



Master Thesis

NATION-BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract

Afghanistan has long experienced civil wars and change in power. Since 2001 the U.S. have occupied the country, first to get revenge from 9/11, and then afterwards with the intention to create a nation-building project in the country, as they have done so many other places before the 2000's. The focus will be on economic-, political-, and cultural and social development. These three dimensions will be the main analysis tool in this thesis and will be used to establish why the nation-building project in Afghanistan failed under U.S occupation after more than twenty years? According to multiple studies the U.S. have sat up different project around Afghanistan with the intention for them to build a stronger economy, better political institutions, and create a new culture for the population, with focus on western thoughts and values. Many of these projects have however not been successful, and the country is still suffering from an unhealthy economy, instable political institutions, and a culture that goes against the religion and values of many Afghan people.

To point out were the nation-building project have failed, and why the U.S. have not been able to build a strong nation, with common goals and values, the thesis will contain statistics from official reports made on the reconstruction of Afghanistan. These reports also contain text material of the on-land projects that have been initiated through the years and gives a clear idea of where and how the investments have been used since 2001. The statistics will show that the U.S. have been investing around 2 trillion dollars in the war and reconstruction of Afghanistan since 2001 and up until 2021, and that they have not been able to create either economic-, political-, and/or cultural and social development.

The nation-building failure will further be established when the thesis touches upon the events that happened after August 2021, when the U.S. and international allies withdraw their military forces, and contractors. Taliban conquered Kabul and created a lot of doubt about the future of the country, the government fled the country, and many Afghan people also left because they were afraid of the consequences of the take-over. This event further shows that the U.S. have failed in all three dimensions of their nation-building project, and that the country has not modernized towards a more western way of living.

All three dimensions are intervened, and this thesis will show that they are both the cause and the effect of the U.S. failed nation-building project in Afghanistan in the past two decades, and that there has not been any development in either of the dimensions, which have put Afghanistan back to the conditions they were in before 2001.

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1. Introduction

Since 2001 the U.S. have occupied Afghanistan, a country who have suffered from instability and destruction for many years. This occupation initiated a war, that lasted for twenty years, several investments in different project of reconstruction, and ended with the biggest mistake the U.S. could make. The reason for the occupation was at the beginning to get revenge from the 9/11 attacks on World Trade Center, Pentagon, and other places around the U.S., but the point of view changed after 2011, where the caption and killing of Osama bin-Laden has succeed. Since 2011 the U.S. their presence in the country have been categorized as a nation-building project with the purpose of helping the country create a healthy economy, a strong government, and a culture that goes along with western thoughts and values. Nation-building often becomes a reality in countries where there has been an armed conflict that has severed the nexus between society and state (Keane, 2016; 33).

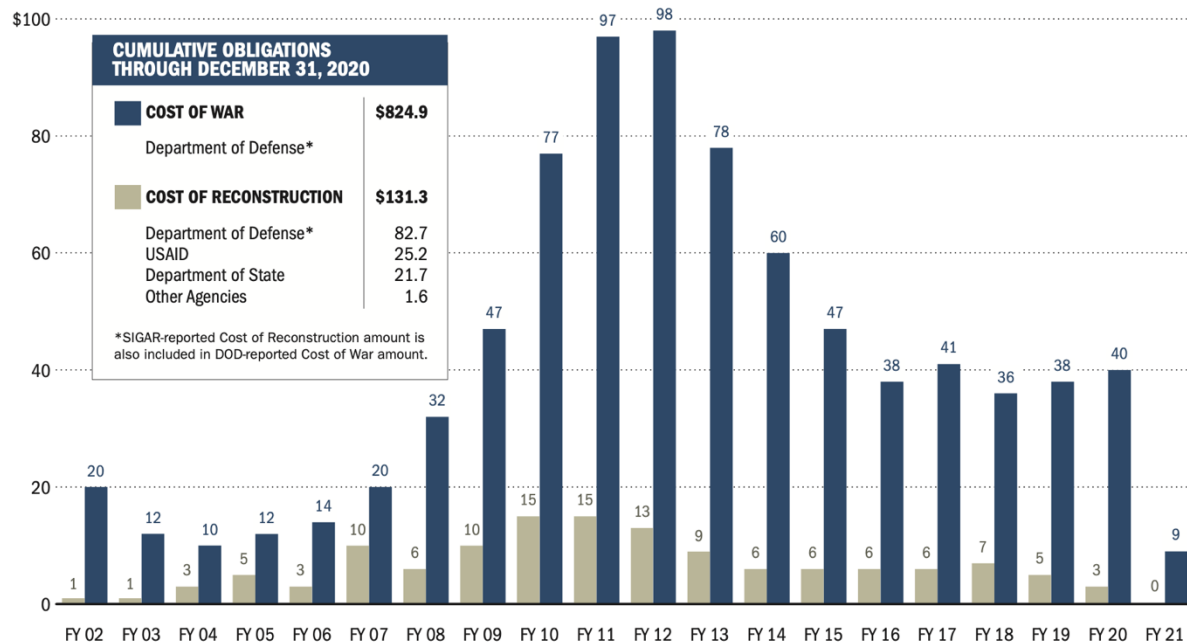
“[Nation-building is (red.)] A set of processes through which a foreign power or powers, by direct intervention and in collaboration with favored domestic political elites, seeks to promote a particular political identity and erect or re-erect a country wide institutional and material infrastructure that can become the enduring foundation of political stability after a period of armed conflict and civil strife”

(Keane, 2016; 24).

Afghanistan has since 2001 gone through developments in both their economic position, political standpoint, and cultural and social views. They have been able to this because the U.S. and allies have helped the country financially and with resources to establish different projects that could help the country to be independent in the future. There have foreexample been projects that focused on creating national forces that could keep up the security in the country and hold back ethnic organizations who does not have the same thoughts and ideas about a nation as the U.S. and their allies. The U.S. and their allies have, among many other things, helped train the Afghan Police Force, getting them the right knowledge about protection, and also supplied them with weapons and other material to get them through the changes with an economy that does not have the resources to supply the force themselves (Goodson, 2002; 168).

The U.S. have spent almost 2 trillion dollars on the war in Afghanistan since 2001, and these investment have, according to the U.S., been used on strengthening the military and police forces, promoting infrastructure, and reconstructing the government so that they can handle difficulties in the future. However, despite these investment statistics shows that there have not been any significant changes in economic development, and the country have yet to move from an underdeveloped country to a developed country (Almukhtar & Nordland, 2019). The figure below shows how the investments have been divided into different departments, and how the money has been used over the years. There is a division between how the investments have been used, and it is clear to see that the investments mostly have been used on war related issues rather than the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Figure 1 – Afghanistan cost of war and reconstruction (\$ billions)



Afghanistan has for a long time suffered from insecurity both in governance and economy, and it has created a desire among the population for some changes. The changes involve a strong government that can provide security in a chaotic post-conflict environment, and a government that involves the public in the decisions-making. The state will be categorized as weak, and a democracy cannot develop in a weak state. The country is in need for economic, political and military help from the foreign countries to build a nation that can be independent in the future and be able to self-govern their nation without fear of getting removed due to their actions. The nation-building project in Afghanistan will, according to this description be categorized as an externally sponsored nation-building project

because the U.S. and their allies have come from the outside with a direct intervention and they seek to promote particular economic projects, political identities, and cultural values, which could be the foundation for a more stable period after the armed conflict has ended (Keane, 2016; 24).

When looking at the economic development in Afghanistan since 2001, it can be seen that their economy has grown since 2006, but that their Gross National Product (GDP) is still one of the lowest in the world. In 2006 their GDP revenue was at 4%, with most developing countries hitting a GNP revenue around 10%, and developing nation are over 30% revenue of the GDP. The main reason for the boost in the economy has been the support from the U.S. and their allies, and the country is dependent on international funding for recurring costs, which also has been shown in the years after 2006. The World Bank estimated that out of 8.4 billion dollars in aid support from 2001 until 2004, only 1.6 billion dollars was spent by the government, the rest went to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), United Nations (UN), and other foreign institutions. This off-budget assistance, as the author is calling it, hinders nation-building and undermines the legitimacy of the government (Jalali, 2006; 16).

To develop a stable economy also relies on political-, and cultural and social development. When looking at the political development in Afghanistan, there are some negative sides. The U.S. and their allies have been able to create a government, with the country holding their first democratic election in 2004, but they have been so busy and occupied with the political development, that the ethnic organizations, such as the Taliban, have been able to grow under the radar of the U.S. military. Through the years from 2001 and up until 2011 the Taliban have not been able to conquer important areas around the country, and their control, have been reduced due to the military help from foreign countries. It was positive that the Taliban did not have the resources to move forward with taken-over important areas in Afghanistan, but it was later also showed that they were not defeated, and their organization was still active around the world, and it gave them a great opportunity to continue to influence the administration in the country and around the world (Jalali, 2006; 6). The support from their network and the inside organization also made it possible for them to conquer Kabul in August 2021, and why the take-over happened so fast. The police and military forces were not prepared for this kind of take-over, and the U.S. and their allies were also caught by surprise. If the U.S. and their allies have been able to develop a stable government and a police force that could hold back potential threats, both from national groups and international groups, then the take-over and withdrawal of

international forces might have played out a lot less violent than it did. This take-over of Kabul further shows that the nation-building project in the past 20 years have not been a success in terms of political-, and cultural and social development.

