



# Systematic Analysis of State-Nation Building and Political Development in Afghanistan: A Critical Approach to the Bonn Agreement and the Doctrine of Liberal Democracy from 2002 to 2021\*

Rohollah Eslami,<sup>1</sup> Ebrahim Forozesh<sup>2</sup>

1. Assistant Professor of Political Sciences, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran (corresponding author) (Eslami.r@um.ac.ir)
2. PhD Candidate of Political Sciences, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran (Faruzesh2020@gmail.com)

(Received: Mar. 10, 2020 Revised: Apr. 29, 2020 Accepted: Jun. 26, 2020)

## Abstract

By withdrawing from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War ended in the 1990s. Throughout that decade, western governments forgot the people of Afghanistan. But the 1998 attack on the US interests in Africa and al-Qaeda attacks of the September 11, 2001 reintroduced foreign aggression of the Western governments' coalition against Afghanistan. Late in 2001, NATO countries, led by the United States, brought down the Taliban regime. Concomitantly, the UN conducted a conference in Bonn, Germany, in which political and paramilitary groups agreed to form an inclusive government without presence of Taliban. The Bonn Agreement contents show that most of its principles are based on the doctrine of Liberal Democracy. Accordingly, liberal democracy is reflected in most of the ratified articles of the eighth constitution of Afghanistan and it was expected to be effective in a country where many political regimes and systems had been experienced. However, it faced challenges and nation-state building development process witnessed deficiencies. The present paper uses systemic analysis of the liberal nation-state (system input, policy design, policy implementation, evaluation and outcome) to answer the research question. The question is: how have the nation-state building process and political development in Afghanistan been affected by the Bonn Agreement and liberal democracy doctrine? And how has that led to the deficiencies in nation-state building and political development in the country? Hypothetically, the process suffered from deficiencies due to the following reasons: disregarding the historical-traditional contexts of Afghanistan, weak presence of liberal democrats in power, disregard for the demands of the fragmented society, the continuation of nationalist policies, and the incorrect public-private divide in the liberal structure of democracy.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, Development, Liberal Democracy, Nation-state building, Segregated society, Traditional Society

---

Journal of **World Sociopolitical Studies** | Vol. 4 | No. 3 | Summer 2020 | pp. 571-616

Web Page: <https://wsps.ut.ac.ir/> Email: [wsps@ut.ac.ir](mailto:wsps@ut.ac.ir)

eISSN: 2588-3127

PrintISSN: 2588-3119

DOI: 10.22059/WSPS.2021.322489.1211

\* This article is taken from a research project approved and done in Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

## 1. Introduction

Afghanistan is a landlocked territory in Asia with a geopolitical and geo-economic position. The country became a buffer zone in the 18th century as a result of the Big Game between Tsarist Russia and the former British Empire. Meanwhile, Afghanistan was also regarded as the easiest economic passageway for energy transfer of Central Asia to South Asia. As a result of its geo-political significance, the country has seen an influx of the former British Empire, the Former Soviet Union, and, more recently, the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in more than three centuries. Researchers believe that "the expansion of NATO in this era to the East is a form of expediency rather than dogma and undoubtedly not an idealistic or humanist mission" (Balkhi, 2013, p. 62). In addition to the lack of nationalism, one of the other reasons for the failure of nation-state building in Afghanistan, is the multi-fabric society of the country, which has remained constantly sterilized by external influx and proxy wars.

The argument over the nation-state building and political development in Afghanistan was first raised under the socio-political reforms of Shah Amanullah from 1919 to 1929. However, with the fall of Shah Amanullah's rule by Habibullah Kalakani, the process did not gain a social significance in the Afghan political literature until December 2001. On foreign sphere, the Cold War and post-communism could be of interest for the newly independent governments from the former Soviet Union to the construction of nationalist governments, because Afghanistan had been liberated from the previous Soviet domination in a way similar to central Asia and Eastern Europe. In connection with the influence of the foreign sphere in the domestic sphere, the existence of undemocratic governments and ideological regimes prevented the formation of nation-state and development process in Afghanistan, as undemocratic regimes in this country opposed any

democratic change. Yet, the introduction of liberal democracy and the rise of ethno-religious discussions and political power transformed Afghanistan's political literature to form a democratic society.

On the other hand, the process of governance in Afghanistan from 1747 to 1919 signifies a traditional and closed conservative system with a model of religious and ethnic legitimacy without the conceptualization of nation-state and development. As Nader Shah and his brother Hashim Khan became chancellor, the process of nation-building and relative development that had begun during the reign of Shah Amanullah was halted with the diminishing of the people's position in relations with the government. This trend, however, created the decade of democracy 1963-73 in a formal manner, with the power of Zahir Shah and then the removal of Hashim Khan from power. At that juncture, with the weak rule of law, political parties, with radical left and right ideologies, raised. In the decade of democracy, Zahir Shah did not show a welcome turn to an inclusive democracy. He never signed the Law of Political Parties (Atai, 2010: 368). Therefore, the concepts of nation-state and political development were not meant in their inclusive sense due to the lack of democratic institutions. On the other hand, the coup of 1974 led to the fall of the Shah's regime, and the first republicanism was formed under the leadership of Muhammad Daoud Khan. In this period, with a focus on economic development and lack of political development, the position of the nation-state and political development were reduced in favor of the one-party republic. Finally, the nation-state process was dismantled from Afghanistan's socio-political literature by the fall of the first republicanism during the 1978 administration and the formation of radical left and right regimes until late 2001.

With the sign of the Bonn Agreement in 2001, the nation-building process led to the enactment of the eighth constitution, the construction of temporary administration, transitional government, and holding of the Loya Jirga (civil-traditional institution). The agreement prioritized the elite of the political community to explain the concept of state-nation as inclusive participation in the light of liberal democratic doctrine. It should be noted that the signing of the Bonn Agreement coincided with September 11, 2001, followed by military response from NATO to fight against international terrorism, under the guise of democratization in Afghanistan. According to Rahimi (1391, p. 299), "One of the major goals of the United States in the Middle East is to democratize the governments of the Middle East by an American definition (Rahimi, 1391:299)." With the fall of the Taliban regime, the flow of international community assistance, the liberalization of institutions and introduction of the international nation-building model, the closed political literature of Afghanistan was transformed in favor of an open governance. Therefore, liberal democracy provided an opportunity for all Afghan people to express their opinion and ideas through ethnic and religious channels. Nevertheless, in contrast to liberal democratic structures, the non-democratic governance approach, in line with previous ideological governments, especially in post-communism, under the nationalization process, left negative impacts on the government's policy and led to ethnic minorities' reactions. According to Brubaker, "minority nationalist stances characteristically involve a self-understanding in specifically "national" rather than merely "ethnic" terms" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 6). Similar to Caucasus countries, different ethnic minorities live in Afghanistan who resist against homogenization due to ethnic and historical ties with neighbors. "With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, the last of the region's avowedly multinational states have disappeared. Everywhere,

political authority has been reconfigured along putatively national lines" (Brubaker, 1996). Hence, beside the challenges of constant conflict and the collision of a new liberal construction with a nationalist function, resistance against nationalization can be considered as a serious problem in the nation-building process in Afghanistan. Therefore, the internal and external conflicts not only damaged the capabilities of the new system, but also exacerbated the crises of identity, influence, legitimacy, distribution, partnership and integration, and led to disappointment in the state-building and political development.

The major question addressed in this paper is how has the nation-state building process and political development in Afghanistan been affected by the Bonn Agreement and the liberal democratic doctrine and why did it result in to the lack of nation-state-building and political development? The secondary questions of this article are as follows: What are the components of nation-state building and political development in Afghanistan? What are the challenges of this process? How did these challenges affect the nation-state and political development process? In response to the main question, the following hypothesis is considered: nation-state building and political development in Afghanistan, based on the principles of the Bonn Agreement, faced deficiencies as it neglected the Afghan history and tradition. It also suffered from the weak presence of liberal democratic forces in power, the lack of demands of the multi-ethnic society, the continuation of national policies and the separation of private and public sphere in the liberal democracy structure. This study adopts a descriptive-explanatory approach and library data collection for documentation and analysis of written data. The reason for choosing this method is that the security situation in Afghanistan prevents the possibility of fieldwork. Another reason is the lack of academic research on the

nation-state-building in Afghanistan lack of software for analyzing questionnaires.

