

T.C.
ANTALYA BILIM UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

GLOBAL POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
MASTER THESIS



**STATE BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN WITH THE ENGAGEMENT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

Hamedullah KHPALWAK

NOVEMBER 2022

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This thesis was accepted by the jury (with unanimous vote / majority vote) on
the date / / 2022 in GLOBAL POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS of POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Dr. Gözde TURAN (Supervisor)

[signature]

Title Name SURNAME!!!

[signature]

Title Name SURNAME!!!

[signature]

Title Name SURNAME!!!

[signature]

Title Name SURNAME!!!

[signature]

Director of The Institute

Title Name SURNAME

[signature]

Thesis Submission Date: / / 2022

DECLARATION

MSc Thesis of this study named “STATE BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN WITH THE ENGAGEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.”, which I presented, I declare that scientific moral principles were followed in the preparation of this study, in case of benefiting from the works of others, reference is made in accordance with scientific norms, no falsification has been made in the data used, and that any part of this study is not presented as another academic study.

... / ... / 2022

[signature]

Hamedullah KHPALWAK



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ABSTRACT

STATE BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN WITH THE ENGAGEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Hamedullah KHPALWAK

MSc Thesis in Global Politics and International Relations

Supervisor: Dr. Gözde TURAN

November 2022; 57 pages

The present research has focused on the role of the international community in state building process while considering the case of Afghanistan in particular and to what extent the process of state building in Afghanistan has resulted in security for the people of Afghanistan. The study has used qualitative research methodology to address the research questions. The primary sources of data collection were interviews from 15 experts and academicians using snowball sampling technique while the secondary sources of data collection included books, journals, newspapers and articles. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The study has found effectiveness of state building process pertaining to security for people in Afghanistan. It was revealed that security, education and infrastructure situation is improving in Afghanistan however, there are still areas where international community has to play more active role. The study supports the argument that any intervention by the international community without full commitment and better allocated resources is bound to failure as is the case in Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS: Afghanistan, International community engagement, International relations, State building.

COMMITTEE: !!!Title Name SURNAME!!!

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ÖZET

ULUSLARARASI TOPLUM MÜDAHALESİ İLE AFGANİSTAN'DA DEVLET İNŞASI

Hamedullah KHPALWAK

Yüksek Lisans, Küresel Siyaset ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı

Danışman: Dr. Gözde TURAN

Kasım 2022; 57 sayfa

Bu çalışma Afganistan örnek olayı üzerinden hareketle uluslararası toplumun devlet inşası sürecindeki rolünü araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışmanın bir diğer boyutu, uluslararası toplumun müdahalesinin Afganistan toplumunun güvenliği açısından ne ifade ettiği olacaktır. Çalışmada araştırmacının temel sorularına cevap bulabilmek adına nitel veri analizi kullanılmıştır. Veriler için birincil kaynak olarak alanında uzman 15 akademisyen ve uzman ile yapılan mülakatlardan, ikincil kaynak olarak da literatürden faydalanılmış ve bu verilerin analizi tematik analiz yöntemi ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonunda Afganistan'da devlet inşası için uluslararası toplumun müdahalesinin güvenlik açısından olumlu katkılarının olduğu; güvenlik, altyapı ve eğitim alanlarında gelişmeler kaydedildiği; ancak tüm bunlara karşın uluslararası toplumun daha fazla rol üstlenmesi gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır. Çalışma, uluslararası toplumun tam anlamıyla katılımının ve tutarlılığının olmadığı, kaynakların yetersiz kaldığı ve düzgün kullanılmadığı müdahalelerde başarısız sonuç alınacağı görüşündedir. Afganistan'da gözlemlenen sonuç da bu tür bir başarısızlık durumudur.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Afganistan, Uluslararası toplum müdahalesi, Uluslararası ilişkiler, Devlet inşası.

JÜRİ: !!! Unvan İsim SOYİSİM!!!

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANDS	: Afghan National Development Strategy
COVID	: Coronavirus Disease
DDR	: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DPT	: Democratic Peace Theory
ERP	: Enterprise Resource Planning
FCAS	: Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
FSG	: Fragile States Group
G8	: Group of Eight
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
GoIRA	: Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
IR	: International Relations
ISAF	: International Security Assistance Force
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	: Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development
OEF	: Operation Enduring Freedom
SAP	: Structural Adjustment Program
UK	: United Kingdom
UN	: United Nations
US	: United States
UNSC	: United Nation Security Council
WB	: World Bank

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PREFACE

I would like to extend my gratitude to my parents for supporting me throughout my thesis, my brothers, for helping me even when my moral was at the bottom, as well as my roommates and friends, for keeping me on track regardless of how distracting life was during these difficult times, and being a family, when mine was far away. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my advisor Dr. Gözde Turan for assisting me in finishing my thesis – deadline by deadline.



1. INTRODUCTION

State building has been an area of interest for both the policy makers and academicians in the field of international relations. Globally, different state building projects have been managed by the international community across many countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Haiti, Sierra Leone, and Iraq. These states have been termed as “failed states” (Rotberg, 2002; 127). Afghanistan is one of the pragmatic models of state building in post 9/11 context as well as 21st century. Terrorism and radicalism have emerged as threats to global and national security of Afghanistan when Al-Qaida attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States on 11th September, 2001. Consequently, the US operation to defeat Al-Qaeda caused downfall of Taliban from West and South regions of Afghanistan. The US president at the time of this operation, George W. Bush, declared a policy of democratization through foreign intervention in Afghanistan. This policy was backed by the liberal peacebuilding agenda, disseminating the liberal democracy and defeating the Al-Qaeda in their sanctuaries within Pakistani borders as well as Afghanistan (Podder, 2013).

Weak and powerless countries have been linked to both national and worldwide security issues since the end of the Cold War, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks within the United States in 2001. After the terrorist attacks, Afghanistan became a focal point for state-building endeavors. Following the shocking attacks, a multilateral coalition with a differing run of on-screen characters, partners, and money was propelled with an aim of disassembling universal fear-monger systems and balancing out the nation. In the US National Security Strategy 2002 Analysis, the threats as well as solutions were analyzed to include and identify terrorism, international organized crime and drug trafficking as the main threats to US national security (Doyle, 2007). According to the strategy, most of these threats are linked to weak or failed states. As a result, state building has become a critical solution for dealing with threats pertaining to failed states.

It was not only national strategy plans or policy designs finding the solution to international terrorism in state building. According to the OECD's (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) States of Fragility 2016 Report, more than 1.6 billion individuals lived in weak countries in 2016. Furthermore, the OECD report estimates that the number of individuals living under unsteady situations would mount to 3 billion people by the year 2050 (OECD, 2016: 38). In connection to these findings, the report suggested these states to be assisted in getting out of their predicaments, failure and weakness in accomplishing national and worldwide stability and security (Torres & Anderson, 2004; OECD, 2015; MacClinchy & Scott, 2016).

Poor state capacity, seen as the essential cause of state weakness and failure, triggered initiatives from other non-state actors as well. Thus, it was not only the US, nor the OECD, which formulated state building as the political panacea to international terrorism and related security problems. Numerous states and multilateral associations have tried to formulate best practices for reestablishing working governments and political steadiness. As a result, efforts to modify and reestablish working governments and political steadiness in strife and post-conflict states have developed in ubiquity, and such cooperation is broadly alluded to as "state-building" or "peacebuilding." In spite of the utilization of a tremendous number of military and police workforce, as well as

endeavors to reestablish overseeing structures, the larger part of these endeavors has fizzled (Hameiri, 2009). The setting and strength of spontaneous management structures have appeared to restrain universal players' impact (Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008; Shankar, 2008; Suhrke, 2011).

Upon a so-called consensus on the root causes and consequences of international terrorism and state failure, the international community engaged in state building process, democratic transformation, human rights, good governance, transparency and fighting against corruption and supported Afghanistan in different perspectives of state building. The UN Security Council passed a resolution authorizing the ISAF (The International Security Assistance Force) to establish security in Afghanistan. Also related to this Resolution, the international community has organized multiple conferences for the purpose of state building on Afghanistan (Bizhan, 2018). As one of the central initiatives, the Bonn Conference of 2001 laid down the foundations of state building which is currently called as the Bonn framework (Fields and Ahmed, 2011). Moreover, the G8 countries organized the allocation of security sector reforms as:

- (i) The police reform to be performed by Germany,
- (ii) The judicial sector reform to be performed by Italy,
- (iii) The military sector reform to be performed by US,
- (iv) Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to be performed by Japan, and
- (v) Counter narcotics to be performed by UK.

In spite of over two decades of endeavors and all the above mentioned initiatives, Afghanistan's state-building endeavors have been unsuccessful to a great extent.

1.1 Historical Background

Rubin (2013) has argued that the level of destruction in Afghanistan was much higher while UN called this level of destruction as an obstacle for the country's peace building. The High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change did not support the use of state building since it was paradoxical that was to help others to build state in an international system of sovereign states. Instead, a more close engagement by great power(s) in stabilizing their periphery was supported and promoted (UN, 2004b). Given that the international system has experienced a dramatic shift from one dominated by imperialist powers to a much more complicated one with sovereign nation states playing the most crucial role, the will and desires of great powers would not be safeguarded in an absolute fashion. Even the great power diplomacy required substantial support from the international community to succeed in challenging situations such was the case with Afghanistan. Humanitarian interventions or peace operations have appeared to be the instruments the international community use in problematic areas, and Rubin (2013) argued that the shift from imperialism to peacebuilding initiatives in Afghanistan was a mirror of the transformation both with reference to the actors of the international system as well as the policy tools applied to overcome vital problems.

It has been a common tendency to analyze and explain the international battle in Afghanistan through the lens of the Cold War (Ruttig, 2013). However, in order to fully

comprehend the flow and suggestions of state-building in Afghanistan, it is proposed that a closer examination of the regional background and domestic issues be conducted. Afghanistan's surrounding environment was not created solely as a result of Cold War, or perhaps it should be stressed that the current surrounding environment in Afghanistan should be viewed through a deeper and authentic lens. In sum, to understand the (dis)agreements, debates and paradoxes on state building in Afghanistan, it is necessary to have a brief look at the historical background of the country and to see how it has struggled to build a functioning political system before the international community intervened in the aftermath the Cold War.

1.1.1 Afghanistan: A Country of Permanent Battlefield

History and political science scholars have presented numerous descriptions to address Afghanistan such as “roof of the world,” “the heart of Asia,” “a land bridge,” “highway for international commerce,” “hub of civilizations,” “eastern door of the Islamic world” and “a melting pot of civilizations” (Alikuzai, 2013; Kaye, 2021). It is a fact that Afghanistan has an imperative location and geostrategic importance. Because of this, for several millennia, the country has been a battlefield of major powers along with numerous smaller size invaders. Therefore, the price Afghanistan had to pay was in the form of blood and destruction of physical and social infrastructure. An overview of more recent history of Afghanistan reveals that there have been several external encounters along with international and regional disturbances that the country has fell victim to in recent times (Kaye, 2021).

The Afghan state was established in 1747, when Ahmad Shah Durrani and his armed forces captured much of what is now Afghanistan. Nineteenth century has witnessed Afghanistan becoming a central hub of the notorious “Great Game” between Imperial Britain and Tsarist Russia, the two superpowers of the time. For a long time, the clashing Russian and British geostrategic interface in Asia began to undermine Afghanistan's autonomy, leading up to 1839, when the British attacked Afghanistan. Although Afghanistan was not entirely under British control from 1839 to 1919, the country was generally administered by the British (Ruttig, 2013; Johnson & Leslie, 2013). With the help of the British, Abdur Rahman Khan's armed forces transformed Afghanistan from a tribal confederacy to a relatively centralized state. Despite efforts to completely centralize the state, tribal zones have managed to retain a certain degree of independence. During Abdur Rahman Khan's reign, commonly supported efforts at comprehensive centralization and progressing governmental shortcomings vanished, highlighting the quality of Afghanistan's tribal population. It will be seen later on that this scenario will repeat itself in subsequent attempts of state-building by the United States.

Before the Soviet Union attacked Afghanistan in 1979, the country had served as an intermediary battleground for over a century. The British occupation of Afghanistan from 1839 to 1919 resulted in the establishment of assumedly national borders that cut across ethnic groups. During the 1980s, rising resistance and the anti-communist struggle engulfed much of Afghanistan's countryside, resulting in a critical influx of outcasts. Afghanistan's resistance lasted until the Soviets left in 1989. Initially, the US supported guerilla troops in Afghanistan in their fight against the Soviets. Despite its intensive engagement and support during the Soviet invasion, following the

collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the US withdrew completely from Afghanistan. Afghanistan was cleared out in a war-torn state, on its possession to recover from decades of conflict and brutality (Ayob & Koubo, 2008; Johnson & Leslie, 2008).

Only three years after the Soviets left, the post-war Najibullah-led organization, which had been established by the Soviet Union following their flight, collapsed under the pressure of ongoing political clashes and paramilitary assaults. The Afghan state was formed by various Mujahedin groups, which were divided into independent locales based on commander groups and territorial groupings. Afghanistan is well-known for its thriving political control struggle wherein Taliban rose to power in the void left by this battle, and thanks to escalating internal strife they were able to maintain control of vast swaths of the country well into the 2000s. On September 11, 2001, the United States' interest in Afghanistan resurfaced, signaling the start of modern international-led state-building in Afghanistan (Ayob & Koubo, 2008; Johnson & Leslie, 2008; Suhrke, 2011). Despite the rapid reaction from the international community following the 9/11 attacks, there has never been a unified and consistent strategic plan for Afghanistan that was agreed upon by various stakeholders. From the start, US plans were developed in Washington without consulting the UN or other members of the international community. Against the unilateral plans of US, the international community has proposed three elements in state building: coercion, resources, and legitimacy (Rubin, 2013).

Since 2006, Afghanistan has been ranked among the top ten most fragile countries in the world by "Support for Peace" (The Support for Peace, 2008). In 2008, the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan formulated its roadmap for security, administration, financial development, and poverty reduction (Rubin & Hamidzada, 2007). Between 2008 and 2013, the agreement, known as "The Afghan National Development Strategy" (ANDS) requested an average of \$10 million in universal funding per year (Shah & Garner, 2009). Military forces from 47 countries, as well as 60 contributing nations, are involved in Afghan state-building efforts. More than 17 years after the start of state-building operations, the situation in Afghanistan does not appear to be improving. More than 150,000 officers from NATO and other partner countries were stationed in Afghanistan ten years after the US-led war began, which corresponds to a time period more than what the Soviets had at any point during their occupation of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, as a result of state-building activities, some progress has been made. On the other hand, Suhrke (2011) describes how rising riots, savagery, widespread corruption, and powerless administration have obscured progress in areas such as health and education. For example, during the first ten years of state building in Afghanistan, the number of battle-related deaths (including military and civilian casualties) increased by 43 percent, and then increased by 142 percent from 2011 to 2015 (World Bank, 2018). These figures highlight the critical importance of addressing deteriorating security circumstances.



