, the comprehensive approach and the conflict sensitive peacebuilding model approach.

4.2.4.2 3D approach for Afghanistan

First, Merchant (2016d) explains that the 3D approach (defence, development and diplomacy), helps a country such as Afghanistan to achieve internal stability and consequently improve social and economic development. A 3D approach is more comprehensive to solve conflict situations, as (Gabriëlse, n.d) argues, in addition to offering enhanced civil and military cooperation for that purpose, using together military, diplomatic and economic instruments to solve security threats in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand some of the challenges that led Afghanistan to its current instability, such as poor cooperation between military agents involved in Afghanistan, mainly between ISAF-NATO, described by Asey (2015) known as ORS (Operation Resolute Support) and ANSF.

The security cooperation challenges between ISAF-NATO and ANSF influenced military cooperation to provide stability for Afghanistan, despite approval by the United Nations Security Council in December 2001, Resolution 1386. Moreover, the Bonn Agreement had the purpose to assist and support the ANSF and the Afghanistan government in stabilisation of the country until the ANSF assumed full control of military security in 2014 (NATO, 2016b). Other structures that improve stabilisation in the country are as Merchant (2016d) presented; the PRT ESC (ambassadorial-ministerial level coordination, co-chaired by the Afghanistan minister of interior (MOI) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander (COMISAF)).

4.2.4.3 Comprehensive approach for Afghanistan

Another approach used for stabilisation in Afghanistan is the comprehensive approach, as a way to coordinate efforts by all parts in creating internal stability (Friis & Jarmyr, 2008). Moreover, a comprehensive approach requires good coordination between all parties involved in the process, in order to be implemented effectively. Also, the key difference between a 3D and Comprehensive Approach (CA), is that civil society and indigenous organisations are included in decision-making under a CA (Friis & Jarmyr, 2008).

Among other aspects, there is a need for a much smaller NATO force that will reduce local population resistance, besides increasing trust of the Afghan forces, supporting a more diplomatic effort to solve the security threat issues that affect stabilisation (NATO, 2014). However, the local population wish for increased effort from the national government to cope with security threats challenges. Shirzad (2017) notes that local populations want a more comprehensive approach towards stabilisation, because they still perceive the country as insecure.

The discrepancies between the national government statements towards stabilisation, contradict the reality observed by Shirzad (2017), who mentioned that Kabul claims to be more secure than it really is. Shirzad (2017) further stated that there is not much you can do, since as an employee you could only ask for more security in your office, and staff are restricted from joining activists or any left-wing activities. Shirzad (2017) elaborated that although there should be more focus on diplomacy to solve the instability in Afghanistan, it does not reduce the necessity to maintain defence and security forces to complement the diplomatic efforts.

It is however important to understand the differences between peacebuilding and the stabilisation process. This difference is mainly observed as, while peace building is a more stable, long-term process, stabilisation is based on scenarios that stop conflicts from continuing, and offer peace building as a long-term solution (United Nations, n.d).

4.2.4.4 A Conflict sensitive peacebuilding model approach

A conflict sensitive peacebuilding model is a long-term perspective approach for stabilisation, as explained previously; it focuses on reducing the escalating conflict situation. But Merchant (2016d) explained that a peacebuilding approach takes place after the stabilisation process starts, emphasising the relevance of cooperation, but to achieve long-term peace solutions the conflict has to stop or at least decrease. This conflict sensitive peacebuilding model, focuses on stabilising security and avoid situations as Shirzad (2017) explained in an interview; when she was an employee in the electoral commission of Afghanistan (always targeted by the Taliban), she was injured in a bomb blast by the Taliban.

Those daily experiences by Shirzad (2017), and many other citizens, are what complicate peacebuilding: personal experiences shape the concept of security. For instance, this approach is demonstrated by the Istanbul Ministerial Process from November 2011 that emphasised regional cooperation on securitisation and conflict solving in Afghanistan, with support of the country's neighbouring and regional countries.

Pakistan held a Ministerial Conference in December 2015 through the Istanbul Ministerial Process, that included Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan, along with Western countries and international organisations, to discuss mechanisms to support regional cooperation (The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in London, 2015). Furthermore, Merchant (2016d) discussed other international meetings that support the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan, in addition to bi-lateral dialogues from the Afghan government with the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Great Britain, Norway or Japan, and held a meeting in Doha that, distinct from previous international meetings, included moderate Taliban members, to evaluate a possible peace agreement.

For example, in the report 'Review of Norwegian development assistance to Afghanistan 2011–2014', the role of Norway to support stabilisation and Afghanistan's development is highlighted through the following: "Norway has been a very responsible partner of the Government of Afghanistan, through active dialogue with the administration and the various Ministries" (Strand & Taxel 2016, p.7). However, in the same report it is mentioned that Norwegian support to Afghanistan's development has been reduced in recent years, "since 2013 Norwegian "on the ground" management capacity in Afghanistan has been reduced, and replaced by a much more fragmented aid management system. Contract responsibility has been divided between NORAD and MFA, but we struggle to identify where the responsibility rests for initiating strategy debates" (Strand & Taxel 2016, p.9).

4.2.5 International community influence in Afghanistan's governance

4.2.5.1 General description

Afghanistan's regional influence is a factor that has driven the country's internal stability and state building process throughout history (Byrd, 2012) However, there are some countries such as Pakistan, and China, which have shaped the country's internal stability and state building process, particularly since 2001 (described below). Afghanistan has a long history of international influence, especially from its neighbouring countries due to its strategic location in Central Asia (see Figure 6).

Throughout history, the country's external influences have been based on state self-interest, although, all external powers have benefitted from Afghanistan's strategic location in Central Asia (Nikolayevna Zavortseva, 2011).

Security threats undermine instability and are used to influence a country's political dynamics, decisions made, and to influence particular powerbrokers and elite, and once set, are very difficult to be changed (Ghani 2017). Powerbrokers are also creating deals with insurgents (including trade) and this undermines the national government and its local authority, hence also increasing corruption (Ghani 2017).

Zaki (2017) explained in an interview that when she was part of a group that in 2012 studied student perception on different issues, including security, foreign policy, and society in Afghanistan, the majority of students believed the influence of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have negatively affected the country. He further discussed that according to those interviewed in research conducted in 2012, the perception was that Japan, Norway, Sweden, and Korea have had a very positive influence on Afghanistan's development. The US and the UK, among other countries, have also had a positive influence. Zaki (2017) emphasised the situation that Afghans fully support the security forces, but they believe that military forces should be provided better training and equipment.

Figure 6: Map of Afghanistan's geographical location in Central Asia



Source: Mapsland (2017)

Despite some natural resources, particularly in the north, in Aynak with copper mines; once again, the main reason for external influence is its strategic location in Central Asia (Blacksin, n.d).