## 1. 1. Research Background

Given the historical existence of undemocratic and ideological regimes in the region, there is no comprehensive comparative research on liberal nation-building and political development in Asia and the West. It seems that this issue has been pursued in post-communism countries in the form of nationalization policies. Similarly, in Afghanistan, most authors have written about the governments' inefficiency. In 'American Foreign Policy in Afghanistan', Tamanna (2008, p. 167) briefly argues that by realizing that every foundation needs focus and consistency, the US wanted to apply its post World War II experiences in Germany, Japan and Balkan in 1990s, to post-Taliban Afghanistan. Also, Saba (2012, p. 162) mentions the inefficiency of modern governance mechanisms in Afghanistan, stating that the country has been struggling with post-colonization state structures since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and centralized governance has been tested with the least attention to the role of people and irreparable destruction has been the result of such experimental method. Regarding the systematic relationship between structure and agent, which contributes to the democratization of institutions in the process of state-nation building and development, no major work has been produced other than those expressing concerns over traditional behavior of political groups: "In our society, statesmen lack democratic mentality, so they are incapable of bringing about structural change" (Sajjadi, 2012, p. 249).

Since modern state-building requires gradual transformation of old institutions in favor of new ones, except for a book by this

author<sup>1</sup> and some theoretical sources, no research has been published on Afghanistan about this issue. Daheshiar (2001, p. 54) mentions that “the project of state-building through institutionalization does not directly challenge traditional relations, but can gradually succeed by creating parallel relations based on rules and regulations in marginalizing traditional relations”. Furthermore, in the discussion of foreign aid, its unnecessary cost and assignment of responsibilities based on attribution and not acquisition, which is related to the model of international state-building and nation-building as an internal process, there is no systematic research other than news reports or implicit references in external sources. In "Why Governments Fail", Ajamoglu and Robinson (2013, p. 532) argue that "the conduct of jobs related to foreign forces by experts deprived the Afghan government from their work force. Twenty percent of the money was spent by the United Nations in Geneva, 20 percent was spent on the NGOs, and the other three layers took 20 percent of the money, which ultimately left little money to the Afghan government". In 'Political Development in Afghanistan', Tamanna (2020, pp. 19-64) addresses the reasons for failure of political development due to political culture which leads to political discrimination. The author's main argument is on lack of indigenous perspectives and agency in development studies, stating that political groups seem outwardly developed and civilized, but in reality they have remained underdeveloped. The author describes his book as "an indigenous research with the purpose of recognition and treatment of an indigenous pain". Tamanna's book has similarities and differences with the present study. The main difference is that it does not address concepts such as nation-state building and consequently political development. Also, little attention has been

---

1. Liberal Democracy and Nation-State Building in Afghanistan

paid to the role of the international community in Afghanistan's multi-fabric society and local cultural and economic development. Similar to the book, this article is concerned with Afghanistan's political development. It is noteworthy that the author's favorable political development does not have a comprehensive explanation of Afghanistan's fragmented society. The author's concern is a purely prescriptive and normative reaction in the development process resulting from the government's actions in Afghanistan's new structure (liberal democracy). In general, while similar and different argumentations can be found in the discussed articles and books, there are few researches about the trend of nation-state building in Afghanistan based on "systemic analysis". Therefore, it seems that this article is the first research in which systemic analysis is done on the process of nation-state building in Afghanistan. The article's contribution to the existing literature is that it specifically deals with nation-state discussions in post-democratic Afghanistan under the liberal system, while other researchers have pointed to nation-state and development issues as margins of discussion.

## **1. 2. Theoretical Framework**

The nation-state building process in new Afghanistan is linked to the Bonn Agreement, the liberal doctrine of democracy and the enactment of the eighth constitution. Therefore, the theoretical basis of this paper is drawn from this phenomenon. Since late 16<sup>th</sup> century, liberalism has formed philosophical, cultural, economic and political aspects of mainly Western countries with three waves (Classical Liberalism, Liberal Democracy and Neoliberalism). The link between liberalism and democracy is due to the similarities that exist in the indicators of these two phenomena. The rule of people, equalization of citizens, public supervision, the rule of law, equal opportunities, freedom of expression, the media, political



parties, organizations and groups, the electability of positions, are common components of liberalism and democracy. In the first wave, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, Spencer, Benjamin Constant, Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and others introduced concepts such as natural rights, humanism, private property, social contract (people and state), large but passive government, negative liberty, worldliness, religious flexibility, liberation of labor force from feudal relations, wisdom and delegating the right to vote to part of society, and managed to change the traditional concept of government for the benefit of a liberal nation-state.

The second wave (liberal democracy) emerged with the outbreak of the industrial revolution, the expansion of capitalist relations and the expansion of commodity exchanges in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The discussion of freedom from negative liberty, given the lack of social responsibility of the individual (freedom from whom and freedom from what?) places itself in the sense of a positive liberty close to one's sense of responsibility before society in the sense of freedom for whom? Freedom for what? And freedom to what extent? In this stage of thought, John Stuart Mill, Hill Green, Bernard Bosanquet, Leonard Hubbaus, Ronald Dworkin, MacPherson, Michael Wales, William Beveridge, John Rawls and others targeting the concept of negative freedom and natural rights defined individualistic liberalism by combining tolerance with liberal society, equality and freedom for all individuals in the society. This exceeded the government's duties from securing private property and protecting the individual to the social responsibility of the state for the purpose of developing and codifying positive laws. Therefore, in this wave, the scientific foundations of modernism evolved in the light of active society and active state as a dynamic being.

The third wave (neo-liberalism) was also formed by the ideas of Hayek, Nozick, Friedman, Berlin, and others in the 1970s following the transformation of the communications revolution, the expansion of the global civil society, the power of multinational corporations, and the simultaneous development of economic and political enterprises. At that juncture, along with national governments and the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund emerged as new actors in the international environment. The concept of the form of government and society tended toward an active society and a small but active state, and macro policies on national borders waned with the globalization plan. According to Nash (2000, pp. 43-44), "processes of globalization mean that the capacity of the nation-state to act independently in the articulation and pursuit of domestic and international policy objectives has diminished as its control over the traffic of goods, services, technology, media products, and information which crosses its borders has been reduced". Similarly, Fukuyama, in the *Supremacy of Neoliberalism* states: "What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (Fukuyama, 1989:4).

Now the question arises: What is the concept of nation-state in the triangular waves of liberalism? In political literature, nation is considered as a multi-dimensional concept. Sometimes blood, tribal, ethnic, historical and cultural commonalities of the nation are considered and sometimes the concept of nation-state is defined in line with the socio-political and economic structures of the people in a country. Therefore, the concept of nation, in several

aspects of nation, nationhood and nationalization in a geography with a mechanical and organic approach is worthy of consideration. According to Ghazi (2002, p. 55), "nation is known as a mechanical and historical meaning in internal interactions of a people's organization and also in the relationship between individual and institution with an organic sense in the official relations of a state with other governments".

In the organic nation-state allegory, patriarchal- neo-populist, populist, spiritualist, authoritarian and totalitarian systems are seen. In this allegory, the wishes of the individual and society are interpreted as ignorance of citizens and are accompanied by reproach, and rulers emerge with a perfectionist and charismatic approach and regardless of social acceptability in the political system. "Organic allegory is a traditional political matter that stands against mechanical allegory in accordance with the principle of social contract" (Seifzadeh, 2009, p. 57).