Figure 1.1: Political Map of Afghanistan

Source: (Nations Online Project, 2021)

The “Afghanistan Compact” was drafted at the London Conference in 2006, which served as the foundation for the “Afghanistan National Development Strategy”. This strategy established development goals for Afghanistan and the international community from 2008 to 2018, but because the Afghan government was unable to implement it, the Kabul Conference 2010 renamed it as the “Kabul Process National Priorities Program” and laid the foundation for the transition of security responsibilities. The 2011 Tokyo Conference emphasized the democratic transition of power giving the date of 2014, as well as the fight against corruption and the establishment of good governance (Nigam, 2021).

Following the political debates, negotiations and compromises, the international community's engagement in Afghanistan followed three major strategies: international administration, post-conflict peacebuilding, and increasing state capacity. Even though the state appears to have a relatively centralized power in the pre-Taliban era and current Taliban government, the government does not appear to have any authority throughout Afghanistan as the security situation has deteriorated on a daily basis since 2003-04.

1.1.2 The Dark Economy and Poverty: The Role of Religion

Afghanistan is a Muslim country with a majority of Sunni Muslims (85%) and a small minority of Shias and Ismailis (15%). Islam is the major belief system in Afghanistan, and as Barfield (2022) contends, this religion is an all-encompassing way of life. Control factors such as ethnicity, religion, culture, and ethnicity all have an impact over the political and financial structure of Afghanistan. As a result, it is critical to comprehend and address these issues in order to comprehend their role in any effort

to develop a state in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries on the planet. The financial advance is hampered by the lack of a structure, debasement, crime, and a lack of state administration (Ruttig, 2013). Agribusiness employs 60-80 percent of the population and is severely impacted by adverse weather conditions such as droughts, floods, and soil disintegration. Finding economic sources of vitality may be difficult according to the World Bank (WB, 2018a). Afghanistan's financial development is still one of the country's most persistent concerns.

More than two-thirds of the world's opium is produced and traded in Afghanistan. In 2016, opium production accounted for more than 16 percent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product (GDP). According to Goodhand (2002), opium trafficking could be a part of Afghanistan's shadow economy or casual economy. The opium industry, according to Suhrke (2011), could be a criminal enterprise. The control structure empowers crime, debasement, and viciousness. It is critical to note that the massive illegal opium market isn't solely due to domestic concerns. Global markets are available. As a result, efforts to establish a state in Afghanistan had always had to address financial issues such as poverty, economic development, and unemployment and Afghanistan's opium trade.

1.3 Research Question

The process of state building has been an interesting area of research for the past several decades, however there is scarce evidence in the existing literature about the role of international community in state building process in a country like Afghanistan, which is not only war affected but also faces serious issues regarding its economic condition, regional influence and internal and external security concerns. This scarcity of literature in the domain of state building in Afghanistan makes it quite difficult for academicians to pursue research on this matter and for policy makers to develop effective strategies for state building in Afghanistan. Addressing the scarcity of relevant literature, the present research intends to address the following research questions:

1. What is the extent to which the process of state building in Afghanistan has resulted in security for the people of Afghanistan?
2. What can research scholars and policy makers in international relations domain learn from the engagement of the international community for State building in Afghanistan?

1.4 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions, following are the research objectives of the present study:

1. To understand the extent to which the process of state building in Afghanistan has resulted in security for the people of Afghanistan;
2. To determine what can research scholars and policy makers in international relations domain learn from the engagement of the international community for

State building in Afghanistan.

1.5 Significance

This research study is an attempt to indicate the role that the international community can play in policy making regarding state building of failed states like Afghanistan. Thus, it attempts to enhance understanding and perception about Afghanistan as a failed state and in the context of state building. This study aims to make contributions for the future researchers on the set issue. At the same time the results of this study are of significant value for the policy makers among the international community as well as for the academicians pursuing research in this particular domain. Thus, the study aims to contribute to various actors including but not limited to policy makers in a particular country that is undergoing a state building process, non-state actors at the international arena as well as different researchers from diverse disciplines.

1.6 Brief Outline

There are five chapters in this thesis with subsections. The Introduction chapter, which this brief overview is part of, proposes a brief and summary overview of the state building in Afghanistan with engagement of the international community, the problems these processes are facing, research questions, research objectives and the significance of the research. Second chapter is focusing on the methodological dimension of the research design. This chapter will explain the research methodology and how the research processes were carried out during the research.

Third chapter is framed as “State Building from Different Theoretical Approaches”. In this chapter, a comprehensive overview of the prior studies carried out in the domain of the role of the international community in state building of failed states all over the world and from Afghanistan perspective will be discussed. This is set base of theoretical foundation as well.

Fourth chapter is Results and Analysis, in this chapter, data collected from primary and secondary sources were analysed and results along with interpretation and comments have been presented.

Fifth chapter as Conclusion and Recommendations will briefly cover the aforementioned findings. The conclusion chapter will also provide recommendations to the policy makers in light of state building in Afghanistan with engagement of the international community.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present research is qualitative in nature and it has made use of both primary as well as secondary resources for data collection. Primary data was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews from experts and academicians in Kabul, Afghanistan. The secondary data sources include books, academic journals, reports, research papers, internet resources, and newspapers.

2.1 Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research's objective is to develop research questions and offer solutions to those problems. Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, is based on the analysis of words and discourses rather than numerical data. Research procedures in qualitative research are not fixed, but rather can be tailored to the study's objectives (Bryman, 2016). For a variety of reasons, this study is better suited to qualitative research. The "why" and "how" questions that arise from human experiences are typically the focus of qualitative research. It is also possible to explore social phenomena utilizing more than one method or data source with qualitative approaches. It will not be sufficient to explain and/or understand the Afghan people's security concerns and experiences throughout the international community's intervention as long as the outlook of such a research is limited to numerical data. The unstructured nature of qualitative research also allows for a variety of data collecting and analysis methods to be used.

2.2 Restrictions on Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methodologies are frequently criticized in three ways. Qualitative findings are argued to be flawed because they rely too heavily on the researcher's subjective interpretation. Qualitative approaches thus are criticized as being highly subjective and rely on subjective feelings. Subjective interpretations may omit or exclude vital data. It is also difficult to apply qualitative research findings to other contexts because they are frequently based on small groups of people, making it difficult. Because qualitative findings have a narrower range, there is less room for extrapolation. As a result, openness cannot occur because it is difficult to determine what the researcher conducted and how he or she arrived at the results (Bryman 2016). Qualitative restrictions can be avoided by conducting thorough study, which takes us to our next issue.

2.3 Qualitative Research: Targets

There are certain quality criteria the researchers have developed for a qualitative research; below these quality criteria have been explained.

- *Trustworthiness*

When conducting research, the researcher should examine the research's quality. Although reliability and validity are routinely employed to measure quantitative research quality, their use in qualitative research is contentious (Bryman, 2016). The main issue with employing validity and reliability in qualitative research is that they

presuppose measurement. Then Bryman (2016) and Johannessen et al (2011) promote trustworthiness as a qualitative research criterion. Trustworthiness is measured using the four criteria below.

- *Credibility*

It is a straightforward fact that there are more than one single possible description of social realities. Credibility refers to ensuring that the research process is conducted in a way that is acceptable to the study's intended audience. This requires both acceptable research methodologies and gaining validation from the social sphere or location examined. Validation of responses and triangulation boost credibility. The former is "... a way by which a researcher informs the subjects of his or her research" (Bryman, 2016: 385). To achieve more trust in conclusions, researchers use multiple approaches or data sources (Bryman, 2016: 386). To assure credibility, triangulation has been employed in both data collecting and analysis, integrating content analysis with study analysis.

- *Transferability*

The study explores the local setting in Afghanistan, state-building in Afghanistan since 2001, and state-building literature. In this way, the reader can decide if this research provides a relevant proposal for future state-building policy-makers.

- *Dependability*

In quantitative research, dependability is connected to reliability (Bryman, 2016). Qualitative data can be verified for reliability by providing an open and thorough overview of the study process, data, and analysis methods.

- *Confirmability*

In qualitative research, the researcher cannot be fully objective. However, it is crucial that qualitative findings are not the result of the researcher's prejudice or subjective interpretations. Ensuring that personal values and theoretical inclinations do not overcome the research technique and findings is vital in qualitative research (Bryman, 2016: 386).

2.4 Data Collection

Data for this study was collected via both primary as well as secondary sources. Primary data collection was done through interviews and for this reason 15 individuals were interviewed who were experts and academicians in Kabul, Afghanistan. Opinions of the individuals were analyzed to answer the research questions of the present study. Secondary data collection was done by reviewing books, academic journals, reports, research papers, internet resources, and newspapers that seem most appropriate to answer the research questions.

Archives, government documents, policy papers and books, websites and periodicals are all examples of secondary data. Using secondary sources is a topic that Bryman (2016) tackles in depth. According to Bryman (2016), the authorship of media

outputs is often uncertain, and thus their validity is frequently questioned, making media outputs less reliable than scientifically-reviewed publications (2016). Peer-reviewed articles make it much easier to establish one's credentials as an author. The researcher's responsibility in analyzing secondary materials is also stressed by Bryman. When examining secondary materials, he suggests pondering the following four questions:

- The quality of sincerity: Authenticity of the evidence is a question that must be answered.
- Reputation: Is there a single error in the evidence?
- Representation: If it's not typical, how exceptional is this evidence?
- "Is the evidence clear?" (Bryman, 2016)

Considering Bryman's advice, evaluated academic publications, books and official documents like public announcements and policy reports were evaluated to determine whether or not they were relevant to the present research questions.

2.5 Sampling Technique

For data collection from individuals belonging Kabul who are experts and academicians, snowball sampling technique was used. Snowball sampling is an approach where participants of the research are requested to help researchers to identify some other probable subjects that is widely used in qualitative research studies (Parker, Scott, & Geddes, 2019: 5). Tentatively, there were 15 interviews including both groups however, the researcher was flexible in determining the number of participants.

Interviewing is one of the most common ways to get data in qualitative research. In order to get a full picture of the research questions, interviews are done. At the start of this research procedure, the crucial question was whether or not interviews could be done. Due to the unstable security situation in Afghanistan, face-to-face interviews could not be conducted since it posed high-level risks for both the interviewer and the interviewees.

As to the form and content of the interviews, two of the most common types of interviews used in a qualitative research must briefly be mentioned. A structured interview is designed upon a fixed set of questions to collect data on a topic. An unstructured interview, in contrast to the structured interview, is more like a conversation in which the interviewer asks one question and then lets the interviewee respond at his/her own pace. There is no set order of questions or answers in this type of interview. In this latter type of interviews, when someone is being interviewed, he or she can come up with his or her own questions. Because there were so many people who were interviewed through video chat, this study has used less structured interviewing method. This technique provides still a lot of freedom and flexibility to the researcher to guide the conversation and ask different questions.

2.6 Data Analysis Strategy

Thematic analysis is used to analyze collected data. It involves process of classifying patterns or themes inside qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2012: 17).

Thematic analysis is usually adopted for describing a cluster of texts, for instance interview transcripts. Researchers evaluate data cautiously so that the recurring themes, patterns of meaning, ideas and subjects can be uncovered (Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 848). There are several ways of doing thematic analysis, however the most prevalent technique uses six-step process according to Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 3354): which are briefly explained below;

- Familiarity with data (Involves comprehensive overview of the data collected prior to individual items analysis. The researcher studies the data several time in order to become familiar with it)
- Coding (Involves labelling or coding the content. The researcher codes the data to make it convenient for analysis)
- Search for theme (Involves looking over the codes, identifying patterns and coming up with themes. The researcher comes up with best possible theme to analyze the data by studying code and identifying patterns)
- Review of theme (Involves ensuring that themes are useful as well as accurate representations of the data. The researcher makes it certain that theme is best for representing the data by analyzing it multiple times)
- Define theme (Involves naming and defining each theme. The researcher names and defines the theme by studying codes, pattern and the theme)
- Write up (Involves writing up the analysis of the data. The researcher writes down the interpretation of the data collected through the pattern and the theme)

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations that were followed in this research are listed as below:

1. Proper consent of respondents is taken prior to their participation in interview.
2. Consent is also taken from respondents about mentioning their personal and professional details in the research. No respondent consulted for this research had any objection regarding mentioning his/her identity during the interviews. Yet, the information of respondents is not leaked out to any external source.
3. The responses were used for research purpose only. Complete responses were mentioned in this research following the consent from the respondents.

3. STATE BUILDING IN DIFFERENT THEORITICAL APPROACHES

3.1 Theoretical Foundations for State-Building

Scholars utilize different theoretical perspectives to develop an understanding on a particular phenomenon. Theories of international relations are centered on depicting and comprehending relations between states as well as non-state actors. The actions of a few actors within the international field concurring to Stefano Guzzini (2001) indicate that assumptions are required to form a sense of the social reality. The presence of a hypothesis could be a precondition for the plausibility of information as concepts are futile without them. Thus, it is necessary to have an overview on theoretical perspectives on state-building to grasp better how these different perspectives contribute to understanding the Afghanistan case.

The existing literature on state building can be classified into two categories. The first category is more policy oriented and advocates for the international state building project as a solution for most of the international problems including state failure. This approach finds its roots from the realist and neo-liberal theories. The second approach is dissimilar to the first approach and focuses on the contradictions of the liberal understanding, highlights the unequal power relations and emphasizes on the difference between the West and East. On the first part of this section the mainstream theoretical approaches with a particular focus on neo-liberals will be summarized. The focus of the present research is on state-building from a constructive perspective instead of focusing on conventional security oriented explanations and economy based explanations. On the second part, critical approaches including some post-colonial and feminist approaches will be examined.

3.1.1 Mainstream Theories on State-Building

State-building is indeed an inter-disciplinary subject matter, drawing attention and conversation from international relations, social sciences, anthropology, political studies, international development, economics and security studies. Over and over again, representatives belonging to these assorted fields are collaborating to investigate exceptionally complicated state building situations. A model is Berger and Weber's article in *Third World Quarterly*, a conventional development journal i.e. a conjointly published research paper by historians as well as political science experts (Berger & Weber, 2006). Hence, it is less likely to constantly categorize one coherent perspective on the subject matter of state-building and relate it with any specific discipline. For instance, IR academicians articulate some diversified state-building approaches and their way to think, apparently, is not limited primarily to the institution they belong to.

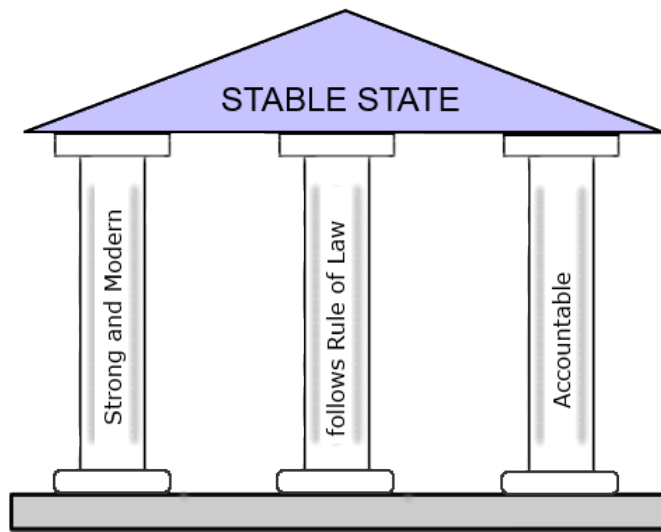


Figure 3.1: Three Components of Stable State

Source: (Fukuyama, 2004)

It is going to be seen below that the mainstream theories will focus on state building as one of the, if not the primary or only, solution to the problems experienced in political systems. On the other hand, the critical approaches will problematize the state building process itself since the state is the problem for these critical theoreticians. Thus, the mainstream theories, despite its differences, will find a convergence point in handling the state in an essentialist way while the critical approaches will challenge such reductionism and essentialism with a more open and inclusive perspective about questions on the state or any other political organization.

