CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF LIBERAL PEACEBUILDING AS A COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY IN POST-CONFLICT PLACES: AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Since the military analysts, as well as peacebuilders, started to view democratization, rule of law, and economic reconstruction as the panacea to enable security and peace in post-conflict places such as Iraq and Afghanistan, it has been possible to assert that there is a structural symbiosis between the principles and goals of peacebuilding and counterinsurgency. The basic criticism of this symbiotic relationship is the use of peacebuilding as a justification to maintain political support for military sides of campaigns. However, these normative efforts of interveners mostly neglect local perceptions and structures of post-conflict states due to expectations for easy and early success, which lead them to pragmatic solutions. These pragmatic solutions cause deterioration in the social and economic situation of host nations. In this regard, the research herein tries to reveal how normative peacebuilding efforts as counterinsurgency could aggravate existing flawed social and political structures causing an inequality between ruling elites and ordinary citizens of post-conflict environments, using Afghanistan as a case study.

***Keywords:** Peacebuilding, Statebuilding, Afghanistan, Counterinsurgency, Inequality, Local Perception*

BİR KARŞI AYAKLANMA YÖNTEMİ OLARAK LİBERAL BARIŞ İNŞASININ ELEŞTİREL ANALİZİ: AFGANİSTAN

ÖZ

Barış inşası için çalışan uzmanlar kadar askerî analistlerin de demokratikleşme, hukukun üstünlüğü, ve ekonomik yapının yeniden inşasını barış ve güvenliğin tesisi için her derde deva bir çare olarak görmeye başladıklarından beri, esasları ve amaçları bakımından barış inşası ve karşı ayaklanma arasında simbiyotik bir ilişki olduğunu iddia etmek mümkündür. Bu simbiyotik ilişkiye yöneltilen en önemli ilişki barış inşasının yürütülen askerî faaliyetler için siyasi destek sağlamak adına kullanılmasıdır. Ancak, müdahalede bulunan ülkelerin izledikleri normatif çabalar büyük ölçüde yerel algıları ve çatışma sonrası ülkelerin yapılarını pragmatik bir bakış açısı ile kolay ve erken başarı elde etmek adına görmezden gelmektedirler. Bu pragmatik yaklaşımlar, ev sahibi ülkenin sosyal ve ekonomik yapılarına zarar vermektedir. Bu bağlamda; bu çalışma, karşı ayaklanmanın bir parçası olarak normatif barış inşası çabalarının, Afganistan örneği üzerinden, yönetici elitler ile normal vatandaşlar arasında eşitsizliğe neden olarak zaten sorunlu olan sosyal ve politik yapıyı daha da kötüleştirebileceğini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

***Anahtar Kelimeler:** Barış İnşası, Devlet İnşası, Afganistan, Karşı Ayaklanma, Eşitsizlik, Yerel Algı*

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INTRODUCTION

As a consequence of unpleasant experiences of 1990s, the peace operation mind-set has evolved from conflict mediation into 'aggressive peace' operations that might include various types of coercion and war in accordance with political and strategic interests of interveners (Pugh, 2012: 410-25). A further feature of the new mind-set is to diagnose the root cause of conflicts as state failure, the cure of which is defined as reconstruction of the failed state as a liberal democracy. Therefore, democratization, rule of law, and economic reconstruction have been viewed as a panacea to enable global security and peace (Pugh, 2012: 416). In this regard, to stabilize the conflict environment as a democratic and peaceful political entity, offensive and defensive military operations became an important element of peace operations.

Moreover, military doctrine, which also evaluates state failure as a threat to security, developed the new counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine in response to this threat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rapid and decisive operations in Afghanistan and Iraq seemed to be the conventional victories of modern armies. However, rising insurgencies soon after, overshadowed these victories. Population-centric counterinsurgency relying on 'winning hearts and minds' of local people by supporting a legitimate host state-structure or government that could maintain basic services to the people emerged as a remedy at that point. In this regard, postulating that 'there is a structural symbiosis between the principles and goals of peacebuilding and counterinsurgency should not be controversial' (Turner, 2015: 73-98).

In Afghanistan, despite the population-centrism of the counterinsurgency doctrine, to defeat the Taliban insurgency, interveners have preferred building collaborations with warlords and traditional local power brokers who had been important actors of the civil war that became one of the initial dynamics of the Taliban insurgency. Nevertheless, all conflicts in Afghanistan have emerged between different elite groups to dominate the power in the country with the help of foreign supporters (Saikal et al., 2004). These domination efforts have been incapable of or unwilling to establish 'an organic relationship with the citizens, based on just and equitable treatment' (Sahrani, 1986: 65). Hence, in Afghanistan, there has been a huge gap between state elites or power brokers and ordinary people, who have been only the object or the victim of the long-lasting power centralization process and conflicts. In this regard, this article tries to reveal how normative peacebuilding efforts as a means of counterinsurgency could aggravate existing flawed social and political structures, causing an inequality between ruling elites and everyday citizens in the post-conflict environment of Afghanistan.

This article includes three substantive parts. In the first part (1), the emergence of counterinsurgency and its symbiotic relationship with peacebuilding are examined. In the second part (2), the article discusses the unequal social structure of Afghanistan from a wider historical perspective. Finally, the third part (3) focuses on the answer to the main question; what are the effects of peacebuilding as counterinsurgency on political, social and economic inequality in the country? Methodology of the article is based on the observations and personal reflections of the author who served with the Afghan people for seven months as a liaison officer of NATO. These reflections and observations are supported with first-hand official statistical data and reports (primary sources), and document analysis of journal and newspaper articles and books on the socio-politics and economic situation of the country (secondary sources).

The academic literature evaluating statebuilding and peacebuilding in Afghanistan has largely ignored the military aspect of the issue by focusing on political and economic analyses. Similarly, the counterinsurgency literature, and especially that which focuses on Afghanistan, has assessed counterinsurgency policies from technical and strategic perspectives. Thus, this article, which will analyse the counterinsurgency and the military aspects of peacebuilding from a political-economy perspective, attempts to fill the gap between socio-political analyses and military studies to some extent.