At the same time its location represents opportunities for Afghanistan if it can balance those interests against its own to build a more stable country. Afghanistan is still dependent on international support (especially from its neighbouring countries), which creates a situation where the state cannot leverage the benefits for themselves (Sedra, 2017).

Also, there is large percentage of development assistance still required for governance, compared to funds available domestically through taxation (Osborne, 2002). Shirzad (2017) presents that because of this insecurity Afghanistan has lost respect as a country internationally and in the Central Asia region. This weak position is shaping the country's need to work towards increased regional cooperation, which will help the future peacebuilding process (Shirzad, 2017).

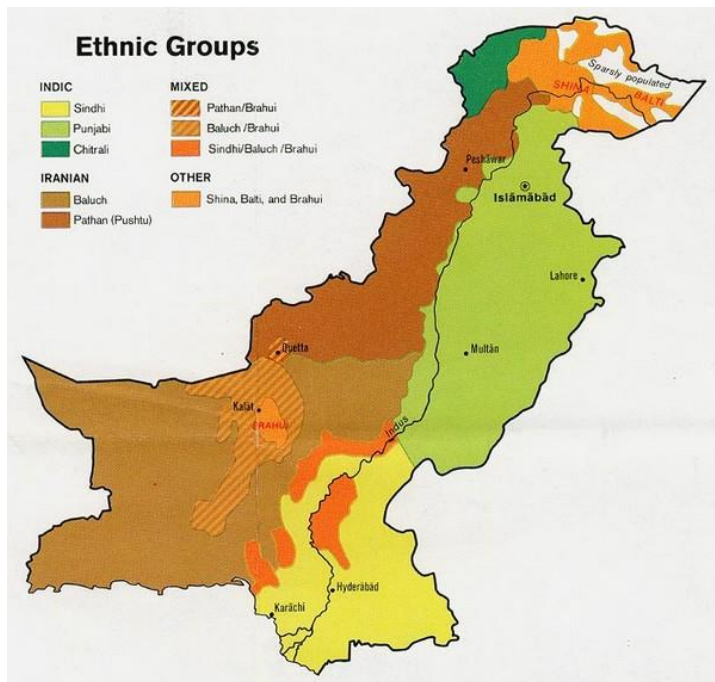
4.2.5.2 Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan

Strand (2016) presents Pakistan as the main Afghan neighbouring country that influences its internal stability and governance through its historical relationship and rivalry with Great Britain (with which Pakistan was a former colony) (Strand 2016).

Disputes over borders (the Durand Line), superpower games, and shifting balances (conflicts between the United States, Russia and China), control the economy and military and impact on Afghanistan's internal development. Afghanistan's conflict with Pakistan since their independence has been particularly pronounced, highlighted through the Afghan vote against Pakistan's United Nations membership in 1949, based on the Durand Line conflict (Strand 2016).

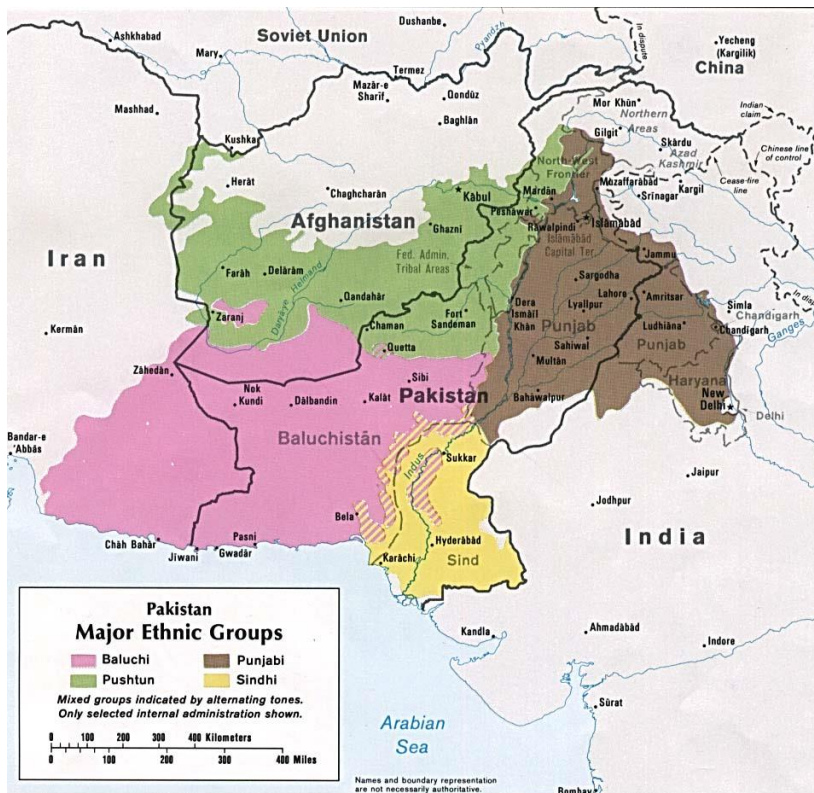
Furthermore, from the fall of the Afghan monarchy in 1973, and with the Soviet Union's invasion, Pakistan became a channel for funding an anti-Soviet force for the broader international community (Gul, 2010) and has played a prominent role supporting the Afghan rebellion, by providing them with supplies. The Taliban has always been a controversial presence in Pakistan, since the capture of Osama Bin Laden by the United States (in Pakistan's territory), or the Peshawar attack from Islamist extremists. Figures 7 and 8 show the ethnic influence in Pakistan, especially on the border with Afghanistan with the Pashtun tribal group. This division helps to explain some of the conflicts between the two countries, especially based on the Durand Line that divided the Pashtuns (Chandran & Chari, 2012).

Figure 7: Map of ethnic groups in Pakistan



Source: Strand (2016)

Figure 8: Map of ethnic groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan



Source: Strand (2016)

The next factor to understand Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan is the country's strategic work with the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), that is the Pakistani government's security service. Among other tasks, Strand (2016) explained that the ISI is tasked with collection of foreign and domestic intelligence and co-ordination of intelligence functions of the three military services, among other security issues and activities. The Global Security (2017), discuss that ISI is not just "a state within a state", but also a relevant factor to influence Afghanistan's internal stability and securitisation.

For instance, Pakistan's interest in protecting its borders with Afghanistan played an important role influencing their intervention in the country after the 1973 military coup that abolished the monarchy in Afghanistan (Hosseini, 2003). Pakistan wanted to avoid a rise up from the Pashtun group (around the Durand Line) in 1973, as, "fearing that the new government might encourage Pashtun separatism in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, the Pakistani government ordered the army to train a clandestine Afghan rebel group" (Mamdani 2004, p.144). That rebel group was the 'Hizb-i-Islami' led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and as explained above, he is currently in talks with the Afghan government to provide stability to the country (Shirzad 2017). Zaki (2017) explains that the government of Afghanistan believes the main source of insecurity is from outside the country, especially from Pakistan. According to this belief, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are being supported by the ISI and Pakistan's main objective in this situation is to install a pro-Pakistani government or gain full control of Afghanistan, however coercively, in the rivalry with India.