3.1.1.1 State Building from Realist and Neo-Liberal Perspectives and Critics

Max Weber argued that state is a representation of mutual action which means whatever the state executes is constantly for general public within the community and not for any specific group of individuals. As a result, state-building could be characterized as the advancement of government's capacity. Agreeing with Weber's view, state creation involves the depersonalization and formalization of political control (Fritz & Meoncal, 2007). This can be alluded to as an institutionalist approach to state-building by Lemay-Hebert (2009). Besides, Weberian states within the West are habitually utilized as a benchmark against which other states' quality is evaluated. (Grissom, 2010: 494). The description of statehood, by Lemay-Hebert (2009), is the foundation of what state-building activities endeavor to reproduce.

A number of state models acknowledge the state's three primary functions: security, representation, and welfare. As a result, in order to legitimize the state, state-building programs typically focus on expanding state capacities in these areas. In short, as Rubin (2005) shows, state-building necessitates the interdependence of capital, coercion, and legitimacy. Before money can be generated, capital must be accumulated, which can then be used to support government services and provide state benefits such as welfare. The ability of the state to construct security institutions in order to exercise a

legitimate monopoly of force is linked to coercion (Rubin, 2006: 178). The theoretical propositions connecting legitimacy of the state and use of force with security concerns establishes the framework for realist assumptions. According to realism, states are necessary to provide security both for the individual and the community at large that is also the primary condition to develop industry, welfare and culture. States in the system follow the successful states trying to emulate their state building processes. According to neoclassical realists, the competitive nature of the international system stimulates states to look at the military, political and technological practices of the leading states (Taliaferro, 2006: 467).

Traditional realism asserts that realist insight maintains its significant role in understanding the external factors in the success or failure of state building. For example, the patron-client relationship that many of African countries have been experiencing throughout and after the Cold War explains the need of the African states to seek for protection and aid (Clark, 2001: 89). Yet, neither the presence of an ongoing patron-client relationship nor state building efforts on its own are sufficient for security and peace. Realism acknowledges the dilemmas embedded in state building as different groups might end up in severe conflict situations to build their own national state. For example, immediately after the Cold War Serbs and Croats competition over the resources needed for state building created the poisonous environment for ethnic cleansing policies and the war in former Yugoslavia (Coates, 2016).

Francis Fukuyama, a leading liberal scholar on foreign affairs and state-building, defines a state's stability as "its capacity to formulate and manage programs, as well as to enforce existing laws in a clear and consistent way" (Fukuyama, 2004: 7). On the other hand, Fukuyama (2014) explains the problem of state building as related to the failure to unpack difference in dimensions of stateness. Since there has been a degree of reducing the intervention of government, state building process overlooks the strength of the government. The statehood and strengthening of the state relates to its ability to execute wide range of activities and to implement the rule of law. If a state does have the ability to execute its decision then that state leads to crisis of failed state (Rotberg, 2010).

Astri Suhrke, as another well-known researcher on state-building with a focus on Afghanistan, defines state-building as "implementing a system of centrally rooted public institutions capable of providing safety and basic services" (Suhrke, 2011: 117). Many other leaders and scholars have presented their own interpretations and definitions of state-building. In spite of minor contrasts, the main focus of the researchers, like Fukuyama and Suhrke, has been to fortify states' capacity so that it can arrange for anticipated levels of security and fundamental administrations (Fukuyama, 2004; Bogdandy et al., 2005; Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008; Grissom, 2010; Friis, 2010; Menocal, 2011; Shurke, 2011).

Considering the relationship between democracy and state building, Huntington (2000) argued that first priority of states is maintaining order; the second stage is economic development, and lastly building democracy. Furthermore, the neo-liberal state building approach has two main components, i.e. neoliberal economic liberalism and liberal democracy. This approach aims at institutionalizing Adam Smith's idea of free market, spreading out freedom for the individual economic actors, equality, human

rights and democracy. Peacebuilding, rapid election and aggressive democratization are also components of the liberal state building (Thiessen, 2011).

In fact, realism and liberalism share contradictions in their approach on state building as can be seen in the international community's efforts in several situations. The liberal/idealist project assumes that a people can be saved from themselves through education, economic development, and advanced, liberal and democratic political institutions. Saving a people from themselves required unavoidably military occupation in many situations which will converge the liberal/idealist project with that of realism (Chesterman, 2005: 1). The paradoxical and contradictory nature of intervention in a foreign country for the sake of state building and liberalism will be seen even more directly in another liberal theory which will be the focus of the next section.

3.1.1.2 Democratic Peace Concept: Proposals for State Building

Policymakers have pushed for majority rule government and democratization for decades in order to boost resources, goad financial development, secure flexibility, and avoid strife and genocide (Reiter, 2001). Researchers such as Immanuel Kant and Thomas Paine recognized associations between vote-based systems and economy, culture, and security as early as the 1700s. Immanuel Kant (1795) expressed that democratic republics would not go to war with one another since individuals would never concur to go to war unless it was for self-defense. As a result, a world overwhelmed by democratic republics would be peaceful. The contention that democracies do not fight with each other has led to the democratic peace hypothesis (DPT) (Gat, 2005: 73).

The ideal affiliation between democratic government and peace has ended up a cliché for nations like the United States. "Ultimately, the finest method to preserve our security and to realize a changeless peace is to help the spread of popular government abroad," US President Bill Clinton said in 1994 (Owen, 1994: 87). Numerous Western substantial distant measures proceed to back popular government and democratization in non-democratic nations (Kant, 1795; Owen, 1994; Reiter, 2001). In a nutshell, state-building operations involve revamping, actualizing, and fortifying central Western Weberian state capacities and education. Concurring to Friis (2012), this state-building concept has brought about worldwide state-building facilitations pointed at forcing vote based system as implies of accomplishing political steadiness.

The concept of non-democratic or intolerant governments being perilous has its roots within the motivations for state-building activities. Intercessions in state-building are regularly established on the presumption that unsteady states posture a danger to national and worldwide security and soundness. Karsten Friis (2012) accentuates this thought while claiming that state-building endeavors in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan have been guided by the idea of non-democratic countries as possibly perilous. Both vote-based systems and progression have been critical objectives of state-building endeavors in these nations, in line with equitable peace convictions, as an arrangement for inner struggle and uncertainty.

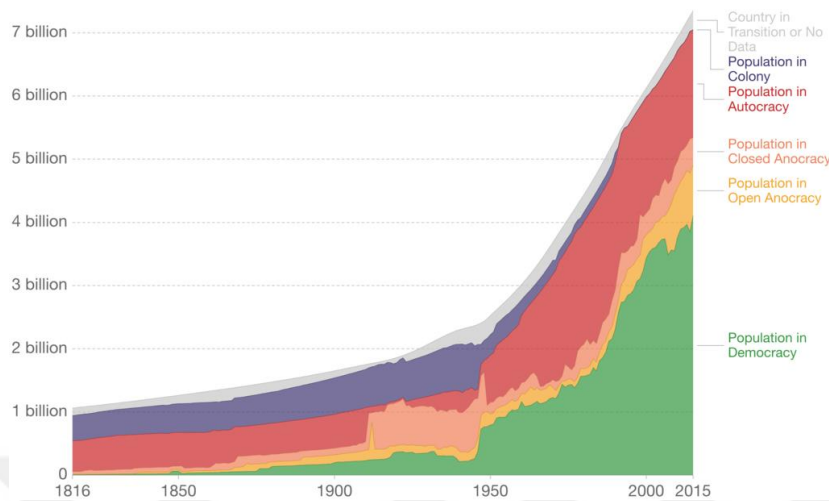


Figure 3.2: World Population by Political Regime Type

Source: (Ritchie et al., 2021)

Agreeing to DPT, imperialism, patrimonialism, and uneducated citizens are common characteristics of non-democratic and intolerant countries. These comparable inclinations are regularly debilitated in state-building strategies, as they hinder state authenticity. Depersonalization of control and successful bureaucracy are pivotal components of state legitimacy, agreeing to both Migdal (1988) and Fritz and Menocal (2007). Equitable changes, counting as majority rule decisions and steady political divulge, concurring with the DPT, can address the intolerant inclinations that debilitate governmental legitimacy. The democratic peace theory's proposition is reflected within the United States' definition of state-building. Within the United States, state-building involves the foundation of democratic governments and the reinforcing of state impart that are subject to majority rule oversight (Monten, 2014: 175-176)

Boege (2011) argued that in the non-western societies, state did not develop along with the cultural, economic and political development. Society was not ready to receive the state mechanism, hence remained disconnected from the state. Individuals did not understand what they should do for the state and what they should expect from it. Therefore, it was suggested that instead of a state-centric approach, one should look into the legitimacy and political order within these societies. The international community is focusing on the Weberian meaning of legitimacy in the fragile state, although this is just one type of legitimacy within these societies. Weber outlined three major types of authorities: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal authorities. These three forms do not constitute the totality of types of domination but they show how it is possible for some people to exercise power over others and the modern state legitimacy is the ultimate/final one (rational power) (Szelényi, 2016). The relevant review of literature suggests that Afghanistan is a tribal society with traditional values hence legal rational authority and open political systems are not functioning appropriately (Boege 2011).

In this research, the term "state-building" incorporates a particular meaning. The concept of state-building has been created over time, and the social background of states has gotten to be more critical. State-building too consolidates social changes, in keeping with Migdal's (2001) accentuation of the significance of viable state-society interactions for state-building. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) activities, long-term security changes in police, military, and border control, advertising progression, and government regulation are all common state-building endeavors. The need for remote offer assistance in state-building is best caught on in terms of the helpful issues that happened as a result of the collapse of the bipolar world order following the end of the Cold War, in conjunction with the development of globalization. In its most essential setting, international community state-building can be characterized as measures conducted by national and/or international actors with the objective of setting up, fortifying, and changing state education (Caplan, 2005).

3.1.1.3 State-Building from a Constructivist Perspective

In contrast to realism, which is concerned with security and material control, and liberalism, which is concerned with interdependency and the work of institutions and people, radical approaches are concerned with interdependency and intersubjectivity. The general framework is seen by constructivists as socially constructed. Emmanuel Adler (1997) argued that constructivism is the conviction that the world is socially constructed. How human activity and interaction shape and are formed by the world depends on the world's changing standardizing and epistemic elucidations. International relations are not fixed and there are no unavoidable outcomes of human behavior. Rather than being intrinsic, concepts such as legitimacy or political violence are socially constructed (Wendt, 1992; Hopf, 1998; Epstein, 2000). Finally, constructivism proposes that acts of the organizations and states are not exclusively spurred by self-interest. Or maybe, how we decipher and assign meaning to the material world is a perfect way to comprehend and clarify states' conduct and association in international relations (Wendt, 1992; Adler, 1997; Hopf, 1998).

In terms of a state, identity alludes to the state's inclinations and potential acts. In a broader sense, identities can tell you who you are, who you are to others, and who others are to you. From a realist viewpoint, state personality is synonymous with self-interest; but, in constructivism, each state can have different personalities, such as imperial, imposing control, or hegemon. Constructivism moreover sees identity as a flexible concept that changes depending on historical, cultural, social, and political circumstances. Identities are imperative for consistency in this way. State actors serve as a foundation for intrigued and can offer assistance to how states decide their best course of activity, avoiding a world in anarchy (Wendt, 1992; Hopf, 1998).

State building as an international project includes some other sub-programs such as good governance, peacebuilding, sustainable development, rule of law, and democratization. For any kind of international problem no matter whether it is terrorism, conflict, or environmental degradation, state building is given as solution to all of these problems. Failed states are seen as cause of insecurity and disorder in the international system. According to the current state building discourse, good governance and institutional building are the main solutions for the failed states. Since the institutions of a state are incapable and weak, they could not adjust themselves in

the international system and global economy. So, the problem according to the post liberal paradigm is not the international system, rather it is the state itself. Moreover, this approach replaced the democracy advancement project. For example, European Union is focusing on the rule of law and institutional building instead of democracy building. The problem with this institutional building is that it ignores the socio-economic context and relegates the people (Chandler, 2010).

3.1.2 Critical Approaches on State-Building

As part of an overall critical position against the positivist and Western-oriented theoretical approaches, critical theorists have argued that state-building theories are embedded in the political, cultural and economic contexts wherein they are developed. Thus there cannot be one single theory that is completely capable of explaining *the* state and state building but many theories should be taken into consideration without developing awareness that these theories are also part and parcel of the problem they are addressing. As it is already discussed in the previous section, the mainstream theories see the modern state as “the territorialization of political authority” (Jessop: 2006: 113). Critical theories do not deny the Weberian definition that the modern state represents “the legitimate monopoly over the means of coercion in a given territorial area”, yet they incorporate and discuss the multiple ways and actors using, imposing, or directing indirect ways and techniques of power. For example, the Italian Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci defines the state as a combination of political and civil society. Nicos Poulantzas, like so many Marxists, sees the state as a social relation. Feminist theorists attempt to display the patriarchal nature of the state (Jessop, 2006: 113-116).

Jennings and Bøås (2015) specify that the concept of failed state is looked from the western security concerns, hence the philosophers have been perceived as supporters. Similarly, arguments provided by Miklian and Schouten (2019) suggest that liberal peacebuilding project contributes to manipulate developing populations to secure the security of west and indigenous forms of social and political institutions are written off as tribal, clan based and lacking in modern functionality, thus justifying the embedding of western versions of institutions into the non-western contexts.

Paris (2014) suggest that the end of peacebuilding and state building which is liberalization is appropriate but there should be institutionalization before liberalization. Democracy and market economy should be delayed until the time of establishing strong stabilizing institutions so that it can control the destabilizing factor of elections and market competition. Fourteen cases of peacebuilding and state building between the year 1989 to the year 1999 show that rapid liberalization has caused re-emergence of violence. Barnett and Finnemore (2012) suggest the republican peacebuilding approach. Deliberation, constitutionalism and representation are the important steps for peacebuilding. Election should not be held quickly rather ground level governance should be initiated in the first level (Thiessen, 2011).

The emancipatory approach to peacebuilding comes from Richmond (2012). Engaging with the local and marginalized groups and bottom up approach is the core point of this approach. State building process should come out of agreement between the local and international actors and any kind of predetermined result and model should be avoided. However, human rights and rule of law are the components of the

program. Mac Ginty (2008) present a traditional and indigenous peacebuilding process. This approach is skeptic of any foreign intervention which may impose foreign culture on the local one. That is why traditional rituals, consensus decision making and reciprocal compensation are considered important (Thiessen, 2011).

Chandler (2010) explain that there are three approaches to international state building i.e. international administration, post conflict peacebuilding and increase of state capacity to address the risk of state failure. The leading critics of the liberal state building project are focusing on all these three areas. Chandler (2010) studied state building from a critical perspective and analyzed that the current state building process is a post liberal project that undermines the autonomy of the individuals. However, autonomy and promotion of freedom was the core of the state building in the classical liberal ideas (Chandler, 2010).