1. PEACEBUILDING AS COUNTERINSURGENCY

Counterinsurgency, in military terminology, is a comprehensive effort that needs a coherent collaboration of military and civilian actors. Despite the flaws and criticisms, the focus of the doctrine is getting support of the population through the maintenance of security and legitimate governance to defeat insurgency. Beyond defeating insurgency, the aim of counterinsurgency in failed states is to safeguard stability and order against the re-emergence of insurgencies, by economic, political, and military supervision of the host-nation government.

On the civilian side of the phenomenon, concepts and implementation of peacebuilding strategies also resemble counterinsurgency themes (Turner, 2015: 77). For instance, in the UN Secretary-General's report, 'An Agenda for Peace', the Secretary General Boutros-Ghali emphasized that for a new era of prosperity and justice, democracy is vital at all levels; in post-conflict countries, development of the democratic, social, political, and economic infrastructure is essential to prevent further violence and to consolidate peace (Boutros-Ghali, 1992: 16).

The humanitarian interventions of the 1990s such as in Rwanda, Somalia, BiH, and Kosovo, were criticized for inadequate efforts before the deterioration of the situation, and the deficiency of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding policies: both the Brahimi Report on the UN Peacekeeping Reform and the Responsibility to Protect Report (R2P) criticised the impartiality and neutrality principles of peace operations (Durch et. al.: 2003). For instance, the Brahimi Report emphasized that military components of peace missions should have robust military effectiveness to defend themselves and civilians under their care (Bellamy, 2009: 40). In this regard, while military strategy began to use peacebuilding activities in order to reach military targets, peace institutions also accepted the necessity of robust military components in peace operations to maintain stability at least for humanitarian activities.

Moreover, R2P stated that human security is a key concept when deciding on an intervention, and offered three specific responsibilities: the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react, and the responsibility to rebuild (Evans, 2008: 40). The responsibility to rebuild brings a burden on the intervening state, or states, to sustain the post-conflict recovery process with monetary aid and political support to eliminate the root causes of the conflict (Hehir, 2010: 114). In the report, the responsibility to rebuild covers three crucial areas: security, justice and economic development (ICISS, 2001: 40). The security component of the responsibility effectively legitimizes the use of various forms of coercion towards the threats against peace and stability. From this perspective, although R2P aims to maintain human security in terms of peace operations, the responsibility to prevent and react necessitates a changing level of military components according to the characteristics of conflict zone.

The roots of the symbiotic relationship between peacebuilding and counterinsurgency can actually be found in the early 20th century, an era remembered for its anti-colonial movements, which also inspired population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine. These early examples were initiated to preserve colonial control against anti-colonial insurgencies; to suppress revolutionary wars. By following a similar critical perspective, it can be said that Western political and security interests also continue to lead current counterinsurgency and peacebuilding efforts. The most basic criticism of these efforts is the use of peacebuilding or statebuilding as a measure of legitimacy that can maintain political support for the military side of campaigns (Jones and Smith, 2010: 81-121). From this perspective, normative peacebuilding and statebuilding practices, including counterinsurgency – represented as the needs of local population – have become an instrument of Western political strategies as well as governing elites of host nations (Kühn and Turner, 2012: 393-5).

Capacity building, rule of law, security sector reform, statebuilding, and good governance are the key themes of the normative practices of peacebuilding as counterinsurgency. The relationship between these themes and security is a fundamental of current campaigns. While peacebuilding literature names this relationship 'security-development nexus', military strategy calls it 'counterinsurgency' (Turner, 2015: 79). From the 1990s, the definition of these efforts has taken various shapes. 'Operations other than war', 'peace support operations', 'counterinsurgency', peace enforcement', and 'stabilization operations' are a few of them. The main debate of this definition problem is which side of the nexus – security and governance – dominates the other side.

It is possible to demonstrate the same contradiction for counterinsurgency as well. According to a more statebuilding-based perspective, peace and stabilization should dominate counterinsurgency as a military strategy to maintain security. However, counterinsurgency, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, has become a general political framework that includes comprehensive military and civilian efforts to maintain sustainable peace in failed states. This contradiction might be summarized as the debate over which one is more controversial: 'securitization of development' or 'developmentalization of military' (Petřík, 2010: 2). On the field, military forces and their operational aims follow the political authority's strategic objectives. The political authority, which assumes state fragility and underdeveloped social structure as an existential threat to security at national or global level, can declare peacebuilding as a component of the military doctrine as in counterinsurgency. As an example of this policy, the US Government Counterinsurgency Guide explains the desired end state of counterinsurgency as 'a government that is seen as legitimate, controlling social, political, economic and security institutions that meet the population's needs, including adequate mechanisms to address the grievances […] of the insurgency (US Department of State, 2009: 4). In addition, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice used the concept of counterinsurgency as a state policy in 2005 by stating 'with the Iraqi Government, our political-military strategy has to be to clear, hold, and build: to clear areas from insurgent control, to hold them securely and to build durable Iraqi institutions' (Rice, 2008: 303-27).

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks the US-led coalition invaded Afghanistan, relying on the justification of self-defence. In 2003, the

invasion of Iraq followed Afghanistan. In spite of the conventional victories, the invasions served merely to worsen the ongoing insecurity in both countries (Jones and Smith, 2010: 81-121; Mann, 2003: 85). The Taliban resistance in Afghanistan and the Sunni tribal opposition in Iraq forced authorities – especially the military and governmental authorities of the USA – to seek new solutions from previous British, French and American counterinsurgency experiences (Cromartie, 2012: 91-111). As a result of these efforts, the US Military published the most comprehensive counterinsurgency document, FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency in 2006.[1] The manual, which adopted a multidimensional approach and incorporated the perspectives of anthropologists, practitioners, sociologists, journalists and officials, was clearly influenced by the important names within the 20th century counterinsurgency literature, such as David Galula, Robert Thompson and Frank Kitson. In 2011, NATO also published the Allied Joint Doctrine of Counterinsurgency which was mostly based on the US and British counterinsurgency manuals.