As a result, the Afghan government has mostly focused on dialogue to persuade Pakistan to discontinue its constant influence in their internal affairs. However, this has not been successful and Afghanistan has shown resentment by additional cooperation with India. Afghanistan has also lobbied the great powers, including the US, the UK, and China to put international pressure on Pakistan. Amongst this climate, the Afghan government has focused on internal issues, for example, building up and developing their security forces, focusing on quantity: of up to 310,000 personnel (Zaki 2017).

Also, Pakistan's 'Strategic depth' approach has a focus to turn Afghanistan into a high dependency from Pakistan, that among other factors, in case of war between Pakistan and India, the Pakistani army could use the Afghan territory to retreat and counter-attack as a military strategy (Marshall, 2016) & (Arni & Thondon, 2014).

Ghani (2017) mentioned that the High Peace Council was established during the Hamid Karzai administration to follow dialogues with the Taliban. Losing its two leaders (Rabbani was killed in a bomb explosion in his home; and Gilani died of heart disease), the council has failed to do much for the establishment of peace in the country.

The number of rebel forces are increasing, and the country is at risk of the emergence of the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP). The rising influence of the ISKP, in addition to the Taliban, is emphasised by Ghani (2017) who explained that other than the Taliban, which was previously the main security problem, now there is also IS (ISIS)/Daesh. Ghani (2017) stated that the national government is now facing two enemies at the same time as international forces have reduced. However, there is another perception that in reality: the ISKP are coercing disillusioned anti-governmental small groups and dispossessed insurgents, achieved through the promise of additional support (financial, armaments, logistics, etc.) and not ideology (UNAMA, 2017).

4.2.5.3 China's influence in Afghanistan

4.2.5.3.1 General description

In recent years, China's changing role in Afghanistan has changed with a rising influence in the country. Also, the importance of Chinese cooperation increased slowly due to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan; with the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (CPEC, 2017). Kabul has also been eager to bring China to Afghanistan thanks to Beijing's influence in Islamabad as well as an acknowledgement of the importance of a secure Afghanistan to China (Bilal Khalil, 2017).

The 'Quadrilateral Group' (formed by Afghanistan, Pakistan China and the United States) has also played a role in China being more involved in conflict resolution in Afghanistan. For instance, through the 'Quadrilateral Group', China influence to provide more stability on the Afghan internal affairs and confront terrorism, that will support its economic interests in Afghanistan (Xinhuanet, 2017) and (Stanzel, 2016).

For its economy and population, Afghanistan requires its basic needs covered: access to food, support to reduce poverty (almost 36% of the Afghan population is under the poverty line) (UNDP, 2015), and the possibility to improve infrastructure to assist with the mid-to-long term development of the economy. An example of infrastructure development can be seen through the copper mine in Aynak (in the north), where China is investing in related services and cross-border rail and road connections to the mine, thus improving the surrounding area.

There have however been problems with this investment, as work was postponed by two years due to discontent by local populations, archaeological ruins in the area (Amini, 2017). The new agreement included more Afghans in the mine's labour force, but most importantly, several roads built and infrastructure development that will help to improve the country's economy and daily life of Afghans (Pajhwok, 2010)

Afghanistan is also interested in gaining China's support to build a road network that will connect the country with a highway across Pakistan to the coast, and even via the Herat-Mashhad railway line, to connect the port of Chabahar in Iran (IRNA, 2017). If such new roads were constructed, China will benefit through significantly improved access for their transportation network, in addition to facilitated copper-mine extraction in Aynak by connection to the ports (and also avoid piracy in South-East Asia).

4.2.5.3.2 China's influence in the global economy and politics

As Houeland (2016) argues, state self-interest aims to influence the global economy and is evidence that this factor is connected to politics. Through a global hegemony desired by states, Dhaka (2014) emphasises China's rising influence in the global economy and hence international relations. Dhaka (2014) explains China's politics to support its economic and trade interests worldwide are well organised by the Chinese government. Kong & Gallagher (2016) discuss the role of the China Development Bank to achieve their political interests, based on economic influence through this organisation created by the Chinese government. This study has shown that such expansion "is an outcome of an orchestrated effort by the Chinese state" (Kong & Gallagher 2016, p.31).

It could be argued that China use their influence to challenge the United States in the Asia-Pacific area, where both have political and economic interests, which indirectly affect Afghanistan. Also, the influence China holds as a BRICS country (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in order to support its international claims and interests. The influence of China and its rising economic and political power in Afghanistan presented by Dhaka (2014), will be briefly analysed in this chapter.

Ravenhill (2014) discuss that states use international economic organisations such as the World Bank or the IMF to influence global politics. Through the China Development Bank, China supports economic investments and aid assistance worldwide, but also in Afghanistan. This is explained with data provided by IMF (2017) that notes the US has 17.46% voting power in the organisation, while China has only 6.41% voting power.

On the contrary, China's WTO membership resistance and lack of interest in the World Bank and IMF, shows a form of resistance to cooperate from China with these influential global institutions, as their self-interests are not accomplished via these existing structures. Cohn (2015) also reinforces that states use their financial assets to exercise economic influence and expand their influence in other countries, for instance in the case of China.

4.2.5.3.3 China's influence in Afghanistan's economic development

China's influence in Central Asia is highlighted by their influence in Afghanistan's economy and politics: "China is indeed set to become both a central and a long-term political and economic force in Afghanistan" (Torjesen 2010, p.2). Thus, China's assistance to Afghanistan is part of a regional interest, in contrast with United States' influence in the Asia-Pacific region: "China wishes to avoid encirclement by a combination of regional and external powers (including the US) through its creation of a favourable climate for regional cooperation and partnership" (Torjesen 2010, p.4). This rising influence of China in Central Asia is highlighted by the following quote: "China in the short and medium term will actually take on the regional leadership role that it has already structurally been granted" (Torjesen & Stankovic 2010, p.8).

The impact of investments in Afghanistan that Keohane & Nye (2001) discuss, should consider China's economic influence and resulting impacts on Afghanistan's economic and social development. There are also certain numbers and facts to support this rising influence of China's economic influence over the last years, such as "the value of China's exports to Afghanistan was \$152 million in 2008, for example" (Torjesen 2010, p.2). There is however another side to consider in relation to China's role regionally: "Chinese engagement in Afghanistan would probably incur considerable challenges to China's regional legitimacy. Security engagement might weaken China's status in the wider world" (Torjesen & Stankovic 2010, p.21).