There are several studies that explained challenges and barriers of state-building in Afghanistan by considering causal-sociological explanation (Brown, 2021). Looking at Afghanistan during past few decades makes it evident that social challenges have been barrier to state-building in Afghanistan. Some prominent challenges, in light of causal-sociological explanation include legitimacy crisis, identity crisis, traditional and tribal culture having clear dominance over civic culture, modernity tradition conflict, economic and cultural poverty, in addition to severe traditional nature of the Afghan society (Hussaini, 2021). Karzai's state took critical steps for state-building with assistance of international community, for instance, constitution formulation, holding presidential as well as the parliamentary elections, forming security bodies, and many more. Nevertheless, these accomplishments were considerably faded contrasted with frustrations (Brown, 2021).

It is anticipated that the newly formed Taliban state is also likely to face this element of frustration with continuity of this adverse social context. The failure of both Karzai as well as Ashraf Ghani's states in recent times must not be detached from Afghanistan's past history. The social barriers along with the severe challenges in Afghanistan were a rooted affair that prevented apprehension of modern state rather resulted in failed states. Consequently, no historic separation can be viewed. The previous regime came across significant challenges for instance violence and insecurity, Taliban extremism, identity crisis, cultural-economic poverty, etc. with respect to state-building while focusing on internal analysis (Hussaini, 2021). This frustrated process is expected to continue within new state. Failure of the new state in terms of legitimacy particularly by non-Pashtun groups, the inefficiency crisis related to service as well as security-building and continuous interruption by militant groups are just some of the main factors through which continuity of state failure in the post-Karzai Afghanistan can be predicted.

3.2 How to Create a State from Scratch

On September 12th, 2001, the 4370th UN Security Council (UNSC) ordered the resolution 1368 just one day after the 9/11 Al Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. The resolution said that the UNSC confirms its readiness to require all vital steps to reply to the traumatic attacks of September 11, 2001, and to combat all forms of terrorism in understanding with its obligations under UN Charter (UNSC,

2001). The resolution, moreover, perceived the right of individual and collective self-defense and encouraged nations to work together and escalate endeavors to combat and avoid militant assaults.

US military operations in Afghanistan, known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), started on October 7th, 2001, less than a month after the militant assaults. OEF's objectives included wrecking fear monger preparing centers and foundations in Afghanistan, securing Al-Qaeda commanders, and combating all around the world militant associations (Ayoub & Kouvo, 2007; Areas & Ahmed, 2011). Astri Suhrke (2011) portrays the initial state-building handle in Afghanistan in 2001 as a "light impression approach" (Suhrke, 2011; Sharon & Bose, 2016). There were no motivating forces for the US or the UN to remain longer or to conduct more intensive state-building or nation-building exercises. Indeed when US Secretary of State Colin Powel inquired the UN to assist shape a modern transitory government in Afghanistan, he advised caution.

3.2.1 The Establishment of States in Tough and Conflict Torn-Environments

3.2.1.1 Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCASs)

Weak states, delicate states, failed states, and collapsed states are all terms utilized in the relevant literature on state-building. To provide a clear picture of what is going on, there's a need to take a step back and begin with the definition of what constitutes a weak and conflict-affected state. FCASs was born out of the concept of failed states.

As a result of the global financial crises between late 1970s and early 1980s, numerous nations in Global South were cleared out with enormous and inconceivably obligations. These Global South countries had to overcome financial crises which were compounded by the scars left by colonialization. This obligation crisis rapidly got to be viewed as a risk to universal financial solidness, and nations with long obligation levels were named as failed or weak states. The elemental highlights of coming up with small states are sketched out by Robert Rotberg (2002). An increase in criminal and political violence; a weakness of control over their borders; rising ethnic, religious, linguistic, and social cleavages; civil war; the use of fear against citizens; poor education; deteriorated or insufficient infrastructure; failure to gather taxes without undue restraint; high levels of debasement; a collapsing wellbeing framework; rising newborn child mortality and declining life anticipation; the disposal of customary tutoring chances; falling GDP per capita; mounting expansion; a prevalent inclination for non-national monetary standards; and fundamental nourishment deficiencies, coming full circle to starvation (Robert Rotberg, 2002).

Structural Adjustment program (SAPs) were actualized to bargain with failing and powerless states under the support of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and comprised of conditionality tied to credits provided to these countries. These programs endeavored to make well-functioning economies and balance out the monetary system. As a procedure of helping failing governments, the world economy and financial development ought to be encouraged out of the disappointment of the state (Babb, 2005: 209). These programs favored privatization in general. The

open division is being changed and scaled-down. SAPs have moreover been alluded to as an ERP framework in later years as extension of the US, IMF, and WB's generous financial interface (Babb, 2009; Davis, 2009). SAPs have been broadly scrutinized, and their selection has been connected to disinvestment, rising imbalance, unemployment, and extreme state disenchantment in numerous nations within the global south where they were executed (Babb, 2005; Newbury, 2016). The SAP's goal on diminishing the state's share in public policies may have had led to these consequences. The disappointment about the SAPs influenced the way global aid was distributed and managed in various ways (Fukuyama, 2004; Marquette, 2011).

Humanitarian and development on-screen characters changed the state-building approaches beginning from the mid-1990s. The objective of moving forward state capacity to use the imposing business model of savagery as a way of forcing position and security was reintroduced as information around the connections between state failure, state shortcoming, and clashes and uncertainty developed. By consolidating the security measurement into the condition, fallow concerns with respect to powerlessness and delicacy into state-building arrangements (Pospisil & Kühn, 2016; Nogueira, 2017). Concerns around the effect of weak and failed states were advanced a long time ago. In 2005, the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) Development Assistance Committee's Fragile States Group (FSG) drafted a set of principles as a reaction to developing concerns. OECD is one of the foremost critical sources of information and research on unsteady circumstances, and has embraced a multidimensional idea of delicacy (Bately, 2010). The OECD's fragility framework is based on five measurements, which speak to a blend of dangers and capacities that can be utilized to evaluate fragility (OECD, 2016).

The combination of risk introduction and inadequately adapting capacity of the state, framework, and/or communities to manage, retain, or decrease those risks characterizes a state's fragility. Poor education, insufficient infrastructure, high unemployment, and uneven opportunity are common in states stamped by these characteristics (Bately, 2010; OECD, 2015; MacClinchy & Scott, 2016). Supporting the research, fragility can lead to violence, regulation failure, uprooting, compassionate emergencies, and other issues. Failed states, agreeing to Torres and Anderson (2004), are those areas where the state is incapable or unwilling to successfully saddle domestic and universal assets for destitution lessening (Torres & Andreson, 2004: 3).

The conflicted perspective of FCASs is the second highlight. There is no universally acknowledged definition of FCASs, just as there is no generally acknowledged definition of failed states, but the numerous definitions are all concerned with the state's failure to satisfy principal exercises and administrations. FCASs, concurring to Sebastian AJ Taylor, it includes both palpable crises (composed strife and savage disturbance of socio-political forms) and inactive fracture (challenged political settlement, administrative predation, and failure to secure essential rights and administrations (Torres & Andreson, 2004). Finally, FCASs are regularly prolific ground for violent clashes, terrorist uprisings, destitution, and insecurity. As a result, these nations constitute a risk to the international community as well as the people who live in these countries and are affected by irregular clashes and destitution.

Ghani, Lockhart and Carnahan (2005) considered that there is a sovereignty gap

in poor and less developed countries. These states do have only de jure sovereignty and therefore they are not able to practically implement their sovereignty. Therefore, there will be a sovereignty gap among them. Poverty, violence and corruption are increasing instead of decreasing in the less developed states. The best way to fix this problem is to establish their state structures. However, the international aid system that aims at the fixation of the failure caused some harms, such as establishment of similar structures to the state mechanism, lack of harmonization, non-state provision to the core state functions, and lack of understanding in the aid flow (Ghani, Lockhart, & Carnahan, 2005).

According to Jacoby (2007), post-war reconstruction and state building limit state sovereignty while providing opportunities for Western corporations and the global market. The US attack on Iraq was intended to spread US supremacy. To have an effective aid strategy, aid organizations should first measure the state's sovereignty gap, and then, based on the state's conditions, there should be a time limit for the aid organization to assist the state. All funds depleted by government or non-governmental agencies should be spent in accordance with the budget and strategy. International organizations should not only transfer funds, but also help the recipient country improve its capacity and knowledge (Ghani, 2008).

3.2.2 Stakeholders in the Afghan State-Building Process

It is important to consider that who intervenes, and what is the reason for intercession? Given the diverse set of associates, each with its claim objectives and purposes, state-building in Afghanistan has been pulled in a variety of ways. The international help community, the United States, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA), and military leader must all play a portion in state-building in Afghanistan. Of course, there is a slew of other key actors within the Afghan state-building preparation. More than a master thesis research would be required to cover the complete complicated and differentiated display of key actors. In any case, bringing together Afghan partners, international associates, state players (the US and GoIRA) and non-state on-screen characters (warlords and the international community) is essential.



Figure 3.3: Neighbors of Afghanistan

Source: (MacClinchy & Scott, 2016)

3.2.2.1 The International Community and Aid to Afghanistan

International aid incorporates a long history in Afghanistan. Aid was utilized to support domestic political stability even when the British used to rule over the country. International aid contains a long history of undermining the arrangement of a government that's responsible to its populace. Within the early 2000s, the United States was Afghanistan's biggest supporter (the US still is nowadays). Other countries like Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and the European Commission are key contributors. The United States had gone through \$127 billion in the country's struggle as of 2008. External aid was, to begin with, given in little amounts, extending from \$1.5 to \$2.3 billion per year between 2001 and 2004. The larger part of the aid was within the context of crisis help and social support (Surrhke, 2011). Unnecessary to say, for aid to be valuable within the improvement of states, it must be well-targeted and must be successfully spread to regions that require help within the states.

3.2.2.2 Foreign Aid and Its Legitimacy

In Afghanistan, the relationship between international assistance and the government's legitimacy is problematic. State legitimacy, which is necessary for successful state-building, is eroded by international assistance, which bolsters capability through increased technical re-establishment. To maintain the legitimacy of the Afghan government, aid projects must match the needs and wants of the public. Afghanistan's lack of functioning governmental structure at the time of the first donor summit in 2002 necessitated the absorption of a substantial quantity of money. As a result of outsourcing the management and distribution of aid to relief organizations and imported consultants, a corresponding state administration comprising of international actors was established.

According to Zürcher (2010), the first step towards achieving state legitimacy is devolving service delivery to the federal government. Rather than that, the phrase "international" is preferred. Citizens were left with very little in the lack of assistance providers. People need incentives to believe in and to obey the state because establishing a state involves provisioning. Legitimacy of government is eroded by a vicious circle of welfare and services.

Foreign funding accounted for more than 40% of the Afghan government's budget in 1960. Aid has both financial and political impacts, which is likely to affect state-building endeavors. Authenticity and state capacity are two key arrays where international help can offer assistance to reinforce a nation. International aid alludes to any monetary help given by governments and/or other associations (indeed for military reasons) (Goodhand, 2002; Waldman, 2008; Suhrke, 2011).

3.2.2.3 America's Role in Afghan State-Building

In many ways, the United States aids the development of the Afghan state. Since the Bonn talks in 2001, foreign aid from the United States has been a significant aspect of Afghanistan's rehabilitation. Monten (2014: 175) advises other countries to "attempt to establish self-sustaining democratic systems". To put it another way, the US strives to improve institutions to the point where they no longer require US assistance.

Foreign policy under the Bush administration could be a factor that put a stop to foreign regimes that are hostile to the fundamental values of democracy, human rights, and capitalism in the United States (Berger, 2006). These values became more appealing after the September 11th assaults. Following 9/11, the US-led coalition conducted a series of airstrikes in Afghanistan (Nogueira, 2017; Nuruzzaman, 2009; Williams, 2011). Following the September 11 attacks, the United States first focused on direct military action in Afghanistan (Williams, 2011; Yamin, 2013). Initially, the US mission in Afghanistan appeared to be defensive rather than humanitarian in nature. Furthermore, the invasion removed Afghanistan as a source of American concern. Afghanistan does not require a state in order to exist. In other words, the US intends to confront the Taliban (Berger, 2006; Suhrke, 2012).

The United Nations adopted the OEF on October 2001. The mission, which was a combined effort between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Afghanistan, was devoid of NATO-led international security assistance forces (ISAF). It happened in an instant. From a broader viewpoint, the declared "minimal footprint" goal was only the beginning (Suhrke, 2011; Suhrke, 2012; Murray, 2013). After the Taliban were defeated, it was suggested that extending military involvement would be detrimental. There are four major arguments against taking a more comprehensive strategy. A long-term military presence would weaken the US position by making them appear to be occupiers. Given the country's volatile history, this is reasonable because only local capacity could create stability, it used the phrase "assisting Afghans in helping themselves." Concerns about Iraq also had a role in emphasizing the need for American forces abroad. After the Taliban were beaten, it was time for the US to take a step back (Murray, 2013).

3.2.2.4 State Legitimacy and the Rise of Rulers/ Tribal Leaders

Designating military leaders into government can also be viewed as a valuable boost to the state's authority and capacity for governance. To begin, outside of the major cities, the country is sparsely populated. Governing outside of these main cities is a difficult endeavor. Due to US assistance during the struggle against the Taliban, Northern Alliance warlords were able to reconstitute their militias and patronage networks (Stanski, 2009; Ginty, 2010). It is possible to conclude that compensating military leader such as General Abdul Rashid Dostum with government positions resulted in their collaboration, making them a valuable asset for the government's expansion into warlord-controlled territory. The prominence of customary and traditional law in Afghanistan demonstrates this point further. For the bulk of human history, it has been the primary system of governance. Local leaders and warlords are the only actors viewed as legitimate authorities in the wilderness of ethnic groups and tribes in distant regions (Pejcinova, 2006; Marten, 2006/2007). As a result, warlords are critical in bridging the divide between the state and the populace in these regions. A warlord's involvement in government is critical for managing and mobilizing support for a state.

Incorporating warlords into the 59 districts also puts the western modernist approach to state-building up against the Afghan culture's entrenched traditional realities. On the one hand, a government comprised of warlords highlights the need of recognizing the local situation. While some members of the international community

embraced warlords, many who favored a western bureaucratic approach for government election and structure were less enthused. International pressure to de-institutionalize state management increased in a paradoxical fashion as the state began to gradually institutionalize (Marten, 2006/2007; Stanski, 2009; Ginty, 2010). International hostility towards a state-administration comprised of traditional leaders can be explained only by modernist Western bureaucratic state administration. Additionally, the state administration's credibility was eroding as a result of human rights groups' stigmatization of warlords. Thus, the consolidation of state power and the marginalization of warlords became the new tactic for enhancing state legitimacy.

3.2.2.4.1 Economic Development and Tribal leaders

Effective state-building entails rebuilding the economy of the state. It is critical not only for the state's legitimacy, but also for the state's ability to deliver basic public services. Apart from aid dependency, the illegal opium trade poses a significant danger to Afghanistan's economy. Opium cultivation, production, and trading are all dominated in the region by warlords (Pejcinova 2006). Warlords survive mostly on the opium trade. Warlords rely on opium revenue to provide services to the public, providing them with legal justification for rule.