Counterinsurgency, as an umbrella term, describes all measures, including political, administrative, military, economics, psychological, and informational efforts. In fact, these are the responsibilities of a host government, according to the principle of national sovereignty. Hence, counterinsurgency mirrors the government, so 'good governments can do counterinsurgency badly, but bad governments can't do it well' (Kilcullen, 2010: 114-115). This idea emphasizes nation-building and statebuilding policies as a means of counterinsurgency in the post-conflict environments. Kilcullen (2010: 155-156) suggests that a bottom-up approach that contains civil-society-based programs, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and collaborations with the local society at the grass-roots level may have a greater chance than the state-centric approaches.

The non-uniformity of local spaces and specific everyday practices of each local population have been neglected, so structures of power and elite-subordinate relations of patronage have not been understood adequately by peacebuilders or counterinsurgents (Heathershaw andl Lambach, 2008). There is inadequate understanding of local cultures, customs, and socio-historical development, including previous state formation experiences, and a lack of social anthropological and ethnographic knowledge involving tribal, ethnic and religious structure and value systems. This represents a great gap in understanding of the existing flawed social and economic structures that are the important reasons for, or the catalysts of, the conflict in the country, which goes some way to explaining the deterioration that can occur post-conflict.

As discussed previously, separation of warfighting and peacebuilding efforts, which melt into one another, has become nearly impossible; furthermore, the success of each depends on the other. Hence, '[t]he days are long past when generals could declare their mission accomplished and return to ticker-tape processions, leaving peacekeeping to the second-class troops of the United Nations or complaisant allies' (Howard, 2007: 7-14). In this regard, to take grass-roots level social and political effects of overall policies in war-torn environments into consideration, alongside the accomplishment of strategic aims, is essential for military planners as well as peacebuilders and scholars. In this regard, the efforts of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan that include combat operations against insurgents, the disarming and reconciliation of armed groups, and the rebuilding of political, economic, judicial and civil society institutions serve as an important case study to observe theoretically the fallacies of the symbiotic relationship between peacebuilding and counterinsurgency.

2. CONFLICT AND INEQUALITY IN AFGHANISTAN

As an all-too-familiar introduction, the 9/11 attacks were a turning point for Afghanistan history. After the attacks, the US-led coalition forces invaded Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban regime that hosted al-Qaeda, which is responsible of the death of nearly 3,000 people, who were the victims of the 9/11. The Taliban's brutal and extremist point of view including oppression of women, public executions, stoning, and other harsh interpretations of the Sharia maintained the required justification of this reflexive invasion directed to take revenge. The aim of the invasion was not only to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaeda, but also to maintain a powerful structure in the country that would prevent the reappearance of Taliban and al-Qaeda-like groups. The military strategy of the invasion was based on the use of anti-Taliban militia groups, especially the Northern Alliance supported by allied air power. These groups succeeded to defeat the Taliban in a short period. However, the expectation of permanent peace in the country following this quick victory was a complete delusion.

Beyond being the main source of insurgency in the country, the Taliban emerged as a symptom of, or an alternative solution to a bigger conflict between different ethnic, tribal and ideological groups, rising especially after the failure of the Communist regime in the country (Saikal et.al., 2004: 9). Despite a critical idea that defines the Taliban movement as a power domination project of Pakistan, the Taliban, relying on the anti-Mujahedeen discourse, were able to sustain an organized armed struggle and dominate

90% of the country, which no other conflicting actor managed (Semple, 2014: 5).

Nevertheless, international efforts, following the military victory, focused on the Bonn Conference that gathered different anti-Taliban groups to decide the future structure in Afghanistan. The biggest problem was defined as the lack of state authority. Attempts were made to solve this by establishing an interim government, with a planned democratization process including a constitution, democratic elections, and a guarantee of economic assistance by international society. The biggest criticism was the absence of the Taliban in the Bonn Conference. Lakhdar Brahimi, one of the architects of the conference, accepted that '[t]he Taliban should have been at Bonn. This was our original sin. If we had had time and spoken to some of them and asked them to come, because they still represented something, maybe they would have come to Bonn' (Rashid, 2008). The absence of the Taliban prevented the Bonn Conference from being a peace agreement.

Most of the ministers of the interim government were powerful warlords having private armies such as Mohammed Mohaqqeq, Mir Wais Saddiq, Mangal Hussein, and Sayed Hussain Anwari. Giving official positions to warlords and commanders, allegedly involving human rights violations, corruption, and drug trafficking during conflicts, caused significant problems at local level. Their counterparts in remote districts, who fought against the Taliban as proxy forces of the Allied Forces, refused to leave their weapons and accept the authority of the interim government (Münch, 2013: 8). Thus, warlordism, as the main reason for the emergence of the Taliban, rooted again in the country through the Bonn Agreement (Rashid, 2002).

Instead of establishing a permanent and widely acclaimed solution to the long-lasting conflicts, the military operation and subsequent Bonn Conference recreated the flawed political and social structure that had been the main cause of instability in the country. According to Skocpol (1995: 5), as a main premise of historical sociology, 'broadly conceived historical analyses promise possibilities for understanding how past patterns and alternative trajectories might be relevant, or irrelevant, for present choices'. In this regard, this part of the article tries to find the sources of this flawed structure in the historical state formation experiences of the country and the huge gap between state and society, which were neglected during the invasion and in the era of post-conflict peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts of counterinsurgency.

a. Historical Roots of the Unequal Relationship Between State and Society

There is consensus that Afghanistan, the 'Land of the Afghans', emerged as a political entity with the coronation of Ahmad Shah Abdali as a king of a tribal confederation in 1747 (Adamec, 2004: 295-322). According to the historical sources, the king was elected at a *jirga*[2] of Kandahar tribes, mostly Pashtun. The establishment of the Afghan state was a consequence of a bargain amongst power elites such as chiefs of clans, tribes, regional populations and other elementary solidarity groups. Despite Ahmad Shah being accepted as King, local leaders retained power in their areas, and this situation created by the bargain between central and local elites became the driver for centre–periphery conflict that has been dominating the political agenda of the country. According to Saikal et al. (2004: 9), all disputes and conflicts in Afghanistan have indeed been derived from 'the attempts of dominant communally based elites to accomplish a high degree of centralisation of power with the help of foreign patrons'. In Abdur Rahman's era (1880–1901), this centralization was maintained by extreme coercion with the help of British economic sources. The major factions of these conflicts have been prominent figures of Pashtun tribes, and from coercion to elite bargains different solutions have been used to dominate authority over the country since then.