4.3 Economic and social development's influence on security threats and international relations

4.3.1 Influence of global political economic development for international relations

4.3.1.1 Economic influence in international politics

Firstly, it is important to understand the global political economy concept that Houeland (2016) presents as the relationship between the state and the public and private markets, in addition to the power of allocation of resources (or distribution of power) at a global level. The benefits from a global political economy include integrating a country's economic and political interests, and to understand that these two factors are connected and their impact is international (Mussa, 2000). For example, infrastructure development supports, as Rovira (2016) noted, economic and social development in addition to a long-term perspective state building process.

Furthermore, Houeland (2016) argues that the distribution and consumption of resources include a broader prospect of agents (governments, institutions and society) that impact the economy, and consequently its stability. However, states also face global economic challenges that impact internally, such as the global financial crisis of 2008, or the current migration crises affecting societies and economies (Merler, 2017).

4.3.1.2 Economic and social development in Afghanistan

4.3.1.2.1 General description

Security threats in a country create instability, and influence the population's social and economic development; for example, the ability of states to tax the population is an important factor for future development (Pahle 2017). Accordingly, a high level of state conflict affects its capability to collect tax for development, resulting in low government legitimacy and a vicious, negative economic cycle (Humphreys, 2003). It is therefore important for Afghanistan to develop its institutions (and thus economic growth), and as all interviewees explained, corruption is a crucial factor limiting the country's stability and development. Weak institutions create the situation where there is a lack of capacity building from the international community to invest in long-term projects in Afghanistan (Sedra, 2003).

McIntosh, & Buckley (2015) present that a fragile state, among other factors, has a fundamental failure of the state to perform necessary functions that meet citizens' basic needs and expectations.

Merchant (2016e) describes some of the main characteristics that constitute a fragile state, such as; weak institutions, damaged/poor infrastructure, out migration of the skilled segment of the population, and a disproportionate number of refugees.

This is the case of Afghanistan, with weak institutions and limited trust from the local population since the 2001 international intervention that damaged infrastructure and created a large outward flow of migration from Afghanistan, to Pakistan in particular (Smith & Cookman, 2015).

To understand how economic development impacts on fragile states, there is a need to divide it into three clear time periods. This distinction of time is presented in Table 10 from a short, medium and long-term perspective. While a short-term perspective focuses on covering basic needs of the population, a medium and longer-term perspective focuses on supporting economic capacity building and infrastructure for economic development (United Nations, 2015) and (Wignaraja, 2009). For this to occur in Afghanistan, Pahle (2017) presents the need to build trust in business and trade.

Table 10: Main suggestions to support economic development from a short to a longer-term perspective

Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiduciary support • Grants, Programmes and Aid Assistance, selective basic infrastructure • Capacity building at all levels • Local market identification • Conflict mitigation
Medium & Long-Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Management systems • Soft Loans, Programmes and Humanitarian Aid/Assistance • Identify key investment areas + stimulate private sector • Regional Trade Bodies contacted and markets identified • Employment creating infrastructure projects at national level • Governance structure in place + conflicts being resolved

Source: Adapted from Merchant (2016e)

4.3.1.2.2 The formal and informal economy in Afghanistan, and its influence on security threats and international relations

4.3.1.2.2.1 The formal economy in Afghanistan

The formal economy in Afghanistan, presented by Byrd (2012), is focused on mineral resources (particularly copper mines in Aynak and iron mines in Hajigak), in addition to the importance of agriculture, as presented by Mohmand (2012) for economic growth and stability.

Kapstein & Kathuria (2012) argue that in conflict zones, such as in Afghanistan, there should be more interest in increasing stability for a country's development: economic development will provide not just growth, but stability for the country. This brings into question the issue of security transfers (from NATO to ANSF): "the recent announcement that NATO troops would leave Afghanistan in 2014 brings into sharp relief the question of whether that country will be able to find lasting peace and prosperity in the absence of a significant foreign military presence" (Kapstein & Kathuria 2012, p.1).

This instability, Adams (2004) argues will create security threats and reduce economic growth, and increase poverty (almost 36% in Afghanistan) (UNDP, 2015). Additionally, Swain & Jägerskog (2016) discuss that internal instability that create security threats, can create a higher dependency on the informal economy (described later in this chapter). This demonstrates the need to support development of the formal economy in Afghanistan (Department of Defence, United States of America, 2016).

While Afghanistan operates a formal economy, the informal economy shapes the majority of a country's economic and social development, and affects its internal stability and state building process (Alter Chen, 2007). For instance, the formal economy in Afghanistan, according to Byrd (2012), focuses on the short-term, to cover basic needs of the population, although on a mid-to-long term perspective it aims to develop economic growth and social development. Based on official numbers, Afghanistan had a GDP estimated for 2016 of \$19 billion (The World Bank, 2017), and a population below the poverty line of almost 36% (UNDP, 2015). This emphasises the need for Afghanistan's economic growth, which will lead to social development as Mohmand (2012) explains, creating internal stability to assist in the state building process.

Additionally, Table 11 shows the international organisations that Afghanistan is a member of, to support economic growth and social development in the country.

Table 11: Afghanistan membership of international organisations

World Trade Organisation (WTO)
The South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with full member and benefitting from food security and climate change-related policy and funds
Istanbul Process (Heart of Asia)
The Organisation Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony
The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Source: Merchant (2016f), Amin Ahmadzai (2015) & Heart of Asia (2015)

Listed below (Merchant 2016f) are the main factors to ensure security for economic development in Afghanistan (particularly for agriculture):

- Safeguarding sustainability by mobilising revenue and securing grant assistance
- Supporting inclusive and job-creating post-transition growth by unlocking the potential of the agriculture and natural resource sectors and by tapping the potential of regional integration
- Improving upon the low levels of human capital and skills
- Continuing to strengthen institutions and governance. Reforms in these areas will be critical to reducing poverty and promoting shared prosperity through sustainable development while helping Afghanistan become more self-reliant in the long term

4.3.1.2.2.1 The informal economy in Afghanistan

In contrast with the formal economy in Afghanistan, Merchant (2016c) presents the main different between informal economy types, and they include:

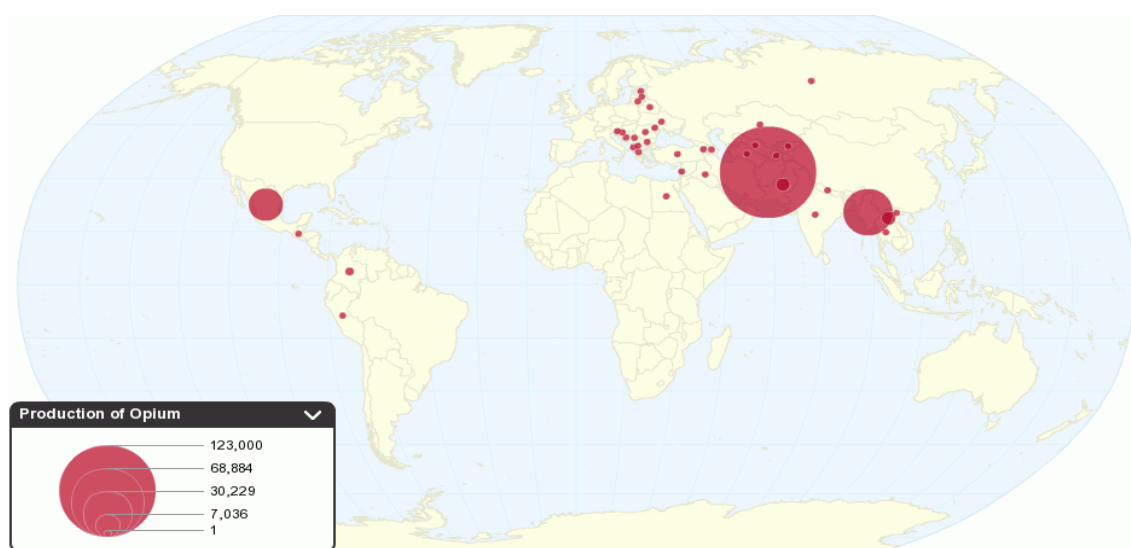
1. Coping strategies (survival activities): casual jobs, temporary jobs, unpaid jobs, subsistence agriculture, multiple job holding

2. Unofficial earning strategies (illegality in business): Unofficial business activities: tax evasion, avoidance of labour regulation and other government or institutional regulations, no registration of the company

The main stabilisation challenges that the informal economy brings are that, income from unregistered businesses and undeclared incomes, illegal transportation and funds ('capital flight') across borders, evasion of customs or tax, and fraud, are difficult to change, as local populations have become dependent on these systems and structures over time (Ghiasi, Zhou & Hallgren, 2015).

Merchant (2016c) presents some information about the relevance of an informal economy for Afghanistan's economic development: 80-90% of economic activity takes place in the informal sector (including the opium trade), it is regulated by networks, traditions and power, and that legal and illicit trades are highly linked. In 2008 the role of opium production in the development of Afghanistan was made clear – the country held a 93% share of the global market in illicit opiates (opium, morphine, heroine) (Merchant 2016b). Global opium production compared to Afghanistan's supply is presented in Figure 9.

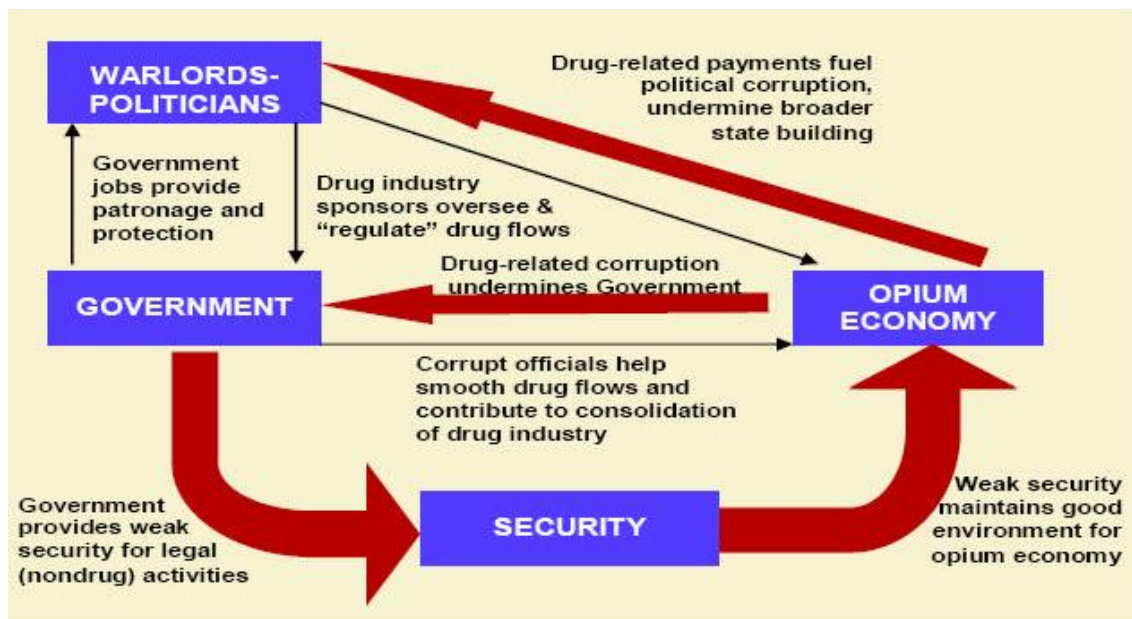
Figure 9: Map of country comparison for opium world production



Source: Merchant (2016c)

The main reasons for a transition from a war economy to a drug economy are according to Merchant (2016c), weak state institutions and a hidden symbiosis (strong informal sector and weak formal sector). Those weak institutions were not able to challenge the warlord's influence after the Soviet Union's retreat in 1990, highlighted in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Warlords influence in Afghanistan after Soviet Union's retreat in 1990



Source: Merchant (2016c)

Suitable counternarcotic policies include production, distribution & processing and substitution to provide alternatives for farmers (UNODC, 2015). Merchant (2016c) further discusses the current policies, including; financial complications, legal and judicial framework, irrigation and infrastructure, regional patronage systems, insecurity and lack of political will. He provides some recommendations to work effectively against narcotics and avoid a problematic future.

The impact of the informal economy on the overall economy of Afghanistan is significant, because both the coping strategies (survival activities) and the unofficial earning activities (illegality in business):

“more than half of the time (56%), the request for illicit payment was explicit by the service providers. In most instances (3/4 of the cases), baksheesh (bribes) are paid in cash. The average amount was \$160 – in a country where GDP per capita is a mere \$425 per year. This is a crippling tax on people who are already among the world's poorest” (UNODC 2010, p.4).

This influence on the Afghan local population impacts on the country's ability for economic growth and social development, reaffirming the perception that the informal economy creates internal instability in Afghanistan.

But most importantly, the dependency mentioned above of the local population on the informal economy, fuels insurgency and undermines the Afghan government. In other words, this situation does not reduce the local population's dependency on the informal economy, which continues to impact on the ability of the Afghan government (among other factors) to collect taxes, to develop infrastructure, or support social inclusion, creating a continuous circle of instability in Afghanistan (Ghiassy, Zhou & Hallgren, 2015).