The security in the country is still not a reality, and it can be seen in the emergence of other terrorist organizations such as ISIS, and the growing affiliation to the Taliban way of thinking. During the 20 years that the U.S. and their allies have been in Afghanistan the security has not worked as it should. There is a need for the Afghan population to be able to handle the security aspect themselves, but they do not have the training or the resources to do so. When the U.S. and their allies have pushed back the Taliban and got to Osama Bin-Laden, the next step was to train the Afghan people so that they in the future could deal with the security threat, but this have not worked fully (Jalali, 2006; 8).

According to researchers the sustainability of the police and army forces is a major challenge. They have built a U.S-supported Afghan National Army (ANA), but this army is so depended on U.S military support and for the U.S to underwrite its costs, which is not sustainable for the future if they want to take care of their own security. The cost of training and creating the ANA have yet to prove itself. They have received basic training, but because of the late start of the development of the police, they are still ill-trained and underequipped. This undertrained police- and military force have also made the withdrawal a bit difficult for Afghanistan (Jalali, 2006; 10). The money spent on trying to rebuild the nation of Afghanistan with western priorities and investments, have not created the development they have hoped, and experts have marked it a flop and waste of taxpayers' money (Kristian, 2021). The cultural and social development has, most like the political aspect, failed. To reach cultural and social development it is important for the U.S. and the Afghan people to remove the threats faced by the majority of the Afghan population, which in this case is the Taliban and other terrorist organizations that might come to light (Jalali, 2006; 7).

Since 2001 there have been foreign forces in Afghanistan helping with the training of Afghan police and military. In 2006 there was 20.000 US-led Coalition forces and 9000 international security personnel that helped detect security threats posed by internal and external forces. This boost of a wider international support should help support the nation-building and legitimacy in Afghanistan, but the result was not that. Instead, the U.S reduced its military forces in the country, and the U.S. left a devastated Afghanistan that was not capable of helping themselves (Jalali, 2006; 11).

It can therefore be said that the U.S. have not had the ability to either create cultural and social development, which they proclaim in the agreements that they have done since 2001 and have not given the people and the government the necessary tools to move forward when they pulled out. A country that has not had stability for two decades, and also long before that, cannot just be left to themselves without any help to build a nation where religion, in many ways, define how life should be lived. They have been used to a more free-living situation since 2001, and they have been used to things that was at one point new and different but now is a part of their everyday life (Kristian, 2021). The withdrawal in 2021 further underlined that the statistics and the researchers was right, the economic development have not been moving in the right direction, the government fled the country during the take-over, Taliban came into power, and the cultural and social development in the past 20 years has experienced a set-back to the society they were before the war. The picture is repeating itself (Jalali, 2006; 7).

1.1. Research question

Why has the nation-building project in Afghanistan failed under U.S. occupation after more than 20 years?

The objective with the thesis is to provide the reader with a concrete analysis of how the nation-building project towards rebuilding a healthy economy, a stable government, and a secure state, have failed under U.S occupation. The analysis will provide an understanding of how the nation-building project in Afghanistan have failed in terms of economic-, political-, and cultural and social development, and how the failure in these three dimensions made it possible for the Taliban to move forward during and after the U.S. withdrawal in 2021. The thesis will also draw lines to the lessons that the international community could learn from this failed nation-building, and how a possible future withdrawal from a warzone should not be conducted.

2. Methodology

2.1. Critical thinking to the choice of theory

Since the 1960's the modernization paradigm has been criticized for being Eurocentric, because it the modern process started in Europe around 1848, with the Industrial Revolution. Scholars such as Immanuel Wallerstein have also criticized the theory for a model that state that a society is required to destruct their culture and make it more Westernized. Samuel P. Huntington also talks about that the West is unique but not universal, but there are so much more to modernization than just a specific culture. To modernize a society, it is crucial that abandon their traditional values, institutions, and adopting those that prevail in the West. The attitudes, values, and culture of people in a modern society is a lot different from those in a traditional society (Huntington, 1996c; 28). It is often these attitudes, and cultural differences that clashes when a western countries tries to develop a modern project in a traditional society.

I have chosen to work with the modernization paradigm, and then focus on *economic development*, *political development*, *cultural and social development* as the main dimensions to explain why the nation-building project have failed under U.S. occupation in Afghanistan for the last 20 years. I have chosen to work with these dimensions because I believe that these three dimensions are important when talking about nation-building, and explaining how the nexus between the dimensions is both the cause and the effect of the failure. Nation-building describes the way of how a nation is build, and for a nation to be functional and independent they need to have an economy and a stable government that can develop positively within the country, and a cultural and social aspect that gives the population of the country a feeling of security and belonging. In Afghanistan we see none of these three factors, and these factors have not been there for a long time and cannot exist without help from outside support.

When looking at the research question it points out an external party, in this case the U.S. and their allies, but the theory I use is internal, and I am aware that there is a contradiction here. I do however believe that the internal theory can be used because the U.S. have occupied the country for so long, that they are no longer just an external party, because of their internal work in the country. Afghanistan have agreed to the changes that the U.S. have made through the years, and it must therefore be assumed that they go along with the modernization.

I also believe that the three dimensions will give a clearer view of how far the country is in the modernization process, and what they need to do to become a modern and evolved society in the future. Even though the modernization paradigm is mostly developed in Europe, and for European countries and views, I believe that it can be used to some extent to analyze Afghanistan and the last two decades of nation-building project in the country (Gurminder, 2015). The external partner, here being the U.S. and their allies, have wanted to modernize Afghanistan with the views and success from the successful modernization period in Europe. These success stories have given them the idea of using the same strategy on a non-western country where the history is so very different from the European one, and where views and religion are also very different. The U.S. believe that especially the economic development is important, and that it will create a multiparty democracy, and that this will further develop the cultural and social aspect as well. The problem that I am analyzing will also show that the dimensions clashes with the traditional culture and values that is present in the country, and that these values are not just something you change, due to different ethnic groups that does not have the same point of view, and do not think that the Western way of living is unique (Huntington, 1996c).

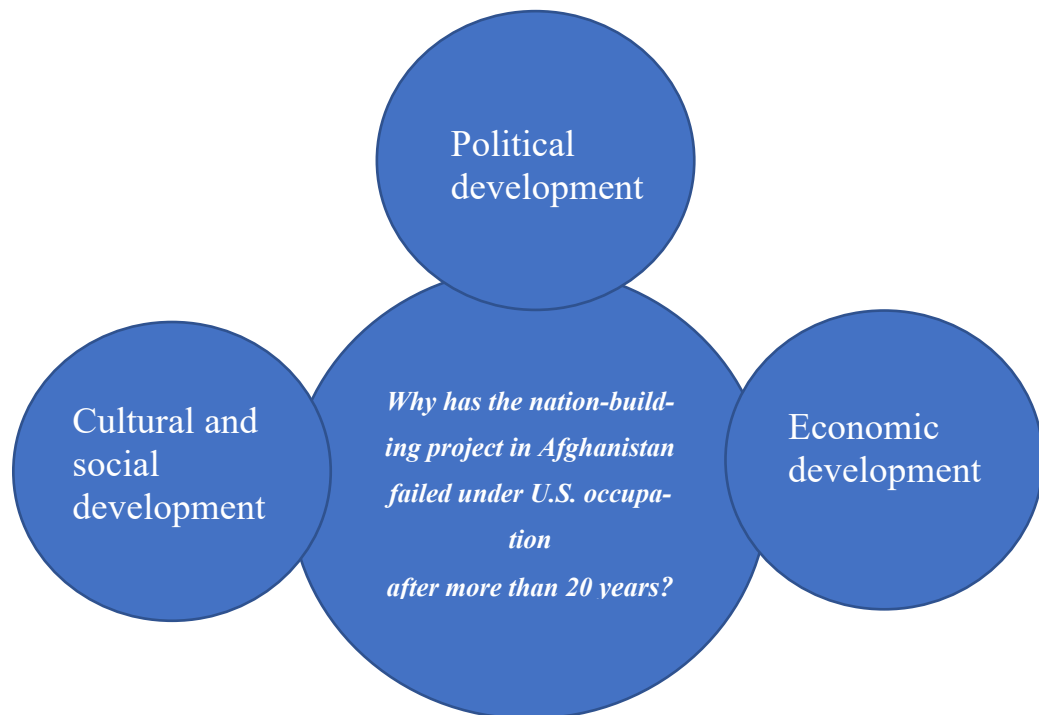
2.2. Modernization Paradigm

To further investigate how the nation-building project have failed during the last 20 years in Afghanistan with the U.S. being present in the country, I will use Modernization Paradigm, which consist of three dimensions: *Economic development*, *Political development*, and *Cultural and Social development*. To explain how the economic development works in terms of creating a healthy economy, I will used Walt Whitman Rostow, and his “5 Stages of Economic development”. These stages will be featured in the analysis and will be the main focus. The model consists of 5 stages, which will be explained later on in the thesis, and is mainly used to developed underdeveloped countries (Rostow, 1990). When looking at the 5 Stages, they mostly concern themselves with infrastructure, institutions, and technology, and first when a country has developed these three things, they are on the road for economic development.

When looking at Afghanistan it can be said that they have a multidimensional problem. But all three dimensions goes together, so if you fail or succeed one of the dimensions, you also fail or succeed in the other two dimensions. Modernization Paradigm can help understand nations evolution process and will also help create a picture of a country and if it is possible for the country to develop politically

when there is no stability in the country. I will supply modernization paradigm with the theory about nation-building. The *Theoretical Operationalization* will show how the three dimensions go together, and at the same time they will be put in context to the research question so that it will be clear how these three dimensions will be used in the analysis later on.