From Abdur Rahman's perspective, this situation stemmed from the military feudal state structure[3] and the policy of indirect rule by his predecessors. Hence, he left the traditional system of ruling relying on elite bargains, and centralized the authority, with British financial and military assistance. He also managed to collect taxes from all tribes, and built centralized military, administrative, and justice systems (Rubin, 1992). To consolidate his authority, Abdur Rahman used excessive coercion such as torture and mass executions against the threats posed to his governance, thus he was named 'Iron Emir' (Wahab and Youngerman, 2006: 93). Beyond coercion, he also insisted that his power as a monarch emanated from *Allah*, and he subsequently supported his legitimacy by grounding it on Islamic basis (Barfield, 2012).

Although *jirgas* have been evaluated as a kind of direct democracy mechanism, the expression of political preferences by ordinary citizens has been limited to tribal leaders and strict communal loyalties. Instead of earning legitimacy by serving the people, maintaining loyalty of local leaders and the consent of central elites using persuasion, bargain or coercion has been the most pragmatic way to consolidate power for the Kings. In this regard, the recent history of Afghanistan can be summarised

as a revolt against central power and the struggle of state bureaucracy to penetrate into the countryside until the end of the 20th century (Roy, 1990: 10).

b. The Constitutional Decade and the Rise of Soviet Influence

During the 1960s and 1970s, the nature of the political conflict changed. This 'Constitutional Decade', felt the ramifications of education reforms and the emergence of an educated intelligentsia, 'who lacked the same access to power and wealth, and the respect for the existing structures of power'. During this period, different political ideologies began to organize around groups such as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) as the communist party of Afghanistan, and *Jamiat-i Islami*, the Society of Islam (Barfield, 2010: 168). According to Shahrani (1986: 61), the conflicts of this new era had been shaped 'between the traditional, aristocratic, and well-entrenched elites and the newly emergent intelligentsia, most from the rural and urban middle and lower classes'.

In 1978, when the PDPA came to power with the 'Saur Revolt',[4] the conflict in the country evolved into a struggle of the Mujahedeen resistance against an anti-religious government, and after the Soviet invasion, a nationalist characteristic was added to the Mujahedeen resistance. According to the perspective of the PDPA, relying on their flawed Marxist terminology, one of the basic problems of the country, creating inequality, was the clash between farmers and feudal lords. Therefore, they advocated a development process that was not based on capitalist accumulation, including land reform, expansion of basic services and rights, and state investment in heavy industry. The Islamists evaluated the problem as the economic injustice and the penetration of non-Islamic culture and customs caused by the corrupted and tyrannical old regime (Rubin, 1992). Both groups were not able to address the real problems of the society due to their monolithic religious and ideological persistence.

In 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic support and aid for the Najibullah's PDPA administration also ceased. The destruction of agricultural areas and the blockage of trading routes due to conflicts caused a serious food deficit. The government tried to close this deficit by printing money, which increased inflation. Corruption and bribery amongst state officials became widespread, as did desertions from the army. Economic catastrophe and the diminution of state authority led to the rise of alternative cash-producing activities, such as drug trade and smuggling, amongst local power brokers and warlords. Such deteriorating circumstances forced Najibullah to resign in 1992 (Sullivan et.al., 2007; Martin, 2014: 86).

c.   The Emergence of the Taliban

During the period culminating in Najibullah's resignation, a realignment among Mujahedeen groups, which was based largely on region and ethnicity, emerged.[5] After the resignation of Najibullah, the non-Pashtun Mujahedeen group, led by President Burhanuddin Rabbani but dominated by Massoud,[6] took power in Kabul. This created a devastating psychological effect on Pashtuns who had dominated the country for nearly 300 years (Rashid, 2002: 21). Subsequently, conflict in the country shaped into a Hobbesian civil war between these internal armed factions with extensive foreign links, and was affected by the ideological, security, and economic interests of neighbouring and extra-regional actors until 2001 (Jalali, 2007: 26; Martin, 2014: 109).

By 1993, the country was divided between these factions like the provinces of 19th century Afghanistan.[7] According to Dorronsoro (1995: 37), the civil war between these factions was not 'primitive' or 'tribal', but strongly political. Ethnic identification and tensions played a part, but the country's warring parties invoked and 'fed' these to mobilize supporters.' Despite all factions struggling for authority, 'no Afghan leader saw the collapse of central power in Kabul as an opportunity to seek independence' (Barfield, 2010: 252). After the withdrawal of the Soviets, the disappearance of a common enemy caused a power struggle between Mujahedeen groups that reached a bitter interethnic and sectarian war of all against all, with no victories. This brutal civil war destroyed many lives as well as the physical structure of the country. Warlords, who gained de facto control of the country, began to participate in illegal activities such as kidnapping, rape, drug dealing, corruption, theft and smuggling to support their military and political power (Brahimi, 2010; Sullivan, 2007).