Additionally, the opium industry creates a sizable amount of informal employment. Given widespread poverty and high unemployment rates, the profits and jobs generated by the poppy trade keep many people out of poverty (Pejcinova, 2006; Ginty, 2010). The warlord-controlled opium trade protects the warlord's assets and legitimizes their position by allowing them to provide a means of escape for the bulk of the Afghan populace.

Poppies are also a problem for state building and the development of institutions because they are illegal, undermining, in particular, external state legitimacy next to internal legitimacy. In 2005, more than three-quarters of heroin distributed in Europe originated from Afghanistan (Pejcinova, 2006, Marten, 2006/2007). With the backing of external economic legitimacy, international investment may be encouraged and the economy steered. External legitimacy continues to be a concern because there is no feasible lucrative alternative to opium manufacture. Profits from the poppy trade cannot be shared with the government. Nearly 80% of the opium trade's revenue goes directly to warlords, while only 21% goes to cultivators (Pejcinova, 2006). This is for two reasons: warlords profit from poppy commerce, as do their subjects. According to state-building discourse, states are intended to assume responsibility for task management. By delivering services at the expense of the state, warlords undermine the legitimacy of the government. Thus, the warlord-controlled opium industry jeopardizes both the state's economic well-being and its overall reputation. It seems to be the case that in the near to distant future warlords will continue to pose a danger to state-building efforts in the absence of a more viable economic alternative to the poppy trade.

Local militias have been included in the OEF for two main reasons. If the US was viewed as an invading army, the operation would have been null and void. Plus, local expertise was critical in tracking the Taliban in the mountains. According to both viewpoints, understanding the local context is critical for planning the international intervention. Military actions in the OEF were transmitted seldom to the South-militias.

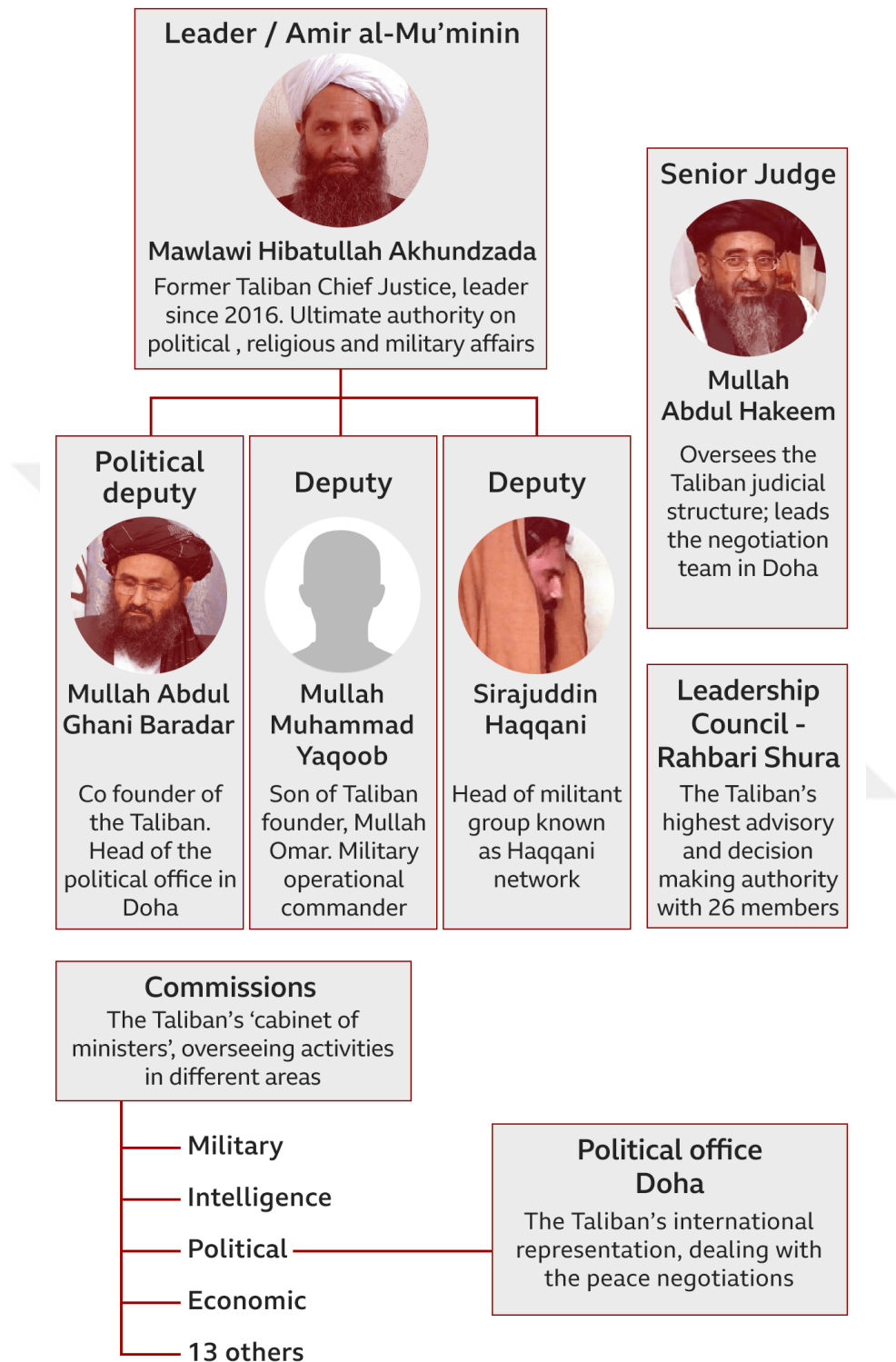
As to the militias in the East, it was barely two hours before an Afghan commandant's operation was to begin that the local militia has shown a lack of devotion. This partial inclusion hampered operations in the highlands to discover the surviving Taliban factions. When security considerations trump local knowledge, the former takes precedence. The Taliban were able to reappear due to a lack of local experience and information. For establishing a legitimate state, military is a critical component of state building. Foreign assistance should be limited in duration; else, the state's legitimacy will be eroded. Military support should be deliberate, including measures to strengthen the military (Murray, 2013).

Feudal lords and military rule don't have a lot of space in Afghanistan's state-building. Government legitimacy, security, and control over violence can't be kept in place if warlords give up their power (Rubin, 2006). A big part of making the state more powerful and effective can be done by working together with warlords during state-building. A recent case study that draws on the relationship between warlords and state-building shows how they work closely. There is a significant group of people who are called "warlords" yet at the same time they work for the state. They help the state run and get support from people outside its borders (Pejcinova, 2006).

In Afghanistan, it got gradually more difficult to keep the state administration clean free of the control of the United States as the state became more institutionalized. A lot of the money made by trafficking opium goes to the warlords who run the business (Ginty, 2010). In a contradictory way, warlords make the state look less legitimate. As part of state-building efforts, the government must be able to stop violence. With the right mix of security and insecurity, warlords can thrive. For instance, Ismail Kahn became a warlord in the Soviet-Afghan war after being the governor of Herat.

Overall, Afghanistan's rulers have both contributed positively and damaged the country's state-building efforts. On the one hand, tyrants who have been part of the state's power structure have helped the state become more powerful and legitimate. Some warlords have even been able to make rural areas safer because of their efforts. On the other hand, the same actors also played a role in insurgent activity and illegal trade, as well as in politics and patronage schemes, all of which are bad for Afghanistan's efforts to build a more stable country.

Taliban leadership structure



BBC

Figure 3.4: Taliban Leadership Structure in Afghanistan

Source: (BBC, 2021)

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents analysis of results of the data obtained through interviews of 15 international relations and political science experts from Kabul, Afghanistan. As mentioned earlier, thematic analysis was used to analyze the responses and themes were extracted accordingly to address the issue of state building in Afghanistan. At first, the details of informants have been mentioned and then themes have been discussed in this chapter.

4.1 Respondent Profile

The profile of respondents has been summarized in Table-1. It can be observed that the 15 international relations and political science experts belonged to Kabul and had diversified exposures and experiences. In order to avoid the disclosure of the identities of the interviewees, the Table is structured in a simplified way without giving ID details, work places, age or gender.

Table 4.1: Respondents Profile

	Name	Designation	City
1	Informant 1	Law and politics professor	Kabul
2	Informant 2	Politician, author	Kabul
3	Informant 3	Author, Political analyst	Kabul
4	Informant 4	Politics Professor, Author	Kabul
5	Informant 5	Professor of law and Political science, Author	Kabul
6	Informant 6	Politician, Author	Kabul
7	Informant 7	Politics professor, author	Kabul
8	Informant 8	Journalist	Kabul
9	Informant 9	Political Assistant	Kabul
10	Informant 10	Journalist	Kabul
11	Informant 11	Journalist	Kabul
12	Informant 12	Political Science Expert	Kabul
13	Informant 13	Journalist	Kabul
14	Informant 14	Journalist	Kabul
15	Informant 15	Journalist	Kabul

4.2 The Interviews

Within qualitative studies, interviews are often perceived as most common data collection methods and this approach is widely adopted in international relations and political science studies. In comparison to quantitative approaches, the qualitative interviews are less structured. Moreover, there are two categories of interviews i.e. semi-structured and unstructured (Bryman, 2016). The aim of the present research was to focus on the issue of state building in Afghanistan and how international community can play its role in this regard, therefore semi-structured interviews were considered to be more viable within this context as it lets respondents to provide more flexible answers and focus more on what they believe is more important (Bryman, 2016). Besides, conducting semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to make sure that all the essential topics for data collection have been covered. Furthermore, it also permits researcher to provide clarification and elaboration in case the respondents are unclear about anything. While conducting interviews, the researcher did not steer the interviews to any considerable extent. The interviews were conducted over phone, considering the security situation in Afghanistan and also the COVID-19 factor. The study did not require observing the respondents while interviewing so zoom or other apps for online video recording were not used for this purpose. Moreover, the issues of slow internet speed are common in Kabul city, and the main focus was on the opinions of the respondents so telephonic interviews were preferred for this study. It also allowed respondents to provide answers when they are available and comfortable. The interviews were recorded and consent was taken from the respondents about recording their opinions over the phone.

4.3 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed within one week of interviewing all respondents. This ensured that the opinions were still fresh in the mind of the researcher. The recordings also helped a lot in transcribing the interviews, in fact most of the transcription was done through recordings. While analyzing the interviews, an explorative attitude was taken towards analysis of reactions and responses on state building in Afghanistan and role of international community in this regard. During transcribing the interviews, the gestures and behaviors of the respondents were not considered as the interviews were not in person and did not include video recordings either. Moreover, the interviews were not transcribed during the data collection phase and all the coding was done after all the interviews had been conducted. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to find patterns, reoccurring themes as well as different perspectives from the data. While searching for codes, the researcher listened to couple of interviews first in order to get initial insights into the possible codes. Afterwards, the researcher read through transcriptions of all interviews and then coded them accordingly. After the different codes were extracted, the sub-themes were created where different codes were placed. Sub-themes were also categorized in to the main themes. Coding is frequently used in qualitative studies where data is analyzed using thematic analysis technique (Bryman, 2016). The main transcript was read before, during and after the coding to make sure that the data did not become fragmented and did not lose its context. The researcher attempted to observe the links between different themes throughout the analysis. Afterwards, the researcher went through each theme to analyze what the respondents said about each theme and used this information in the

analysis. The natural pauses during the conversations were also removed from quotes that were used in analysis, unless it was relevant to analysis (Bryman, 2016).

4.4 Findings and Discussion

From the data, seven primary approaches were identified that international community employs for the purpose of state building in Afghanistan. These strategies include: (i) Working with De Facto Authorities (ii) Immediate Attention to Economic Challenges (iii) Education and Awareness (iv) Improving Security Situation (v) Infrastructure Advancement (vi) Women's Participation (vii) Building Self-Reliance. This section presents these strategies along with the quotations from the respondents (*'in italics'*) to address the process of state building in Afghanistan.

4.4.1 Working with *De Facto* Authorities

It is very significant to understand that Taliban takeover of Afghanistan on 15th August, 2021 was not a sudden thing as the Taliban were in command in all those areas from where the US and NATO forces were withdrawn previously. The Taliban rise in Afghanistan was a gradual process and it just did not happen all of a sudden (Informant 1 and 5). However, the complete takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban after the last troop of US and NATO forces left the country was indeed a matter of serious concern for several groups of individuals including women and minorities (Informant 2). Informant 1 stated that "*Many refer to it (the current government) as the de facto Government, because they say they don't have legitimacy*". This might depict that international community can be somewhat reluctant to trust the Taliban government in the peace and state building process in Afghanistan. However, Informant 5 stated that "*I don't think there is any less legitimacy now than there was during the last government*". This clearly indicates that despite the fact that Taliban government might lack legitimacy; the international community has made a decision to trust the Taliban government and involve it in the state building process. Informant 13, who had worked with an NGO in Afghanistan, made an impactful statement on behalf of his NGO that "*We actually trusted, we chose to believe that the Taliban, take them upon their word... It's not an Islamic virtue to lie so we will take you (that Taliban) up on your word*". This shows that NGOs working in Afghanistan are now considering trusting the Taliban government and work in collaboration with Taliban to proceed with the state building process in the country. This clearly indicates that there is still trust and hope within international community and NGOs in Afghanistan despite little legitimacy towards de facto government. This hope and trust might be determining factors to enhance the relationships of international communities with Taliban as well as the NGOs with Taliban in the longer run for the betterment of the people of Afghanistan. This can be related to McLachlin and Larson (2011), who argued that swift trust is an important element in the context of disaster relief and in the places where change happens quickly. Moreover, this swift trust can also lead towards commitment in the longer run and result in considerable higher performance levels (McLachlin & Larson, 2011). Informant 9 was of the opinion that the role of international community is very complicated when it comes to working in collaboration with Taliban government as some of the NGOs working within the country might be able to trust the government however, the donors of these NGOs might be reluctant to trust the de facto government which might ultimately hinder the state building process in Afghanistan. Most of the respondents

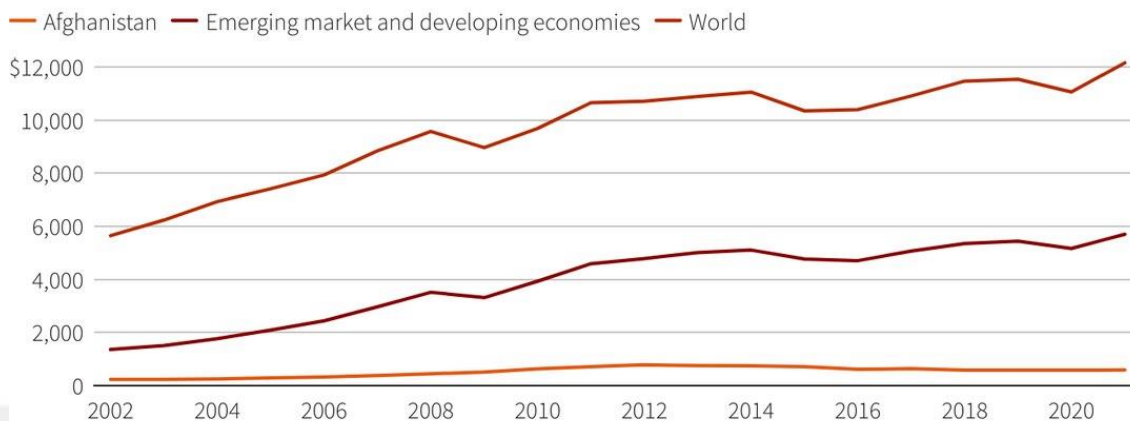
were of the opinion that now it is obvious that without collaborating with the de facto authorities, it is nearly impossible to pursue the state building process in Afghanistan and ensure peace and security for the residents. The international community was reluctant to play its role in the peace building process soon after Taliban established their government in the country and waited for well over six months after that to come up with an effective strategy and now the things are obvious that social and economic coping systems must be incorporated by the international community without any further delay (Informant 6).