In the mechanical allegory of nation-state, liberal political systems, social and plural democracy are defined by the views of social contract companions, companions of utilitarianism and neoliberals. Liberals recognize the philosophical concept of government as an artificial and legal institution, created in accordance with the requirements of human security. Therefore, government, based on its authority and expediency, is the basis for the will, authority and freedom of the founding board. As Rousseau (2003, p. 1) puts it, "man is born free, but everywhere his authority is in the ward". Hobbes (2008, p. 7) says: Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. According to John Locke (1993: 141) "because no political society can be, nor subsist, without having in itself the power to preserve the property, and in order thereunto punish the

offences of all those of that society, there, and there only, is political society where every one of the members hath quitted this natural power, resigned it up into the hands of the community in all cases that exclude him not from appealing for protection to the law established by it”.

In mechanical exemplification, state-nation concepts are non-alike structures but connected to one another. In this stage, government is not an organ of organizing and charisma but a mechanism for organizing the society. Therefore, the existence of the individual is reduced to workers and salary-earners, and individuals become responsible citizens, under the traditional-organic ruling. In both mechanical and organic exemplifications, the state’s elements (field, population, government and governance) are pre-necessities of conveying the trend. However, for conveying the trend of becoming a nation in mechanical concepts, protection of Liberal Democracy attributes is mandatory on the side of the state and the nation. In addition, contemporary scholars of nation-state building do not recognize the two notions for their functional differences. According to Jagers (1992, p. 29), the state has "three distinct faces: (a) power as national capabilities, (b) power as political capacity, and (c) power as institutional coherence". Nonetheless, in liberal literature, these concepts have similar processes, for their interdependence: “The basis of liberal government is established by people; thus, nation-state is known as the united and integral actor in the international environment” (Zarger, 2006, p. 108). On the other hand, the RAND Corporation and U.S. Council of Foreign Relations define the concept of nation building as a function of civic institutes and governmental actions at the time of crisis adopted during transition period: According to Pan (2003, p. 2), “it is the process of establishing civic order and governmental functions in countries that are emerging from a period of war or other types of upheaval”. However, Jagers’s

impression accounts that state building is to emphasize the state's power in national and institutional stages, and nation building according to RAND Cooperation is for civic order and governmental function in crisis periods. Kymlicka also, understands the process of nation building in the hands of a normative liberal government in order to promote the superiority of a certain type of social culture: "Liberal Democracies are looking for expanding a universal social culture worldwide" (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 19). Hence, it seems that for the multi-dimensional essence of the two concepts, they are not used consistently as having constant meanings. More detailed explanations on nation-state building models is provided in the following section:

#### **Nation-State Building Models**

- a. nation building preceding state building
- b. nation building succeeding state building
- c. international model of state-nation building

There are two basic models for building a nation-state in the contemporary world. One, which has already been discussed, is the European model in which the nation precedes and gives rise to the state. The other is the American model where the indigenous peoples were defeated and disbursed, their treaty rights were little respected and their national identities trivialized. At the same time, in the latter the land was populated by waves of immigrants from many parts of the world. The model was for the immigrants to assimilate into the existing population in a situation where ethnicity was not tied to historical claims to a homeland. Rather, the prevailing perception was that America was a "melting pot" in which former ethnic loyalties were subsumed to a larger civic nationalistic idea of becoming "American." Thus, the state "grew" the nation (Barry-Barner, 1999, p. 104). In the European model,

nation building has ethnic and historical roots while the American model describes identification of nations with their civic structures. While the process descending in the American model, it is ascending in the European one. Hobsbawm (2012, p. 23) says: "for governments the central item in the equation state = nation = people was plainly the state". The background of the international state-nation building model dates back to the WWII. This model is a descending process, and its legitimacy is accounted for when international powers try to help countries in crisis parallel with internal desires and UN actions. This model was primarily used by the USA for rebuilding and renovation in Western Germany and Japan. The second utilization of this model was the support of Western powers in Balkan in 1990s. The third case seems to be the international community's efforts to establish new political structure in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. According to Talentino (2004, p. 560), "international nation-building, therefore, pursues state-building tasks in the hopes that a stable political structure will provide an adequate environment within which identity-building can occur over time". There are also models used in post-communist states which are not be discussed here. The following sections discuss a systemic analysis of nation building in Afghanistan.

## **2. Systemic Analysis of State- Nation-Building and Political Development in Afghanistan**

### **2. 1. First, System Input**

The Bonn Agreement was signed in December 2001, under UN supervision and with the presence of political mainstreams, militia and religious groups (excluding Taliban), aiming at long-term peace and respect for human rights. Its most important components

were the establishment of a six-month government, commitment to democracy, arrangement of the Loya Jirga for electing the leader of transitional government for two years, establishment of an Independent Human Right Commission, disarmament, execution of the 1964 constitution (except for the royalty related parts until enactment of a new constitutional law), arrangement of elections by the transitional government and invitation of peace forces. Article 3 of the agreement reads: "Conscious that some time may be required for the new Afghan security and armed forces to be fully constituted and functioning, the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan request the United Nations Security Council to consider authorizing the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas. Such a force could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centres and other areas" (Bonn Agreements, 2001, Annex 1: article 3).

The Bonn Agreement gave special authority to the UN on interim power duties and expediency: "The functions and powers of members of the Interim Administration will be further elaborated, as appropriate, with the assistance of the United Nations" (Bonn Agreements, 2001, Interim Administration, C: Function, article 9). Hence, the primary act of interim government with collaboration of the UN representation, was implementing components of the Bonn Agreements such as establishing Human Rights Commission, office of election regulations, and arrangement of Loya Jirga for electing the head of transitional government. Given the emphasis on conducting a variety of elections and omitting the provisions of the Monarchy from the 1964 Constitution, it is well clear that the participants of the Bonn Conference rejected a revolutionary radical leftist or rightist regime as well as the monarchy's rule to

create a republic government based on the components of democracy. It seems that representatives of the general public and other political and religious groups approved the new constitution and ratified the agreement with the suffix "Islamic" in the form of the system under the title of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Therefore, while Afghanistan is a multiethnic country, the people's representatives also voted for the institutionalization of the nation-state based on the construction of a state by human beings. However, what challenges this extensive social agreement, on the one hand, is the desire to perpetuate traditional power-derivation of forces within the state under functionalism, and on the other hand, the radical readings of extremist groups established during the Cold War whose role was ignored in the Bonn Agreement. These groups later merged with the Taliban against the new political structure and foreign military forces, resulting in the continuation of the civil war. As a result, the issues of nation-state building and political development, and even the type of political system were overshadowed by the readings of these groups.

## 2. 2. Second, Policy Design

Based on the sixth article of the Bonn Agreement, the transitional government ought to establish commissions for drafting and codification of the constitution with the help of UNAMA<sup>1</sup>, so that Loya Jirga members sign the first draft of the constitution. On December 14 2003, people's representatives in Loya Jirga, enacted the eighth constitution in 12 articles and 162 sections, integrating Islamic principles and liberal democracy doctrine. In the law, the essence of the government was "Islamic Republic" and the type of the political system was known as "semi-presidential". Of the attributes of this law, were the president's responsiveness to the

---

1. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan



National Council (House of Representative and Senate) and rejection of hereditary, traditional, conservatism, totalitarian and absolute monarchy sovereignties, in favor of national sovereignty based on the will of the people which was emphasized by the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph of 4<sup>th</sup> article. Relations between the people and the government were designated based on social contract and electing head of government and local & national representatives by elections within the framework of liberal democracy doctrine.

Separation of powers and government responsibility are emphasized in sections 4, 5 and 7, and sections 6 of the law, respectively. Section 7 accounts for social justice, public welfare, commitment to democracy, equality and respect of the International Declaration of Human Rights. Also, commitment to freedom of speech and thought, freedom of media, market economy, freedom of parties and assemblies, establishment of corruption-free administration, non-discriminatory participation and electing rights in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 58<sup>th</sup> and 156<sup>th</sup> sections are included in this law as liberal measures. Thus, answering the first secondary question of this article, the nation-state building based on the Bonn Agreement and the new constitution in Afghanistan have traditional and modern components. It means that, if nation-state in Afghanistan is measured in a traditional scale, it has the traditional components of land, population, government, sovereignty, social values and common history. But since nation is not a constant concept and such identities consist of ethnic, linguistic and historical elements in the history of Afghanistan and in geographical reigns, they are not ultimate concepts. It seems that based on modern values, people's consensus to build the new political structure in accordance with liberal democracy in the new constitution, is the important element of nation-state building in Afghanistan.