Figure 2 – The connection between the three dimensions



2.3. Quantitative research

To answer the research question, and especially how far Afghanistan have come in reaching economic development, I will use Rostow's "5 Stages of Economic Growth". The description of the stages will help me explain where Afghanistan have been placed during the last twenty years, and if the U.S. nation-building project have helped the country in reaching a healthy economy (Rostow, 1990). To further get the idea of both the economic-, political-, and cultural and social development in Afghanistan, I will statistical materiel from The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). These statistics shows different areas of reconstruction, and where the investments have been placed. It will also show how much money each project has gained through the years.

Quantitative data is described as entailing the collection of numerical data, which can both be a deductive and inductive way of viewing the relationship between theory and research (Bryman, 2006; 149). This thesis will be written from the perspective of a deductive point of view. This is mainly because the theory has been the main factor when choosing the research question, how to structure the findings in the analysis, and what I wanted to conclude at the end, and I thereby let my theory decide my observations. These steps in quantitative data collection does not always function in a linear way, but moves around to fit the different questions that might come up during the analysis, but the main steps are a good indicator in getting to know the main factors and the links between them. This kind of data collection has a distinctive epistemological and ontological position that suggest that there is more to it than numbers, which also comes to light in the analysis where the numbers will be put in context to the text material, and then with those information in mind will form a clear answer to the research question (Bryman, 2006; 149-151).

2.4. Qualitative research

Qualitative research design focuses more on text and words rather than numbers as quantitative research (Bryman, 2006; 381). Qualitative research design has a different ontological and epistemological view than quantitative research. The focus is more ontologically on the human thought, behavior, and language, which goes hand in hand with the epistemological view where it is the deeper understanding of the society that we live in, that is at focus (Bryman, 2006; 375).

The purpose of using qualitative data analysis is to show how the political development, and the cultural and social development has been in Afghanistan since 2001. This will give me an opportunity to analyze different documents from meetings between the U.S. and Afghanistan and the U.S. and the Taliban, to see what the different aspects are on the development achieved. This text material will help me get a deeper epistemological understanding of how the U.S. sees themselves and their actions done in the last twenty years. The ontological aspect comes to light when using documents and when analyzing the behavior of the U.S. since 2001.

When using documents, it will provide background and context to the analysis, and track the changes and development made in the specific reconstruction project since 2001. According to Glenn Bowen, documents may be most effective in gathering data when events can no longer be observed, which is the case in terms of the U.S. and their nation-building project in Afghanistan (Bowen, 2009; 31). Some of the advantages when using documents as the source of data is that it is less time-consuming,

and you select your data instead of collecting them. There is also the aspect that a lot of documents is available online, which also makes the process faster because if an event has happened, then there are public records most likely exists (Bowen, 2009; 31). There are however also disadvantages in terms of using document analysis which could be that they are not produced to answer a specific research question, and it can therefore be necessary to select more documents in terms of getting the information to answer the question. If foreexample doing interviews, you would be able to specify the questions in the direction of your research question (Bowen, 2009; 31).

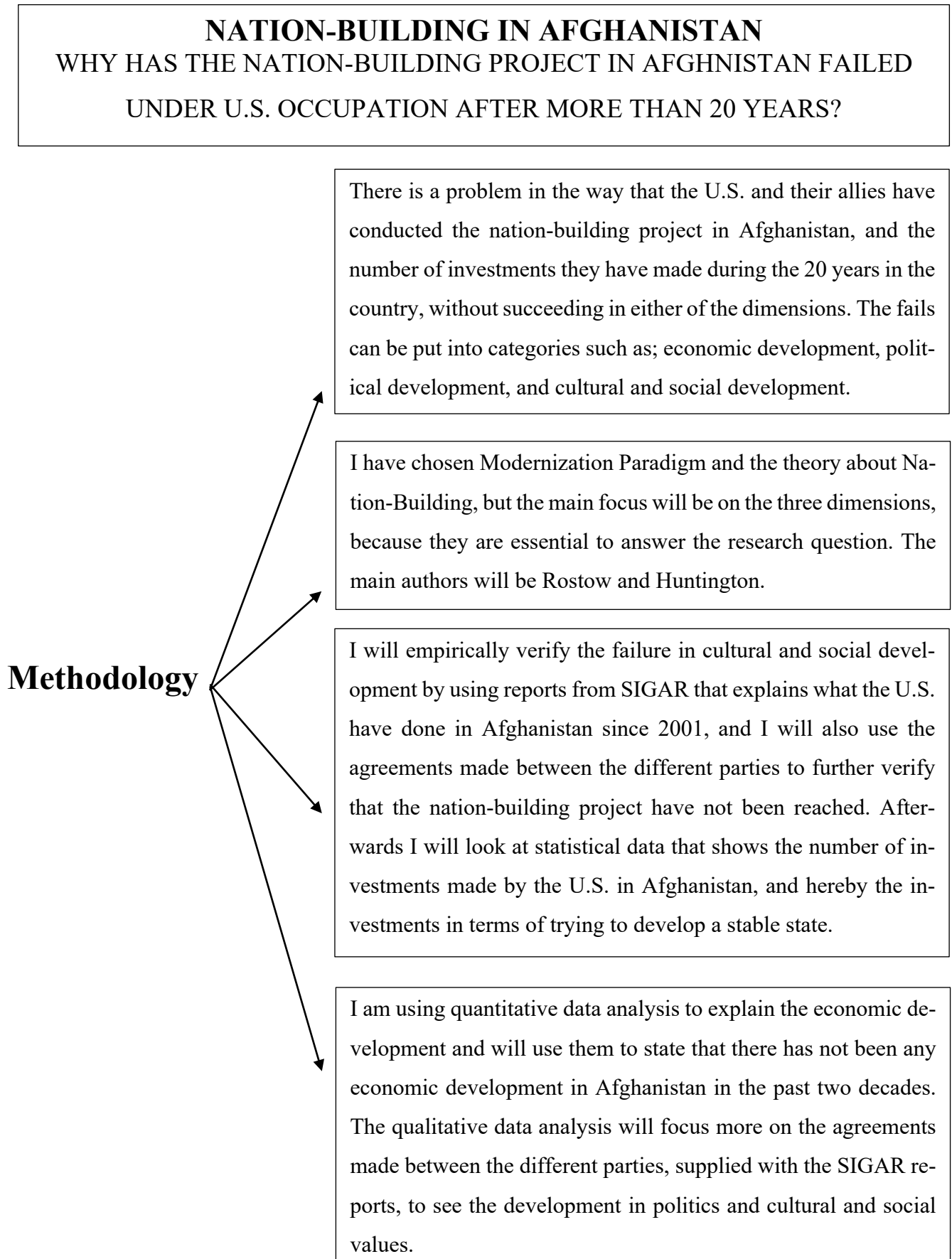
In this thesis the choice to use documents analysis is due to the fact that it is less time-consuming, and with the time being, and the size of the group, document analysis together with quantitative statistics is believed to be enough to answer the research question. The choice of documents will be the agreements made between The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America, and The Taliban and the United States of America. The agreements where both made in 2020, and they mainly focus on creating long-term peace between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan, but also the fact that the living situation of many families should not be changed dramatically just because the U.S. leaves the country. In the agreement with the Taliban there is mainly focus on human rights, and the fact that the organization will discuss a possible ceasefire with the Afghan government, and also participate in intra-Afghan negotiations about a political roadmap of Afghanistan the date for. There is also the main factor that the Taliban agrees to not use Afghan soil and will not let other terrorist groups use it as well, to threaten the security of the U.S. or its allies, and if some tries to threaten the security the Taliban will send them a clear message that this has no place in Afghanistan (Attachment 1; 2020, 2-4).

The documents will be used to explain how the U.S. see themselves and how they believe they have produced nation-building in the last 20 years. It will also give a clear information about what have not been done in the last two decades, and what is believed should be done in the future. The future aspect will not play a big role in the analysis but will be mentioned in some situation because it is relevant for the explanation. The documents represent both parties and their thoughts and believes on the situation in Afghanistan, and is written by firsthand informants, as the author being the United States and the government of Afghanistan and the United States and the Taliban, which makes the reliability high (Bowen, 2009; 33).

As a supplement to the agreements, research reports primarily from SIGAR and the article about Rostow's 5 stages of economic development will be used. These reports will help answer the research question in terms of *economic development, political development, and cultural and social development*, and also help explain if the U.S. have been able to develop the economic situation in Afghanistan in the past 20 years, and how far along they have come in the 5 stages of economic development. This economic development will further be explained together with the statistics of the U.S. investments in Afghanistan and used to analyze if these investments have been useful or not.

When using this kind of analysis, it is important to establish the *authenticity, credibility, representativity* and *meaning* of the document used. *Authenticity* is about the reliability when looking at the author and where the document comes from. Both the agreements and the statistics used in the analysis comes from government officials, and we must assume that no third party have been a part of the writing, and therefore have not compromised it during the process. It is clear that it is government officials who have written it, which makes the authenticity high in this case. When looking at the *credibility*, the statistics comes with a further description of the investments and where they have been used, and if this has been a success or a failure, so it is not necessarily written in a positive way, just because it comes from the U.S. and is about the U.S. projects in Afghanistan. It gives the reports a high level of credibility, because we then must assume that it tells the truth about the investments made, and the reconstruction projects. The criteria of *representativity* represents the aspect of the document and what it concerns oneself with. When looking over the documents it is clear that both parties seem satisfied with the points, and the representativity can therefore be valued as high, because both parties seem to have a say. It should be noted that we do not know the background for these agreements and how they have been made, and what compromises there might be, but for what we can see both parties are represented. The last criteria are *meaning*, and it is about the message in the documents, and if the language used in the documents is understandable. The documents are pretty light reading, and it is clear what the purpose of the agreements is, and what both parties see as possible for the future in Afghanistan. The statistics also gives a clear vision of where the investment have been used, and how much have been used on war, and how much on reconstruction. It is of course statistics, so it is important to read them carefully, and make sure that they are understood correctly (Bryman, 2016; 546-548).