The huge refugee influx into Pakistan due to this brutal civil-war caused the emergence of a new social class: Afghans who did not have any first-hand knowledge or experience of their own country. This young and poor generation, most of whom were orphans of persistent conflicts, were open to manipulation by different factions and radical movements. The Taliban also emerged as a movement under the leadership of Mullah Muhammad Omar, previously affiliated to the Hezb-e Islami, amongst this young population against 'the corruption and debauchery' of warring commanders (Maley, 2002: 20). From this perspective, the Taliban was not only a terrorist or extremist group, but also an insurgency of young Afghans, gathering from a different social base in refugee camps and madrassas,[8] as a consequence of the adverse political, social and economic conditions

enduring in the country (Maley, 2002: 218). Members of the Taliban viewed themselves as the saviour of the country and its population from the catastrophic conflicts and flawed social system that had ruined the Islamic way of life. Most of the Taliban were educated in Pakistani Deobandi madrassas,[9] where they learnt about the ideal Islamic society created by the Prophet Mohammed, and they wanted to reproduce it in Afghanistan. According to Mullah Omar, '[they] took up arms to achieve the aims of the Afghan jihad and save [the] people from further suffering at the hands of the so-called Mujahedeen' (Rashid, 2002: 23).

3. THE EFFECTS OF PEACEBUILDING AS COUNTERINSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN

Following the year 1994, in which the Taliban movement was initiated, and for nearly seven years, the political and social agendas of the country were determined by the power domination struggle between the Taliban and the opposing Northern Alliance. The Taliban organization, relying on religious discourse and coercion, managed to dominate 90% of the country until 2001. The dysfunctional social structure in the country, faced by the US-led invasion and the ISAF campaign, was the catastrophic result of these conflicts. Such long-lasting conflict and disorder caused the death of over a million Afghans; left over a million Afghans disabled or orphaned; and forced a great majority of the population to move to neighbouring countries as refugees. Furthermore, agricultural infrastructure, roads, drinking water facilities, schools, health clinics and electrical power plants were destroyed by the warring parties (ANDS, 2006).

a. Ignorance of the People in the Name of Sharia: The Taliban Regime

The state structure disappeared during the civil war between warlords. In the period of the Taliban, their dogmatic and puritan Islamic reasoning also prevented any political framework or clear strategy to form a recognisable government beyond the implementation of the strict form of Sharia law (Roy, 1998: 210; Saikal, 1998: 114-26). In the historical context, Sharia had emerged as the underlying framework of legal policies of the traditional Afghan state structure, but this was the first time that the country was under the control of clerics, with a clerical leader (Nojumi, 2003: 31-8). Due to their unfamiliar practices and ideas lacking a sophisticated ideological framework, many people in Afghanistan regarded the movement as alien. In 1996, during an interview, an elderly Islamic scholar explained, 'we are ruled by men who offer us nothing but the Koran, even though many of them cannot read […] we are in despair' (Lewis, 1996). Although the Taliban stated that their movement aimed to rescue the people from the

turmoil caused by the civil war between the so-called Mujahedeen, they were interested only in Koranic dogmas instead of the necessities and problems of the people. According to Nojumi (2008: 111), the Taliban movement became an example of the hidden contradiction of revolutionary movements: that the personal character and political ideology of its leaders preclude the motivation and the aim of the movement. Therefore, 'like many other revolutionary movements, the Taliban failed to differentiate between running a popular militaristic movement and administering a functioning state' (Nojumi, 2008: 111). In this regard, although the Taliban managed to consolidate its authority over the country, due to its short-sighted perspective and inadequate political experience it could not address the real causes of the political and social inequality in the country, and could not maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people.

b. Pragmatic Justification of the Invasion

After the 9/11 attacks, the reflexive decision to invade the country was justified on the basis of ongoing civil war, in conjunction with the political and military aims of the coalition. The harsh methods and radical perspective of the Taliban regime also justified this decision. Instead of addressing the root causes of ongoing conflicts in the country, the US-led coalition preferred to cooperate with the Northern Alliance, some members of which were known to be warlords involved in illegal activities and unlawful killings (Ahmed, 2015; Hunt, 2013; Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, 2013: 177). This cooperation achieved its target in only a short time for the coalition; however, at the same time, it justified these actors by rewarding them with official titles and chairs at the Bonn Conference. According to Sharan, one failure of the Bonn Agreement was to build a rivalry between two key groups, which has shaped the character of the post-Bonn era: 'the Jihadis, in particular the Panjsheris […], who controlled most of the security ministries in the government and whose power emanated from their regional bases, and the newly formed Western technocrats around President Karzai whose power was limited to Kabul' (Sharan, 2013: 1110).[10]

Beyond this pragmatic cooperation to enact the military strategy, the statebuilding process, following the liberal peace approach, supported the legitimized roles of these warlords, intentionally or unintentionally. The most significant example of this process was the security sector reform in the country. Ethnic and tribal differences and struggles between different groups have dominated the history of the country. Despite this reality, rebuilding of the national army and police forces was left to the Tajik

members of the Northern Alliance. Having learned to survive in long-lasting conflicts, these actors, for instance General Fahim who was the Minister of defence, naturally recruited personnel from their own factions (Giustozzi, 2008; Rashid, 2008: 201; Suhrke, 2006: 13). The most important reason behind the misjudgements of the Bonn Agreement was the singular international focus on the Taliban as the actors of conflict. This behaviour ignored the real historical reason for insecurity that 'has been the absence of national political reconciliation' among different groups (Eikenberry, 2014). The pragmatic solutions adopted and the ongoing monolithic perspectives actually increased the inequality between the different groups in terms of political and social rights such as getting jobs in government organizations, receiving basic services, and participating in economic and political activities such as banking, investing and voting.

The other component of the liberal peace approach, the free market economy, has also supported the role of these legitimized warlords in the political and economic life of the country. Besides their de facto authority based on coercion and economic resources such as foreign aid and illegal activities, the Bonn Conference and President Karzai's 'accommodations approach toward various warlord commanders' propelled their authority in the economic and political life of the country by giving them de jure authority through official titles (Mukhopadhyay, 2009: 7).