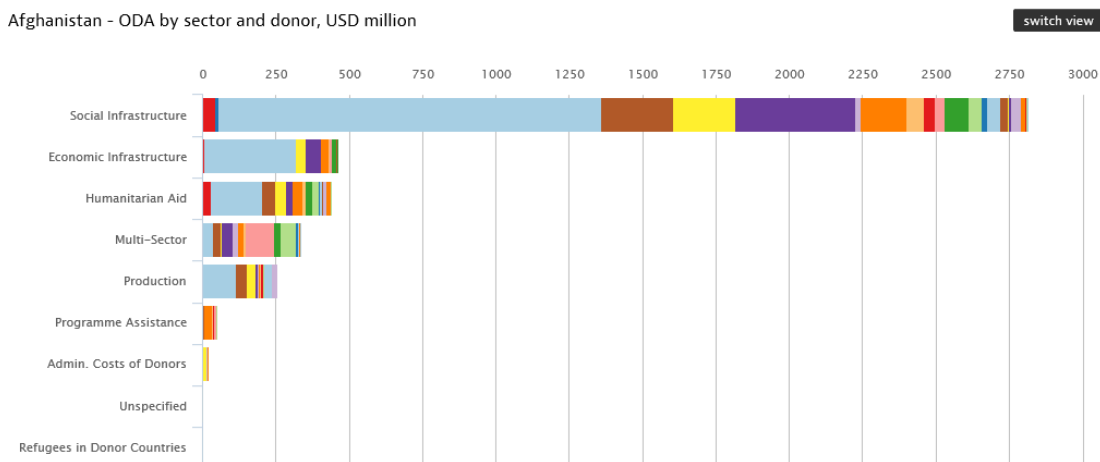
4.3.1.3 The influence of aid in an economy and for social development

One could argue that aid is politicised, and in some cases, even before it reaches the beneficiary (Pereira Watts, 2017). Aid assistance is therefore used to carry out a state's self-interest and foreign policy, and hence intervention is justified, as is the case in Afghanistan: the "most serious charge is that humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan became politicised" (Kreczko 2003, p.253). But Radelet (2016) presents that the influence of aid as a foreign policy tool does not necessarily have a negative impact on the recipient country, as long as aid is sustained over time for long-term economic recovery.

Menon (2016) analyses the reasons that states intervene in other countries through aid assistance. He claims that assistance is a tool to support internal stability and recovery that the state alone would not be able to perform. This situation, where a state intervenes in another based on aid assistance support was also the case of Eritrea in the 1990s, that Pahle (2017) underscored. In the interview with Pahle (2017), he explained that Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia in 1993 with support from the United States through humanitarian assistance – a population long affected by the war. Pahle (2017) further emphasised that the international community cannot legitimately intervene in a civil war without violating the principle of state sovereignty, as explained previously in the theory chapter.

Birsdall (2016) presents that international aid assistance impacts on a developing country economy in the long-term, particularly when the most important economic areas are invested in, such as agriculture in Afghanistan. Also could be argued that aid assistance is still strong influence over the economic and social development impact in Afghanistan, despite the international intervention of 2001 (Harvard University & NATO, 2013). The main sectors receiving aid assistance in Afghanistan can be observed in Table 12.

Table 12: Afghanistan – Official Development Aid assistance (ODA) by sector, USD million in 2014



Source: OECD (2014)

4.3.1.4 Securitisation’s influence in economic and social development for Afghanistan

Begovic (2013) highlights that securitisation is a factor that impacts on the peaceful development of a country’s institutions and democratic system (aside from its economic and social development), with the support of proper security policies and forces. That is why the influence of an effective Afghan national army for securitisation and stability is necessary to provide economic and social development for the country. This has been difficult to manage due to the level of corruption in Afghanistan, the poor support by NATO/ISAF in terms of training (using private contractors who were not capable of the task), and the need for more strategic support to national forces.

In order to solve such securitisation challenges, roots of these problems must be considered first to stabilise the conflict, and afterwards, strive for peacebuilding (Dudouet & Schmelzle, 2010).

The next factor important for securitisation is to present the areas that, as Cordesman (2013) describes, impact directly on a country’s local population: transition from insecurity to economic and social development. In Table 13 the different security periods faced by Afghanistan since 1978 are presented.

Table 13: Security periods faced by Afghanistan since 1978

Description	Timeline
Soviet Revolution	1978-1992
Warlordism	1992-1995
Taliban	1995-2001
NATO/ISAF	2001-2014
Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)	From 2015

Source: Adapted from Merchant (2016g)

Table 14 presents how security has been transferred from the international community intervention in 2001, to the Afghan authorities.

Table 14: Afghanistan security responsibilities transferred since 2001

Internationally-sponsored	<p>2001-14: Global War on Terror/Operations Enduring Freedom</p> <p>2002: ISAF established under UNSC resolution</p> <p>2003: ISAF goes national 10k</p> <p>2005: ISAF doubles to 20k</p> <p>2009: 40k extra troops</p> <p>2010: Lisbon NATO Summit</p> <p>2011: NATO troops peak at 140k</p> <p>2014 ORS (NATO) and ORS (US)</p>
Nationally-sponsored	<p>2001: ITGA established</p> <p>2002: Loya Jirga convened</p> <p>2003: Active ANSF recruitment</p> <p>2004: Constitution and elections</p> <p>2009: Taliban shadow government</p> <p>2010: push from 130k – 350k ANSF troops</p> <p>2014: 2/23 ANA Brigades assessed as 'capable'</p>

Source: Adapted from Merchant (2016g)

From 2015, the securitisation focus in Afghanistan have focused on ANSF training to support counter-terrorism, that will assist the Afghan authorities to gain internal stability with their own forces, to solve internal challenges and help in the state building process (The Kabul Times, 2017). The security transfers from NATO's withdrawal in 2014 to the ANSF, have been challenging for Afghanistan and the process to achieve a positive security transition has not been as effective as expected at solving insecurity in the country (Felbab Brown, 2015).

For instance, Taucher, Vogl & Webinger (2014) argue that the ANSF forces have been preparing since 2012 for a security transition and have not yet been effective. In other words, it is argued that despite transferring security aspects, there was a lack of preparation for the ANSF to assume more security issues, because “by the end of 2013, over 90% of 800 ISAF bases had been closed, with some handed over to the ANSF and others dismantled because the ANSF lacks the capacity to maintain all of them” (Taucher, Vogl & Webinger, 2014, p.8).

5. Discussion

5.1 General discussion

In this discussion chapter, I will analyse the findings of this research in terms of relevant, identified theories. I also note possible implications for further research and emphasise the importance of studying the impacts of instability on Afghan state building, in addition to discussing some gaps that were not studied and could help with further research on the topic.