Another liberal doctrine in this law is pluralism, repeatedly emphasized in almost all principles of the Bonn Agreement. This concept is meaningful in terms of the liberal doctrine against any supremacist approach in the reciprocal relationship between the individual and society with the national government. According to Aghabakhshi and Afshari-Rad (2010, p. 523), one may talk about pluralism when no political, cultural, religious and ethnic group has absolute governance and the acceptance of differences and diversity of beliefs is formalized in the country. Pluralism is explicable with individual and social aspects in politics, culture, ethics and bureaucracy. It also accounts for party competition, diversity in cultures and belief in moral pluralism. In normative terms, it takes extensive diversity as desirable (Heywood, 2012, p. 80). In fact, pluralism in politics and government was one of the most important principles agreed on in the Bonn Agreement and then the new Afghan constitution. It is noteworthy that in Afghanistan's social-political environment of the years 1919 to 1978, pluralism was instrumentally practiced by delegation of government positions to individuals inclined to the ruling groups or interacting with traditional groups. Nevertheless, the concept was recognized for the first time by the liberal democracy discourse with no gender, racial and religious discrimination in the Bonn Agreement and enactment of eighth constitutional law. Under the 22<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> articles of the constitution, people can have their decisions and share power in society and government. Indeed, the concept of participation in power, without discrimination, in a pluralist sense was guaranteed in the 50<sup>th</sup> article of the law in accordance with the Bonn agreement. In general, one or multiple principles of Liberal Democracy are embodied in all articles of the new constitution of Afghanistan. It manifests, in mechanical terms, the Liberal Democracy doctrine in the making of politics and government and the mutual relationship between the nation and the state.

### **2. 3. Third: Policy Implementation**

Afghanistan has all elements of a nation-state (land, population, government and sovereignty). However, before the Bonn Agreement, none of the political regimes in Afghanistan had been formed based on the direct will of the people. This indicates that political groups faced a weak political culture. Therefore, the formation of nation-states and inclusive development has always faced crisis and fragility, far from the will of the people. In fact, most of the political regimes in Afghanistan emerged and deteriorated through traditional gatherings, coups or influenced by foreign agents. After 2001, for the first time, liberal democracy was established in Afghanistan with the direct will of the people. However, the new will faced a crisis due to disregard for historical and traditional backgrounds and the demands of a fragmented society. The following sections discuss the elements of nation-state (land, population, government and sovereignty) in accordance with systemic analysis of the context of policy implementation in the liberal nation-state-building in Afghanistan.

#### **2.3.1. Land**

This land element actualizes the human population and national governance in the water, soil and space area in the sense of nation-state with citizen activism. The concept of land also excels at the concepts of nation-state and racial, ethnic and religious groups. The state of Israel, for example, has the same racial identity, but it always suffers from land identity dilemma.

Having the land element as part of the the international environment, contemporary Afghanistan has been subject to nationalization, neighboring in the north with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In the South and the East, it

experiences fragile nation-state-building and development with the growth of extremism, legal ambiguity over the Durand Line, lack of appropriate cultural infrastructure, political economy challenge of water as the source of regional freshwaters, and Pakistan's strategic depth in competition with India. In the West, it borders Iran, with cultural commonalities, historical dilemma of the political economy of water regarding Iran's share of the Hirmand Lake and revolutionism. Therefore, the nature of the confined of this country has created few opportunities and many functional limitations facing nation-state-building and political development. In addition to these challenges, Afghanistan has a special privilege as the closest passageway to connect South Asia to Central Asia, which has been marred by security crisis and the civil war of the national and religious groups.

### **2.3.2. Population**

This element actualizes social, political, cultural and economic action in the geopolitical realm. Ghazi (2002, p. 55) refers to Durkheim idea, stating that in all geographical realms, human groups appear in two forms, one mechanical and the other organic. The heterogeneous social context in Afghanistan shows that the population element is primarily formed mechanically due to the multiplicity of ethnic groups, cultures, languages and racially diverse neighborhoods. But this process has been transformed into a non-democratic organic allegory of nation-state due to familial & political supremacism. So, minorities become more emotionally attached to the people of neighboring countries, and the nation-state building process is reduced in favor of ethnic and religious nationalism, and subcultures are pitted against each other. After the Bonn Agreement with enactment of the Eighth Constitution, achieving a common national identity called "Afghan" is one of the major challenges in the nation-state building process and is

considered as an obstacle to political development. Because apart from the smaller ethnicities and religions that do not play a decisive role in politics and government, the four major ethnic groups, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, form the ethnic and religious majorities, respectively, and have a direct and decisive influence on politics. According to Bashirieh (2013, pp. 287-288), the supremacy of the religious majority in Afghanistan has caused the Sunni Tajiks of the religion to become more friendly with the Pashtuns and to reach more government positions than the Shias.

### **1.2. Religious Sects**

This element is both a factor in the formation of socio-political structures in the traditional way and a threat to the nation-state building in the modern sense in Afghanistan. Religious sects, on the one hand, have defined belief in collective relations, the social segregation of Shia, Sunnis and other religions, and, on the other hand, have played a deterrent role in perpetuating political power, bias toward traditions, and rejecting rationality among Afghanistan's rural community. Religious elements are considered merely as a form of worship and less political in Afghanistan's urban areas. However, the same components are a tool for extremist groups to provoke people against the national government in rural areas. In fact, due to rural underdevelopment or unbalanced development, traditional clerics or extremists, along with large landowners, hostilely use religious elements as a tool against the concepts of nation-state and political-economic development. According to Sajjadi (2012, p. 111), in the eyes of traditional Afghan clerics, rulers and political agents of society are regarded as non-religious.

### **2.2. Ethnicity**

In the cultural field, numerous definitions for ethnicity are

presented. In this article, Antony Giddens' definition is used, which is relevant to Afghanistan's context: "the concept of ethnicity is one that is purely social in meaning. Ethnicity refers to the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people which sets them apart from others" (Giddens, 2009, p. 667). The origin of ethnocentrism emerges as the concept of 'understanding one another' in Islam, but this understanding has been converted into physiologic and public procession in Afghanistan. Ethnic and tribal dependence not only are the opposite of modern symbols of life, but also in contrast with linguistic and ethnic-cultural symbolism, showing an opposition to citizenship principles. As a result, ethnicity is known as an inadequate facet and incongruent with common national identification in delineation of the nation-state building process.

### **3.2. Language**

Language is one of the major principals of identity, which gives meaning to concepts of nation-state with its multiple functions. However, with a hostile approach, it has functioned as the symbol of supremacism, socio-cultural multiplicity, cultural bias and discrimination in Afghanistan. Even though Pashto and Persian/Dari are recognized as the first and second official languages of Afghanistan in the constitution and other frequent languages are defined as third formal languages, the 16<sup>th</sup> article of the constitution is controversial in the country. Because ethnic and linguistic identities overlap with politics and have created social, economic and cultural turmoil in the process of nation-state building and are an obstacle to balanced development, especially by creating social conflicts in the allocation of funds to tribal areas.