Figure 3 – Methodological overview



3. Theory

This chapter will explain the chosen theory more specifically modernization paradigm, economic-, political-, and cultural and social development. The theories will have their own subsection, to make it more readable for the reader, but later on, in theoretical operationalization, they will be explained in context to the research question, and it will therefore also be showed how the dimensions are intervened.

3.1. Modernization paradigm

Modernization paradigm can be traced back to the time after World War 2, where it was rapidly used to describe the international setting after the war. The term “modernization” has no precise meaning but was popular due to the fact that scientist could use it to describe the rise of industrialization and the nation-state in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century (Tipps, 1973; 199). The emergence of the Third World societies made the term more prominent, and it was now used to describe their way onto the international political stage. First the theory was mostly used to study the European colonialization and the American society, but American scientist believed that this term could also be used on Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to study their economic development, political stability, and cultural and social changes (Tipps, 1973; 200). There have not before been studied countries outside America and Europe and the scientist’ therefore did not have any literature to hold on to and had to rely on familiar traditions of Western thinking about the nature of social change (Tipps, 1973; 200).

Modernization theory is deeply rooted in the perspective of developmentalism which was established in the conventional wisdom of Western social science along time before the end of the nineteenth century (Tipps, 1973; 200-201). This idea about social change in non-western countries is therefore based on perspectives and thoughts about Western social change which according to Robert Nisbet (1969) have dominated social science and for a long time. Huntington believes that modernization theory is “a multifaceted process involving changes in all areas of human thought and activity” (Tipps, 1973; 201). The theory summarizes a countries development into the modern world in terms of economic development, political stability, and cultural and social development, but one must remember that the theory was based on European and American history during the industrialization, and that these scenarios cannot be transferred to countries who have not gone through the same. It is in fact on the national level that various facets of the modernization process are seen aggregated.

There is a general agreement between scientist's that modernization is a type of social change which is both transformational in its impact and progressive in its effects (Tipps, 1973; 202).

3.1.1. Economic development

Economic development refers to the growth in total economic activity and output of a society, it involves changes in the capabilities of individuals, groups, and societies. Walt W. Rostow was one of the biggest economic scientist in the 1960's and he have written a variety of books based on, according to some, an optimistic view on the period (Jacobs, 2020). Rostow developed different stages that an underdeveloped society had to go through in terms of creating economic development, and on their way to a more modern consumer society. To reach a modern consumer society it is necessary for the country to reach the "take-off" stage. At this stage they have shown their ability to break with the traditional norms and values and created a more modern society based on industrialization and economic growth (Jacobs, 2020). Rostow created a total of five stages, called *The Stages of Economic Growth*, which he believed focuses directly on the composition of investment and on developments within particular sectors of the economy (Rostow, 1959; 1). When talking about the stages of economic growth, they are in need for a demand perspective as well. The phases derive not merely from the discontinuity of production, but also from high price or income elasticities of demand. The demand for resources has resulted in demands from social decisions and from the policies of governments, whether democratically responsive or not (Rostow, 1959; 2-3). A society has to make a lot of decisions when focusing on economic growth, and these decisions are also often interplayed with market demand, risk-taking and technology, which are some of the key factors to create economic development. The decisions to be made are often deeply rooted in their history, culture, and political process, but it is important for the society to make decisions that can later on benefit the economic growth (Rostow, 1959; 3).

Traditional Society

In more recent times the story about traditional societies is a story of endless change, reflected in the scale and patterns of trade, level of agriculture output and productivity. The central economic fact about traditional societies is that they evolve within limited production functions (Rostow, 1959; 4). A traditional society often lack systematic understanding of their physical environment capable of making invention at a more or less regular current flow, but the productivity is often used on minimum

consumption levels and non-productive or low productive outlays such as; religious and other monuments, wars etc. (Rostow, 1959; 4).

Preconditions for Take-off

In this economic stage the widening of the market is essential. If a society widens their market not only by trade, but with increased specializations of production, increased inter-regional and international dependence and increased market incentives to create new production functions, they are on the road to what is called the “take-off” stage, which is essential for a society to become modernized (Rostow; 1959, 5). Until a definitive political transformation occurs, the take-off is likely to be postponed. This definitive political transformation includes harnesses of national energies, talents, and resources around the concrete tasks of economic growth (Rostow, 1959; 7).

Take-off

The take-off stage consists of the achievement of rapid growth in a limited group of sectors, where modern industrial techniques are applied. The take-off is distinguished from earlier industrial surges because prior and concurrent developments make the application of modern industrial techniques a self-sustained rather than an abortive process (Rostow, 1959; 7). A result of take-off is the ability of the society to sustain an annual rate of investments of the order of, at least, ten per cent. The take-off stage usually witnesses a definitive social, political, and cultural victory of those who would modernize the economy over those who would cling to the traditional society (Rostow, 1959; 7).

Drive to Maturity

Rostow defines the stage “Drive to Maturity” as the period when a society has effectively applied the range of modern technology to the bulk of its resources. During this stage the industrial process is differentiated, with new leading sectors gathering momentum to supplant the older leading sectors of the take-off, where deceleration has increasingly slowed the pace of expansion (Rostow, 1959; 8). It is important to note, that the leading sectors are not the same in every society but are determined by the pool of technology but also by the nature of resource endowments (Rostow, 1959; 8). Societies become modern in different ways because they have different resources available and different policies that shape the degree of the leading sectors (Rostow, 1959; 8).

High-mass Consumption

In the last stage of economic growth there are three directions in which a mature economy could be turned once a society ceased to accept the extension of modern technology as a primary objective. The first direction is to offer the public increased security, welfare, and leisure to the working force. The second direction is to provide enlarges private consumption, including single family homes and durable consumers goods and services. The last direction is to seek enlarges power for the mature nation on the world scene (Rostow, 1959; 11). A society can choose more than one direction, and there is a pattern in the societies in the first half of the twentieth century, that they have made choices among all three alternatives (Rostow, 1959; 11).

3.1.2. Political development

When wanting to modernize a society it is important to develop political stability, which promote economic-, and cultural and social development as well. It is all about innovating policy reforms that changes traditional values and behavior patterns, and expand communication and education, and last the rationalization of authority structures (Huntington, 1971; 140). Huntington comes with a second requirement for creating political stability, and that is to successfully modernize and achieve a new social consciousness in the society. This is possible if the authorities let the social groups be a part of the political system in ways harmonious with the continued existence of the system (Huntington, 1971; 140). When countries experience political instability, it is mainly because of the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change (Huntington, 1996a; 5). The changes made during a social and economic development such as mass media expansion, industrialization, and education, can be the factor that makes the whole thing fall apart. These changes undermine the traditional sources of political authority and traditional political institutions, and it makes it harder to establish new political institutions that combines legitimacy and effectiveness (Huntington, 1996a; 5). Modernization involves changes in and of a traditional political system, but it does not necessarily involve significant movement toward a modern political system (Huntington, 1996b; 141). According to researchers the kind of political development as mobilization and participation seemed to be more applicable to the “developing” world rather than underdeveloped countries (Huntington, 1996a; 36). A developed political system is characterized as a modern society, whereas undeveloped ones are characterized as traditional societies (Huntington, 1971; 299). Political development is a response of the political system to change in its societal or international environment, and to challenge state-building, nation-building, and participation (Huntington, 1971; 299). It has been

argued that economic development can create political stability, but also vice-versa, that economic development can undermine political stability. It depends on what form of political stability the society is going for, because it can also be the fact that if a society have political stability, then the economic development will automatically become a reality, as it has been seen in for example India where the in the 1950's had a modest rate of economic growth but achieved a high level of political stability (Huntington, 1996a; 6).

Political development can cause difficulties among its citizens, especially because some countries or societies are very traditional that changes in the political system, values and authorities is not something everyone agrees on. It has been seen in some countries, that instead of developing modern political systems, there was an "erosion of democracy", and a tendency to military regimes and one-party regimes. Instead of a unifying nation-building, it can create ethnic conflicts and civil wars (Huntington, 1996a; 36). This is also a pattern that is seen in today's world where traditional countries are not willing or interested in turning their country into a Western democratic country where values and authority is different from their thoughts. Cultural and social development and economic development can have an influence on the traditional thought of how a society should work. If there are changes in these categories, it will disrupt and undermine the loyalty to traditional authorities. The leaders, secular and religious groups are challenged by the new elite (Huntington, 1996a; 36). According to scientists' modernization produces many social forces as for example fundamentalist religious movements (Huntington, 1996a; 38). These creations of new movements can be an obstacle if a society want to make changes in terms of political development and modernization. A change in the political worldview in a traditional society can make the creation of effective political institutions very hard (Huntington, 1996a; 39). The things that come into conflict with the development idea is the new elite based on Western or modern education, which according to the traditional elite is not something necessary (Huntington, 1996a; 39)

Education is a big part of modernization, and that is education for both men and women, but not all traditional societies are ready to make that move towards modernization (Huntington, 1996a; 73-74). Education is a part of cultural and social development, which will be elaborated in the next chapter, but it is used here to further establish, that all three levels go together. If a society want to succeed in political development, they have to succeed in both cultural and social development and economic

development, not necessarily the same amount of success but they have to be developed (Huntington, 1996b; 142-143).