To re-iterate, Afghanistan is a land-locked country (see Figure 3) surrounded by six other states (Pakistan, China, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and accordingly has an important geo-political role. As outlined in chapter 4, Afghanistan is a country that has been strongly influenced throughout history by other states, as argued by Barfield (2012) and Nyrop & Seeking (2001). This influence helps to better understand the 'geo-political' interests of other countries to influence Afghanistan, both political and financially. As a result of this, Afghanistan has had a high dependency on ODA funding (OECD 2014), a lack of in-country foreign investments as presented by Sedra (2003), and financial dependency on other countries for development. This observed financial dependency impacts negatively on the Afghan government's ability to develop its own policies for stability (and consequently reduce security threats), and support long-term economic growth and social development through Afghan institutions.

5.2 Concepts to consider for further research

For further research, I consider there to be real benefits in receiving information by visiting the country, because it would be possible to interview more people and to meet with government representatives and visit relevant organisations that work with securitisation (i.e. NATO, EU). Moreover, and as mentioned in the methodology chapter, information provided by the informants in the interviews helped to describe the securitisation impact in Afghanistan. Throughout the thesis was observed that securitisation is shaping the country's stability and its economic and social development, and the international community led by the US is influencing in Afghanistan's state building.

The most challenging concepts of this research brought up interesting angles to consider for further research (i.e. the co-existence of two governance systems in Afghanistan and economic and social development in Afghanistan), or discrepancies between contradictory concepts were observed in this research and said to have an impact on international relations, securitisation and particularly Afghanistan's stability and state building (i.e. theories versus reality, and state legitimacy and the principle of self-determination).

Further interviews on the two governance systems would allow better insight into these systems, and an understanding of the challenges faced to co-exist. It would also be very useful to interview a representative from the Afghan government and discuss how the co-existence of both governance systems function, from an official Afghan institution perspective since they work with implementation of these.

5.2.1 The Co-existence of two governance systems

It was quite challenging to analyse the co-existence of two governance systems in Afghanistan, as I had to consider why the so-called 'international community' introduced a new governance system when there was already in existence. When I was analysing the thesis findings, I found it interesting to discuss the co-existence of the two governance systems at a local level, because I observed during the findings analysis that both systems at local level 'Shura' (traditional system) and CDC's (governance system established in 2004), have a great potential to resolve local issues. This is because through the secondary data related to the local governance system in Afghanistan, both 'Shura' and CDC's members are elected among the local population, which helps them to feel more included in the Afghan governance.

But in relation to my hypothesis and research question, the international community exercised influence in Afghanistan's governance, as it established a Western-modern democratic system in 2004. The impact of this new governance system in terms of stability and securitisation discussed throughout focussed on the justification of the international community's decision to intervene. Their intervention was considered a way to help the Afghan citizens with the establishment of a democratic system after the Taliban government.

Findings of this research showed that the Western-modern democratic system established in 2004 did not remove the traditional system of governance. Highlighted in chapter 4, I found the international community wanted to influence Afghanistan, but considered that a way to more effectively exercise influence and be better accepted by Afghan citizens was to keep the existing traditional system. This was deemed helpful to the international community as it could assist them in their goal (what is described throughout, as 'states self-interest').

Lastly, this research found there is a need to establish institutions to support states international claims and interests, in reference to the supra-national organisations established after the WWI ('League of Nations') and WWII (i.e. 'UN', 'EU' and 'NATO'). Tillman (2009) argues that states used these supra-national organisations to pursue their self-interests by influencing other states. One of those cases was the US's influence towards NATO to intervene in Afghanistan, in order to support efforts to eliminate the Taliban and insurgency in the country.

5.2.2 Economic and social development in Afghanistan

States make use of international law to support their claims and self-interests, such as international agreements like the 'Kosovo Declaration of the Independence'. Rovira (2016) presented in the interview that the 'Kosovo Declaration of the Independence' was a legal document recognised internationally that allowed use of the principle of self-determination, in contradiction with the principle of state sovereignty. For instance, it can be argued that Pakistan's weight with ISI has been negatively influencing Afghanistan's internal affairs and stability, although not directly, but by supporting rebel groups after the Soviet invasion of 1979.

Moreover, China's economic interests (chapter 4), particularly in the Aynak area (north of Afghanistan) evidence China's desire to exercise influence in Afghanistan. The discussion is however, if whether those economic interests are based on shared benefits, or whether they are more beneficial to China than local Aynak citizens (Pajhwok, 2010). Despite short-term development assistance to cover basic needs, a country's stability must consider longer-term perspectives to bring economic growth and social development for a country (De Haan, 2004). This statement produces an interesting discussion in relation to the international community's intervention in Afghanistan, and other states self-interest in influencing Afghanistan's state building.

The country receiving aid should be able to decide upon how assistance should be distributed in the country, which does not occur in the case of Afghanistan. For instance, there was still a high level of ODA in Afghanistan in 2014 (OECD, 2014). This emphasises the need for Afghanistan to include longer-term perspectives for economic growth and social development, where the government is included to decide upon the use of ODA for growth and recovery.

5.3 Concepts and discrepancies

5.3.1 Theories versus reality

As discussed in chapter 3, it is challenging to explain why theories cannot fully explain reality. For instance, factors from realism and liberalism were described to explain how security threats impacts on Afghanistan's economic and social development. However, there was a contradictory opinion from both governance systems in Afghanistan, as secondary data analysed highlighted the perception that, at local level, both governance systems are more effective in solving conflicts, as members are locals that tend to be better accepted by the local population.

It was observed throughout this thesis that the country's society, governance, and other factors that shape its economic and social development are based on the traditional culture and religion. The international community does typically not consider these factors when intervening in a country, as confirmed by the example of the two governance systems in Afghanistan.

It was also observed that the use of theories by states and their governments are not neutral, and used as justification for the Afghanistan intervention. One of the examples that evidences this perception, is that the US considered the need to intervene in Afghanistan was to provide stability and remove the Taliban from the government because, as realism explains, this was also for securitisation, to protect the US in response to the 9/11 attacks by Al Qaeda (Singh, 2015).

The US used a realist theoretical approach to justify its self-interest and intervention in 2001, but the reality is that the Taliban was influential years before this (Kabul fell to them in 1996) that could have justified an earlier intervention. The case of the US intervention in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks, despite the Taliban's marked influence since 1996 is a clear case in point of the external influence on Afghanistan's affairs that the country has historically experienced.