### **4.2. Loya Jirga**

The members of the Loya Jirga were often appointed by the rulers

before the liberal democratic system became effective, and were in fact a means of maintaining power. But with the enactment of the eighth constitution, its membership become elective. This time-honored historical-traditional element (convening a Loya Jirga for major national decisions) can even bring the president to justice. Contrary to the components of the liberal nation-state, of which the parliament is a distinguishing feature, Loya Jirga has found a place in the distorted liberal democratic system of Afghanistan. This concept is composed of the two words: "Loya" and "Jirga". Loya is a Pashto word meaning 'large' and 'jirga' is a Turkish word meaning 'gathering'. This traditional parliament has a long history in Afghanistan. According to Ghobar (1384, pp. 11-31), before the arrival of Islam in this country, consultative councils called "Sabha", in which all the people participated, and "Samati" councils, in which only the owners of herds, carts and Shah participated, existed. Some scholars, however, consider Loya Jirga as a tribal tradition derived from feudal relations: The Jirga is a tribal and feudal institution established to secure the interests and consolidate tribal foundations in the maintenance of political power, and the tribe is a large social unit, whose members consider themselves to belong to a father or lineage (Ansari, 1384: 11).

No matter how the term is defined, not only is Loya Jirga not an important tool in the modern age, but also it is a barrier for modern institutions such as the parliament, provincial assemblies and city assemblies that are created through elections. In particular, since 2002, Afghanistan has witnessed the convening of dozens of consultative Loya Jirgas, whose decisions have also been used illegally. Because the real members of the Loya Jirga, according to Article 8 of the constitution, consist of members of the national assembly/parliament and members of the provincial and city councils. The Loya Jirga, which is foreseen in Afghanistan's new

constitution, has not been convened in the past two decades due to incomplete quorum. In addition, from 2002 to 2021, the Afghan government refused to hold city council elections. Thus, the Loya Jirga is in fact a tool of the executive against the legislative as a political construct.

## 5.2. Ummah

Ummah is an abstract category that has challenged the element of population in Afghan politics and government. For example, children were taught to say: They are the ummah of the Prophet Mohammad<sup>(PBUH)</sup>, but with the formation of jihadist groups, the word gradually entered the political literature and is still used, mostly by fundamentalist followers, in slogans. On the one hand, this category does not have the same meaning and connotation for Shia and Sunni faiths, and on the other, it is a factor for socio-political and religious divisions and threatens nation-state-building delineation. The word ummah is based on the leadership of the caliph among Sunni fundamentalists, while it is used in the Shia faith on the principle of the rule of Velayat-e-Faqih. In fact, the use of the word ummah has become a seasonal tool for the perpetuation of power in the form of a slogan in the radical right's hand, instead of expressing an all-encompassing religious identity for all Muslims. Notably, the word is not compatible with concepts such as nationalism, nation-state building and development in the age of nation-states.

## 3. Sovereignty

The continuation of feudal rule, the rebellion of tribal leaders and militias against the central government, proxy wars and foreign aggression have reduced sovereignty in the sense of nation-state and inclusive development to a strong society and weak



government in Afghanistan. Except for Ahmad Shah Abdali and Timur Shah Durrani, who ruled contemporary Afghanistan in a strong and inclusive manner, this element was affected by internal strife until Abdul Rahman Khan came to power in 1880. From 1880 to 1901, Abdul Rahman Khan was able to establish a strong central government in Afghanistan, but after his death, a weak sovereignty re-emerged in the country. Thus, the crisis of sovereignty, on one hand, gradually shattered Abdali's vast territory under the Treaty of Gandamak and then the Durand Line with the former British Indian Empire, and on the other hand, increased the scope for foreign intervention in Afghanistan to the day. Hence, one of the deterrents of nation-state building causing fragile development is the historical weakness of the sovereignty that has led to the historical crisis of *influence* in Afghanistan, the crisis that lasted in the liberal democratic system of Afghanistan from 2002 to 2021 even with the presence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops in Afghanistan.

#### **4. Government**

If we consider the state as a system that leads the society, so, state is a tool of government's politics, executive and juridical orders and codification in the trend of political development and its abilities. Government is a manmade entity in the philosophy of Liberalism; therefore, with respect to the existing system in Afghanistan, nation building and state building are implemented in politics by the establishment of democracy.

Definition and acceptance of democracy were implemented under the sixth article of the constitution with the arrangement of the first presidential election in 2004 and first assemblies' election and provincial councils in 2005 under the leadership of Joint Office

for Election Regulation (with both internal and international members) while the election and political parties' law had not been authorized yet. Hence, both laws were put on the agenda by presidential order and emphasis on single non-transferable vote in election law and restrictions in the use of party symbols during the competition. This policy put political and technical restrictions on the competition between political parties, because single non-transferable vote minimized the role of political parties in parliament relative to proportional representation, with no respect to single-seating constituencies. Nevertheless, by the arrangement of first presidential and national council elections, the executive, legislative and supervisory roles of the government were actualized in the capital city and provinces based on 64<sup>th</sup>, 82<sup>th</sup>, 84<sup>th</sup>, and 138<sup>th</sup> articles of the constitution. The first elected government succeeded in implementing three basics of state building, in a liberal democratic sense, by the introduction of ministers and members of the judicial branch based on the 69<sup>th</sup>, 77<sup>th</sup>, 91<sup>th</sup>, 92<sup>th</sup> and 93<sup>th</sup> articles of the constitution about the government and the 117<sup>th</sup> and the 118<sup>th</sup> article and the late paragraph of the 50<sup>th</sup> article about the Supreme Court and national assembly (Wolesi Jirga).

The next sections analyze the function and abilities of the political system following pervasive participation, redistribution of power, foreign help and international nation-state building model. This model entered the political literature of Afghanistan after the Bonn Agreements. In the model, besides establishment of government from outside, nation building is the internal process and must not be left behind state building, and foreign aid should not be stopped until reaching acceptable development and national identification (Pei and Kasper, 2003, p. 5). Taking government's activeness in implementing politics, the attributes of the liberal democratic system in Afghanistan in the political socialization need to be analyzed based on nation-state building concepts. Almond

and Powel (1966, p. 38) state that “the confrontation of a system development problem may be related to the changing patterns of political system capabilities- i.e., growth or decline in regulative, extractive, distributive, symbolic, and responsive capabilities”.

### **Extractive Capabilities**

If the political system can create bureaucratic and specialized structures and respects the will of the people at the local and central levels, its overall legitimacy and civic survival will be guaranteed, and its extractive capabilities will increase. The rule of liberal democracy in Afghanistan was able to reform the bureaucratic structures and the right of the people to access government information on natural resources from 2002 to mid-2021, in accordance with Article 50 within the limits of the law and paved the way for relative participation of citizens in government positions. However, due to security challenges caused by the crisis of influence and the weakness of political socialization, this government could not use natural resources to finance the national budget. After nearly two decades, a large part of the Afghan government's development budget is still funded by international donors. Afghanistan, for example, has a budget of \$5.5 billion in 2021, of which \$3.7 billion is a regular budget and \$1.8 billion is a development budget (I.R.Afg National Budget, 2021, p. 4). The budget is supported by the international community in the areas of security, public order, education, housing and governance, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and a number of Western countries.

### **Regulatory Capabilities**

Democratic and legitimate authority is the degree to which individuals and groups are active in the regulatory capacity of a

democratic political system. Undemocratic systems are not adorned with this principle. In the patriarchal system there is no trace of administrative staff; in the hereditary system there are employees with specialized roles under control, and in the feudal system there is a kind of commitment between master and servant (Weber, 1965, p. 341). Thus, if governance is based on democratic principles, then freedoms, modernization process, simultaneous political and economic development, and good governance are guaranteed. Therefore, the liberal democracy of Afghanistan was able to promote social justice and individual dignity, human rights protection and democracy in the areas under its influence in accordance with Article 6 of the constitution. Legal achievements were accomplished under Article 7 of this law regarding commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in line with Articles 17, 43 and 44 of the law, for balanced development of women and Kuchies to promote education and higher education up to bachelor's degree. Also, the right to freedom of choice and expression and the media have been empowered in accordance with Article 35 of the law on the establishment of communities and parties, and Articles 33 and 3 of the constitution. However, what waned regulatory capacity was more attention to urban development relative to rural development, which eventually turned rural-traditional nervousness into a tool for extremist groups or led to a clash of tradition and modern opinion.