3.1.3. Cultural and social development

Cultural and social development refers to the change in attitudes, values, and expectations of people from the traditional world to those common to the modern world. Cultural and social development is a consequence of education, increased communication, mass media and urbanization (Huntington, 1996c; 37). Do the non-Western countries have to abandon their own cultures and adopt the elements of a Western culture? Not necessarily, and if the leaders of the society decide to create a more modern society, they have to be aware that it can create insecurity among the population because they are unsure of their cultural identity (Huntington, 1996c; 37). It is easy to transport modern thoughts and cultural aspects to new societies due to the more open world in terms of transportation and communication. If you want to create cultural and social development, it requires much more than just political stability and economic development.

Modernization and economic development neither require nor produce cultural and social development. According to Huntington, cultural and social development moves people into unfamiliar cities, social settings and occupations that breaks their traditional local bonds and can create a crisis of identity to which religion frequently provides an answer (Huntington, 1996c; 37). This is seen in the Muslim and Asian societies, and especially the Islamic Resurgence has become a major social, cultural, and intellectual movement, that has a deep impact on the political aspect in the countries (Huntington, 1996c; 37). For many years these societies sought the Western way of creating economic prosperity technical sophistication and political cohesion, but the Western practices and customs, and they could not find peace with it, and they therefore continued down their own path. They do however, especially in East Asia, attribute their dramatic economic development to their adherence to their own culture, instead of their earlier import of Western culture (Huntington, 1996c; 38). The two central element of any culture are language and religion. English has foreexample become the world's language, and it is a part of most communication in general but also in terms of businesses, media, tourism, and diplomacy.

According to Huntington, the Westerns way of living is declining due to the lack of ability to promote the Western culture as a universal culture. America is the biggest promoter of Western culture, and they believe that everyone should commit themselves to the values of the West

such as democracy, free markets, human rights, and individualism. The only problem is that the non-western cultures are going towards the changes with skepticism because it is so different from their traditional values and religion that they cannot see themselves living this way (Huntington, 1996c; 40). To believe that non-western countries should adopt Western values and culture is immoral in its implications, with culture follows power, and according to scientist's non-western societies can only be shaped by Western culture if the expansion and deployment of Western power into the areas, becomes a reality like we saw it under the Cold War¹ (Huntington, 1996c; 41).

Huntington comes up with a critic of the Western values, and the way that they are promoting them, as if they were the only way of living. He states that the West has to abandon the illusion of universality and to promote the strength, coherence, and vitality of its civilization in a world of civilizations (Huntington, 1996c; 41). There is also the fact that the responsibility for containing and resolving a regional conflict must rest with the leading states of the civilization in the region, not by parties coming from the outside like forexample the UN and/or United States. These outside parties cannot impose on local conflicts long-lasting solutions that deviate from the realities of local power (Huntington, 1996c; 42). To put this into perspective it means that in a multicivilizational world, the West's responsibility is to secure its own interests, not to promote those of other peoples and not to attempt to settle conflicts between other people when those conflicts are of little or no consequence to the West. The problem is however that the Western unity depends more on events in the United States than on those in Europe, which means that the United States is pulled in multiple directions concerning immigration, growing power of populations, cultural changes, and trade agreements (Huntington, 1996c; 43).

3.1.4. Summary

The modernization theory and the three levels; economic development, political development, and cultural and social development, will be used in the analysis to explain the U.S. nation-building project in Afghanistan, and why this project have failed since the U.S. occupied the country in 2001. It will be used to analyze how and where the country is now, and how they have gotten to that point. There will especially be focus on the economic development, which will be supplemented with a statistic over how much the U.S. have invested in Afghanistan during the years. The economic stages will be explained again in the analyzes but the explanation will focus on Afghanistan and their

¹ The West no longer has the economic or demographic dynamism required to impose its will on other societies (Huntington, 1996c; 46)

economic development. The political development will be used to focus on the instated government, and how it has developed through the years. The cultural and social development analysis of the nation-building in Afghanistan will mainly focus on the traditional society that Afghanistan still is, and this is especially due to their religion and values.

3.2. Theoretical Operationalization

The theoretical Operationalization will be used to look at the three dimensions, and how these are intervened, it will also refer back to figure 2, which shows the three dimensions and that they are not one-on-one put all of them go together. If you want to succeed you have to have all three dimensions in mind, because a success on one means a success on the others as well, and a failure in one means a failure in all of them. Each dimension of the cause and the effect of why the nation-building project in Afghanistan have failed, and this will further be developed in the analysis, where statistics also will show how they are intervened. When reading research articles and books about nation-building, it can be seen that some scholars call it state-building. Nation-building and state-building are very much interchangeable and overlapping, but nation-building focuses on people and the population whereas state-building focuses more on the government and the state. Nation-building is the concept that will be used in this thesis to explain the research question and the three dimensions from before.

The main points of the modernization paradigm are the fact that the theory summarizes a countries economic development, political development, and cultural and social development, which all are a part of developing a modernized society. These three dimensions will be used to explain why the nation-building project in Afghanistan have failed under U.S. occupation after more than 20 years. According to different statistics and documents, the U.S. states that they have helped Afghanistan to a healthier economy and have developed a more modern society when it comes to western values and believes. This is however not the fact, and it can also be seen in newer statistics that especially the economy is not healthy and steady, which causes problems for the country. The nation-building project have not been a success when looking at the political development and cultural and social development, which can be seen in the newest developments in the country where the Taliban have taken control and the government have fled the country due to threats. So even though the U.S. claim that they have made progressive moves towards a modern society, this is not the fact.

To create economic development, it is crucial that you move your society from a *Traditional Society* to *Preconditions for Take-off*. To get to the next stage it is crucial that you develop in industries such

as technology, because this is an industry where you have the opportunity to innovate and then widening the market within overseas trade, and with that also increase the international dependency (Rostow, 1959; 4). But to reach this economic development it is also necessary to look at the political development, because it is in this dimension the development for education, innovating policy reforms, and expanding communications lie. The government of the society needs to also develop in a more modern direction, if the economy has to move forward, and this is for example education so that the people can actually work and lead the new technological industries in the future. It is also necessary for the politicians to make the rest of the world aware of these changes, and then make agreement overseas in terms of exporting new innovation and discoveries (Huntington, 1971; 140). The last dimension that also has to function if the two other dimension need to succeed is *cultural and social development*. This dimension works around people change in attitudes, values, and expectations, and how these changes from a traditional view to a more modern view. The other dimensions cannot succeed without this dimension supporting them, because it is crucial that the people agree to the political changes because these changes are more modern, but if the people does not support this decision, then they are not signing up for educations, and will not work in the more modern industries because they are still stuck on their traditional views and attitudes. The government also have the responsibility to make sure that people understand what an adoption of more modern thoughts will mean for the country, both now and in the future, because it can create insecurity among the population (Huntington, 1996c; 37). If the government however does not have the ability or resources to make sure that people understand this modern way of thinking, then it is difficult to succeed, not just in *cultural and social development* but also in *political development* because the people will feel that they are being betrayed by their own government and will maybe support traditional groups and thoughts instead. This will also give a setback in the *economic development*, because agriculture cannot economically move the country to stage 2 of economic growth, and they are therefore stuck in stage 1, with no signs for moving forward (Rostow, 1959; 4)

In terms of economic development, there has been a raise since 2006, but according to researchers this only happened because foreign countries contributed with humanitarian aid. It did however make an increase in Afghanistan's GNP, and they actually moved to the second stage of economic growth, because the political institutions used the money on creating industries and educating people, so that they could run these industries in the future. The country did not move to the 3 stages of economic growth because the GNP fell from 2007 and onwards, and the political institutions did not have the

resources to continue to develop the industries and educating people, which took a step back in the economic development, and they went back to stage 1. The U.S. did not make the necessary investment to develop business' and give the political institutions the resources so they could maintain their economic growth and widening the market. It is crucial for a country to be able to develop technological solutions if you want to move forward, and they have not been able to do that since 2006 (Jalali, 2006; 16) (Rostow, 1959; 4).

As mentioned before it is also necessary that the political aspect is developing if the economic growth should move forward. The political institutions have to create police reforms that states that this is the future for the country, and this is what they need to create a stable economic future. If the political institution does not have the support from the people, or from other people in the institution, then it can be very difficult to create a more modern policy. When developing the political institutions, it is important to remember that you do not necessarily have to make significant changes towards a modern political system, but the thoughts and policy reform needs to be more modern in the way of thinking, and executing the agreements (Huntington, 1996b; 141). You have to get the public involved in the processes of what you are doing, why this is good for the country, and what the future will be like if this becomes a reality. if you want to develop the economy by building new industries and need to educate people, it is important that you explain to them why this is good for themselves and the country. This also goes together with the *cultural and social development* because people need an explanation of why the views are changing, and why there is a change in attitudes from the government, and it will create less insecurity among the population if they know what is going on. If they do not include the public in the process it can develop ethnic conflicts and civil wars, as we have also seen has been the reality of Afghanistan since 2001, and especially since 2011 after the U.S. killed Osama bin-Laden and started their nation-building project. We saw, and maybe always knew, that some groups were not the biggest fans of modernization, and did not want to implement western values into the political- and cultural and social dimension in particular, but we have also seen that this have taken a toll on the economic development, especially since the withdrawal in 2021, which again shows that the dimensions are intervened, and if you want success in one dimension, you need to succeed in the other two dimensions as well. Each dimension are therefore both the cause and effect of why the U.S. nation-building project in Afghanistan, in the past two decades, have failed,

4. Analysis

For the past 20 years Afghanistan have been occupied by the U.S. and their allies. This occupation all started in 2001, after the attacks on World Trade Center in New York, and 3 other places around America. In October 2001 the U.S and their allies invaded Afghanistan and the Taliban ruled government, their target was Osama bin-Laden, and by 2003 there were 8000 American troops in Afghanistan. In 2011 Osama bin-Laden was killed in a drone attack in his safehouse somewhere in Pakistan, and the U.S. have reached their goal. However, they did not pull back from Afghanistan, afterwards they developed a nation-building project to get the country back on track after a war that have left the country in political instability, with and unhealthy economy, and a divided cultural and social environment.