4.4.2 Immediate Attention to Economic Challenges

The second theme as identified by the data analysis was that there are significant economic challenges faced by people in Afghanistan and these economic challenges require immediate attention from the international community. Informant 4 stated that *“There can be a tipping point soon where we might witness businesses getting closed and people getting unemployed”*. The economic challenges in Afghanistan are getting severe each and every single day after the Taliban takeover. It is feared that more people will fall into poverty soon if nothing is done in reaction to the present economic crisis in the country (Informant 8). Informant 13 stated that *“The international community is about to witness a critical point in Afghanistan due to political instability”*. The peace and state building process is definitely not possible without overcoming the economic challenges that the country is facing since complete withdrawal of US and NATO forces. Informant 6 and 9 were of the opinion that as the economic crisis increases in the country, the people will opt towards illegal ways to earn money and this will certainly make the security situation even worse in Afghanistan. Economic crisis in Afghanistan is something that requires immediate attention from the international community because it is practically impossible to make effective peace and state building strategies in any country which is facing severe economic challenges. This issue is very critical because the international community has already been reluctant to trust Taliban government and imposed some serious sanctions as well for first six months. Although most of the sanctions initially imposed have now been lifted, however, there doesn't seem to be any effective strategy formulated or implemented by the international community to overcome the economic crisis in the country. The international community has to take the economic challenges in Afghanistan very seriously if it is to make the state building process in Afghanistan effective and fruitful.

No convergence

Afghanistan has one of the world's lowest GDP per capita. The gap to the world average and even to other developing countries grew in the last decade as turmoil hurt the economy.



Note:
Source: IMF

Figure 4.1: Afghanistan Economic Crisis

Source: (IMF, 2021)

4.4.3 Education and Awareness

Education and awareness are important not only for the people of Afghanistan but also for the newly established de facto government in the country. Informants 4, 6, 8 and 11 saw the new government as an opportunity as it is easier for international community to educate the new government official and spread awareness among them regarding the important aspects. This is part of adoption process which is in line with the SET framework which argues that agreeing to mutual objectives and how to achieve them is essential for better relationships. Informant 8 stated that “*The Taliban government is not like any other government and there is room as well as opportunity to educate them in the way it should be done*”. There is serious lack of awareness among the Taliban government about the problems and issues faced by the country, however, this is not just a weakness, but also an opportunity to spread awareness among the officials regarding the most important things first (Informant 7). Informant 9 stated that “*Taliban government is very flexible towards humanitarian projects and shows somewhat rigidity towards development projects*”. Therefore it is very essential that international community must play its role in educating the government of Afghanistan about the fact that development projects are also important for the country in the long run, and the focus should not be on the humanitarian projects and aids only, just for short term gains. It is evident that there is serious lack of knowledge, awareness, understanding and capability in the de factor Taliban government and this is something that must not be ignored during the peace and state building process. The Taliban government officials are not skilled enough to formulate policies in consultation with civil society and this opens up the opportunity for immediate education and awareness (Informant 12). On the other hand, Informant 7 and 15 strongly emphasized on the

education of common people in Afghanistan. There is immediate need for building an infrastructure in the country that promotes education all across Afghanistan because without education, the people are more likely to continue to suffer the way they are right now (Informant 10). Education is one vital element of state building and it is not possible to bring peace and harmony within any nation in absence of education. Also education is regarded as basic and fundamental human right and the people of Afghanistan must not be deprived of this basic right. To some extent, the role played by international community in promoting education and spreading awareness among the general public is appreciable, however, considering the destruction that the country has faced in the past and in the recent times, this growth is very insignificant and there must be more effective and substantial steps to be taken in order to ensure that education must reach to all individuals. Informant 3 stated that *“The way I see it is that international community has taken most interest in improving the quality of education in Afghanistan and this has resulted in very significant outcomes, however, this is just a beginning and there is a long way to go in terms of educating Afghan nation”*. The urgent need to make effective strategies for promoting education and awareness, not only among the general people but also among government officials, is indeed imperative in the context of state building in Afghanistan. This is something that is going to have very significant impact in ensuring peace in the country for decades to come.

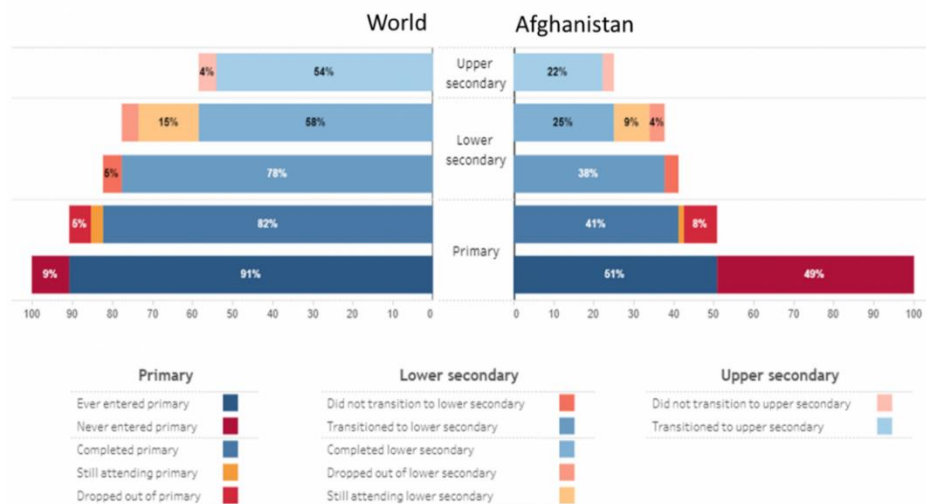


Figure 4.2: Girls Education in Afghanistan

Source: (Orfan & Niazi, 2021)

4.4.4 Improving Security Situation

The success of any nation is strongly dependent on the aspects of security and ease of access to all areas, including the remote areas, within the country. Informant 13 and 14 had the opinion that in past few months, the security issues have been improved in the country and it feels safer to travel to remote areas than before. Informant 13 stated that *“I am developing a perception that people are now feeling safer in the country and I see more people travelling than before.”* Indeed, the security situation in Afghanistan has improved in recent times and there seems to be more control and authority of the Taliban government. Most of the journalists, among respondents, had

experienced very less security issues while travelling to remote areas in Afghanistan in recent times than they used to face before. Informant 7 stated that *“The restrictions imposed over female journalists is part of another debate, however the overall security situation is improving in the country as one government is taking control instead of two”*. With the withdrawal of NATO and US forces, the security control is entirely on the Taliban government and this is where the active role of international community comes into play who has to negotiate with the Taliban officials and also provide them with the necessary equipment to ensure the security situation is improved nationwide. The improving situation of security in Afghanistan is a good sign and it is also pointing out towards the need to save extra money on security measures and invest in education or developing infrastructure, as less money is now needed for managing security now than before (Informant 6). Taliban government promised the general public that it will take necessary steps to improve the security of the nation and this is one promise that this government managed to uphold. There are still occasional bomb blasts in mosques and on check posts, however, the frequency of the terrorist activities have been significantly declined since Taliban came into power. Few restrictions have been imposed on the people by the government for their safety, for instance females must not travel alone without company of “Mehram” and the international community, more specifically the NGOs, have mixed reactions to such regulations. Overall, it seems that security is very much in control of the Taliban government and this is where the international community has to play minimal role and invest the resources in other essential elements of state building.

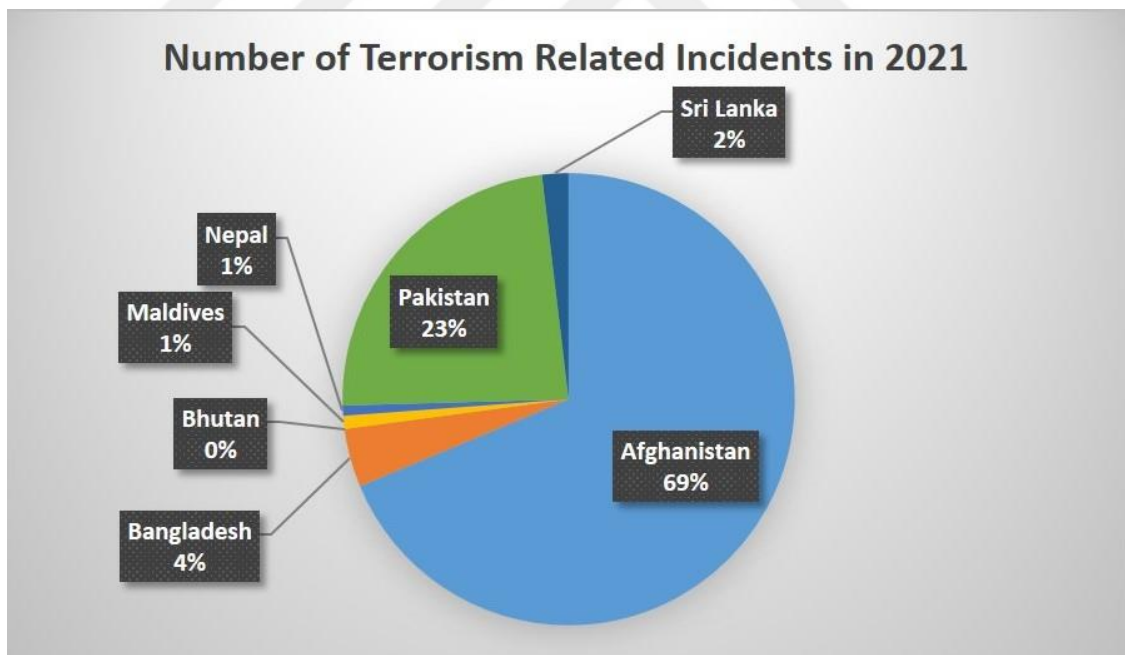


Figure 4.3: Regional Terrorism Incidents

Source: (Sunday, 2022)

4.4.5 Infrastructure Advancement

The destruction that Afghanistan has faced for past several decades calls for

establishment of concrete and efficient infrastructure throughout the country. There are many countries among international community, for instance India, who are taking more interest in building roads, bridges and schools throughout the country, however the interest of these countries is more personal, rather than for the general public of Afghanistan, as they seek to gain access to natural resources in Afghanistan (Informant 4). Informant 6 stated that *“The infrastructure in Afghanistan is of utmost importance, if the aim is state building of Afghanistan”*. International community must not rely on the countries who are seeking their own interests while developing infrastructure in Afghanistan (Informant 10). Informant 7 stated that *“When the roads are linked to the areas where everyone wants to travel, the prosperity is bound to come by”*. More than specific interests of specific countries, it is important to advance the infrastructure in Afghanistan and roads must be linked to the remote areas as well so that travelling becomes easier for general public. The construction and infrastructure projects are seeking attention of the international community and at the moment there is no significant step taken to advance the infrastructure in the country, other than few roads that are obviously insufficient to sustain the economy (Informant 12). The important thing here is that the international community must monitor all the investments being done on infrastructure projects by contributing nations and ensure that it must facilitate the Afghan nationals more than the self-interests of those nations. During the advancement of infrastructure process, the mismanagement has been observed as well which is leading towards loss of precious resources for the nation. Informant 9 stated that *“There are funds and there are resources to build necessary infrastructure, however the incapability of government is hindering the growth process due to its mismanagement”*. There are quite a few challenges that international community has to face in terms of advancement of infrastructure in Afghanistan pertaining to the mismanagement issues of the Taliban government and the self-interests of the contributing nations. Management and development of effective infrastructure within Afghanistan is significant for peace and state building process in Afghanistan.

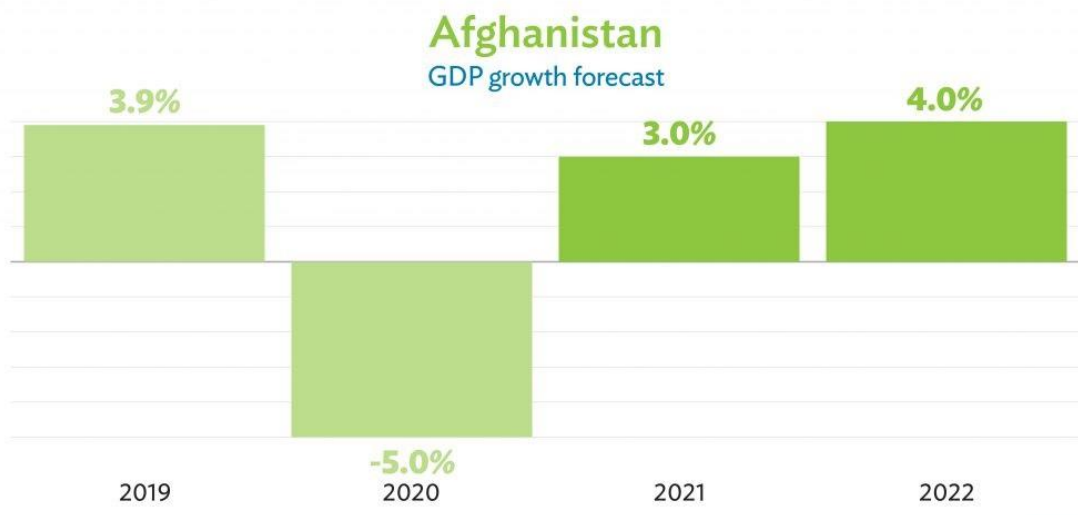


Figure 4.4: Afghanistan GDP Forecast

Source: (Rietjens, 2022)

4.4.6 Women's Participation

It is evident that after the Taliban came into power in Afghanistan, the role of women in the growth and development of the country has been very limited in many different ways. Interestingly, this does not come as a shock as the similar behavior was observed during the previous regime of Taliban in country, before US and NATO invasion. Although there are limitations, however they are not as strict as during the previous Taliban regime (Informant 2). Informant 5 stated that *“Women in Afghanistan are very considerable portion of population and it is necessary that they must play active role in betterment of the entire nation in the present era of crisis”*. Taliban allowed girls to attend schools in March, 2022, however there were strict restrictions imposed on the female teachers teaching at higher level. This raised a very critical concern as absence of female teachers in higher grades meant that girls will not be able to get higher education as they cannot be taught by male teachers, as per Taliban belief. To some extent, there is some relaxation for females in education, however, there are strict restrictions for women in the workplace. Informant 9 stated that *“I don't see the situation of women participation getting improved in near future, one approach might be to engage them from home by providing necessary infrastructure like internet, mobile phones and laptops”*. The need to educate Taliban government about significance of women participation is one thing, however this might take time to change this mindset and in the meanwhile it is essential that international community can promote work from home culture for females in Afghanistan as it would take lesser efforts than convincing the Afghan government officials to permit women to go to workplace regularly. Informant 15 stated that *“So rather than saying this is what the government or this is what the culture demands. We would try and say OK, well, what in the office makes you comfortable in terms of working? And how can we facilitate that?”* There are very few instances where companies are allowing work from home culture for women in Afghanistan. With improving education, infrastructure and security situation in the country, the only thing that hinders women from actively contributing towards growth and development of their country is the mindset of Taliban government. Many other Muslim countries are encouraging women to become part of workplace environment and contribute towards progress of the nation with their skills. International community can take immediate steps to promote women participation to ensure effectiveness of state building process in Afghanistan.