In the short term, this approach prevented another civil war and enabled the interim government to be established. In fact, state formation experiences of Afghanistan indicate that kings and political leaders of the country have used this approach to stabilize the country and get legitimacy of the local power elites by sharing the power with them as a component of elite bargains. However, the consequence of this pragmatic policy was enormous damage to security and peace at local levels, creating serious grievance among the people who were oppressed by these warlords, towards the central government and their affiliations at local level (Farrell and Giustozzi, 2013: 848).

These issues might be regarded as the anecdotal evidence for political inequality among the different ethnic and social groups in the country. However, economic indicators must also be analysed to enable a better understanding of the economic dimension of the inequality in the country. According to the Gini coefficient value of 31.6, inequality amongst the people seems low in Afghanistan (CSO, 2014).[11] This, however, is caused by the widespread nature of poverty in the country as well as the lack of a healthy financial record system. On the other hand, the unequal poverty rates between the rural, Kuchi and urban population are significant, and

observed easily. In this regard, consumption disparity might give a more realistic picture. According to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the bottom 10% of the population accounts for 3.6% of total consumption while the top 10% accounts for 21.1% of total consumption (ANDS, 2008).

c. Inequality That Cannot Be Seen Through Statistical Data

Beyond the statistical data, the evidence from the everyday life of the people is better able to illustrate inequality. For instance, international NGOs operating in the country commonly pay $15,000 per month for their rental accommodations; and an average price of an armed vehicle, which they use, is almost $40,000. Working in an international NGO, as an interpreter or expert, is one of the most prestigious jobs for the Afghans (Mayr, 2010). Besides, according to New York Times '40 per cent of international aid leaves the Afghan economy as quickly as it comes in […] while as little as 20 per cent of that aid reaches its intended recipients' (Bergen and Lalwani, 2009).[12] Many NGOs, the aim of which is to enhance the life circumstances of the local people, offer a reasonable opportunity to their workers –local or international where as an Afghan police officer or a teacher can only earn $60 a month (Herold, 2010). The war and free market economy enable investors – mostly western companies and power brokers who have managed to benefit from the long-lasting conflicts – to raise prices in the country, making living on $60 extremely hard.

Further significant evidence for inequality is the booming construction sector of the country. Rising numbers of luxury villas, known as 'poppy palaces' amongst the people, in the Sherpur area of Kabul signify the incomes from illicit drug trafficking, corruption and warlordism (Carberry, 2012). While some of these buildings are used by corrupted elites and ex-warlords, some mercenaries, embassies, Western journalists, the United Nations and NATO HQs are also accommodated in them (Starkey, 2013; Gutcher, 2013). However, many people under the poverty line live in low-income houses spreading all over the hills surrounding the Afghan capital, Kabul. Most of the houses are mud houses, lacking running water or electricity, and with open sewers causing disease (Herold, 2010). TV Hill, which stands in the south of the Kabul city centre with the communication and broadcasting antennas on its peak, is the famous area for these poor people, known for low life expectancy and much human suffering (Jeong, 2014).

On every street of the capital city, Kabul, it is a routine and a common part of daily life to see female beggars with their little children, and

amputated, disabled and elderly people, sitting in the middle of motorways and streets begging for money. Their numbers increase in the winter due to food scarcity and the difficulty of finding a job. Their situation is bare human suffering, illegal though it is, and they are vulnerable to crime and exploitation (Vennard, 2015). In stark contrast, luxury hotels such as Intercontinental Hotel and Serena Hotel are located in the city as well, offering the nightly price for single of nearly $125,000. Moreover, luxury shopping malls such as Gulbahar Center, in which the latest versions of the most expensive cell phones and tablet PCs coming from Dubai can be bought, are another contradiction of the capital city. Beyond statistical data based on surveys and flawed registrations, these observations can be regarded as proof of the inequality amongst the people of Afghanistan.

The liberal statebuilding project aims to change social relations between state and society according to the ideal type of the Western state (Kühn, 2012: 23). In Afghanistan, peacebuilding, with aggressive or armed characteristics, has attempted statebuilding according to the Western security framework. Therefore, while NGOs or international aid organizations have been trying to deliver assistance, political decision makers, for instance the US government, have always followed their own political agendas according to the tensions in their homelands. For example, the US government declared their aim as being 'to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future' (Obama, 2009). This monolithic evaluation of the problems in Afghanistan, as discussed previously, led them to pragmatic solutions that deteriorated the relationship between ordinary Afghans and the government, which has been trying to balance political and economic struggles of the elites and benefits of foreign donors.

d. Counterinsurgency-Specific Examples of Inequality

Another example of pragmatism, the arming of local militias and power elites in rural areas, in which the authority of central Government had not yet reached, created a great risk for the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the local people (Martin, 2014: 219). As an example, the relationship of General Petraeus, who was the ISAF Commander, with Atta Mohammed Noor, who was an ex-warlord assigned as governor, justified Noor's autonomy in his responsibility area, and this was highly controversial according to the COIN strategy of aiming for the legitimacy of local government (Hastings, 2011). A further example was the unconditional support of US forces for militia leader Colonel Abdul Raziq Achakzai, who became Lieutenant General of Police later, in southern Afghanistan. In his deployment, General Petraeus visited him at least five times in Spin Baldak (Walsh, 2014; Crilly, 2014). Besides these controversial relations, aggressive night raids, collateral damage and civilian casualties created a

negative assumption towards ISAF among the people; even President Karzai condemned the increase of night raids causing collateral damage (Porter, 2011).

A further example, which causes inequality among the local population, is Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). In NATO's official discourse: 'Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were one of the success stories of Afghanistan and they made exceptional contributions to provincial administrations' (Gass, 2012). To illustrate the successful progress achieved in terms of statebuilding, NATO emphasized the quantitative measures such as the number of soldiers and police officers recruited for Afghan National Security Forces ANSF, the number of children attending school, economic data sets, and the construction of infrastructure throughout the country to persuade domestic and international audiences that statebuilding progress was going in the right direction. However, according to critical perspectives, these numeric instruments were not adequate to measure the success and impact of PRTs in the field (Eronen, 2008). For instance, despite these positive numbers, around 80–90 per cent of the Afghan state budget consisted of foreign aid at the peak of the efforts. This issue has subsequently been causing a serious sustainability problem for Afghanistan without external support (Larsen, 2013).