### **Distributing Capabilities**

The level of analysis in this capability is related to economic, political and civic freedoms of the political system. In economics and politics, liberal democracy actualizes good governing by irenic transition of political power from one civic organization to another, transferring centralized policies in the interest of pluralist and non-centralized policies, redistribution of assets and economic

reformation. Afghanistan signed the UN MDGs<sup>1</sup> in 2004 in line with its national development strategy and committed to the eight goals of the document in addition to “longstanding and constant security” up to 2020. The country claimed in Sep. 2013 to have reached part of the goals in education, intact drinking water and reduction in child mortality” (BBC, 2013, Sep 27). However, the distributive capabilities of the liberal democratic system in Afghanistan suffered most for two reasons: First, decentralized policies were not institutionalized in Afghanistan’s segregated society in the sense of multiculturalism and cultural minorities were viewed as second-class citizens. Second, the continuation of historical nationalist policies blurred the line between liberal and tribal forces, reducing the concept of citizenship to ethnicity and religion, and the continuation of the head of political power to the historical concept.

### **Symbolic Capabilities**

Political systems explain their abilities by presenting symbols, idols, laws, rules and programs to achieve social acceptance. In liberal democracy system, identity and legitimacy of the system is evaluated with evolution of individualism. According to Apter (1965, p. 29), “the citizens are politically equal, as in the concept of one man, one vote. Power and loyalty are constantly being exchanged for benefits and privileges. The voting mechanism is the equivalent of the market. Preferences are rationally registered by the citizens as choices in the political arena”. Thus, the congestive agreement of people and government of Afghanistan to enact the constitution based on democracy and other situated and civic rules can be symbolic and among common abilities of the nation-state.

---

1 . Millennium Development Goals

Therefore, the establishment of bureaucratic institutions, under the 50<sup>th</sup> article, and supporting businesses, based on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> articles of the constitution, which is compatible with the evolution of individualism and relative productivity of the private sector, are known as the system's abilities. Nevertheless, what damaged symbolic capabilities in the nation-state-building and political development process was disregard for the demands of Afghanistan's multicultural society. In fact, the majority of Afghanistan's fragmented society did not see their cultural values in the structure of a liberal democratic system after the enactment of the eighth constitution. A clear example of this is Article 4 and the designation of the word "Afghan" and its application to all ethnic groups, and Article 16 with emphasis on the preservation of scientific and administrative terms that has fueled the linguistic and ethnic divide. As in most Persian-speaking provinces, due to differences over the name of the university (Danishgah / Pohenton) most academic institutions have no names.

### **Responsive capabilities**

By moving to modern systems from traditional systems, laws, rules and non-private facets substitute personal relationships in politics. With the establishment of the new system in Afghanistan, some employees were appointed as spokespersons in almost all governmental and independent institutions. This decision let the people test the performance of the officials in accordance with the laws and regulations, to express their criticisms and suggestions for improving issues. Thus, the system's accountability in this area contributed to the systematic relationship between the government and the people only in areas under government control. Therefore, in answer to the second sub-question, it can be said that the political structure is in line with global conditions in terms of politics and foreign relations, and the Afghan government has been

able to achieve relatively good results, but there are also challenges in explaining nation-state building and the development process. These challenges include legal ambiguity over the Durand Line, weak cultural infrastructure in the south, east, and north, and a landlocked nature. Likewise, heterogeneous social contexts, separate tribal and religious aspirations and tribal supremacism have replaced national nationalism with ethnic nationalism. Indeed, the totalitarianism of religious fundamentalists against each other, unbalanced rural development, ethnocentrism in government functions, ethnic and linguistic overlap, the survival of the Loya Jirga in front of the Wolesi Jirga, vague interpretations of the ummah instead of citizenship and political weakness constitute the major challenges facing nation-state building. These challenges have minimized responsive capability and have led to penetration crisis of sovereignty in rural areas.

#### **Forth: Policy Assessment**

Although the liberal democratic system gained limited success in Afghanistan, it suffered from deficiencies in supplying the national budget as well as establishing systemic relation between rural and urban areas as a result of security weakness and traditional functions within the bureaucratic system. Political behavior toward the real population of the country prohibited the presentation of actual measures in the development process. As the exact statistics on the population and other characteristics of Afghanistan is unknown, it is difficult to offer a thorough policy assessment on whether the government has reached pre-MDGs goals. In addition, energy shortage for the industrial sector and weakness in preventing the dumping policy of regional countries, have minimized the distributive ability of the government. The integration of liberal democracy doctrine and jurisprudential

principles in the constitution, with no reformative-interpretative objectives on the part of religious institutions in the government has resulted in gender clash intentions, and rejection of elections by extremists, which are regarded as serious challenges of the system's symbolic abilities. In fact, the government has a façade of liberal democracy but it is trapped into traditional relations. As a result, liberal freedoms have ceased to impact governmental functions. Therefore, structural dichotomy and lack of purposeful reform has prohibited the process of nation-state building and political development. As the philosophical identification of the new system is based on the liberal democracy values, the evaluations of this article show that implementing liberalistic structures to political development and nation-state building process in Afghanistan has failed.

In Afghanistan, the concept of nation, in the sense of citizen's right in political participation to achieve power, is left ambiguous. In this country, ethnic, cultural and religious identities are graphed on ecological framework in line with common values based on traditional politics. This order has converted, in political sense, the natural and normal choice of better life and coexistence to preference for racial residence in separate places. Promoting racial and religious prejudice in politics has prevented, on the one hand, the fulfillment of citizenship rights; on the other hand, it has introduced the centralized governance responsible for social segregation and discrimination.

The Bonn Agreements opened a new door for inclusive participation of citizens and nation-state building. The liberal-oriented governance was able to partly trigger the process of nation-state building with relative respect for Liberal Democracy values and corresponding to international politics from 2001 to 2009. Relying on foreign aid, this system tried to follow the



international model of nation-state building, as stated in by the Bonn Agreements synchronized with nation building as the internal trend. However, from 2009 to 2020, the weakness of the system, immersing politics into tribal surfaces and lack of rural development and social engineering prohibited comprehensive development. According to international statistics, from early 2014 to mid-2015, among 102 countries, and then statistics of international transparency organization, from 2016 to 2019, Afghanistan has not even been met relatively. In these statistics, a 2,95% increase in financial corruption puts Afghanistan at the top of corrupt countries. In specifications of regularity and security, Afghanistan stands on the 100<sup>th</sup> position, with 3,9% of security decrease. They show the accessibility of citizens to juridical and justice entities with 1% reduction, respecting of citizen's fundamental rights with 4,4% decrease. Also, judicial justice has 4,16% decrease, influence crisis by 17,1% decrease in half 2015 in ratio to 2014. Meanwhile, only the characteristics of open government and applying laws were equal in both 2014 and 2015 (World justice project, 2015). Afghanistan was the second most corrupt country in 2016 and 2017, and was included in the list of the four most corrupt countries after Somalia, South Sudan and Syria in 2018 to late 2019. This conveys the message of the lack of political development in the nation-state building process (Transparency International, 2019). Therefore, answering the third sub-question of this article, weak rural political development, lack of moderate interpretations of jurisprudential principles and the clash of linear functionalism with liberal democratic structures resulted in the inability of the socio-political system in proportionate passage from traditional to modern relations. The reason is that the system is not properly institutionalized with historical-traditional contexts and the demands of a fragmented society. In fact, the teachings of liberal democracy have been

applied ostensibly on an axis of democratization. The consequences of such a pattern can be seen in the function of the agent through immersion in tribal-traditional relations, especially in the reliance on traditional assemblies (Loya Jirga) instead of the national assembly/parliament. This has ultimately led to a lack of realistic delineation of the process of nation-state building and political development and waning of these concepts in Afghanistan.