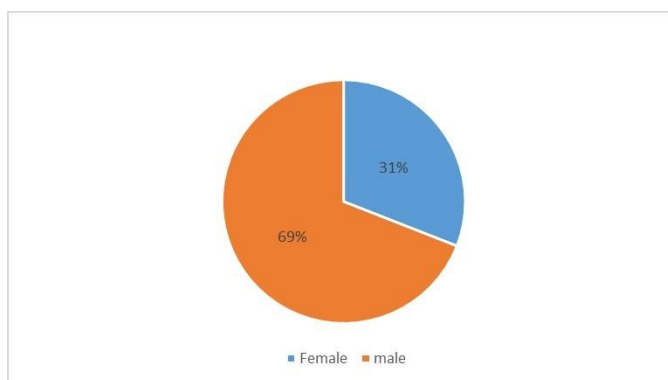


Figure 4.5: Women's Participation in Afghanistan

Source: (Salari, 2021)

4.4.7 Building Self-Reliance

One very important aspect of the process of state building for any country is the desire of its own people to depend on their own selves and establish themselves as soon as possible. Unfortunately, in the previous instances of state building globally, the aspect of self-reliance has been observed to get least significance and same is happening in the case of Afghanistan as well. Informant 7 stated that “*There is no possibility of successful state building in Afghanistan unless people learn self-reliance. It is not an option, rather a compulsion*”. Most of the state building efforts by the international community in Afghanistan are targeted at short term benefits, such as humanitarian aid and so on and the focus has been very less on the long term sustainable projects development (Informant 11). Self-reliance is an element that teaches people to think about the long term future and encourages efforts within to stabilize the economy and normalize the procedures. Informant 12 stated that “*There is strong need to encourage the self-reliance behavior among the people, otherwise the nation will be vulnerable to collapse any time in future*”. The impact of irreversible ruin in Afghanistan can only be minimized if the people of Afghanistan stop depending upon foreign aid and donations and start working over building themselves for the betterment of the future of the country. The international community must make sure that along with taking immediate actions like providing funds to lessen the impact of economic crisis, there should be equal focus on the development projects within the country that would equip the people with necessary skill set and provide more job opportunities. There are terms and conditions of contributing nations associated with aid and donations that might not always be in favor of the failed state and one effective way to get out of this situation is through self-reliance. Building self-reliance among Afghani people is something that international community has given least significance to and there must be effective approaches formulated to promote the culture of self-reliance in order to make state building a success in Afghanistan.

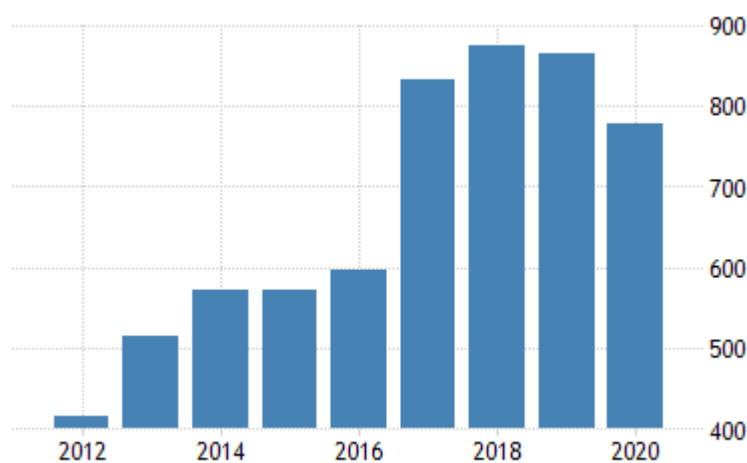


Figure 4.6: Afghanistan Exports

Source: (Taher, 2021)

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present research explored the role of international community's role in the state building process of Afghanistan. Moreover, the study also investigated the learning outcomes for academicians and policy makers in the context of improving security via state building in the context of a failed state, i.e. Afghanistan. Researchers in the field of international relations and political science are actively questioning the prospects of state building as it is of significant importance for the failed states all across the world. This study used qualitative research approach to study the aspects of state building in Afghanistan and the role of international community in this regard. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 international relations and political science experts in order to address the research questions. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the opinions of the respondent. Upon the analysis of the interviews, seven issue areas were identified and a thematic analysis was conducted. These seven issue areas are framed as: "Working with De Facto Authorities", "Immediate Attention to Economic Challenges", "Education and Awareness", "Improving Security Situation", "Infrastructure Advancement", "Women's Participation" and "Building Self-Reliance".

The case of Afghanistan is much different from other failed states such as Iraq and Somalia. Afghanistan has always been in the spot light within the region because of numerous reasons. The country has faced multiple wars as international powers perceived it to be an easy target to gain supremacy and exert more influence globally and regionally. Afghanistan is considered as a failed state still today primarily due to the destruction caused by several wars in the past few decades. Moreover, the regional significance of the country is very important to consider and that is why it is essential for the international community to exert more efforts for state building in Afghanistan so that peace and stability can be brought into the country as soon as possible. For other failed states like Iraq and Somalia, the regular efforts for state building might be considered as more feasible with more potential for success, however, the case of Afghanistan is much different and immediate and effective strategies are required to stabilize the country. The security situation within Afghanistan significantly impacts the security situation within the entire region and more specifically its neighboring countries like Pakistan. Therefore, state building and efforts to improve security in Afghanistan are of utmost importance, not only for the country, but also for the entire region.

It was observed that the most immediate need for state building in Afghanistan is to address the current economic crisis in the country as it is expected to give rise to many other problems including political instability and a significant rise in terrorist activities. The least important factor from where international community can save precious resources is the security situation since it is improving in recent times. Moreover, it was found that the international community must continue to play an active role in Afghanistan in order to monitor and influence the *de facto* Taliban government rather than withdrawing completely from the country and leave its people on their own. It is indeed very difficult for the international community to work with the Taliban government due the wars that both groups have had in the past and the fact that international community does not fully acknowledge the Taliban governance and leadership. It is crucial to consider that role of international community is challenging in

spreading education and awareness among the general public as well as the government officials, strict monitoring the sources and spending of resources on infrastructure advancement, employing novel strategies to promote women's participation in the economy and encouraging the locals to build self-reliance via long-term development projects. The situation of security, education and infrastructure is continuously improving in the country in recent times. With the right approach and active involvement of international community, Afghanistan can definitely become a case of failed state that evolved into a progressing nation via state building.

Taliban have the authority within the country and without their consent and approval, it is literally impossible for the international community to pursue the goal of state building in Afghanistan successfully, hence it might be a paradox for international community if they work with Taliban while they gave a fight against them in the past. On the other hand, if the international community does not opt to work with Taliban government, this would raise many complicated areas in future that will be difficult to be dealt with. State building in Afghanistan is still considered as a failed project and one of the most important reasons for this is that international community has been reluctant to work with the local government and the issue is more severe in Afghanistan now with the establishment of Taliban government. Despite the failure of the past initiatives, it seems more plausible today that the international community must figure out ways to use *de facto* Taliban government in the state building process.

Both of the research questions were appropriately addressed and both of the research objectives were met after the data analysis. It was observed that the process of state building has enhanced some degree of security of the people in Afghanistan and there were some meaningful outcomes for academicians and policy makers in this research that can be utilized for the benefit of a failed state like Afghanistan. It is recommended that the international community must continue to play a constructive role in the state building process of Afghanistan. In most of the areas, such as education and infrastructure development, some very positive and encouraging outcomes have been observed due to the efforts of the international community. In the areas like security, the efforts of international community do not seem to be as significant as other areas, and one of the major reason for this is the fact that security situation in Afghanistan seems to be improved after Taliban take over so it is assumed that for the improved security situation, credit is given more to Taliban government and less to the international community. However, it is important to consider the role of international community in all aspects of state building in Afghanistan, including the security improvement. Indirectly the efforts of international community are considerable to improve the security situation within Afghanistan even after the Taliban took control of the country.

5.1 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present research was qualitative in nature and made use of thematic analysis. Future studies can use mix method approach by incorporating quantitative techniques as well in order to have more comprehensive understanding of the role of international community in state building of Afghanistan. This research relied on opinions of experts from Kabul only. Future studies can take opinions from representatives of the contributing nations as well and compare their opinions with

those of experts in Afghanistan. This research considered Afghanistan as a failed state and did not focus on state building approaches for other failed states such as Somalia. Future studies can consider state building approaches for multiple failed states as well.

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APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Details

Name:

Age:

Designation:

Experience:

Publications:

Interview Questions

1. Do you think international community is playing any role in state building in Afghanistan?
2. What do you think are the main challenges for international community in terms of state building in Afghanistan?
3. What are most prominent strategies used by international community for state building in Afghanistan?
4. Do you think that international community has gained any success in providing security to the people through state building in Afghanistan?
5. What do you think can be future prospects for international community for state building in Afghanistan?

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Informant 1

“Yes I think International community is playing an important role in state building in Afghanistan project although many regard it as it as a failed project but still there are efforts that are being executed in the right direction. However there are many challenges that are being faced by international community for the purpose of State Building in Afghanistan. I think the most important one of these challenges is to work with the de facto Afghan government. Not many members of international community are able to easily trust the Afghan Government and that is why it is challenging to execute the state building project in Afghanistan in the right direction. Also security is one major issue in Afghanistan and this is something that needs immediate attention. The most prominent strategies that can be used by international community for state building in Afghanistan can be improving security situation in the country and the ability to work with the de facto authorities because honestly International community now does not have any other choice. Yes I think International community has gained good success in terms of providing security to people in Afghanistan .In future I believe that the international community can work on enhancing education among the people of Afghanistan and working in collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan. Unless or until the security of Afghanistan is not improved there cannot be much success gained from the state building project in Afghanistan.”

Informant 2

“To some extent yes the international community is playing some sort of role in state building in Afghanistan but this cannot be considered as the ideal State building project by any standards. I strongly believe that there are many challenges that International community has to face in terms of State Building in Afghanistan and a very important one of these challenges is the security situation. Under the present Taliban government as well as the lack of proper infrastructure most of the population of Afghanistan is still illiterate and living below the line of poverty so these are very big challenges that International community is facing at the moment as they pursue with the project of State Building in Afghanistan. Many refer to it (the current government) as the de facto Government, because they say they don’t have legitimacy. Interestingly, this does not come as a shock as the similar behavior was observed during the previous regime of Taliban in country, before US and NATO invasion. Although there are limitations, however they are not as strict as during the previous Taliban regime. After 20 years of War situation I think there can be some very good strategies that can be incorporated by the international community for State Building in Afghanistan and this includes development of infrastructure like roads, building, schools, bridges and more. Also there must be some trust now put into to the newly formed Taliban government because this is now the only reason for hope for international community to advance this sort of state building project in the country. The challenges for international community are very severe. Immediate focus should be given to infrastructure advancement. International community has gained some sort of success as well in terms of State Building in Afghanistan but most of the countries still see it as a failed project

rather than a successful one. But the efforts of international community have improved the security is overall security situation in the country which is a very positive thing. In future the international community must give more focus to infrastructure advancement, education and working with de facto authorities.”

Informant 3

“Well there is no doubt that International community is indeed making genuine efforts in terms of State Building in Afghanistan but these efforts cannot be concluded to be satisfactory by any standards. This is the reason why State Building in Afghanistan is considered as a big challenge and now many students are carrying out research on this topic. Well I believe that there are many major challenges for international community as they look for State Building in Afghanistan, for example, with the increase in aid programs there is lack of self-reliance among Afghan people and they are depending more on aid and less on hard work in recent times. I also think that lack of awareness and education are also big challenges for international community. The way I see it is that international community has taken most interest in improving the quality of education in Afghanistan and this has resulted in very significant outcomes, however, this is just a beginning and there is a long way to go in terms of educating Afghan nation. The awareness and education are not confined to the people only but they extend to the government officials as well. It is equally important to provide necessary education and awareness regarding policy making, International politics, peacebuilding, State Building and other related concepts to the officials in Afghan government. There are many strategies that are being used by international community in Afghanistan to improve State Building in the country for example they have worked on infrastructure advancement and there are multiple projects of education that are going on in different parts of the country. Yes the international community has been successful in providing security to the people of Afghanistan through its State Building efforts but as I said before it cannot be concluded as satisfactory by any standards so there is broad room to work on the security situation in the country. Well I believe the future prospects are very interesting for the international community as there are diversified things that can be worked over for example improving the education and awareness among the people and among the government officials and sincere efforts to improve the element of self-reliance among the people of Afghanistan. State Building projects do not rely on international community only rather there must be some genuineness among the people to rebuild themselves otherwise all the efforts of state building in the country would be for short term only.”

Informant 4

“For sure there is significant role of International community in state building in Afghanistan. Although there are some reservations on the countries like US that they are more oriented towards their own self-interest rather than focusing on the betterment of the people of Afghanistan but still there are considerable efforts being put in by US and other countries in Afghanistan to improve the standard of living of the people. There can be a tipping point soon where we might witness businesses getting closed and people getting unemployed. There are many countries among international community, for instance India, who are taking more interest in building roads, bridges and schools throughout the country, however the interest of these countries is more personal, rather than for the general public of Afghanistan, as they seek to gain access to natural

resources in Afghanistan. International community faces many challenges when it comes to State Building in Afghanistan because people are not very literate and people are not aware about international politics as well as their own future. Also there is severe economic crisis that the country is going through at the moment which is increasing the crime rate day by day. So the economic condition is indirectly affecting the security situation in the country. There are some very prominent strategies that are used by international community for State Building in Afghanistan and one of them is that they have worked on the improvement of infrastructure in the country and improving the situation of education of men and women. I don't see much efforts in terms of improving or overcoming the present economic crisis in the country because this is something that requires immediate attention. At the moment it might not be right to say that International community has gained success in terms of providing security to the people of the country through state building efforts but in future the situation of security in the country can be improved. In fact as Taliban came into power again, the security situation of the country seems to be better than before so it is more role of the local government and less on the side of the international community. As the local bodies can directly get involved in order to improve the security situation in the country. The future prospects for international community for State Building in Afghanistan can include immediate attention to economic challenges and improving the situation of education in the country. It is equally important to provide necessary education to women in the country because they are very significant portion of the entire population of the country and cannot be neglected under any circumstances.”