From another critical aspect, quick impact projects of PRTs and military units were conducted without considering the necessities of the local population adequately. For instance, the demands of the local people were for energy, factories and employment; projects that needed much investment and time; however, agencies, instead, constructed easier and quick impact projects such as a small road or a canal. In a greater sense, these quick impact projects could not solve the main drivers of the conflict and insecurity (Fishstein and Wilder, 2012). The jeopardy of the Kandahar city power project is a significant example of the dilemma of quick impact projects. During the harsh period of counterinsurgency, in 2010, the US military built a diesel power plant on the site of Shorandam Industrial Park to temporarily supply Kandahar and the industrial park with electricity (Kandahar Bridging Solution). However, U.S. Agency for International Development USAID decided to stop providing fuel for this power plant by September 30, 2015, and the local Afghan authorities do not have capacity to maintain the fuel for the power plant. After September 30, 2015, Kandahar city, which is one of the most critical cities for counterinsurgency against the Taliban, and all industrial facilities constructed to prevent poppy production and attendance to the Taliban might lose the electricity (Sopko, 2015 April). The response of the US Department of State to the SIGAR[13] inquiry related to the issue reflects the current policy of the US Government towards Afghanistan and counterinsurgency:

> The United States […] carefully designed the program to transition from a counterinsurgency imperative toward sustainable management by the Afghan government. […]We have never harboured [sic] illusions about the ease of this transition nor did we guarantee an unchanged level of available electricity for all customers. However, we have coordinated our efforts with the Afghan government to ensure that – to the greatest extent possible – the needs of the people of Kandahar are met. […] This is the most prudent, sustainable course of action, calibrated to balance our responsibility to taxpayers with our strategic interests in Afghanistan. The United States cannot afford to spend hundreds of millions of dollars required to provide indefinite subsidies for diesel power generation (Carpenter, 2015 May).

According to the US counterinsurgency manual, US forces should follow a bottom-up approach to building a host nation's capacity. However, this assertion, as in the example of the electricity problem, does not decrease the importance of strategic and operational planning. A decision made at strategic level may have strategic value despite its negative consequences at tactical level. The most important example of this issue is military sales. For example, the US may sell a major weapon system to a host nation that has inadequate means to maintain and support that weapon. However, the sale may accomplish an essential political goal, or it may ensure a continued relationship between the host nation and the US. If a host nation is dependent on the US for maintaining a major weapon system, this gives the US influence over that host nation's decision-making process (FM 3-24, 2006). Similarly, statebuilding as counterinsurgency is far from altruistic or local-centric, but seems viable in terms of realist international theory for a limited time and set of objectives.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) of the US military can be given as another controversial example of statebuilding as counterinsurgency. CERP funds, regarded as 'money as a weapon system' in Afghanistan, provide tactical commanders with a means to conduct multiple stability tasks such as the reconstruction of infrastructure, support to governance, restoration of public services, and support to economic development (ATP 1-06.2, 2013). The US PRTs, for instance, conducted CERP-funded projects, but with a lack of transparency or coordination with Afghan authorities and aid agencies, caused the reconstruction of schools and clinics without adequate groundwork, staff or material resources (McLeary, 2015; Fishtein and Wilder, 2012). According to Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's report between 2004-1014 more than half of the projects founded by CERP funds were unknown projects (SIGAR, April 2015). Consequently, CERP projects also could not address the social and economic problems of the local people due to military strategy oriented implementation.

Due to inadequate understanding of local dynamics, and the pressure to get success in the short term, most implementations of statebuilding as counterinsurgency have been criticised bitterly, since they helped local strongmen and power brokers to get more power (Suhrke, 2008: 214-36). An inadequate governance system, especially in rural areas, enabled warlords and power brokers, who 'strengthened their position even more—especially also through a seat in the Afghan government', to seem only 'justified' local leaders (Gauster, 2008). These policies, aiming to provide services and good governance to gain the support of the population, reinforced local strongmen, whose greedy behaviour alienated the local people, and their patronage-based systems (Fishstein and Wilder, 2013: 312; Osinga and Russell, 2013). In this regard, huge funds were directed to local patronage-based power brokers through international military assistance (Nijat, 2014), thus, one of the most important matters rising during the statebuilding effort was the negative effects on the country's internal balance of political power, especially with 'the eventual absence of continued external assistance' (Cookman and Wadhams, 2010).

5. CONCLUDING DISCUSSIONS

The efforts in Afghanistan to stabilize the country and establish sustainable peace are one of the best examples of the symbiotic relationship between peacebuilding and counterinsurgency that emerges in current post-conflict environments. The invasion of the country to overthrow the Taliban regime and demolish al-Qaeda turned into a light footprint statebuilding campaign. However, after 2003, rising attacks of the Taliban forced the international actors to develop a new counterinsurgency doctrine using military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions to defeat insurgency and maintain sustainable peace and development in the country. The limited success of the new doctrine, since 2010, was deemed sufficient to justify withdrawal of international combat forces, however the current situation in the country is far from being peaceful and stabilized.

The monolithic perspective of these efforts, exemplified in Afghanistan, relying on liberal peace theory and Western experiences, ignore social, political and historical differences of the post-conflict environments. Following colonial era mistakes, these efforts, promoting Western values and experiences as the only solution for these countries, used ongoing conflicts in order to maintain primarily their own strategic aims. This narrow perspective led international efforts to deteriorate the flawed social and political structure of the country, which has been the real cause of the conflict since the first political entity. In this regard, even for the most

altruistic reasons, initiation of a campaign without knowing or paying attention to the social structure of the country and the historical background to the conflict can worsen the circumstances in a post-conflict country. Having strategic aims is a necessity for every country in today's international arena; however, these strategic aims of the international actors should be balanced with the necessities and priorities of the local people for a sustainable peace.