### **Fifth: System Outputs**

Before offering a systematic analysis, a brief explanation of 'system' is presented. Each system consists of numerous components which have interactions with one another. The employees within a system have behaviors, restrictions, and goals, and are divided into open and closed clusters. An open system is based on democratic values and a closed system is a feature of non-democratic governments. This paper attempts to compare the two systems to provide an independent and realistic analysis of the situation. The author argues that the doctrine of liberal democracy, as an open system in the realistic explanation of nation-state building, can only be applied to the urban society in Afghanistan. What has damaged and disrupted this process has been the unbalanced historical development that has not been implemented in Afghanistan's rural areas for a long time. In other words, weakness in the implementation of liberal teachings is the result of lack of competent parties and political elites committed to political pluralism in Afghanistan's fragmented society. One of the consequences of this process is the tendency to continue power in a tribal way like manipulation of the people's votes in the electoral process. The process of implementation of liberal democracy has repeatedly dealt with politico-ethnic issues but has ignored the real population demography and has sufficed to relying on approximate statistics on the conduct of elections. This unrealistic approach has

ultimately led to all kinds of irregularities and electoral fraud. For nineteen years, the government has failed to distribute electronic IDs in a way that would be approved by all ethnic groups. On the contrary, it sought to exercise power by implementing tribal nationalism through nationalization policies disregarding decentralization. Tribal nationalism has been a failed historical experience from 1880 to 2020 for Afghanistan's fragmented society in a 'multicultural' sense.

Denying proportional representation, the government in Afghanistan emphasizes the survival of the non-transferable single voting system, while itself prevents the formation of national parties, nation-state building and political development. The second presidential and provincial council elections in 2009 and the second national council elections in 2010, with a single non-transferable voting system, resulted in technical fraud, widespread corruption, and political manipulation. Third presidential and provincial council elections in 2014 with a widespread fraud, led to the creation of a national unity government and executive branch in the body of the new system, contrary to the provisions of the constitution. Related to this, the third parliamentary elections were held with a three-year delay in 2018, and the fourth presidential elections were held 2019. These two elections were the worst elections in the structure of Afghanistan's liberal democratic system from 2002 to 2019, due to violations and fraud and the creation of imaginary voting centers. The negative consequences of these two elections were long-delayed announcement of the election results, early dismissal of members of election commissions (election complaints and elections) and amending the election law before announcing the results of the parliamentary elections. The 2019 presidential elections candidates' refusal to accept election results was also a serious challenge for political development and the

nation-state building process. Similarly, legal challenges and lack of accountability of the representatives of the National Assembly to the nation-state building and political development have not been constrained in the country from 2002 to 2020. Parliamentarians' disregard for Article 109 of the Constitution in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> rounds of the Constitution, which stipulates that "proposals for amending elections law shall not be included in the work agenda of the National Assembly during the last year of the legislative term" (Afg. Const. 2004, art 109), has led to lack of necessary amendments to the election law before the elections. Hence, this law has been continuously amended by presidential decrees in recent legislative years or during continuous elections. Thus, such signs and functional actions show that the ruling political groups in Afghanistan are not yet adorned with political culture. In fact, weakness of the political culture not only has damaged the concepts of nation-state and development, but also has led to the emergence and intensification of various crises in politics and government. Lucien Pye (1965) describes these crises in the process of political development and nation-state building as crises of identity, legitimacy, distribution, participation, integration, and influence.

### **Identity Crisis**

In the stage of renovation, the Liberal system faces the challenges of nation building and cultural solidarity, which according to Almond and Powell (1966, p. 36), "refers to the process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from small tribes, villages, or pretty principalities to the larger central political system". In other words, when the physical and mental health of an individual and society pale against new political conditions, the identity crisis occurs. In this situation, the position of individuals and social groups is devastated and results in alienation of human beings from oneself and others. Pye (1969, p. 542) says: "the

question of identity, is closely related to the problem of the mobilization of the commitment of the members of a political system to that system—their emotional attachment to the polity and their willingness to commit resources to it". Now we see this process in Afghanistan in which upon the establishment of the new system, individuals and society are facing identity crisis for passing of tradition to modern conditions. Weakness in peaceful transition and civic education have created an identity crisis, which overlaps with individuals' nationality and religion. It has also caused deficiency in the political development and nation-state building process, and in agents politic in rural areas. The political and civic society of Afghanistan have not accepted the Afghan identity for national identification yet. The identity crisis has caused most voters to participate in elections with ethnic and religious bias and no consideration of individual and social welfare programs and plans. Thus, there are two ways to institutionalize nation-state-building and development: one is the European model (nationalism in the sense of citizenship equality) and the other is state-building in multicultural societies in the sense of multiculturalism through which the UAE has developed. The first has experienced failure since 1880 in Afghanistan, since nationalism has failed repeatedly and has been reduced to an ethnic-oriented identity regardless of the civilizational and linguistic background of Afghanistan's fragmented society. The second way, however, is state-building, which has not been considered in the liberal-democratic system of Afghanistan, and therefore the nation-state-building and development process has waned.

### **Legitimacy Crisis**

Lucien Pye (2001, p. 306) states that the crisis of legitimacy arises when the political system is disinterested in the principle of

equality, inclusive participation and freedom in the process of political development. Two issues should be taken into consideration here: one is the concept of structure and the other is the concept of the agent's function in relation to the political system.

Afghanistan's political system, in the sense of a structure, is based on the teachings of liberal democracy in combination with the principles of Islam, a structure that is accepted by the country's urban society. In fact, this structure, while being democratic, does not take into account the historical and traditional background and the separation of the public sphere from the private sphere. While this structure is acceptable to the urban community, for most of the underdeveloped tribal-rural community, which is influenced by tradition and extremist fundamentalists, it is difficult to accept some of the articles of the constitution; in particular, gender equality, the education of girls in schools and universities, and women employment in bureaucratic and political affairs.

The political system as agent has also become vulnerable in Afghanistan due to the identity crisis; that is to say: an agent who inherited power for several generations, now has to gain power through elections. In fact, the agent of former hereditary power is forced to transfer privileges or part of his ancestral powers to others in order to remain conditionally in power.

Now, the crisis of legitimacy in the liberal democratic system should be explained. This means that the liberal democratic system in Afghanistan experienced both good and imperfect legitimacy at home and abroad from 2002 to 2020. The Provisional Government gained its legitimacy from the signing of the Bonn Agreement in late 2001, and the Transitional Government gained legitimacy from the Loya Jirga. It seems that the first presidential and national and provincial elections, with the least electoral fraud, marked the

culmination of the legitimacy of the new system in the domestic and foreign arenas. But the legitimacy crisis of the system started from the second elected government in 2009 due to political influence in the technical and engineering layers of various elections, weak rural development and by the formation of the national unity government in 2014 with violation of the constitution. In the aftermath of the 2014 elections and the holding of all kinds of elections with violations and fraud, the internal and consequently external legitimacy of the liberal democratic system became vulnerable due to the collision of the agent's function with the structure. The invitation of Taliban by Russia, Iran, and China and a number of Central Asian countries to join the peace talks, as well as direct US talks with Taliban, and the establishment of a Taliban representative office in Qatar also undermined the Afghan government's regional legitimacy; a process that ultimately disrupted the process of development and consequently, nation-state building.

### **Distributive Crisis**

Easton (1965, p. 21) states that: "political system can be designated as those interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society". In Afghanistan, the concept of distribution has been following the traditional method and prior political trends, disregarding economic and civic desires of people. The undemocratic distribution structure, based on interaction with heads of tribes and religious sects, has led to unjust distribution of power and a gap between the people and the system, creating a weak majority and a prosperous minority. Hence, the traditional politics, in the sense of a patriarchal authority, was not able to create functional relations between the government and the low and middle classes in the liberal democratic system; as the escalation of

distribution crisis became the advertisement tool of extremist forces against the government. Misusing people's beliefs, these groups induce people against the democratic system, resulting in the deficiency of the nation-state building process. Although the distribution crisis was temporarily resolved through the participation of other minorities in power after the signing of the Bonn Agreement, ethnic and religious patronage gradually led to the spread of corruption and the violation of constitutional principles.