Informant 5

“I see it in the way as the international community is making efforts however the result is still not sufficient. So the efforts are there but if you are asking about the role then I feel bit doubtful because the results are not very impressive. There are many challenges for America and other countries as they work on State Building in Afghanistan. America and its allies are very reluctant to work with the de facto authorities of Afghanistan because they simply don't trust them. This lack of Trust is directly affecting the people in Afghanistan. Also the country is going through severe economic crisis at the moment. Most of the people in the country are living below the line of poverty. The standard of living of the people is very low already. People are deprived of the basic necessities of life like food, water, shelter and clothes. Under these conditions where there is absence of basic necessities of life it is very difficult to execute State Building projects effectively. The first and foremost strategy that the international community must work on is to improve the economic situation of the country because economic challenges can be considered as significant barriers to success of State Building in Afghanistan. It is important that men and women of Afghanistan must play their role to reconstruct the nation as a whole. I don't think that without active participation of women at workplace and in education Afghanistan can be able to overcome the economic crisis. The international community has gained some success in improving the security situation through State Building efforts as it has increased the education among people. Improvement in infrastructure in the country has also resulted in improvement in the security situation of Afghanistan. The future prospects can include working more on participation of women and improving rather overcoming the economic challenges that the country is facing at the moment. It is important that all these efforts must be immediately executed because if the economic

situation the country gets worse than it would be very difficult to carry out the state building project in Afghanistan successfully. I don't think there is any less legitimacy now than there was during the last government. Women in Afghanistan are very considerable portion of population and it is necessary that they must play active role in betterment of the entire nation in the present era of crisis.”

Informant 6

“Yes USA and other countries are very active in Afghanistan but it seems like most of the efforts made by these countries in the name of State Building are more for their self-interest. So the focus is less on State Building in Afghanistan and more on pursuing their own self-interest. For successful State Building it is important that USA and other countries must work with de facto Taliban government which seems to be a big challenge. There is also very big concern which is being raised at the international forums these days regarding State Building in Afghanistan that women are not actively participating in the betterment of the country. The Taliban government has imposed restrictions on women such as they cannot travel alone and there are other restrictions that women face while working and in terms of getting education. Working on infrastructure seems to be very prominent strategy of international community along with improving education and awareness. Again this is where the self-interest of countries like India comes into play as India has invested heavily in terms of improving infrastructure and building schools in different parts of the country. The international community was reluctant to play its role in the peace building process soon after Taliban established their government in the country and waited for well over six months after that to come up with an effective strategy and now the things are obvious that social and economic coping systems must be incorporated by the international community without any further delay. The improving situation of security in Afghanistan is a good sign and it is also pointing out towards the need to save extra money on security measures and invest in education or developing infrastructure, as less money is now needed for managing security now than before. The infrastructure in Afghanistan is of utmost importance, if the aim is state building of Afghanistan. When State Building efforts are genuine and sincere they indeed lead to improvement of security of the people of the host country. It seems like the efforts of State Building of international community in Afghanistan are not a big success and that is why they have not led to improvement of security situation in the country. But the newly formed Taliban government has somehow managed to improve the security situation in the country as we see less terrorist activities in recent times. In future USA and other countries must look into to improving the security situation in the country and focus more on improvement of Afghanistan through their State Building efforts rather than focusing on pursuing their own self interests.”

Informant 7

“Yes the role of International community is obvious but results are still far away as we talk about State building in Afghanistan. After US and NATO invasion in the country the people have suffered a lot and it will definitely take very long time to reach the level where state building in Afghanistan can be termed as successful. There are many challenges that International community is now facing while working on State building project in Afghanistan. The first and most important challenge is lack of trust on the Taliban government. International community is not easily willing to work with

the de facto Taliban government. The second major challenge is that the economic condition of the country is very drastic at the moment. One can imagine how State building project in a failed state can work without working with the Government of the country. And when the country is under drastic economic crisis there are many strategies used by international community that include development of infrastructure, betterment of education and spreading awareness among people of Afghanistan. There is serious lack of awareness among the Taliban government about the problems and issues faced by the country, however, this is not just a weakness, but also an opportunity to spread awareness among the officials regarding the most important things first. The restrictions imposed over female journalists is part of another debate, however the overall security situation is improving in the country as one government is taking control instead of two. When the roads are linked to the areas where everyone wants to travel, the prosperity is bound to come by. There is no possibility of successful state building in Afghanistan unless people learn self-reliance. It is not an option, rather a compulsion. Indirectly we can say that the efforts of international community for State Building have improved the security situation in the country as well. Because of the efforts in the domain of improving education and infrastructure but credit also goes to the Taliban government because after they came into power the security situation the country has improved considerably. As I see it in future the international community must give more emphasis to the economic challenges that Afghanistan is facing because they can soon increase street crimes and tourist activities within the country. Although the infrastructure in the country has been improved with the efforts of the international community but still there is more room for improvement in the infrastructure. So working on the economic situation and infrastructure seem to be most prominent strategies for State Building in Afghanistan by international community in my opinion.”

Informant 8

“This topic is very interesting and as a student of Political Science and international relations I also believe that there should be more research done on understanding the aspects of State Building in failed States. Now to answer your questions I think yes the international community is playing a little role in state building in Afghanistan. I say a little because most of the experts believe that the state building project in Afghanistan is a failed project and not a successful one. The economic challenges in Afghanistan are getting severe each and every single day after the Taliban takeover. It is feared that more people will fall into poverty soon if nothing is done in reaction to the present economic crisis in the country. The Taliban government is not like any other government and there is room as well as opportunity to educate them in the way it should be done. At the moment this means that there are many challenges that the international community has to face for the purpose of State Building Afghanistan for example the security situation in the country is not satisfactory and when people of any country are not feeling safe and secure it is very difficult to carry out any sort of development project successfully in that country and same is the case with Afghanistan at the moment so the biggest challenge is to improve the security situation in Afghanistan immediately. International community has played massive role in terms of improving the infrastructure within the country. Many countries like USA and India have invested heavily in improving infrastructure in Afghanistan which has helped to improve the standard of living of the country of the people of the country. Also there has been more emphasis on improving the education of men and women but

with Taliban government it is very difficult to focus on women's education. I don't think so that International community has made any effort to improve security situation in the country because the credit of much better security at present in Afghanistan goes to the Taliban government more than any other entity. The future prospects of State Building include working with Taliban government to improve women's education and to engage them in different constructive act activities to improve the overall economy. Participation of more women in the development of the country would mean lesser efforts would be required from the international community.”

Informant 9

“The state building in Afghanistan is a very interesting aspect and this can be considered as a genuine case study about a failed state on its way to advancement through State Building. I am not very sure about the fact that there are any genuine efforts by the international community that can be regarded as State Building efforts in Afghanistan because the way I see it is that most of these efforts are made by the countries with their own interest in Afghanistan and they are least interested in improving the life of the people of Afghanistan. If there would be genuine efforts for state building in the country we would have seen the results long time ago. There are challenges but these are not as such that they make State Building efforts insignificant. For example lack of education can be regarded as a major challenge in this regard but it can be overcome. Similarly there is not much awareness among people and the government officials about the state building process and this can be overcome as well. International community is making efforts in terms of improving infrastructure structure in the country by building roads, bridges, schools, college and hospitals. So this way there is some sort of a plan which is been followed as a part of state building process in Afghanistan. The security situation is better now and has very little to do with the efforts of international community. International community has been involved in Afghanistan since a long time ago but the security situation improved only after Taliban came into power yet again after more than 20 years. Although there are still some terrorist activities like bomb blasts which are happening in the country but the frequency is very less as compared to last 20 years. I would say that in future the international community should focus on making sincere efforts and work more on improving the security situation in Afghanistan and pursue with their agenda of improving infrastructure and education in the country without any self-interest. Taliban government is very flexible towards humanitarian projects and shows somewhat rigidity towards development projects. There are funds and there are resources to build necessary infrastructure, however the incapability of government is hindering the growth process due to its mismanagement. I don't see the situation of women participation getting improved in near future, one approach might be to engage them from home by providing necessary infrastructure like internet, mobile phones and laptops.”

Informant 10

“There is immediate need for building an infrastructure in the country that promotes education all across Afghanistan because without education, the people are more likely to continue to suffer the way they are right now. International community must not rely on the countries who are seeking their own interests while developing infrastructure in Afghanistan. It is not very easy to say that International community has

been successful in playing a role rather a significant role for State Building in Afghanistan but it is true that the international community comprising of US and many other countries is making some efforts for the failed state like Afghanistan. In this process obviously the international community has to face a lot of challenges as well. The Government of Taliban in Afghanistan is newly formed and it is considered as a de facto government that is why countries have reservations to pursue the state building process in Afghanistan under the Government of Taliban. One very neglected challenge for the international community is the fact that with more and more aid coming into Afghanistan the people are losing self-reliance so they are not depending on themselves instead they are depending only on the aid or mostly on the aid if I take it that way. It is good to see that there some strategies that are being used by the international community for the purpose of State Building in Afghanistan for example there has been ample amount of work in the domain of education and building infrastructure. Somewhat attention has been given to the security concerns too and this is where they have managed to get some success through because Afghanistan now is much more secure than it was ever before. Some give this credit to the Taliban government and some to the international community for their State Building efforts. The future prospects are obvious. The international community must focus on working to improve the security situation in Afghanistan and work more on the infrastructure development and education for both the citizens as well as the government officials.”

Informant 11

“It is difficult to answer this question that whether or not International community is playing role in state building in Afghanistan but if it is the case of yes or no then I would say yes because the role is obvious in terms of efforts that we see from America and other countries to facilitate a failed state like Afghanistan. Most of the state building efforts by the international community in Afghanistan are targeted at short term benefits, such as humanitarian aid and so on and the focus has been very less on the long term sustainable projects development. Afghanistan is a kind of country which has lots of challenges to offer to the international community when it comes to State Building because there is lack of education, lack of awareness, there is economic crisis in the country and the security situation is not up to the mark. People are reluctant to trust their own government. Very few people would want to visit Afghanistan under these circumstances and so on. It is encouraging to see that at least there is some agenda that is followed by the international community for example in past few years I see more focus on infrastructure development in all parts of the country. It is obvious that when you improve and facilitate the infrastructure in any country the nation is likely to make swift progress. There has been success for international community in terms of providing security to the people of Afghanistan through State Building at first but it is minimal and there are more prospects of improvement in this domain. It is important to note that the future of State Building in Afghanistan depends on how International community makes efforts to work with the Taliban government and encourage them to focus on multiple aspects including the role of women in the state building process.”

Informant 12

“We cannot deny the efforts of international community comprising of major countries like America, India, Germany, United Kingdom and others in state building in

Afghanistan but it is interesting here to mention that most of the political science experts still believe that Afghanistan is a failed state and the state building process in Afghanistan has also failed. The Taliban government officials are not skilled enough to formulate policies in consultation with civil society and this opens up the opportunity for immediate education and awareness. The construction and infrastructure projects are seeking attention of the international community and at the moment there is no significant step taken to advance the infrastructure in the country, other than few roads that are obviously insufficient to sustain the economy. There is strong need to encourage the self-reliance behavior among the people, otherwise the nation will be vulnerable to collapse any time in future. This effectively means that there are some factors that the challenges that have hindered the effectiveness of State Building efforts by the international community. A massive challenge here is the lack of literacy among people. The literacy is in terms of education of people and awareness among the government officials. Until or unless the level of education is not improved among the people and government of Afghanistan it is very hard that the State Building efforts would be of any use in this country. In the past we have seen some approaches used by international community in terms of improving education but a serious challenge over here again is that due to the Taliban government the focus of education is more on men and very less on women. Similarly the restrictions imposed on women in terms of getting education and working in education or corporate sector also poses serious threats to the effectiveness of state building process because women are a large part of Afghanistan population. I have observed that in recent times the security situation in the country has improved but its credit must not go only to the international community because it all happened after Taliban government. Now we see very less terrorist attacks in Afghanistan which is good sign for the people of the country. The future of State Building in Afghanistan depends on how sincerely the international community puts effort in order to improve education and security in the country.”

Informant 13

“Yes the international community has played significant role as we talk about State Building in Afghanistan because many countries under the leadership of United States of America have contributed their part to improve the present situation of the country and make Afghanistan a better state in this region. International community has faced many challenges as we talk about State Building in Afghanistan which is very common in failed States. The first one of these challenges is the fact that people of Afghanistan are now depending more on foreign aid and less on their own efforts so the element of self-respect and self-reliance is decreasing day by day. Therefore I think the State Building efforts would be somewhat successful until the aid keeps on coming. The second one is the fact that at the moment Afghanistan is going through considerable economic crisis which is also making it very difficult for the international community to make its state building project a success in Afghanistan. Yes the international community has used quite a few strategies for State Building in Afghanistan in recent times for example they have contributed in terms of focusing on education and infrastructure development and improving the security within the country and within the region as well. So I would say that yes International community has been somewhat successful in terms of improving security within Afghanistan. The future prospects of State Building in Afghanistan must comprise of focusing more on education and encouraging Afghan people to depend on their own selves instead of relying on foreign

aid only because one day it will stop coming in and this will make the situation in the country even worse. We actually trusted, we chose to believe that the Taliban, take them upon their word... It's not an Islamic virtue to lie so we will take you (that Taliban) up on your word. The international community is about to witness a critical point in Afghanistan due to political instability. I am developing a perception that people are now feeling safer in the country and I see more people travelling than before."

Informant 14

"In recent times we have seen very attractive role of International community for State Building in Afghanistan but there are few considerable challenges that International community especially America had to face in this country. The American government and most countries in the international community are actually not very comfortable to work with the de facto Afghanistan government because of its policies and history. Few concerns of the international community genuine but the need of the hour is that International community and Taliban government must work in collaboration. International community must make more efforts to encourage the Taliban government to allow women to become a constructive part of the Afghan Nation. In the absence of women's participation in the advancement of this country it will be very difficult for the international community to make its state building project a success for a failed state like Afghanistan. The infrastructure in Afghanistan has been developed considerably in past few years but there is still room for more improvement so I suggest that International community must play more aggressive role in terms of development of roads and schools and other infrastructure within the country instead of distributing money among the people. Education is something that cannot be underestimated under any circumstances and same is the case with Afghanistan. But education is not confined to people only because they strongly believe that the Taliban government needs to be educated as well so that they can make better policies and become a constructive part of international politics. Many countries in this region still believe that Afghan government is incompetent to make effective political strategies due to their illiteracy and lack of awareness. The efforts of international community and the Taliban government both have played their role in improving the security situation in the country. At the moment as I have said before the future holds in collaboration of the Taliban Government and the international community. Without this collaboration State Building would be very slow or ineffective in Afghanistan."

Informant 15

"There are mixed views about the fact that International community is playing any sort of role in state building in Afghanistan or not but it is obvious that there are efforts that are being made by the countries like America and India and others to improve the standard of living in Afghanistan. Massive investment has been made by regional giants like India and global giants like America in Afghanistan to improve the infrastructure like roads and building and schools. This has also resulted in improving the education level and the security situation in the country but the main problem is that International community has lack of trust on that de facto Taliban government in Afghanistan and at the end of the day it is the people who are suffering from this lack of trust. So rather than saying this is what the government or this is what the culture demands. We would try and say OK, well, what in the office makes you comfortable in

terms of working? And how can we facilitate that? The restriction imposed by Taliban on its people especially women are debatable but the international community must understand that the main focus right now is the people and not Taliban at the moment. Some very prominent efforts have been made by international community in recent times in terms of improving education, improving the awareness, improving the economic situation to some extent and improving the security situation within the country. The prospects for future for State Building in Afghanistan are working with Taliban government and working on issues like participation of women in the state building process.”