Consequently, due to the extremely individualistic and paternalist Western-minded design, peacebuilding as counterinsurgency could not provide the right and adequate solutions, and could not engage with its target population (Richmond, 2013: 378-79). Hence, instead of ameliorating the social and political circumstances of ordinary people, these efforts recreated the traditional conflicts in new forms by emboldening inequality between traditional elites and everyday citizens. Therefore, the idea of everyday peace, as a bottom-up approach that is not under the control of normative practices, seems an alternative way of thinking. Everyday social practices among the indigenous people include avoiding controversial and sensitive conversation topics, using ambiguity in representing oneself in inter-ethnic/religious contact, exercising ritualized politeness, and blaming outsider factors. With these practices, everyday peace accepts 'the bases of conflict and seeks to minimize the impact of conflict through toleration and coexistence' (Mac Ginty, 2014). Especially for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process of peacebuilding and counterinsurgency campaigns, these kinds of practices gain importance. While dealing with strategic level issues to solve the conflict, considering these practices can support the grass roots and local level efforts. Mac Ginty (2014: 560) states that everyday peace may contribute to a wider concept such as 'peace formation' through the evolution of everyday diplomacy from the more activist form of people-to-people activities.

'Peace formation' means the collaboration of state formation, liberal peacebuilding and statebuilding and localised peace-making in a locally and internally legitimate form (Richmond, 2013). Peace formation is a process in which '[i]ndigenous groups use peaceful methods to build a polity/state and institutions, according to particularistic rights, needs, identity, custom, culture, and material resources' for an emancipatory peace with local and external hybridity (Richmond, 2013: 389). These bottom-up-approaches suggested for the peacebuilding and statebuilding processes should be considered in the military side of the current campaigns, since current post-conflict environments do not allow the separation of armed struggle and peacebuilding efforts from each other, as emphasised in this article.

ENDNOTES

[1]According to this Manual the term 'counterinsurgency' is defined as the 'military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency'. This phenomenon, which implies the importance of legitimacy maintained by an effective government and the public support, is not only a military doctrine, but also it has become a national policy of the USA (Farrell and Rynning, 2010).

[2] A traditional assembly of leaders and elderlies.

[3] Although the term 'feudal' does not the exact word to define the socio-political structure of the country, it is used to enable a better understanding of the situation by establishing a similarity between the European state formation experience. The social structure was representing a tribal-peasant characteristic that was dominated by the loyalties to the tribal leaders caused by strong traditions and the authority of the leading figures.

[4] The Revolt was initiated by Parchamis in the military, especially Soviet-trained-and equipped Afghan Air Force and Tank Brigade in April 1978. Parchamis were one of the most powerful leftist groups, which had have a political struggle with the other influential group Khalq until the Taliban rising. Within a short time, the PDA announced the establishment of the 'Democratic Republic of Afghanistan' supported by the Soviet government. Nur Muhammad Taraki was chosen as President and Prime Minister, and Babrak Karmal and Hafizullah Amin as Deputy Prime Ministers. Amin Saikal and William Maley, 'Introduction', in *the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan: International Symposium: Papers*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Barnett R. Rubin, 'Lineages of the State in Afghanistan', *Asian Survey* 28, no. 11 (1988): 1188-209.

[5]Khalqis also joined Gulbadden Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami, the radical Islamist party, which aimed Pashtun dominance and supported by Pakistan especially. Shia Hazara's and Northern militia groups such as Dostum's Uzbeks and Kayani's Ismailis, which were basically non-Pashtun groups, allied with Ahmad Shah Massoud's Tajiks. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 248.

[6] Ahmad Shah Massoud was one of the prominent leaders against the Taliban and the Soviet invasion. As a Tajik political and military figure, he played a great role in the struggle against the Taliban. Massoud was assassinated by Al Qaeda on September 9, 2001.

[7]Ismail Khan in Herat and the west (including Badghis, Farah, and Ghor), Dostum in the north from Mazar in alliance with the Hazara Hizb- i- Wahdat and the Ismailis in the Baghlan, Masud in Kabul and the northeast, Haji Qadir in the east, and Jalaludin Haqqani and Mulla Naqibullah Akhund in the southeast.

[8]An Islamic educational institution, specifically for religious instruction.

[9]The word Deobandi refers to the city of Deoband in India, which is the learning centre of the approach. The Deobandi approach has a traditionalist interpretation of Islam, which has been known by their opposition to secularism in general and to modern state-led education in particular. However, they are opposed to the radical Islamists. After 1947, the prominent Deobandi madrasas of Pakistan located in Peshawar, Karachi and Lahore, and in 1980s their network in Pakistan expanded massively by backing fight against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Kristian Berg Harpviken, 'The Transnationalization of the Taliban', *International Area Studies Review* 15, no. 3 (2012): 203-29.

[10] This failure in the Bonn process caused a conflict and fragmentation among elites, which President Karzai had been trying to balance during his two terms presidency through elite bargains and

patronage. During the 2009 presidential election, for instance, 'Karzai promised ministerial positions, licenses, government contracts and development funds as political resources for his clients, ethno-regional patrons like Mohaqeq, the leader of the Wahdat faction, [who] demanded five ministries for the Hazaras' (Sharan, 2011: 1112).

[11] The Gini coefficient value or the Gini index is the most common statistical measure that is used to represent the income distribution and the inequality in a country. A Gini coefficient of zero means perfect equality, and 100 means maximum inequality.

[12] Astri Suhrke (2006: 1) uses an Afghan saying to illustrate the situation of international organizations in the country; 'foreign aid organizations are "cows that drink their own milk"'.

[13]Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) is the leading oversight authority of the U.S. government providing independent and objective oversight of the Afghanistan reconstruction funds.

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