### **Participation Crisis**

According to Pye (1969, p. 558), "the participation crises and the way they are resolved have major effects on the values associated with governmental performance. The scope, nature, and attainability of the output are affected by opportunities to participate". Huntington (1976, p. 4) states that: "no consideration to the legitimate desires of society resulting in clustering acts for preserving benefits of one group against other groups are the reason for indiscriminate situations in politics". In Afghanistan, weakness of inclusive participation leads to weakness of national identification, as direct participation comes under the participation without executive power. For example, the 60<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> articles of the constitution define special duties and authorization for the president, but no duty is assigned to the first and second deputies until the president's death. Hence, the existence of this crisis, on the one hand, damages good governance and division of works, and on the other hand, marks a minor role for ethno-religious minorities in elective posts in the segregated society of Afghanistan and results in persistence of centralized policies. At the same time, the socio-economic demands of minorities are not taken into account in the process of growth and development in national policies. In fact, the persistence of centralized policies in Afghanistan's multicultural



society and disregard for the peoples' demands in the provinces have made people feeling distant from those in power. Thus weakness of functional relationships between the people and the government not only has put the nation-state building and development process in crisis, but also has led to the flow of capital to countries that have historical and linguistic ties to the minorities.

### **Penetration Crisis**

Pye (1969, p. 558) states that: "penetration crisis refers to the process by which the bureaucratic arms of governmental control penetrate the society". Ideological regimes in Afghanistan faced influence crisis from the 1978 coup till 2001. The crisis was expected to be eradicated by pervasive participation of people in the new system. But the collision of liberal structure with traditional functions, continuity of war, and weakness of consistency between nation-state building agents, internal ruling groups and Afghanistan's fragmented society prohibited realization of the expectation. Increase in drug production, continuity of feudalism, fundamentalists' influence on lower classes of society, suggesting democracy as an irreligious belief and advertisement of ummah concept instead of nation can be claimed as the reasons for intensification of the influence crisis.

### **Solidarity Crisis**

Inequality among social groups and separation of leaders from masses leads to solidarity crisis. According to Pye (1969, p. 560), "unless this problem [national identity] is solved first, other problems that arise will be difficult of solution". Although a democratic mood and solidarity between society and political elites was created and solidarity crisis was removed temporarily in the interim and the transitional elective governments, in the aftermath,

engineering of elections, political elites' promotion of ethnocentrism, increase in financial corruption and lack of programs to achieve cultural, economic and socio-political goals resulted in systematic weakness and created a gap between political society and lower/middle classes and thus constant crisis re-emerged.

To sum up the article, first, liberalism and its connection with democracy were discussed as a theoretical framework, and from the heart of both phenomena, indicators were presented to delineate the nation-state building process. Subsequently, the position of people in liberal components and its systematic connection with the nation-state building were explained along with the contemporary views of nation-state building and the models of this process. This made it possible to define the concepts of nation-state building in the liberal democratic system in accordance with the theories and developments of the new era. Similarly, the position of nation-state elements in Afghanistan was explained, arguing that the concept of nation-state was never clear in previous regimes. In all discussions the structure of liberal democratic governance based on the Bonn Agreements, the new constitution, the functions and capabilities of Afghanistan's new political system in the context of foreign aid were examined. The findings of this study indicate that the process of nation-state building in Afghanistan, has replaced the idea of civic nationalization with ethnic nationalism due to its tribal-traditional functions. This has created an unwritten alliance between tradition and democracy with social engineering of ethnicity and nation, regardless of the social demands of a culturally fragmented society. An undemocratic phenomenon that ultimately, like other systems in non-democratic societies, derailed the liberal democratic system and intensified the types of crises described above. Thus, answering the main question of this article,

as stated in the hypothesis, it is confirmed that the experience of nation-state building and political development process based on the Bonn Agreement was not successful. Democratization in a country like Afghanistan, with such historical and traditional backgrounds, was not considered realistically in the new structure and was not properly operationalized. The process is likely to face another crisis with the end of foreign aid and the end of the democratization project.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

Considering that the government has always functioned weaker than the multicultural society of Afghanistan, composed of different ethnicities, nationalities and religions, authors conclude with suggestions to address the challenges: First, pursuing a policy of decentralization and avoiding continuation of failed policies of centralism and tribal nationalism: because in fragmented societies, nationalism does not work similar to the European model. Therefore, instead of nationalism, which has intensified the gaps and crises, it is appropriate for Afghanistan to take the state-building model, experienced and developed in the UAE. Second, cooperation between ethnic and religious leaders to achieve a unified national identity based on the principle of citizenship and the rejection of the unconventional political culture of the ruling and peasantry should be enhanced. Third, academic attitudes should change toward development of theoretical foundations in the structures and nature of the political system based on historical contexts. Fourth, a spirit of reciprocity should be constructed for independent political participation instead of participation without executive power for the sub-national classes. Fifth, the spirit of interaction needs to be enhanced between policymakers at the domestic, regional and international levels with the aim of

sustainable growth and development. Sixth, belief in the democratic system, as an approach to good governance in which more tolerance exists compared with other governance systems in the process of nation-state building and development, needs to be created. Seventh, attempt to accept the democratic fact that social theories and democracy, as sociological realities under the establishment of democratic institutions, are possible through the promotion of the political culture of the nation-state building and development process. Eighth, separation of public and private spheres from each other needs to be recognized in the political structure. Because humans' sense of belonging to each other is not organizable by abstract claims or pure rationality; rather, it is possible by constant companionship with the purpose of coexistence. This dream is achievable by giving up oppression, humiliation and supremacism towards each other and turning to self-creation.

## References

- AcemOglu, D., & Rabinson, J. (2013). *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). New York: Crown.
- Apter, D. (1965). *The Politics of Modernization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Almond, G., & Powell, B. (1959). *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Almond, G., & Powell B. (1966). *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*. Boston: Little Brown& Co.
- Barner-Barry, C. (1999). Nation Building and Russian Federation. In B. Glad & E. Shiraev, E. (Eds), *The Russian Transformation* (pp. 257-278). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Brubaker, R. (1996a). *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brubaker, R. (1996b). Nationalizing States in the Old “New Europe” and the New. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19(2), 411-437. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1996.9993918>
- The Bonn Agreement. (2001, Dec 5). Red: July, 2019. Retrieved from <https://eoi.gov.in/kabul/?pdf0652?000>
- Easton, D. (1965). *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York: John Wiley.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (1969). *The Political Systems of Empire*. New York: The Free Press.
- Gellner, E. (2009). *Nations and Nationalism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Cornell University Press
- Giddens, A. (2012). *Sociology* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Heywood, A. (2012). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (2012). *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Program, Myth, Reality* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Cambridge University Press.
- Jagers, K. (1992). War and the Three Faces of Power: War Making and State Making in Europe and the Americas. *Comparative Political Studies*, 25(1), pp. 26-62 <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0010414092025001002>
- Jones, T. W. (1966). *Masters of Political Thought*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kymlicka, W., & Opalski, M. (2001). *Western Political Theory and Ethic Relations in Eastern Europe: Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported?*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Nash, K. (2010). *Contemporary Political Sociology: Globalization, Politics and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Weber, M. (1965). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice Hall.
- Pan, E. (2003). United Nation: Nation-Building. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/united-nations-nation-building>
- Pye, L. (1969). *Political Culture and Political Development (Studies in Political Development)*. Princeton University Press.
- Pei, M., & Kasper, S. (2003). Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation Building (Policy Brief 24). Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2003/04/11/lessons-from-past-american-record-on-nation-building-pub-1240>
- Samuel, H. (1976). *No Easy Choice*. Massachusetts :Harvard University Press.
- Talentino, A. K. (2004). The Two Faces of Nation- Building: Developing Function and Identity. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17(3), 557-575. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757042000297008>

### Websites

1. Report (2015) in [www.data.worldjusticeproject.org](http://www.data.worldjusticeproject.org)
2. News (2013) in [www.bbc.co.uk/persion](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persion)
3. Surveys (2019) [www.Transparency.org](http://www.Transparency.org)