4.1. Quantitative analysis

This quantitative analysis will help explain where the investment has been made, and how it has been, or not been, developing the different dimensions in Afghanistan. they will be put together with descriptions of which industries the U.S. have tried to build and develop, and how the political support has been towards these nation-building project, as well as the publics support towards more education and personal development. It will also show that not all nation-building projects have been successful, and why this have happened. it will show that the success in one dimension depends on success and support from the other dimensions, or else it is difficult to make it work. The focus in the part of the analysis will mostly be on the economic development, but political development and cultural and social development will also make appearances.

Since 2001, and since the nation-building project became the only reason for the U.S. to stay in Afghanistan, they have invested a lot of money in the reconstruction. Since 2001 the U.S. have invested around 2 trillion dollars in Afghanistan, and these investments have gone to different projects around the country with the focus on reconstructing. These reconstructions surrounded both training of the Afghan police forces, creating a safe haven for women and girls, infrastructure, and creating businesses that could make the country independent form outside donors in the future. since 2010 the investments have gone down, and according to the statistic on the next page, the investments went from 16.5 million dollars in 2010 till 4.6 million dollars in 2020. So, it can be argued that the U.S. may have been aware of the lack of development and success of projects, and also in the last couple

of years also were aware that they wanted to withdraw their forces, and therefor shut down most investments. In 2020 the agreements between the U.S. and the Afghan government, and between the U.S. and Taliban were also signed by President Trump and representatives from the different parties, so it makes sense that the investment have gone down from there. However, it is still a lot of investments that have not been successful, and the reconstruction of economic-, political-, and cultural and social development have not been a success (SIGAR, 2021b; 166-167).

The statistic below shows that the many projects and department that the U.S. have supported in Afghanistan comes to a total of 144.9 million dollars in 20 years, which is a lot of investments, on projects that have not really developed. The statistic shows the investment made from 2002 until 2009, and all three dimensions are represented, which also shows that the three dimensions are inter-vened, and that a success or failure in one means success or failure in the other dimensions as well. The statistic also shows which department have received the investments, and then it has been their job to use the money correctly on projects that goes along with the knowledge and resources that they have. The SIGAR report, from which this statistic is taken from, comes out quarterly and gives the U.S. Congress a status on the reconstruction in Afghanistan. The report used here is from the second quarter of 2021, and it comes with a very interesting acknowledgement already in the beginning.

“The report’s key finding is that, as implemented, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) created the risk of doing the wrong thing perfectly. That is, programs could be deemed “successful” even if they had not achieved or contributed to broader, more important goals—such as creating an effective Afghan security force and a stable Afghanistan”

(SIGAR, 2021a; 1)

This quote further establishes that even though the investments have been made in different areas, the SIGAR found out that the programs was not successful. Reports dating back to 2018 are making concerns about different projects lead by U.S. department in Afghanistan. This is foreexample regarding the training of The Afghanistan Security Forces (ASFF) and the fight against corruption, which according to the report from 2019 is why the Afghan government cannot survive financially or militarily without continued external assistance (SIGAR, 2019; 12). The report also talks about the security aspect, and that the U.S. department handling the training of the ASFF, does not have clear knowledge about how many troops have signed up, and how many of them have actually received training. However, the U.S. are still paying their salary, but are unaware of the right number of

participants (SIGAR, 2019; 1). As shown in the statistic the ASFF have received a total amount of 82.9 million dollars in support, but is the SIGAR report is telling the truth, then no one actually knows what these money have gone to, and who have received the money. The cultural and social development has received the biggest investments, and this include the security aspect of the whole situation. These investment was supposed to make the Afghanistan Security Force able to handle their own security in the future, but they have not been able the receive the right training, and do not have the resources to continue by themselves, as the quote above also tells us (SIGAR, 2021a; 1). It is notable that even though several reports have shown that the progress in different projects have not been successful, that the U.S. have continued to support the projects, and have not made any significant changes to get the projects to succeed.

In terms of the withdrawal, and the failure in terms of cultural and social development could be the aspect of security, and the fact that the ASFF were not able to hold back Taliban when they took over Kabul. This is another nation-building project that have failed during the U.S. occupation of the country in the past two decades. According to a new report from May 2022, SIGAR found that the single most important factor in the ASFF's collapse in August 2021 was the U.S. decisions to withdraw military forces and contractors from Afghanistan through the agreements between U.S. and Taliban. The government simple did not develop a strategy and plan for nationwide security following the withdrawal of U.S. forces (SIGAR, 2022; 1).

As seen in figure 4, the investment is divided into different security operations and institutions, and also which agency from the U.S. that is responsible for these operations. It can be seen that the biggest investment is in the ASFF, which should be the security force that should have fought back the Taliban when they invaded Kabul in 2021, but that was not the case. The forces were defeated by the Taliban within days of the U.S. leaving the region, which shows that this investment might not have been as successful as the U.S. and the Afghan people have hoped (Andrzejewski, 2021). The investment in security has since 2001 invested around 82.9 million dollars in ASFF in terms of training, missions, and weapons. According to the SIGAR report, when the U.S. withdraw all military and military contractors from the country, they also stop providing the ASFF with weapons and advanced military equipment which they needed to continue to the battle against Taliban (SIGAR, 2022; 2). And with a security defense that does not fully have the ability to fight back, and from one day to another are standing alone to face future threats, it became easier for Taliban to infiltrate the organization and exploit the ASFF's tactical, logistical, and leadership weakness (SIGAR, 2022; 2). This fail when it comes to security is a major failure from the U.S. because this is the

security that should make the Afghan people feel secured in the future, and it should be able to fight back when threats become a reality. When a country like Afghanistan have been through decades of long-lasting conflict, it is important to get help from the outside to rebuild their country, but also not to impose on the region with different solutions that deviate from the realities of local power (Huntington, 1996c; 40). Many Afghan people are interested in keeping up the security that they have lived under since 2001, but with the defeat of the ANSDF this was not the case, and many of the people fled the country when Taliban took over Kabul.

Figure 4 – U.S. FUNDS FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION (\$ MILLIONS)

U.S. FUNDS FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION (\$ MILLIONS)			
U.S. Funding Sources	Agency	Total	FY 2002–09
Security			
Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF)	DOD	\$82,899.77	18,666.47
Train and Equip (T&E)	DOD	440.00	440.00
Foreign Military Financing (FMF)	State	1,059.13	1,059.13
International Military Education and Training (IMET)	State	20.37	7.41
Voluntary Peacekeeping (PKO)	State	69.33	69.33
Afghanistan Freedom Support Act (AFSA)	DOD	550.00	550.00
Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Activities (DICDA)	DOD	3,284.94	1,118.23
NATO Resolute Support Mission (RSM)	DOD	281.87	0.00
Total – Security		88,605.40	21,910.58
Governance & Development			
Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP)	DOD	3,711.00	1,639.00
Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund (AIF)	DOD	988.50	0.00
Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO)	DOD	822.85	14.44
Economic Support Fund (ESF)	USAID	21,237.39	7,706.18
Development Assistance (DA)	USAID	887.59	884.90
Global Health Programs (GHP)	USAID	576.88	392.09
Commodity Credit Corp (CCC)	USAID	34.95	23.79
USAID-Other (Other)	USAID	54.06	30.27
Non-Proliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining & Related Programs (NADR)	State	927.14	348.33
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)	State	5,503.36	2,275.13
Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF)	State	14.51	3.19
Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs (ECE)	State	96.56	36.58
Contributions to International Organizations (CIO)	State	523.45	29.47
U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)	DFC	320.87	205.05
U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM)	USAGM	306.77	15.54
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)	DOJ	284.47	127.44
Total – Governance & Development		36,290.35	13,731.41
Humanitarian			
P.L. 480 Title II	USAID	1,095.68	664.39
International Disaster Assistance (IDA)	USAID	1,152.67	342.27
Transition Initiatives (TI)	USAID	37.54	33.33
Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)	State	1,603.47	555.04
USDA Programs (Title I, §416(b), FFP, FFE, ET, and PRTA)	USDA	288.26	288.26
Total – Humanitarian		4,177.63	1,883.29
Agency Operations			
Diplomatic Programs, including Worldwide Security Protection (DP)	State	11,839.28	1,481.50
Embassy Security, Construction, & Maintenance (ESCM) - Capital Costs	State	1,544.32	294.95
Embassy Security, Construction, & Maintenance (ESCM) - Operations	State	157.27	4.00
USAID Operating Expenses (OE)	USAID	1,665.18	309.70
Oversight (SIGAR, State OIG, and USAID OIG)	Multiple	704.00	42.00
Total – Agency Operations		15,910.05	2,132.14
Total Funding		\$144,983.43	39,657.42

Since 2001 the U.S. has provided around 36 billion dollars to support the government and the economic development in Afghanistan. The economic support has been donated in the hope that the country could use it to help build their own healthy economy with businesses and employees who would contribute to the economy in the future. Agriculture is the industry that creates most stability and income to Afghan families, and the U.S. have also supported this industry with around 1.4 billion dollars since 2006, which can also be seen the increased sales of products from Afghanistan such as fruit. But there are other industries that could create a better stability, and in the future could make the economic growth that the country so desperately needs. The U.S. have calculated that the industry of the mineral and hydrocarbon deposits, has an estimated value of 1 trillion dollars, which is also why the U.S. have tried to push this industry forward, and donated money to get it up and running, because this could be something that the Afghan economy could live off for years to come, and also make the country self-sufficient in energy and may even be able to export it (SIGAR, 2021; 140-142) (Katzman & Thomas, 2017; 64).

According to the report made by SIGAR, the government who is in charge of the industry, did not have the knowledge and resources to move forward with making proposals and business deals with other countries, and they also lack technical expertise and capacity, which is a big part of controlling an industry. The sector is also limited due to the lack of security and widespread corruption which is a big part of every industry in Afghanistan, so it is difficult to get anything up and running, because this creates a major flaw in the system. The SIGAR report also claims that the U.S. government did not have a strategy for the development of Afghanistan's extractive industries, this shows that the U.S. once again had a project developed and invested in, but it did not work properly because they themselves lack appropriate strategies, and therefore cannot guide the Afghan people and government in how to run an industry of this size (SIGAR, 2022; 2). The U.S. have supported the industry since 2002 with around 338.4 million dollars, to create extractives-related projects, and to create, support, and expand Afghanistan's physical infrastructure base and bolstering stability in the country and build a confidence within the government. In 2021 the ministry concluded that around 1 billion dollars in stones were smuggled out of the country, which shows that the sector has failed to materialize as a driver of economic growth and as a source of sustainable domestic revenues for the Afghan government (Almukhtar & Nordland, 2019) (SIGAR, 2021; 141).

It can therefore be argued that the U.S. might not have all the resources to develop bigger projects, and one might wonder if the U.S. should have focused on smaller projects and then maybe they could

have succeeded in just some of them. In terms of the political dimension, it can be argued that due to lack of resources in terms of the political dimension, the failure prolonged to the economic dimension because it could not develop economic growth due to lack of knowledge to build up an industries, that had potential in the future to support Afghanistan, and also create export to overseas countries. this was an opportunity for the country to move from stage 1 of economic growth to stage 2, where technology and new industries are crucial, and also the fact that the market is widening, and the export can make the country independent from international support is essential (Rostow, 1959; 4). It is necessary for the government to create educational institutions, that can educate the people in this kind of industry, because they are just used to the traditional way of living, which mostly includes agricultural working environments. They do not have the knowledge about machinery and how to make economic growth within a big industry. To get people excited about this idea of working within a modern industry that creates more economic development, it is important that they explain the situation, and why this is good for both the people working, and the country in the future. It gives them an opportunity to get the people involved in the process and at the same time decrease the insecurity within the people. If they just do it and does not include the people and tell them why they are doing it etc. it can create insecurity among the population, and some people might not go along with it. The cultural and social dimension is about getting the people involved, and not make them afraid of a modern development in some sectors of the country (Huntington, 1996c; 40).

It can be argued that the ability to create cultural and social nation-building projects that should help the Afghan people to be independent from the U.S. in the future, has not been a success. The U.S. have not had the ability to create long-lasting projects which can be a sign that the idea about nation-building is good, but the execution of the plans has failed due to the lack of ability to promote the western culture as a universal culture. When a country like the U.S., which is the biggest promoter of western culture, occupies another country for 20 years, it should be possible to at least get something positive outcome. But the only problem is that non-western countries often go towards the changes with skepticism because it is so different from their traditional values and religion that they cannot see themselves living this way (Huntington, 1996c; 40). It is therefore important for the U.S. to create some sense of trust from the Afghan people towards them, and to make them aware that they are there to help, and will not suddenly abandon them, and leave everything to themselves before they are sure that they can handle it. Huntington says that it is important that the leading state of the civilization

has the responsibility to contain and resolve a regional conflict, and this resolving must not lay on parties from the outside, in this case the U.S. (Huntington, 1996c; 42).

The figure below shows how much the U.S have spent in Afghanistan from 2001-2022, and the total amount of million dollars spent exceed 2 trillion dollars, which is a lot thinking that the country has not developed that much since 2001, and especially also thinking about the latest event regarding the withdrawal of international forces.

Figure 5 - United States costs of the war in Afghanistan from 2001-2022

UNITED STATES COSTS TO DATE OF THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN, 2001-2022	
Estimated Congressional Appropriations and Spending in Current Billions of U.S. Dollars, Excluding Future Interest Payments and Future Costs for Veterans Care	
	Total FY2001-FY2022*
Defense Department Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) (War) Budget	\$1,055
State Department OCO (War) Budget	60
Defense Department Base Budget War-Related Increases	433
Veterans Care for Afghan War Vets to Date	233
Estimated Interest on War Borrowing	532
TOTAL in Billions of Current Dollars	\$2,313
	*Rounded to nearest billion. Amounts for FY22 are budget requests.

The Defense Department Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) is the one where most investments have been places. The OCO is an operation in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostiles against an enemy of the United States or opposing military forces (OIG, 2016; 1). This part of the investments has been the most expensive one, and the funding is often used to support activities that would likely continue even if the current military conflicts end. The influx of funds is intended for a country or area in which multiple federal agencies are implementing programs, and it is done with caution to avoid fraud, waste, or abuse in the execution of U.S. funded programs and activities (Peter G. Peterson Foundation, 2020). These information factors do not go hand in hand with what have actually happened in Afghanistan and what these U.S. funded activities have actually given the Afghan people and government.

But how is it possible for the U.S. to not be successful in creating a healthy economy in Afghanistan when they have supported them so much through the years? A lot of the explanation may lay in the execution of the nation-building project, and the fact that the money spent on developing an economy has boosted the economy at first, but then it went down. It went down mostly because the Afghan government do not have the resources to create a healthy economy, no businesses want to hire Afghan people but are looking to other countries for cheap labor, and also the fact that no one knows where the money actually goes, according to some sources the Taliban might also have taken some of the money, so corruption also plays a big role. According to Fukuyama, for economic development to succeed the domestic actors must be empowered, and if the domestic actors are not willing to build and operate by themselves, and design their own factory, then it is difficult to build a healthy economy that can continue to grow in the future (Keane, 2016; 27).

According to sources when the nation-building project started in terms of creating economic development, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) did not have enough experts to fulfill the projects that were launched, and it created a problem in various areas of the development projects. According to an interview made by Conor Keane in 2012 of a Senior USAID Official USAID did not have the capacity to organize, manage and implementing comprehensive nation-building projects in Afghanistan (Keane, 2016; 70). The money spent on nation-building projects such as the agriculture, as mentioned earlier, have failed due to the lack of observation. USAID relied a lot on contractors, but they also neglected to visit the sights of their investments, which also creates a flaw in the USAID system, and therefore creates a failure in the project. A U.S. Inspector General confirmed that the oversight of the agriculture projects has not been a reality, and the progress reports were not analyzed properly, and it was therefore hard to confirm their accuracy. This left the agriculture industry, and the nation-building project to fail (Keane, 2016; 128).

The economic development is essential for Afghanistan if they want to create long-term stability, and even though we must assume that Afghanistan is interested in a more modern society both in terms of economic growth, political stability, and cultural and social development, it is difficult to actually know what they want. If Afghanistan want to create a healthy economy in the future, they need to make decisions that focuses on economic growth, but these decisions are often rooted in their history, and culture, which sometimes makes it difficult, but it is important to make these decisions if they later on want to benefit from economic growth (Rostow, 1959; 3). Afghanistan is still in the economic stage called *Traditional Society*, which means that they have not been able to create a

market for new industries and are still living off the industries they always have such as agriculture. The central economic fact about this stage is that they evolve within limited production functions, and they lack the understanding of their environment and what it is capable of. This lack of knowledge, resources, and economy, makes it difficult for them to move on to the next economic stage called *Preconditions for Take-Off*, which include an essential widening of the market, and increased specialization of production (Rostow, 1959; 4). This also means that because the country has not moved from a *Traditional Society*, and forward they do not, according to Rostow, have a so-called modernized society and economy (Rostow; 1959, 5).

4.2. Qualitative analysis

This part of the analysis will contain of a qualitative analysis of primarily the agreements made between the U.S. and the government of Afghanistan and between the U.S. and Taliban in 2020, when President Trump was in Office. The analysis will focus on the political- and cultural and social development but will also show how the economic development is intervened with these two dimensions. Quotes from the agreements in terms of what the U.S. have done since 2001 in Afghanistan will be put into the analysis and set in relation to what have actually happened in Afghanistan when we look at the SIGAR reports, and the events from the withdrawal in 2021. It will also show if there has been any success in the political development since 2001, and how this success could be traced in the economic development as well.

When looking at Afghanistan there have not been any major success in political development, or cultural and social development through the years. The value in Afghanistan is very different from the western world's values and religion, and it can be difficult to prolong these values and ideas to a country which thoughts are not the same. It is therefore important to establish trust and support from the population, and the government in the particular country before you make significant changes to their society (Huntington, 1996a; 36). When the U.S. decided to occupy Afghanistan in 2001 it was because they wanted revenge from the actions made on 9/11. They had a plan to kill Osama bin-Laden, and at the same time they wanted to make sure that the Taliban regime were pushed back from power and let a new more democratic government lead the country. The U.S. succeeded with these project, in 2004 Afghanistan had their first democratic election which shows a modern political development, and a change in the cultural and social dimension as well, because many Afghan people trusted the western values, and also liked the fact that their opinion mattered, and they felt involved

in the process of chosen a new leader (Office of the Press Secretary, 2004). The political development further comes to light with the election in 2004, because girls and women were now allowed to go to school and get an education, which will help them in the future to get a job, which will further develop the economic growth in the country. The industries that were now invested in could benefit from this education opportunity because it will give them the resources and knowledge to further develop technological innovations, businesses, and maybe export to overseas countries in the future. According to Huntington this is the kind of development a foreign supporter has to be careful with. Not every traditional society is interested in or willing to turn their country into a modern society, where values and authority is different from their original thoughts (Huntington, 1996a; 36). In Afghanistan we see it with organization like the Taliban, who are still very much active, and are still making statements regarding their thoughts on a modern society, and why a traditional is better. Taliban have had the power in Afghanistan in the 1980's and 1990's, and they do not pay much attention to women's rights, human rights, and democracy. They were pushed back after the U.S. occupied the country in 2001, but they silently operated behind the scenes and still recruited new members, and they continued to conquer land around Afghanistan, and made sure that no one forgot who they were even though they were not as visible as before. The group is not keen on modern and western thoughts and believes more in traditional values when it comes to politics (Keane, 2016; 2). This creation of a bigger organization can be an obstacle for political development, and it can make the creation of effective political institution very hard for the foreign country that wants to help.

There have been a particular big set-back since august 2021, when Taliban conquered Kabul, and it can be argued that the way they did it, which in some eyes was very easy, shows that the U.S. and the western way of living, might not be the right way for Afghanistan. it also shows that the political-, and cultural and social dimension has failed yet another time, because the government fled the country almost right away, and the Afghan military and police were not able to hold back Taliban, which caused violence in the streets. This take-over of Kabul is strictly against the agreement between the U.S. and Taliban, because in their agreement the mentioned that the Taliban agreed to a comprehensive ceasefire during the withdrawal, but as we know that was not the fact.

Until 2011 the U.S. had success with political development, but because they did not pay much attention to Taliban during the years, and their foregoing development inside the organization. It can therefore be argued that the U.S. was caught off guard when the Taliban afterwards again began to move forward, and wanted to conquer the power back, and create the traditional society they believe is the right way of leading a country. In the data collected through the official website of The

White House, and the reading through the agreement made between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban) and The United States, it says that the U.S. would withdraw their military forces from Afghanistan, and that the Taliban agreed to a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, but we saw that this failed, and the minute the international forces left Kabul, Taliban drove in and began creating a violent behavior which made many Afghan people, including the government, flee the country (Attachment 1, 2020)

The government fleeing the country is a sign that the U.S. have not been able to create political development, and thereby have not given the government the resources and tools to stand up to Taliban and their organization. It also shows that the U.S. really believed that they have pushed Taliban back so that this would not happen in the wake of a withdrawal, but they were surprised. It can be argued that the withdrawal is the biggest mistake the U.S. have made in the 20 years they have occupied the country. The agreement also states that Taliban will not pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies, but this also became a reality when the withdrawal was about to happen. The Taliban use force and violence to conquer Kabul, and it made it necessary for a lot of countries to make sure that their embassy employees made it out of the country alive, because airports and other transportation out would close eventually due to the Taliban now taking back the power (Attachment 1, 2020; 3). In terms of creating political development, the U.S. actually put this as a part of the agreement with the Taliban, but again this does not seem to be a reality in the near future. The agreement states:

“The obligations of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban in this agreement apply in areas under their control until the formation of the new post-settlement Afghan Islamic government as determined by the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations”

(Attachment 1, 2020; 1)

This part of the agreement is about a future government in Afghanistan which should come to light through intra-Afghan negotiations between Taliban and the government, but because the government had to flee the country due to threats from Taliban, it is unlikely that these negotiations become a reality, and therefore also unlikely that Afghanistan is getting a politically developed government. The U.S. have in the agreement made between The United States and The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

promised that they would help reach a peace agreement that would end the war in Afghanistan, and contribute to regional stability, but this have however not been the case. It also states that it is the goal of all parties to have a unified Afghanistan at peace with itself (Attachment 2, 2020; 1). It can however be argued that this might not be the case for everyone, and especially Taliban think something else. They would rather return to the ways it was before 2001, when they had power, and everything functioned according to the religion and the values of a traditional society, and when looking at the latest development in the country they might get what they want.

The SIGAR report establish that the investments made in Afghanistan in terms of human rights, and other nation-building projects is around 36 million dollars (SIGAR, 2021; 166). The figure shown in the report, and the following explanation on how these money have been used, and on what, is another sign that the money spent on this war and the investments made in terms of nation-building projects have not been as successful. The U.S. is not keen on saying that the nation-building projects have not been a success but talks about that the mission they came there to do, has been solved, and that they have also created economic growth, political stability, and cultural and social development. But we know from the SIGAR reports that it has not been a success, and the withdrawal is a great factor on how the nation-building project have failed and have failed for many years.

According to President Joe Biden, he also believes that the war should have ended a long time ago, and that the purpose of the war is no longer there, which also is why he took the final decision to withdraw all military forces from Afghanistan. He states that;

We succeeded in what we set out to do in Afghanistan over a decade ago. Then we stayed for another decade. It was time to end this war. [...] We saw a mission of counterterrorism in Afghanistan — getting the terrorists and stopping attacks — morph into a counterinsurgency, nation building — trying to create a democratic, cohesive, and unified Afghanistan [...]

(Biden, 2021)

Biden touches upon the fact that the mission to kill Osama bin-Laden and get revenge from 9/11 happened a long time ago, and then the view was shifted towards nation-building and trying to create a unified Afghanistan. When he used the word “trying” it may give the reader the idea that he does not fully agree that the nation-building project have succeed, but they have done what they could with the resources they had, but he also acknowledge that the money spent on the war is way too much

when you look at what the U.S. have lost in terms of people killed, and that no longer a vital national interest of the American people, and the struggles that comes with the situation of a person being deployed.

The fact the President Biden goes public and telling people, how much money the war has actually cost the U.S., and that this war is no longer necessary in terms of creating sustainable security from threats from non-western countries, again show that the U.S. government is very much sure, that the withdrawal is a good thing. He also mentions that the U.S. will continue to support Afghanistan in the future but in more diplomatic ways than before. It can however be argued, how the U.S. have thought the withdrawal would play out, did they think that from one day to another you can just retrieve all military forces and contractors, and then let the government I Afghanistan take over? Did they really believe that the government had the economic resources, the political stability, and the whole population behind them to do so? Did they think that the Taliban would not grab the first chance they got, to take over Kabul, the most important city in Afghanistan, and regain power?

It is very difficult to believe that the U.S. have been so blind to what have actually happened over the years in Afghanistan, and have not been able to look upon their own actions, and dig into the reality of the nation-building project, and the investments made, and see that most projects have failed, the investments have not create a stable and healthy economy, and that the people might not be as secure in their own country, because the security provided came from the U.S. military forces and other international support. Of cause the agreement made between the U.S. and Taliban suggested that the organization would not do any harm, and would fulfill their side of the agreement, but the events lately have suggested otherwise. The biggest mistake the U.S. could make was going through with the withdrawal, without any thought on how it would be in the future, both for the government, but also the people living in Afghanistan.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the proposed research question; *Why has the nation-building project in Afghanistan failed under U.S. occupation after more than 20 years?* it can be concluded that the nation-building project in Afghanistan have failed due to many reasons, but according to the finding it mainly happened due to the nexus between the three dimensions economic development, political development, and cultural and social development. The three dimensions have been helpful in explaining the nation-building project in Afghanistan and have also been helpful in terms of analyzing the statistics, and the agreements made during the years. the nation-building project can be seen as a helping hand from the international community to Afghanistan, and a way for them to prolong the western values and democracy. But on the other hand, it can also be seen as a failure because the way they have done it, might not have been the most suitable way due to the different culture and religion in the country. According to some scientist, the U.S. and western way of living is not necessarily the right way of living, but it might be such a big part of the U.S.'s role out in the world, that they feel the need to do it, despite setbacks over the years they continued, and because they have had success in other countries beforehand. They do however need to revalue their strategy when doing these nation-building projects, because not all countries are the same. Afghanistan has after the withdrawal, been setback to the years before 2001, where Taliban had the power, their economy was not healthy, and people did not have the basic human right forexample in terms of girls and women, and their right to go to school.

Afghanistan is still experiencing economic problems and have not moved from being a traditional economic society, to a more technological developed society. They have not been able to create a stable government, which also is the cause for the lack of economic development, and the fact that they do not have the full support from the population also makes it difficult. It is difficult to create political institutions with modern thoughts if you do not have the support from the people and let them get involved in the process. It can create a lot of insecurity among some people, which can let to civil wars, which is the reality in Afghanistan. The U.S. could have succeeded with the nation-building project, but they did not have the ability, resources, or knowledge to do so, which is why the withdrawal was the biggest mistake the U.S. have made since occupying the country in 2001.

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