5.3.2 State legitimacy versus the principle of self-determination

The principles of state legitimacy and self-determination are regulated and accepted by the international community, and this research has highlighted the use of them by states in international relations. In the 21st century, nations still have discrepancies with the principle of self-determination (supported by Woodrow Wilson after the WWI). In the case of this research, the clash between these two principles relates to the discussion that Afghanistan was established formally as an independent state in 1747, and yet in 2017 is still dependent on other states.

I suggest further research on the discrepancies between 'state legitimacy' and 'the principle of self-determination'. These principles were briefly described in this thesis and were observed to have had an impact on internal stability and state building, in addition to having provided social and economic development for the local population.

6. Conclusions

To analyse the international community's influence in Afghanistan, the thesis hypothesis ***The international community uses security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan*** has been analysed throughout the research process. To assist with this aim I proposed two research questions that were considered crucial to examine how the international community uses security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan.

Research questions:

- 1. How does the international community use security threats to exercise influence in Afghanistan?***
- 2. How security threats exercise influence in Afghanistan's internal governance, and economic and social development? (sub-research question)***

Throughout this thesis I have examined several relevant concepts in order to answer these two research questions. To explore the first question, I examined how the international community, led by the US, exercise influence over Afghanistan using politics and economic tools. The way they have influenced stability has been discussed; particularly the governance system (new and old) and on economic and social development for the country. But also the way neighbouring countries (mainly Pakistan and China) influence internal Afghan affairs - through ISI work or through economic growth (such as the Aynak copper mine).

To explore research question number two, I examined governance, economic and social development, and securitisation and their impact on Afghan state-building and security threats. It was also found that the international community exercises its influence through securitisation strategies indirectly or directly with international meetings and summits (see Table 8), to decide upon Afghanistan's internal decisions.

My findings have evidenced the relevance of the research questions for the topic, and I conclude that the two areas of governance and economic and social development have had a clear impact on security threats and state building in Afghanistan. Further research is necessary for advancements in international relations and for Afghan development into the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Interviews

<u>Informant</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Position</u>
Marta Rovira	December 2016	General Secretary ERC
Hasina Shirzad	May 2017	Journalist
Seema Ghani	February 2017	Anti-corruption activist
Mohammad Mahdi Zaki	February 2017	Deputy Director, Organon Research and Academic Organization
Simon Pahle	March 2017	Professor at HiOA

Appendix 2: Master's Thesis Pre-Test Questionnaire

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. General Information

1. Which country are you from?
R:
2. What is your current job position/s?
R:
3. Have you been involved in politics?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
4. Do you have experience in international politics?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
5. Which countries have you visited in relation to your work?
R:

B. Security threat conceptualization

6. Has your work been directly or indirectly affected by insecurity and if so, how?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
7. If answer to question 6 was "Yes", how long have you been working in insecure areas or been impacted by insecurity? How did you respond to increases in insecurity?
R:
8. How is the Government of Afghanistan performing in terms of increasing security?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
9. What sort of insecurity is still prevalent in terms of undermining the legitimacy of the current government and its presence outside of main cities? What could be done, in your opinion, to strengthen security?
R:

C. Security threat in international politics

10. Do you think threats to undermine security are used to influence a country's internal political dynamics? If so, how?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
11. From the following list, which one/s do you think exert the greatest threat to security? (can be chosen more than one answer)
R: a) international terrorism b) economic interest c) country's internal security d) others, if so please specify
12. Do you think threats to security influence state building?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know

D. Afghanistan state building

13. Have you been involved with Afghanistan during your work life?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know

14. If answer to question 13 was “Yes”, could you explain briefly which was your involvement? (can be chosen more than one answer)

R:

15. From the following concepts, which one/s do you think has influenced Afghanistan state building?

R: a) strategic location in Central Asia b) economic interest c) religious and cultural traditions d) dispute between countries not let the other influence in Afghanistan e) others, if so please specify

E. Future Perspectives

16. Which are the main challenge/s for international security?

R:

17. From a scale of 1 to 5 (1 less likely to 5 most likely), do you think security threat will play a role in a state building process? Try: Do you think security will continue to play a key role in Afghanistan’s state building process and what will the threat look like?

R:

1	2	3	4	5
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18. From a scale of 1 to 5 (1 less likely to 5 most likely), do you think security threat is important for Afghanistan? Try: Is security the most important threat to Afghan state building, if not what is? If so, what would be the next most important threats?

R:

1	2	3	4	5
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F. Others

19. Would you like to receive a draft of the master thesis in April 2016 to review your inputs, and include additional comments you would be interested?

R: Yes / No

20. If answer to question 19 is “Yes”, could you provide the e-mail contact to send you the draft?

R:

21. Additional comments or issues you would like to be included (optional)

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22. Could you write in the box below a few key facts about your recent working experience in Afghanistan (optional)

G. Interview Information

23. How you would like to be referred your comments in the Master Thesis project?
(i.e. Mr/Mrs/Dr, job position, representative from an organization, representative from a governmental organization, remain anonymous or another)

R:

Appendix 3: Master Thesis Final Questionnaire

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. General Information

1. Which country are you from?
R:
2. What is your current job position/s?
R:
3. Have you been involved in politics?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
4. Do you have experience in international politics?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
5. Which countries have you visited in relation to your work?
R:
6. In your opinion, which key factors from the list below have most influenced the development of Afghanistan into the State that it is today?
R:
a) strategic location in Central Asia b) economic interest c) religious and cultural traditions d) dispute between countries not let the other influence in Afghanistan e) others, if so please specify

B. Security threat conceptualization

7. Has your work been directly or indirectly affected by insecurity and if so, how?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
8. If answer to question 7 was "Yes", how long have you been working in insecure areas or been impacted by insecurity? How did you respond to increases in insecurity?
R:
9. How do you think is the Government of Afghanistan performing in terms of increasing security?
R:
10. What sort of insecurity is still prevalent in terms of undermining the legitimacy of the current government and its presence outside of main cities?
R:
11. What could be done in your opinion, to strengthen security?
R:

C. Security threat in international politics

12. Do you think threats to undermine security are used to influence a country's internal political dynamics? If so, how?
R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know
R:

13. From the following list, which one/s do you think exert the greatest threat to security? (can be chosen more than one answer)

R:

a) international terrorism b) economic interest c) country's internal security d) others, if so please specify

14. Do you think threats to security influence state building in the future?

R: Yes / No / No reply-don't know

15. Is security the most important threat to Afghan state building, if not what is? If so, what would be the next most important threats?

R:

F. Others

16. Additional comments or issues you would like to be included

17. Could you please write in the box below a few key facts about your recent working experience in Afghanistan?

G. Interview Information

18. How you would like to be referred your comments in the Master Thesis project?
(i.e. Mr/Mrs/Dr, job position, representative from an organization, representative from a governmental organization, remain anonymous or another)

R: