****

**Aalborg University**

The Faculty of Social Sciences

Development and International Relations

Kroghstræde 3

9220 Aalborg Øst

Front page images collected at <http://epaper.dawn.com/~epaper/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=02_05_2012_001_003>

# Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to examine why external factors are creating obstacles when it comes to creating peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Throughout history, Afghanistan has been subject to interventions by external powers, mostly due to geopolitics.

The paper entails a historical aspect that through a triangulation method examines the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979-1989, while drawing parallels to the current intervention of the international community. For this, help is drawn from Chalmers Johnsons’ *Blowback* perspective and a further development of this approach made by Immanuel Wallerstein, arguing that the Americans are now reaping what they have sowed through their Cold-War foreign policies in Afghanistan. The Mujaheddin army fighting the Soviet in during the invasion later became the Taliban, which the US and the international community is now fighting today, and therefore an account of the Taliban is given in order to understand both parties in the conflict.

This examination also revisits the debate on IR and humanitarian intervention through neo-realism and liberalism. However, emphasis will be on the discipline of sociology through the social theory of social constructivism. The IR theories explain some of the political actions taken by the US and the international society; however, they lack a historical and cultural aspect, which is then supplied by social constructivism. As the state of Afghanistan is of a complex nature these aspect are vital in the peace and reconciliation process. To receive at thorough understanding of the conflict an analysis is made from the view of Afghan actors from political, military, economic, and social arenas. These perspectives provide an Afghan description of some key elements of actor understandings of the conflict, including the role of ethnicity and factionalism with focus on the debate of the Pushtuns, and the issues for a peace process. This leads up to a final examination of the ideational and relation factors that affect the peace and reconciliation process.

[1 Abstract 2](#_Toc328692517)

[2 Introduction 5](#_Toc328692518)

[2.1 Problem statement 6](#_Toc328692519)

[3 Methodology 7](#_Toc328692520)

[3.1 Scope and selection of theories 10](#_Toc328692521)

[3.2 Literature search 12](#_Toc328692522)

[4 Theories 13](#_Toc328692523)

[4.1 Neo-realism 13](#_Toc328692524)

[4.1.1 Realism and humanitarian intervention 16](#_Toc328692525)

[4.2 Liberalism 17](#_Toc328692526)

[4.2.1 Liberalism and humanitarian intervention 18](#_Toc328692527)

[4.3 Social constructivism 21](#_Toc328692528)

[4.3.1 Constructivism and humanitarian intervention 24](#_Toc328692529)

[5 Summary and framework for the analysis 28](#_Toc328692530)

[5.1 Neo-realism 28](#_Toc328692531)

[5.2 Liberalism 29](#_Toc328692532)

[5.3 Social constructivism 31](#_Toc328692533)

[5.4 The ‘Blowback’ perspective 32](#_Toc328692534)

[6 Analysis 34](#_Toc328692535)

[6.1 The history of external intervention in Afghanistan 34](#_Toc328692536)

[6.1.1 The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979-1989 35](#_Toc328692537)

[6.1.2 Taliban in Afghanistan 38](#_Toc328692538)

[6.1.3 Taliban and the international community 40](#_Toc328692539)

[6.1.4 The Afghan war of 2001-2002 43](#_Toc328692540)

[6.2 The Afghan view and the process of peace and reconciliation 46](#_Toc328692541)

[6.2.1 The conflict and issues for a peace agreement 47](#_Toc328692542)

[6.2.2 Current peace strategies 52](#_Toc328692543)

[6.2.3 Implications for a durable peace process 53](#_Toc328692544)

[6.3 Sub-conclusion 56](#_Toc328692545)

[7 Conclusion 58](#_Toc328692546)

[8 Acknowledgements 60](#_Toc328692547)

[9 References 61](#_Toc328692548)

# Introduction

For few countries in the world is it more true, than in the case of Afghanistan, that geography determines the history, politics and the nature of a people. The geo-strategic location of Afghanistan on the crossroads between Iran, the Arabian Sea and India and between South Asia and Central Asia has given its mountain passes and territory an enormous significance (Rashid, 2011). Afghanistan came to the awareness of the international scene with the Soviet intervention in 1979, the guerrilla war waged against the Soviets and the Communist regime in Kabul, the following civil war after the collapse of the Communist government, and the rise of the Taliban with its fundamentalist regime, human rights violation and its harbouring of Osama bin Laden and other Al-Qaida terrorists. However, it was the launching of Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001 by an alliance of Coalition forces, which really put focus on the country. After three decades of conflict and political instability, Afghanistan is now one of the poorest nations in the world and facing enormous development challenges (UNDP Afghanistan). The development crisis is grave with, for instance, limited access to basic necessities and a continuing exclusion of women and their rights in society[[1]](#footnote-1). In order to fully comprehend the contemporary events in Afghanistan, a grasp is required of the country’s geopolitical situation, its ethnic composition and the affect that these two factors have had on its history (Clements, 2003; xiii).

In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on humanitarian grounds, and in 2001 the US and the international community followed along this path of intervention. Over the last decades there has been a growing acceptance of humanitarian intervention and a responsibility to protect. Thus when states are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens, then the international community inherits that responsibility (Baylis et al., 2008; 170). Humanitarian intervention poses a difficult test for the international society built on principles of non-intervention, sovereignty, and the non-use of force (Wheeler, 2005; 1-2). However, these humanitarian principles often conflict with principles of non-intervention and sovereignty. Theorist John Mill argued that states are accorded certain natural rights as the right to non-intervention, but why is this not the case for Afghanistan? Seeing as the international community, including its neighbouring countries continues to interfere in the domestic policies of Afghanistan. Furthermore, one can only assume that after three decades of war the Afghans would be more than ready for peace and reconciliation, but why then is the peace process prolonged? This leads to the following problem statement:

## Problem statement

**Why are external factors creating obstacles when it comes to creating peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan?**

# Methodology

This section encompasses considerations about the overall methodology, disciplines involved in the paper as well as arguments for the choice of theory and empirical analysis. As I came across different literature while making this paper, there will be a description of the literature search at the end of the section.

The method has an essential influence on how the empirical material is collected and examined. Throughout the paper a combination of the inductive and the deductive approach will be used. By using the inductive approach new knowledge can be gained and contribute to the existing body of knowledge. However, as I have premises and theories to work from this paper will not be purely inductive. The premises being various empirical studies on the subject including already collected quantitative and qualitative data. The theory is also known in advance and will be applied to the empirical knowledge in the analysis to see if there can be any coefficient of determination found in the theory.

To obtain legitimacy in the conclusions of the paper I will try to reach constructive validity and be as objective in the collection of data and use as correct measurements as possible in the examination (Yin, 2009; 41-45). I will be critical via a social science method in an interdisciplinary combination of International Relations (IR) and sociology, including an ethnographic and anthropological aspect. There is an euro-centrism within neo-realism and liberalism, and by using them uncritically, I will be able to criticise them. I will be critical towards any empirical knowledge used and underpin that knowledge will differ depending on the theoretical background of the literature. This will be an explanatory study as the objective of the paper is to explain the current problems with creating peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. It is important for this study to obtain a high level of reliability in order to ensure that the causal correlations between the influence of external forces and the current problems in the Afghan peace process actually exists, and also so the collection of empirical knowledge and data and the use of this can be repeated with the same result (Yin, 2009; 41-45). To ensure that the empirical data and knowledge comes from reliable sources, I will, as earlier stated, be critical in the sense that I use triangulation to enhance the validity. Furthermore, I will register the dates upon the collection of my online findings online and keep full references of books and working papers used so that through a test of the examination it would be possible to use the same sources.

The project’s time scope will be from 1978, where a domestically Soviet inspired coup took place against the Daoud dictatorship, which later resulted in the Soviet invasion. The Afghan Mujaheddin opposition groups fought against the communist rule and the Soviet Union with the economic and military aid of US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is of great relevance for this study to examine the history of Afghanistan in order to understand the role of the external obstacles affecting the current situation in Afghanistan. Furthermore, an account of the political and military force of Taliban will be given as it helps to provide a better understanding of the 2001-2002 war and the following post-war conflict. Additionally, a study of this kind will also elucidate the role of Pakistan in the conflict and clarify Taliban’s relations to the international community in order to examine the current peace process in Afghanistan.

The paper is going to be a document study, which is used to describe human aspirations and intensions for the period they refer to, also places, social relations, and events. Furthermore, this kind of method is chosen as I am interested in the written, formal and visible reasons behind the actions of states and organisations. However, I will, where relevant, supplement with further perspectives from critical scholars within the area like for instance Chalmers Johnson (Johnson), who’s *Blowback* perspective will be used in the analysis[[2]](#footnote-2). Johnson argues that many aspects of what the American government had done abroad invited counterattacks from states and peoples who had been victimized. This perspective and its objective for this paper will be further introduced in the section The ‘Blowback’ perspective.

The problem statement is based on a macro-level and endeavours to answer the research problem in a broader contextual and place-specific perspective by using existing written resources.

In this project there will be a chronological account of the major political events in the history of Afghanistan since 1978 including the previous humanitarian interventions of Afghanistan, and it will be taken into account that the course of history depends on the approach taken by the written literature. The historical aspect will be given mainly from the observations of the liberal Pakistani journalist, Ahmed Rashid and the French professor, Olivier Roy supplemented by the observations of neo-realist William Maley. Oliver Roy will contribute with an ethnographical and anthropological aspect through his understanding of the view of the Afghan population. As previously stated, the main objective of the section will be, as previously stated, to give a chronological account of the political events, while applying theoretical knowledge through the arguments of theories of international relations (IR) and social theory.

The project will be an empirical analysis with an interdisciplinary aspect of IR and sociology, including aspects of an ethnographic and anthropology character through the empiric studies of Oliver Roy. There is a natural link between the IR and sociology discipline as social theory is widely concerned with how to conceptualise the relationship between agents and structures. Thus it is being used to help to determine, how we should think about the relationship between states and the structure of international politics. However, the focus of the project remains on a macro-level as the theories will be used to describe interaction between states, and asymmetrical actors like the Taliban.

The subjective point of departure for this study is Afghanistan as seen in the problem statement. Hence, it will be from a neutral non-western point of view. An example of this approach can be found through the words of Oliver Roy: “*Development's policies are based on a set of premises: state building, state of law, democratisation, accountability and privatisation. The idea is that the Western concept of democracy could be implemented through the development of a 'civil society' of the building from scratch of new institutions. Such a model works when there is political will from the local political authorities and the society to adopt such a model. But in any case a policy of development should be based on political legitimacy. In Afghanistan, political legitimacy means abiding with nationalism, Islam and local political culture (often based on clanism and networks). The issue is not opposing a Western model of democracy into the local political culture, but to root democracy into the local political culture”* (Roy, 2004). This project is based on a desire to examine the different external factors influencing the peace process in Afghanistan, and therefore finding various obstacles based on the political culture in Afghanistan and the view of Afghan actors. Hence, the emphasis will be laid on the local responses of actors.

In epistemological view, I do not expect to reach a conclusive result with this project as I am examining various obstacles. Hence, I will only come to an examination of my field of research via the theories, and therefore the project will be empirical and theoretical.

The empirical knowledge will mainly derive from books and working papers. The theoretical aspect of the project will involve three different theories that can help to explain the obstacles in the current peace process in Afghanistan. The theories chosen will be addressed in the following section.

## Scope and selection of theories

As written above, the project will include IR and sociology. IR theory will be applied in order to gain an International Relations perspective on the action of states in the international system including humanitarian interventions[[3]](#footnote-3) through the neo-realist and liberalist theories. The idea behind neo-realism is that structure is defined by anarchy in the international system and that there is no central authority to protect the interests of the larger global community. The fear of other states being potential threats to national security motivates the policies of most states as expansionary and aggressive states to do exist and they challenge the world order. Kenneth Waltz (Waltz) argue that the processes of globalization cannot be managed merely by building effective international institutions as their effectiveness depends upon the support given by the major powers, which is why states, and especially the major powers, are called on to, do what is necessary for the world’s survival. Mearsheimer and offensive realism rests on the assumption that great powers are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals, with hegemony as their final goal. According to Mearsheimer, the aggressive character is not intrinsic to states, but the product of the constant search for survival in a world of uncertainty, offensive military capability, and changing distribution of power. This theory, with emphasis on the ideas of Waltz and Mearsheimer, will provide a better knowledge of state action in regards to their foreign policy and their motives for humanitarian interventions and therefore this will play a significant role throughout the examination.

 The other theory within IR theory that will be of use is liberalism. Liberalists wishes to project values of order, justice, liberty, and toleration into international relations. However, there are different variations to what kind of international institutions that is required to deliver these liberal values. The commitment to freedom points in the direction of a minimalist role for international institutions, while the democratic political culture needed for basic freedoms to be taken care of requires strong and interventionist institutions. These different positions will be examined mainly through the liberal thoughts of Mill, Doyle and Hutcheson. These different ways of viewing humanitarian interventions makes this theory interesting to this study as it can help to determine the interventionist positions of the US, UN and NATO, and why they are trying to enforce liberal values in spite of the implementing problems.

The theoretical emphasis of this study will be laid on the social theory of social constructivism. The thoughts of Alexander Wendt (Wendt) will be used because of its aspects on how to conceptualise the relationship between agents and structures, hence, the relationship between states and the structure of international politics. Constructivists believe that war is not just the use of deadly force; it is a social institution and comprises rules, laws and norms. The ideas of Luke Glanville (Glanville) and Martha Finnemore (Finnemore) will be described to gain knowledge on the constructivist view on humanitarian intervention. Norms of humanitarianism and military intervention not only regulate how states act, they can also be linked to their identities and thus expressive of how they define themselves and their interests. The social construction of reality forms what is assumed as legitimate action. Thus the more illegitimate a possible course of action appears to be, the greater the potential cost for those proceeding on their own. According to constructivists, world orders are sustained not only by great power references but also by shifting understandings of what constitutes a legitimate international order.

Most of the written literature on humanitarian intervention goes beyond the normal tripartition of realism, liberalism and constructivism but this paper wishes to revisit this debate as traces of these theories still can be found in the foreign policy of states and international institutions and still plays a vital role within IR. Furthermore, this will provide an examination of the three theories’ explanatory force within the field of humanitarian intervention and the subsequent political process of cooperation. There is also a legal dimension to this debate. However, I will not elaborate further on this matter, but merely touch the area through the IR discussion on state sovereignty and norms. Furthermore, as earlier described the theoretical emphasis will be laid on social constructivism and according to social constructivism, *“Examination focused only on the legitimacy (...) of humanitarian intervention cannot, on its own, explain its occurrence”* (Glanville, 2006; 158).

## Literature search

In search of literature, different search engines, databases, and libraries have been used. As for instance the libraries of the university as they have been of great help, given their online database of e-books, working papers, and academic journals and also their collection of books. Furthermore, relevant materials from previous semester’s curriculum have been helpful when looking at the theoretical aspects of this study.

# Theories

The main purpose of this section is to identify and describe the three main traditions used within IR and their view on humanitarian intervention. This will serve as the basis for the analysis as the purpose of this study is to examine what are the current external obstacles in creating peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Firstly, there will be an account of neo-realism in terms of state behaviour, anarchy in the international system and state interests in humanitarian intervention. There are different versions within the theory of neo-realism. However, this section will focus on Waltz’ theory of neo-realism, and also Mearsheimer’s arguments on offensive and defensive realism. The humanitarian intervention aspect within neo-realism will be described via Alex J. Bellamy and Nicholas J. Wheeler, who study state motives for intervening. This will be followed by an account of liberalism in terms of liberal institutions, human rights and pre-emptive defence measures. Emphasis will be laid on the ideas of Mill and Doyle. Mill argues that state relations must be governed by the principle of non-intervention, while Buchanan and Keohane argue in favour of the Legal Status Quo view. Doyle’s aim is to elaborate on two main legacies within liberalism following a policy mix of forcible and non-forcible instruments to be deployed when seeking regime changes in states. Finally, social constructivism, mainly through the ideas of Wendt will be described to gain knowledge on relations between states and their interests, including the norm of humanitarian intervention, which will be elaborated through the views of Finnemore and Glanville.

## Neo-realism

Neo-realists or structural realists, like Waltz, argue that structure is defined by the ordering principle of the international system, which is anarchy, and the allocation of capabilities across units, which are states. Furthermore, Waltz assumes that there is no differentiation of function between different units (Baylis et al., 2008; 127).

Neo-realists explain differences in policy by differences in capabilities or power. However, unit size aside all units recognise that one constraint of anarchy is the need for security to protect national interests (Baylis et al., 2007; 129). States look at all other states as potential enemies and threats to their national security. This fear and distrust creates a security dilemma, and this motivates the policies of most states (Baylis et al., 2008; 127-130).

States and other actors act together in an anarchic environment. This means that there is no central authority to enforce norms and rules or protect the interests of the larger global community (Baylis et al., 2008; 127-130).

Neo-realists view power in terms of state capabilities. States are differentiated in the system of power and not by the function of the states. Power gives a state a certain position in the international system, which then shapes behaviour of the states. Foreign policy choices are all shaped by the structure of the international system (Baylis et al., 2008; 127-128). The distribution of power and any dramatic changes in that distribution help to explain the structure of the international system. If a certain state fails to maintain its position in the international system it can, according to neo-realists, cause increased uncertainty and instability. Waltz argues that the main mechanism for order in the international system is balance of power. The renewed emphasis on the importance of NATO and the United Nations and their interventions in troubled areas around the world may be indicative of the major powers’ current search for order in the international system. Waltz argues that the processes of globalisation cannot be managed merely by building effective international institutions as their effectiveness depends upon the support given by the major powers (Baylis et al., 2008; 128).

John Mearsheimer, an offensive realist in security studies, argues that relative power and not absolute power is most important to the states. He would suggest that state leaders should pursue security policies that weakens their potential enemies while at the same time increase their power relative to all others. In this era of globalisation, the incompatibility of states’ interests and goals makes conflict as inevitable as cooperation. Therefore, according to neo-realists, leaders must always be prepared for an expansionary state that will try and challenge the global order (Baylis et al., 2008; 130).

Offensive neo-realists accept most of Waltz’ ideas including a great part of the assumptions within traditional realism. Defensive realists believe that our assumptions of relations with other states depend on whether they are friends or enemies. However, there is little difference between defensive and offensive realists when looking at expansionary or pariah states, or traditional enemies. Most defensive realists consider conflict to be inevitable in some situations. First, expansionary and aggressive states do exist and they challenge world order. Second, some states may make conflict with others unavoidable in a pursuit of their national interests (Baylis et al., 2008; 130).

Mearsheimer argues that great powers “*are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals*” (Mearsheimer, 2001; 29). In order to test the validity of offensive realism, Mearsheimer claims that “*we should almost always find leaders thinking that it is imperative to gain more power to enhance their state’s prospects for survival*” (Mearsheimer, 2001; 169). According to him, great powers are rarely satisfied and instead they therefore seek to extend their hegemony. This implies that the biggest concern for states is not simply for security, as Waltz asserted in *Theories of International Politics*, but for maximizing power (Devetak et al., 2012; 42).

States must be treated as empty boxes because their characteristics and arrangements do not really make a difference at the level of the international system, which is the concern of international relations theories. With regard to the system the differentiation of units is irrelevant since states are undifferentiated in their primary function: to produce their own security. Units are required to pursue their own security as no one else can be trusted on to do so. The reason for this is that the organising principle of the international system is anarchy, not hierarchy, and selp-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order, according to Waltz. International, supranational, and transnational organisations perform important roles but are always subordinate to the most powerful states. This structural state obliges each state continuously to guard its security and defend its relative position with regard to other states without relying on others. Interdependence produces not just good relations but also mutual vulnerability, according to neo-realists (Devetak et al., 2012; 41-43).

Waltz believe that each state shapes policies and decides on actions according to its own internal processes but its decisions are made by the presence of other states as well as by interactions with them. These policies cannot be explained in terms of the interacting parties if the situation in which they act and interact prevent them from some actions, disposes them toward others, and influence the outcomes of their interactions (Keohane, 1986; 52-53). According to Waltz, no state intends to take part in the formation of a structure by which it and others will be constrained. As individualists in origin, international political systems are spontaneously generated and unintended. Structures are formed via the coactions of their units, and depending on their own efforts they either prosper or die. The international system is formed and maintained on a principle of self-help that applies to the units (Keohane, 1986; 84-85). According to Waltz when “*looking for the international structure, one is brought face to face with the invisible, an uncomfortable position to be in*” (Keohane, 1986; 82).

Waltz claims that supranational agents are able to act effectively, however, either they attain some of the capabilities and attributes of states themselves or they will soon give away their inability to act in important ways without the support of the principal states worried about the matters at hand. Hence, without agents with system-wide authority, formal relations of super- and subordination fall short to develop (Keohane, 1986; 81-82).

Waltz assumes that states seek to ensure their survival. However, the reasons to this may vary from ambition to conquer the world to the desire merely to be left alone. This motive of survival is taken as the ground of action in a world where security of states is not assured, Waltz argues that the environment of state action, or the structure of their system, is determined by the fact that some states prefer survival and act with relative efficiency to achieve that (Keohane, 1986; 85-87).

Waltz argues that great assignments can be accomplished only by agents of great capability. That is why states, and especially the major powers, are called on to do what is necessary for the world’s survival (Keohane, 1986; 107). Waltz: the problem”*(...) is not to say how to manage the world, including its great powers, but to say how the possibility that great powers will constructively manage international affairs varies as systems change*” (Keohane, 1986; 15). If force is used or expected in one state, the recourse of other states is to use or be prepared to use it singly or in combination (Keohane, 1986; 111).

### Realism and humanitarian intervention

States have almost always mixed motives for intervening and are rarely ready to sacrifice their own soldiers overseas unless they have self-interested reasons for doing so. For realists, genuine humanitarian intervention is imprudent because it does not serve the international interest. Not only do states not intervene for humanitarian purposes, their statist paradigm also asserts that states should not act in this way (Wheeler, 2005; 6-7). Seen in the light of that international peace and security rests on reciprocal recognition of state’s sovereign rights, realist argue that humanitarian intervention is illegitimate (Bellamy, 2003; 4). Realists claim that a state’s primary responsibility is to its own citizens, and therefore it cannot be legitimate to risk the lives of the citizens on a humanitarian crusade to save strangers elsewhere. For instance, according to realists, it makes no difference to the United States, if other nation’s population want to kill each other (Bellamy, 2003; 10). Thus in its practical form, it constitutes a recurring discourse in the domestic politics of intervening states. The discourse focuses on the lives of the military interveners rather than the plight of those in danger (Bellamy, 2003; 10-11).

The mentality and nature of neo-realists ideology in a modern humanitarian world have been changed. Nonetheless, neo-realism is far from extinction in international affairs and in a humanitarian world. According to neo-realists, regardless of the international system, whether bipolar, unipolar, or multipolar, states will expectedly continue to act on their own national interests. They support a humanitarian crisis or take part in an alliance, but their very support in that alliance will likely be predicated by their national interests. Neo-realists argue, the main powers on the international arena do not act based on altruist motivations and therefore, humanitarian action run by states is likely to remain largely interest dependent (Aliyev, 2011).

##

## Liberalism

Liberalists wishes to project values of order, justice, liberty, and toleration into international relations. Domestic and international institutions are needed to nurture and protect these values. However, these values and institutions allow for significant variations. Liberals disagree on fundamental issues as for instance on the causes of war and what kind of international institutions that is required to deliver liberal values. Liberalists agree on anarchy not being the cause of war (Baylis et al., 2008; 110). However, the actual answers to what causes war come in different variations within liberalist thinking. Those with a positive conception of liberalism advocate interventionist foreign policies and stronger international institutions, and those who lean towards a negative conception and emphasise on toleration and non-intervention (Baylis et al., 2008; 110-111). The former, the liberal institutionalists, believe the failure of the balance of power to be the cause of war, while the latter believe that interventions by governments domestically and internationally disturb the natural order and thereby creating conflict (Baylis et al., 2008; 111). Thus liberalism pulls in two different directions. The commitment to freedom in the social and economic spheres point in the direction of a minimalist role for governing institutions, while the democratic political culture needed for basic freedoms to be looked after requires strong and interventionist institutions (Baylis et al., 2008; 111).

Liberal institutionalism seeks to explain why, and how, international institutions have become so vital with the rise of complex interdependence. Institutionalism no longer focuses directly on the goal of promoting peace, however, there is still an assumption that institutions add indirectly to this goal by promoting habits of cooperation and a sense of mutual interests. Liberal institutionalists maintain that international cooperation is extensive and that it has become indispensable in many areas. However, it is not automatic; a shared interest in peace does not ensure cooperation to achieve it. Institutions can devise means to which shared goals can be implemented, to allocate costs, and to prevent cheating. By showing how cooperation can be achieved in practice, institutions affect the perception of national interests and form expectations, according to institutional liberalists. They focus on information, norms and conventions as fundamental aspects of international relations (Devetak, 2012; 55).

### Liberalism and humanitarian intervention

Liberalist thinker, Michael Doyle (Doyle) advocates a policy mix of forcible and non-forcible instruments through a dual-track that he believe should be deployed in seeking regime changes in illiberal parts of the world. The first track is protecting the liberal community which means securing strong alliances with other like-minded states and defending itself against illiberal regimes. This may involve liberal states to entail in their foreign policy strategies as the balance of power in order to contain authoritarian states. The second track is more expansionists and wishes to extend the liberal zone by various economic and diplomatic instruments. Doyle categorises these in terms of ‘inspiration’, ‘instigation’, and ‘intervention’. Firstly, inspiration refers to the hope that people living in non-democratic regimes will fight for their liberty. Second, Doyle refers to instigation as peace building and economic restructuring. Thirdly, he sees intervention as legitimate if the majority of a polity (today meaning the majority of the United Nations Security Council) is demonstrating general disaffection with their government and/or their basic rights are being systematically violated (Baylis et al., 2008; 118).

Liberalists with a negative conception believe that as individuals, states have different characteristics, and the identity of the state determines its outward orientation. Furthermore, the character of states may differ but all states are accorded certain ‘natural’ rights as for instance the generalised right to non-intervention in their domestic affairs (Baylis, 2008; 110). The liberal thinker Mill address the matter in the following: “(...) *the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection (...) the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others*” (Mill, 1983; 68).

Mill claims that states are established by the informed consent of their citizens. Thus, democracy can only be established by a domestic struggle for liberty, and human rights cannot take form if they are imposed or enforced by outsiders. Furthermore, interveners will find that they either becomes embroiled in an unending commitment or that the human rights violations re-ignite after they depart. Mill believes that oppressed people should overthrow tyrannical governments themselves (Mill, 1973; 377-378).

The liberal thinker, Francis Hutcheson argues in favour of pre-emptive military action in order to prevent the rise of a dangerously powerful state if that state threatens the dominance of the liberal international order (Greener, 2007; 300). In more recent times, customary assistance has grown to allow for some defence of pre-emptive action in the case of a direct and imminent threat to state security. However, the traditional understanding of what constitutes “imminence”, and therefore what constitutes an act of “pre-emption”, has been challenged in the last decade. Allen Buchanan and Robert O. Keohane, suggests that the distinction can be made through grouping four main positions: the Just War Blanket Prohibition, whereby distinct cases of pre-emption only are permissible; the Legal Status Quo, where the preventive use of force is possible with the authorisation of the UN Security Council; the National Interests view, whereby any action may be undertaken in order to secure national interests; and the Expanded Right of Self-Defence as expressed by the US National Security Strategy of 2002 (Buchanan, 2004; 1-4). In Keohane and Buchanan’s view, the Cosmopolitan Institutional view and the Legal Status Quo view allows for the possibility of preventive force. The Legal Status Quo view may involve elements of self-defence; however, it also highlights the wider notion of helping others by supporting the decisions of the UN Security Council, and thereby correlating with liberal arguments if force is used as a last resort. Contrary to this approach, force might be used to prevent massive human rights violations in the Cosmopolitan Institutional approach, according to Buchanan and Keohane (Buchanan, 2004; 4) (Greener, 2007; 302).

Preventive action in the name of self-defence allows the possibility of using unnecessary force. However, if imbued with other liberal terminology, as the need to support the decisions of the UN Security Council, to secure human rights, or the need to liberate others, the liberal case for such action is more difficult to ignore, according to Beth Greener (Greener). Therefore, “defence” of the liberal state might include pre-emptive self-defence measures in cases of direct and imminent threats. Liberal caution in seeing force as the last resort makes it difficult to undertake preventive actions in the name of self-defence only, though if used together with other liberal principles, as for instance securing human rights, preventive actions potentially gain some form of legitimacy (Greener, 2004; 302).

Like Mill, the liberal thinker, Thomas Pogge, suggests that the idea of absolute sovereignty is not defensible in liberal terms as liberalism “*centres around fundamental needs and interests of individual human beings*” (Pogge, 1992; 58). Charles Beitz elaborates further on the matter by asserting that “*unjust institutions do not enjoy the same prima facie protection against external interference as do just institutions*” (Beitz, 1979; 121). Cosmopolitan liberals wish to extend the principles of justice that hold within liberal states to the international environment, and therefore, under certain circumstances, the needs of individuals come to overrule principles of non-intervention and state sovereignty. This renewed cosmopolitan philosophy has resulted in the notion of humanitarian intervention being given quasi-legal status (Greener, 2004; 305).

In the pursuit of creating liberal entities, military are deployed to force the creation of a democratic government within another state. Undemocratic regimes may be seen as legitimate targets as they, in liberal terms, have no representative character. Michael Walzer argues that “*it is a feature of democratic or liberal culture that peace is conceived as a normative condition. Wars can only be fought, then, if some ‘universal moral principle’ requires it: the preservation of peace, the survival of democracy and so on*” (Walzer, 1992; 111). In this case, some have argued that this universal moral principle is possibly not only the survival of liberalism or democracy but even its forceful promotion elsewhere, according to Greener (Greener, 2004; 310).

## Social constructivism

Constructivists believe that states are central actors in international politics, and that they are autonomous from the social system in which they are embedded. Their foreign policy is often a result of domestic politics rather than by the international system (Wendt, 1999; 2).

Wendt believes anarchy to be an empty vessel, bereft of any importance, absent human meaning and resulting practices that characterise this condition. He focuses on the state, which he portrays as having “constituted” it’s relations in terms of shared ideas about what a state is and on what its interests are (Kolodziej, 2005; 278). Wendt maintains that states have a broad range of choice before them in relating to each other, and that they are perfectly free to create whatever form of anarchy they please. These forms of anarchy can range from incessant conflict to perpetual peace. As ideal types, each form of culturally created anarchy has a different logic of state identity, role, interests, and the appropriate use of hard and soft power (Kolodziej, 2005; 278-279).

Another view within constructivism is the creation of new identities. Changing ideas regarding who actors believe they are define their interests. Interests and ideas are constructed from shared ideas (Kolodziej, 2005; 269).

Human agents both construct their identities that enable them to act, while at the same time they are being constrained by these identities. The latter is defined by rules, norms, and institutions affirmed by actors. These ever-changing agent-structure modalities develop through an ongoing process of confirmation, rejection or social mutation by which agents redefine themselves and revise the structures which enables them to act in the moment while simultaneously limiting their range of freedom (Kolodziej, 2005; 269).

Wendt insists that the structure of human relations, including relations between states, is mainly the result of shared ideas rather than of material forces. He argues that human associations and exchanges are primarily characterised by human ideational conceptions of their material circumstances, whether violence, technology or economic resources (Kolodziej, 2005; 268).

Constructivists believe that agents and their social constructions are not autonomous and independent of each other. They are equally constituted by the meanings and ideas that compose them. These ideas shape social structures that characterise the identities and interests of these actors or agents (Kolodziej, 2005; 274).

Constructivists argue that social facts are dependent on human agreement and are taken for granted. Terrorism, human rights, and sovereignty are all social facts. Thus their existence depends on human agreement, they will only exist so long as the agreement exits, and their existence forms how we categorise the world and our actions.

The social construction of reality also forms what is assumed as legitimate action. What is seen as appropriate and legitimate can influence the possible costs of various actions. Hence, the more illegitimate a possible course of action appears to be, the greater the potential cost for those proceeding on their own (Baylis et al., 2008; 163).

Constructivists claim that sovereignty did not always exist. They believe it to be a product of historical forces and human interactions that produces new distinctions regarding where political authority resided. To comprehend the origins of these modern concepts requires attention to the interplay between institutions and existing ideas, morally minded actors who were attempting to improve humanity and the political calculations by leaders who had ulterior motives. Further concern is alternative pathways. According to constructivists there are contingencies, the conjunction of ideational and material forces, historical accidents, and human intervention that can force history to change course (Baylis et al., 2008; 163-164).

Wendt’s claim that anarchy is what states make of it draws attention on how different practices and beliefs will generate divergent patterns and organisation of world politics. Some of the most important debates in world politics entail the definition of particular activities. Security, humanitarian intervention, and sovereignty are examples of important orienting concepts that can have a number of meanings. States and non-state actors have rival understandings of the meaning of these concepts and will fight to try to have collectively accepted their favoured meaning. The fact that these meanings are fixed through politics and when fixed they have consequences for the ability of people to determine their fates suggests an alternative way of thinking about power. Constructivists claim that the forces of power go beyond material; they also can be ideational (Baylis et al., 2008; 164-165).

Constructivists assume that structures can have a causal impact as they make possible certain kinds of behaviour and thus create certain tendencies in the international system. Sovereignty do not trigger states to act one particular way, it helps them to develop and invests them with capacities that make certain kinds of behaviours possible. Being a sovereign state equals certain rights and privileges that other actors in world politics do not, including the right to use violence (Baylis et al., 2008; 166).

One of the tenets within constructivism is how identity comes before and shapes the basis of interests. For instance through identity claims, all taking the form, ‘because we are *x*, we can or should do *y*’ (Devetak et al., 2012; 105). For a constructivist world politics is all about those kinds of claims, and about clashes between people making different and competing kinds of identity claims. Identity is not just about Selves but also Others who are ‘not Self’, who are outside the borders. So to say *we* are a specific kind of people is at the same time to say that *they* are not, whoever *they* are. A statement as ‘because we are x (where x might be ‘democratic’ or ‘free’) implies that another group who is not *x* have to be treated differently. This then becomes politically significant as particular Others have to be treated differently by certain kinds of Selves. The categorical distinction between Others and Selves influences how interactions between the two groups will unfold (Devetak et al., 2012; 105).

Constructivists believe that the present order of things is largely dominated by sovereign states interacting under conditions of anarchy. However, anarchy, as conceived by constructivists, is a different kind of anarchy as in the social space between states you have state identities, international law, and other self-other relationships (Devetak et al., 2012; 107).

According to constructivists war is not just the use of deadly force; it is a social institution and comprises rules, norms and laws. These laws govern war, and practices and protocol describe how war is supposed to be prosecuted. Furthermore, norms work as a binding set of expectations such as ‘do not deliberately target or kill civilians’ (Devetak et al., 2012; 108). Although these expectations are not always met, violators of these norms do come in for criticism, and generally provide rationales and excuses for their deviation from the accepted rules of normal behaviour – something they probably would not do if it had not been for the well established norm. The institution of war includes this humanitarian practice to which many states follow because war is not just something people engage in with no limits. War is regulated and has social meaning attached to it, according to constructivists. Hence, the existing international institutions in world politics provide a set of standards to which states can be held accountable for their actions. International organisations have authority and not just control, claims the constructivists. They are not just means of coordinating actions between states, but they actually have their own authority as an effect of the fact that the shared norms on which they are incorporated into the self-conceptions of all the numerous participating parties (Devetak et al., 2012; 108-115).

An especially noteworthy development that constructivists believe occurs sometimes in international politics is that a number of states identify with each other so strongly that they no longer consider war among themselves as a real option. Constructivists assume that under specific circumstances states can form a security community in which states have an extremely positive identification with each other. This entails a specific kind of self-other relationship in which the previous Other becomes an extension of the Self. States in a security community view all of the other states within the community as Selves rather than Others, sharing common values, commitments and interests. Disputes in such a security community are resolved peacefully. States are then expected to work together to ensure that essential interests are secured through close coordination of activities, whether these activities concern international trade and commerce, international development, or some other form of collaboration to solve a persistent problem. These matters should be resolved peacefully within the security community as the states involved share common commitments and interests which in time may come to constitute a common identity (Devetak et al., 2012; 116).

### Constructivism and humanitarian intervention

In recent decades various processes have worked against the principle of non-interference and proposed how state sovereignty is conditional on how states treat their populations. World order is made and sustained not only by great power references but also by shifting understandings of what constitutes a legitimate international order (Baylis et al., 2008; 168).

Norms of humanitarianism and military intervention not only regulate how states act, they can also be connected to their identities and thus expressive of how they define themselves and their interests. Not only do norms constrain behaviour as actors are worried about the cost of doing so, they also constrain behaviour as they are expected to avoid settling their disputes through violence as war might not pay but rather as it violates how ‘civilised’ states are expected to behave (Baylis et al., 2008; 169).

According to constructivist and English School thinker, Luke Glanville, when examining norms it is important to distinguish between types of norms. With regard to the nature of norm’s injunction, a distinction can be made between three types: those that constrain or restrict certain behaviour; those that allow or permit certain behaviour; and those norms that require or prescribe certain behaviour. These norms can be labelled *prohibitive*, *permissive*, and *prescriptive* norms. The norm of non-intervention with regard to the sovereign territorial and political integrity of other states is an example of a *prohibitive* norm. The ongoing debate on whether the post-Cold War world has witnessed the emergence of a norm that allows and legitimizes intervention in response to violations of human rights is a debate over the strength of a *permissive* norm. Arguments that there exists an emergent norm that compels states or (re)constitutes their interests so they that have a preference for pursuing responses to these violations can be best understood as arguments on a *prescriptive* norm (Glanville, 2006; 115). Glanville argues that the latter two is often confused with one another, especially by constructivists. He claims that it is one thing to suggest that humanitarian intervention is understood to be a legitimate answer to human rights violations; it is another thing to say that states feel obliged to react to these violations. Hence, prescriptive norms do not just allow certain courses of action; these norms do not only (re)constitute interests so that a particular course of action becomes grouped with a range of permitted and legitimate policy choices. Prescriptive norms can (re)constitute states interests so that norm accommodating behaviour is viewed as being in the state’s interests (Glanville, 2006; 155).

Constructivist, Martha Finnemore emphasise the permissive nature of humanitarian norms. She observes that, while emergent norms appear to *allow* intervention in reaction to human rights violations, these norms do not *require* intervention (Finnemore, 1996; 181). However, Finnemore does not restrict her analysis to the permissive injunctions of humanitarian norms. She asserts that “*changing norms may change state interests and create new interests”*. An illustration of this, according to Finnemore, can be found in the emergence of “*interests in protecting non-European non-Christians”* (Finnemore, 1996; 158). This assertion does not only deal with the permission to intervene and the legitimacy of intervention but also the change in state preferences so that they now had an alleged interest in intervening. While Finnemore has underpins that humanitarian intervention norms were ‘permissive norms only’, she also cites a number of cases that implied a *prescription* to intervene. Glanville argues that a permissive norm humanitarian intervention may allow and legitimise intervention in reaction to human rights violations. It is quite different to speak of a norm that serves the purpose of reshaping state interests towards a preference for such intervention. Therefore, Glanville, states that such a norm must be labelled ‘prescriptive’. This does not imply *actual* state actions but, unlike permissive norms, it does suggest appropriate behaviour that *ought* to occur (Glanville, 2006; 156).

Glanville claims that states do not intervene to prevent violations of human rights simply because they are allowed to. It is not until we consider the strength and the nature of norm that *prescribes* humanitarian intervention and its interplay with state’s self-interests that we can begin to answer for example why Afghanistan and not Darfur, according to Glanville (Glanville, 2006; 157).

Finnemore clarifies her distinction between permissive and prescriptive injunctions: “*States construct rules among themselves about when intervention is legitimate or necessary*” (Finnemore, 2003; 5). The scholar argues that contemporary humanitarian intervention cannot be explained by rationalist appeals to material interests; it can just be explained by reference to the shifting normative context in which it occurs. Furthermore, “*contemporary humanitarian intervention norms do more than just allow intervention”* (Finnemore, 2003; 79).

The prescriptive norm refers to a sense of obligation, a moral duty, about the suitable response of states to crimes against humanity being committed in other states. Firstly, the prescriptive norm of humanitarian intervention is an *imperfect* rather than a *perfect* duty, according to Glanville. Thus it is a duty of beneficence that does not belong to any specific agent. As such, intervention is a good thing to do but at the same time not a wrong thing not to do. Secondly, Glanville claims, “*a compounding mitigation of the potential strength of the prescriptive norm of intervention is that, as an imperfect duty, it is logically also a positive rather than a negative duty; violation requires omission rather than action”* (Glanville, 2006; 159). To violate the norm prescribing humanitarian intervention needs a failure to act.

Some believe that negative and positive duties bear unequal moral obligations. With regard to humanitarian intervention, the argument goes that, while the failure to act leads to many deaths, these deaths were not intended and therefore is not our moral responsibility. It is unimaginable that coercive tools could be used to punish a state’s failure to intervene to stop human rights violations committed by other people in another state. According to Glanville, it is much more difficult to compel specific actions by states than to restrict specific actions (Glanville, 2006; 159).

For constructivists, international norms affect state behaviour as the decision-makers of the state draw on conclusions about ‘whether a class of actions is required, forbidden, or allowed’, and forms states interests and identities (Glanville, 2006; 161-162). Also constructivist Alex Bellamy believes that decision-makers outline the normative issues at risk in a manner which makes intervention or a failure to intervene socially acceptable. Where they wish to justify intervention, statesmen emphasise values of solidarity claiming that there is agreement on what constitutes a supreme humanitarian crisis, on the importance of human rights, and on the rules governing the use of force in international society. In relation Glanville elaborates further: *“Where they wish to excuse violation of the prescriptive norm of humanitarian intervention, statesmen appeal to pluralist concerns regarding the sanctity of the sovereign state and the need to preserve international order by protecting the integrity of the prohibitive norm of non-intervention in international society”* (Glanville, 2006; 165). According to Glanville, the difficulty that statesmen face in justifying violation of the prescriptive norm by performing this art speaks to the strength it (Glanville, 2006; 165).

Constructivists Charles W. Kegley Jr. and Gregory A. Raymond view the US, as global hegemon, as enormously influential: “*When the reigning hegemon promotes a new set of norms, the code of conduct changes for virtually everyone. What the strongest do eventually defines what everybody should do, and when that practice becomes common, it tends to take on an aura of obligation*” (Kegley, 2004; 41).

# Summary and framework for the analysis

The main objective for this section is to give an account of the theories and approaches that will be used in the analysis. Each theory and approach will be summarised briefly and then followed by a description of how they will be applied to the case of Afghanistan. In accordance with the problem area the analysis will focus on external factors influencing the political situation in Afghanistan from the late 1970s and until now. The current political situation in Afghanistan could be covered through various fields, but the main focus of this analysis will be on the external forces influencing the country both previously and currently, the domestic Afghan point of view and the ideational and relational link between how the external factors determine domestic politics and peace and reconciliation[[4]](#footnote-4). The theories and the approach in question will be: Neo-realism, liberalism, social constructivism, and the blowback perspective. Each theory and approach has its shortcomings and therefore they will be used to supplement each other.

## Neo-realism

Neo-realism will be used in this examination to elucidate the action of states in regards to their foreign policy and their motives for humanitarian interventions, especially on the part of the US and therefore the theory will play a significant role throughout the examination.

Neo-realists believe anarchy to be the ordering principle of the international system. Differences in policies are explained by differences in capabilities or power. Thus, power provides a state with a certain position in the international system, which then shapes the behaviour of the state. This will be used to examine the US foreign policy towards Afghanistan both during and after the Cold War.

According to Waltz, states view all other states as potential enemies and threats to their national security, and given the anarchic environment, there is no central authority to enforce norms or rules or protect the interests of the larger global community. Waltz argues that the main mechanism for order in the international system is balance of power. Furthermore, the international institutions depend upon the support of the major powers. Waltz arguments can provide help not only to analyse on the US reasons for intervening Afghanistan but also to describe its relation to international institutions and why the Americans were the first to engage in war after the attacks of 9/11.

Offensive realist Mearsheimer argues that relative power and not absolute power is most important to the states. In his perception state leaders should pursue security policies that weaken their potential enemies while increasing their own power relative to all other states. According to Mearsheimer, great powers are rarely satisfied and instead they seek to extend their hegemony. Genuine humanitarian intervention is imprudent for realists as it does not serve the national interest. States are rarely willing to sacrifice their own soldiers overseas unless they have self-interested reasons for doing so. Realists argue that states will expectedly continue to act on behalf of their own national interests. They may assist in a humanitarian crisis or take part in an international alliance, but their very participation in that alliance will likely be predicated by their national interests. According to neo-realists, the main powers on the international arena do not act based on altruist motivations, thus, humanitarian action run by states is likely to remain largely dependent on interests. The explanatory forces of these arguments will be tested through the examination of the roles of the US, the Soviet Union, India and Pakistan when trying to either invade or create an allied in Afghanistan.

## Liberalism

Liberalism functions as an alternative theory to realism and it represent the approach taken by international organisations and many Western countries. International institutions are, according to liberalists, needed to foster and protect values of order, justice, liberty, and toleration. However, these values and institutions allow for different variations. Both the negative and positive variation will be included in this examination as it provides the study with a wider aspect. Furthermore, it gives a picture of the complex nature of the concept and debate of state sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. Liberalists with a positive conception of liberalism advocate interventionist foreign policies whereas those with a negative conception emphasise non-intervention. The former believe that the failure of the balance of power to be the cause of war, while the latter believe that interventions by governments domestically and internationally disturb the natural order and thereby creating conflict. Doyle believes in the former by protecting the liberal community which means securing strong alliances with other like-minded state and defending itself against illiberal regimes. This may involve states to entail in their foreign policy strategies as the balance of power in order to contain authoritarian states. Furthermore, he wishes to extend the liberal zone and he views intervention as legitimate if the majority of a polity is demonstrating general disaffection with their government and/or their basic rights are being violated.

This is also seconded by Hutcheson as he argues in favour of pre-emptive military action in order to prevent the rice of a possible dangerous state if that state threatens the dominance of the liberal international order. Liberals, like Mill, with a negative conception argue that states are accorded certain natural rights as for instance the generalised right to non-intervention, and that they are established by the informed consent of their citizens. Hence, democracy can only be established by a domestic struggle for liberty, and human rights cannot take form if they are imposed or enforced by outsiders. These different views on humanitarian intervention and the appliance of Western democratic values can be used to examine the position of the US and the international institutions in the current negotiations, and to whether it is possible to establish such values in a country like Afghanistan as the country may not be suitable for such a transformation.

Liberalists assume that institutions add indirectly to the goal of promoting peace by promoting habits of cooperation and a sense of mutual interests. Liberal institutionalists maintain that international cooperation is extensive and that it has become indispensible in many areas. However, a shared interest in peace does not ensure cooperation to achieve it. This will be used to study the presence and behaviour of NATO troops and the concept behind the international community’s “*new commitment to humanitarian action”*, cf. the section Taliban and the international community. Furthermore, it will help to analyse the positions of the UN Security Council towards assisting in creating peace in Afghanistan”.

In more recent times, assistance has grown to allow for some defence of pre-emptive action in case of a direct and imminent threat. However, the traditional understanding of what constitutes an imminent threat has been challenged in the last decades. Buchanan and Keohane provide four main positions that the distinction can be made through: the Just War Blanket Prohibition, where only distinct cases of pre-emption are permissible; the Legal Status Quo, where the preventive use of force is possible with the authorisation of the UN Security Council; the National Interests view, whereby any action may be undertaken in order to secure national interests; and the Expanded Right of Self-defence. The explanatory forces of these positions will be examined when studying the positions taken by the US and the UN Security Council.

## Social constructivism

Social constructivism entails a social aspect that neither of the two purely IR theories do. The theory explains state interest via norms and values and thereby takes the social context into consideration. The Afghan society is very socially complex and therefore this theory will be very useful when examining the historical aspect and the opinions from within the Afghan society.

Constructivists believe that identities are defined by rules, norms and institutions affirmed by actors. Wendt argues that unlike the realist claim, relations between states are mainly the result of shared ideas rather than of material forces. This will provide the examination with an alternative explanation of what determines state behaviour.

According to constructivists, security, humanitarian intervention, and sovereignty are examples of important orienting concepts that can have various meanings. States have rival understandings of the meaning of these concepts and will fight to try and have collectively accepted their favoured meaning. This suggests an alternative way of thinking about power, which makes the constructivist claim that the forces of power go beyond material; they can also be ideational. This perspective can be useful when studying the norm of humanitarian intervention and the growing acceptance of it, through the ideas of Western states and international organisations.

One of the tenets within constructivism is the idea that identity shapes the basic of interests. Identity is not just about Selves but also Others who are ‘not Self’, who are outside national borders. So to say that *we* are a specific kind of people is the same as saying that *they* are not whoever *they* are. Thus a statement as ‘because we are democratic or free’ implies that another group who is not democratic or free have to be treated differently. This will be used to examine the international community’s enforcement of liberal values and the ideas behind it.

Norms of humanitarianism and military intervention not only regulate how states act, they can also be connected to their identities and thus expressive of how they define themselves and their interests. Glanville argues that it is important to distinguish between different types of norms. With regard to the nature of norm’s injunction, a distinction can be made between three types: those that constrain or restrict certain behaviour; those that allow or permit certain behaviour; and those norms that require or prescribe certain behaviour. These norms can be labelled *prohibitive*, *permissive* and *prescriptive* norms. The norm of non-intervention with regard to the sovereignty of other states is an example of a *prohibitive* norm. The ongoing debate on whether the post-Cold War world has experienced the emergence of a norm that allows and legitimises intervention in response to human rights violations is a debate over the strength of a *permissive* norm. Arguments that there exists an emergent norm that compels states or (re)constitutes their interests so they that have a preference for pursuing responses to these violations can be best understood as arguments on a *prescriptive* norm. Finnemore emphasise the permissive nature of humanitarian norms. She argues that while emergent norms have appeared to allow intervention in reaction to human rights violations, these norms do not require intervention. Glanville claims that states do not intervene to prevent human rights violations simply because they are allowed to do so. He asserts that international norms affect state behaviour as the decision-makers of the state draw on conclusions about whether a class of actions is required, forbidden, or allowed, and form states interests and identities. This debate about the various distinctions of norms will be used to examine the concepts behind an emerging norm of humanitarian intervention and to view possible explanatory forces to why humanitarian intervention occurs in one state and not in another. Furthermore, it will used to categorise the path chosen by the decision-makers of the US and also the position taken by the UN, when it comes to question of whether or not to intervene a state.

## The ‘Blowback’ perspective

The *Blowback* perspective has derived from thoughts on US foreign policy over the last half of the twentieth century, focusing particularly on the decade after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. Johnson argues that many aspects of what the American government had done abroad invited to retaliatory attacks from nations and peoples who had been victimised: “*World politics in the twenty-first century will in all likelihood be driven primarily by blowback from the second half of the twentieth century – that is, from the unintended consequences of the Cold War and the crucial American decision to maintain a Cold War posture in a post-Cold War world*” (Johnson, 2002; vii). Thus *Blowback* is another way of saying that a nation reaps what it sows.

Although people usually know what they have sown, the US’ experience is rarely imagined in such terms as so much of what the managers of the American empire has sown has been kept secret, according to Johnson. “*The unintended consequences of American policies acts in country X are a bomb at an American embassy in a country Y or a dead American in country Z*”, Johnson elucidates (Johnson, 2002; xvi). Thus meaning that when civilians become victims of a retaliatory attack, they are at first unable to put in context or to understand the sequence of events leading up to it. Although the American people may not be aware of what has been done in their name, those on the receiving end certainly do (Johnson, 2004). However, Johnson argues that *Blowback* is hardly restricted to such reasonably straight forward examples. In its wider sense, Blowback also includes for instance the distortions to our culture and basic values as we are gradually more required to glorify warrior roles and the militarism and arrogance of power that inevitably accompany the role of global hegemon (Johnson, 2002; xvii). Johnsons’ *blowback* perspective, along with Wallerstein’s extended version of the perspective, will be used to examine the historical factors behind the current situation in Afghanistan. Furthermore, it will elucidate the role of the US both during the Soviet and the current invasion and thereby reveal if the current US position carries any resemblance to the position taken during the Cold War Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

# Analysis

The purpose of this section is to apply the above-written theories and approaches to the case of Afghanistan. This will be done by firstly, examining the history of external intervention in Afghanistan. This will entail an examination of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979-1989, a study of the origins and objectives of the Taliban, including its Pakistani support and the movements relationship with the international community and also the war of 2001-2002. This will be followed by a study of the Afghan view on the conflict, including the role of ethnicity and factionalism and the issues for a peace process. Subsequently, there will be an examination of the ideational and relational factors that affect the peace and reconciliation process via views on the current peace plans, and concludes with some applications for a durable peace process. Finally, there will be a sub-conclusion, summarising the most significant findings. Throughout the section the earlier described theories and approach will be applied, however, emphasis will be laid on social constructivism and its focus on norms, values and identities.

## The history of external intervention in Afghanistan

In order to examine the current external obstacles intervening in Afghanistan’s domestic affairs, it is important to study the underlying factors. It is my presumption that external factors have throughout history had a huge impact on Afghanistan. External interventions has left the country as a “fragile state”[[5]](#footnote-5), and defined an agenda of responsibilities for the international community which has taken, and still will take, years properly to discharge. This section firstly examines the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Second, a study will be made on the Taliban from the movements rise in 1994, including the origins and objectives of the movement. This will be followed by an examination of Taliban’s support from Pakistan. Finally, this section will show a study of Taliban’s troubled relations with the wider world, including the war of 2001-2002. Throughout the section the earlier described theories will be applied, including the “Blowback” approach argued by Johnson.

### The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979-1989

In 1993 the end of the Afghan dynasty came when King Zahir Shah was deposed by his cousin and brother-in-law, Sardar Mohammed Daud. Afghanistan was declared a Republic with Daud as the President. Daud came in to trouble only two years later as he tried to crush a nascent Islamic fundamentalist movement, whom then fled to Peshawar, where they received help by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to continue their opposition to Daud. These leaders, Ahmad Shah Masud, Gulbuddin Hikmetyar and Burhanuddin Rabbani were later to lead the Mujaheddin. Daud then turned to the Soviet Union for aid to try and modernise the structure of the state. From 1956-1978 the Soviet Union gave a total of US$1.26 billion in economic aid and an additional US$1.25 billion in military aid to Afghanistan, as the Soviet Union wish for the country to be a part of their sphere of influence at the height of the Cold War. However, just five years later in April 1978, communists within the army overthrew him in a military coup. Daud and his family were massacred. But communists were divided into two factions, Parcham (the flag) and Khalq (the masses) and their lack of knowledge of Afghanistan’s complex tribal society led to widespread rural revolts against them. As khans and mullahs declared holy war against the infidel communists, the communist ruling elite were themselves caught in internecine violence. The first Khalqi communist President Nur Mohammed Taraki was murdered, while his successor Hafizullah Amin was killed during the Soviet Invasion in 1979 and installed the Parcham leader Babrak Karmal, as president (Rashid, 2010; 12-13).

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on 27 December 1979. The prime purpose of the invasion was to replace Hafizullah Amin’s regime with a more flexible regime. However, this did not mean that Amin was regarded as more dangerous than the Mujaheddin. It is highly likely that Moscow thought that a more moderate communist regime could bear the brunt of a fight against the Mujaheddin, but it never believed that the situation could develop into a ten-year guerrilla war (Roy, 1991; 13).

The official Soviet justification for the invasion was that it was in the defence, in terms of the 1978 mutual assistance treaty, of a revolutionary government endangered by a foreign-supported insurrection. Moscow cited the Soviet-Afghan Friendship and Co-operation Treaty, Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, and the allegedly ’14 requests’ made by the Kabul government, even though the Chairman and President of the Revolutionary Council had been killed and most of the Central Committee members arrested (Roy, 1991; 14).

Within just months Afghanistan had become a vital piece in the Cold War between the Soviet Union at the US. The Afghan Mujaheddin later became US-backed, anti-Soviet troops. But for the people of Afghanistan the Soviet invasion was an attempt by outsiders to subdue them and replace their society with an alien ideology and social system. The holy war took on a new momentum as China, Arab States and the US poured arms and money supplies to the Mujaheddin. 1. Million Afghans died during the ten years of the invasion (Rashid, 2010; 12-13).

The Soviet war in Afghanistan had various examples of violations of human rights by the invading superpowers and humanitarian emergencies. However, no attempts were made by an international organisation or a sovereign state to intervene in force for the protection of civilian population. Interstate proxy wars in the Third World had little to do with the power and security enhancement of the state itself; they were mainly battles for the sphere of influence between the two superpowers. The humanitarian action of the Cold War period could be considered as purely neo-realistic (Aliyev, 2011).

From a *Blowback* perspective, the US aid to the Mujaheddin during the Soviet/Afghan war was the Americans reaping what it had sowed. The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton shares Johnsons’ argument: “*When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, we had this brilliant idea that we were going to come to Pakistan and create a force of Mujaheddin, equip them with Stinger Missiles and everything else to go after the Soviets in Afghanistan, and we were successful. The Soviets left Afghanistan and then we said Great! Goodbye! Leaving these trained people who were fanatical in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Leaving them well armed, creating a mess, frankly, that at that time we did not recognize, we were happy to see the Soviet Union fall and we thought okay fine! We're okay now; everything's going to be so much better. Now you look back the people we are fighting today we were supporting in the fight against the Soviets*" (Hillary Clinton, Fox News interview). From 1984, the CIA supported Osama bin Laden (bin Laden), as so many other extreme fundamentalists among the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan. All US money was funnelled through Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), which had since 1982 been taken the lead in recruiting radical Muslims to come to Pakistan, receive training, to then to fight on the Afghan side. Osama bin Laden became close friends with, amongst others, the head of the ISI. It was not until after the Russians had bombed Afghanistan severely that the US walked away from the death and destruction the CIA had helped cause, that bin Laden turned against American support.

World System analyst, Immanuel Wallerstein (Wallerstein) expands the *Blowback* perspective in order to explain how why it is occurring all over the place. He believes that countries engaging in such operations today are powerful, but less powerful than they used to be. When these countries were at their height of their power, they could ignore *Blowback* as minor unintended consequences. However, when they are less powerful now, the consequences are not so minor, yet they appear to feel the need to pursue the operations even more vigorously and openly, according to Wallerstein. *Blowback* appears when the declining power engages in behaviour that, in the short run, obtains some immediate objective, but in the middle run, makes their power decline, and therefore in the longer run is self-defeating[[6]](#footnote-6). According to Wallerstein, the obvious thing for these states is not to go down this road any more as these operations no longer work in terms of the long-run objectives of the country. However, Wallerstein argues that Barack Obama (Obama) is faced with immediate dilemmas. Firstly, Obama is intent to remain in power. Furthermore, he is faced with strong political forces within the US, and not forces who want a radical revision of national policies. Secondly, Obama has not given up hope on restoring the United States to a position of unquestioned hegemony, argues Wallerstein. The US government is, according to Wallerstein, not ready to come to terms with the new geopolitical realities of the world-system and to the realities of the country’s decline and relative power (Wallerstein, 2012). The actions of the US government through the thought of Wallerstein is in accordance with Mearsheimer’s idea that state leaders should pursue security policies that weakens their potential enemies while increase their power relative to all others, cf. the section Neo-realism.

The collapse of the socialist bloc and the end of the Cold War changed the political environment of the world. In a “New World Order”, the old beliefs of neo-realism began to lose their explanatory power as there was no longer bipolar competition and humanitarian intervention began in earnest. However, neo-realistic state behaviour can still be traced in their patterns of intervening in conflicts, according to neo-realists. States’ behaviour in modern humanitarian interventions still depends on the states and interests of individual participants (Aliyev, 2011). In contrast to the Cold War world, modern humanitarianism is more likely to resort on direct intervention, but the latter can still be based on self-interests. As in the Cold War age, there are ‘attractive’ and less ‘attractive’ conflicts. Glanville would here argue from a constructivist view that in order to understand why intervention in one state and not another it is necessary to look at the strength and nature of a norm that prescribes humanitarian intervention and its interplay with states self-interests.

From the Western point of view, the Soviet invasion was seen as the re-enactment of the communist threat against the free world; anti-Soviet and conservative movements were subsequently boosted. In Afghanistan the domestic dimensions of the conflict gave away to declaration of holy war against invaders and infidels. This Islamic dimension was increased by the meeting of the Islamic Conference Organisation in Islamabad on 27 January 1980, which officially condemned the invasion. The diplomatic isolation of the Soviet Union was announced by the UN General Assembly on 14 January 1980 which demanded the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan (Roy, 1991; 15).

### Taliban in Afghanistan

Out of the Soviet/Afghan war emerged a second generation of Mujaheddin who called themselves Islamic Movement of Taliban (Taliban) or the students of Islam, *talib* (Rashid, 2010; 12-13). A handful of Taliban had fought the Soviet Army during the Soviet occupation in the 1980s, more had fought the regime of President Najibullah who had managed to hang on to power for four years after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, but the vast majority of the warriors were young Koranic students, drawn from various Islamic theology schools that had been set up in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan (Rashid, 2010; 1).

Taliban arose as a military force. However, they did not originate from a standard military programme, but from a complex mixture of political and social context which went some way towards explaining their character. They implemented an interpretation of the Sharia or Islamic law that appalled many Afghans and the Muslim world (Rashid, 2010; 1-2).

Taliban, drawn from the majority Pashtun ethnic group, which accounts for 40 per cent of the 20 million Afghan people, laid emphasis on nationalism. The Pashtuns had ruled the country for 300 years but had recently lost power to Afghanistan’s other smaller ethnic groups. Taliban victories revived hopes that Afghanistan would once again be dominated by Pashtuns (Rashid, 2010; 1-2)[[7]](#footnote-7).

Just before the Taliban emerged at the end of 1994, Afghanistan was in a state of virtual disintegration. The country was divided into warlord fiefdoms and all the warlords had fought switched sides and then fought again in a confusing array of alliances, betrayals and carnage. The warlords seized farms and homes, threw out the owners and handed them over to their supporters. The declared aims of Taliban were to disarm the population, restore peace, enforce Sharia law and defend the Islamic character of Afghanistan (Rashid, 2010; 21-22).

Great portions of those Taliban who fought in Afghanistan were not Afghans. According to Rashid, “*between 1994-1999 an estimated 80.000 to 100.000 Pakistanis trained and fought in Afghanistan*” (Maley, 2002; 221).

Taliban’s closest link and main backer was with Pakistan, where many of them had grown up, aided financially by Saudi Arabia and the US. Pakistan’s Afghan policy was in the doldrums as the Pakistani government, with Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister, were desperately keen to open up direct land routes for trade with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) (Rashid, 2010; 26).

The Pakistani backing for the Taliban was explained in different ways. Some saw a relentless searching for ´strategic depth´ in the event of a conventional war between India and Pakistan. Others thought it to be driven by economic concerns, especially the belief that there were profits to be made from gas and oil pipelines from Central to South Asia through a stable Afghanistan. While some defended the policy in terms of ethnic factors, in terms of the alleged ´need´ for a Pashtun-ruled Afghanistan, but not Pashtuns of a nationalist stripe. This last argument carried some weight as General Pervez Musharraf, who overthrew the previous Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, in a military coup, in Pakistan in 1999 claimed in an interview that “*our national security compulsion as far as Afghanistan is concerned is that the Pakhtoons of Afghanistan have to be on Pakistan’s side*” (Maley, 2002; 222).

However, as the international and domestic pressure increased on Pakistan to explain its position towards Taliban in February 1995, Bhutto made the first formal denial of any Pakistani backing of the Taliban: “*We have no favourites in Afghanistan and we do not interfere in Afghanistan”*. Furthermore, she said in the matter of Taliban recruits entering Afghanistan from Pakistan that “*I cannot fight Mr. Rabbani’s war for him. If Afghans want to cross the border, I do not stop them. I can stop them from re-entering but most of them have families here”* (Rashid, 2010; 29).

By September 1996 Taliban had captured Kabul where they first tortured then publicly hanged the former President Najibullah, the ex-communist strongman who had then been living under UN protection for four years (Rashid, 2010; 5). By March 1997 Kandahar had been the capital of Taliban Islamic warriors for two and a half years. Taliban had then conquered two-thirds of Afghanistan and were fighting to conquer the rest of the country. Taliban had brought relative security and peace to Kandahar and neighbouring provinces. The armed population had been disarmed and warring tribal groups had been crushed and their leaders hanged (Rashid, 2010; 1-2). Though, this had been done at the expense of human rights and the international awareness and pressure mounted on Taliban and their relations with the international community was becoming increasingly strained. However, the Taliban movement inspired a new extremist form of fundamentalism across Pakistan[[8]](#footnote-8) and Central Asia that refuse to cooperate with traditional social structures, Islamic values or existing state systems (Rashid, 2010; 1-2).

### Taliban and the international community

Upon taking Kabul in September 1996, the Taliban immediately demanded recognition from other states as the new government of Afghanistan and Afghanistan’s seat in the UN General Assembly. Nevertheless, they received neither. The reactions in Western states to reports coming out of Kabul following the Taliban takeover were extremely unfavourable, both at mass and elite levels. As a result, states such as France, US and the United Kingdom opted in the first instance to leave the *status quo* in place. The Taliban faced similar problems at the UN as the UN General Assembly had adopted Resolution 396 on 14 December 1950. The resolution stated that,

“*wherever more than one authority claims to be the government entitled to represent a Member State in the United Nations and this question becomes the subject of controversy in the United Nations, the question should be considered in the light of the Purposes and Principles of the Charter and the circumstances of each case*” (Maley, 2002; 244).

This resulted in the Credentials Committee of the UN General Assembly opted to preserve the *status quo* in 1996-2001, which left the Rabbani Government in control of Afghanistan’s seat (Maley, 2002; 244).

The Clinton Administration’s position seems to have been driven by an argument similar to the following:

“*Afghanistan’s problem is the lack of order. The solution is to establish a common national power. The Taliban are the right people to fill this void. They are Pashtuns, from whose ranks Afghanistan’s rulers must be drawn. They are Sunnis, and hostile to Iran. They are not anti-western, and may well invite the former King to return. And once they restore order, the Taliban will withdraw from politics as they have promised. US energy corporations can construct oil and gas pipelines through Afghanistan, and rents from these pipelines will fund reconstruction*” (Maley, 2002; 228). However, because of the human rights violations and the Afghan friendliness towards Al-Qaida the case for supporting the Taliban fell apart (Maley, 2002; 228).

The catalyst for change in Afghanistan, and the grave mistake of the Taliban, was their decision to provide hospitality to Bin Laden. His presence in Afghanistan surfaced as a matter of concern for the US shortly after the takeover of Kabul, when it became clear to the US government that Bin Laden was still benefiting from Taliban protection in Afghanistan. However, it was on 7 August 1998 that the problem became acute. Suicide car bombers blew up the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and the US quickly concluded that Bin Laden was to blame (Rashid, 2010; 7) (Maley, 2002; 249). Western experts now wondered whether the Taliban’s back to basic Islamic ideals fulfilled the predictions of for instance Samuel Huntington[[9]](#footnote-9) that in the aftermath of the Cold War era, a new militant Islamic world would oppose the West and create a new clash of civilisations (Rashid, 2010; 7).

Two weeks later, US President, Bill Clinton, ordered that terrorist training camps run by Bin Laden near Jalalabad to be hit with missiles. The air strikes killed a number of militants, Afghan, Arabs, Pakistanis, and Kashmiris, but Bin Laden escaped unscathed. The Clinton Administration then decided on 7 July 1999 to make a range of unilateral sanctions against the Taliban, including freezing all Taliban assets in the US and banning commercial and financial ties between the Taliban and the US.

Furthermore, in Resolution 1267 of 15 October 1999, the UN Security Council demanded that the Taliban turn over Bin Laden “*to appropriate authorities in a country where he will be returned to such a country, or to appropriate authorities in a country where he will be arrested and effectively brought to justice*” (Maley, 2002; 249). If Taliban would fail such a handover, the resolution required states to deny permission for any aircraft “*to take off from or land in their territory if it is owned, leased or operated by or on behalf of the Taliban*”, except on the grounds of ´humanitarian need´, and then only if approved in advance by a special Committee of the Security Council (Maley, 2002; 249). Resolution 1267 also requirements for states to freeze ´funds and other financial resources´ owned by the Taliban or available for their use. The Taliban refused to comply, and this led to further measures with Resolution 1333 of 19 December 2000. This resolution went on from economic to military sanctions. Paragraphs 5 (a) and 5 (b) required for instance states to prevent, “*the direct or indirect of supply, sale and transfer to the territory of Afghanistan under Taliban control (...)* (Maley, 2002, 250).

These measures placed Pakistan in a difficult situation. Pakistan responded by firstly protesting that the sanctions were having humanitarian consequences, until those effects were found limited by the Secretary General, resulting secondly in Pakistan evading the terms of resolution 1333 (Maley, 2002; 1-2, 250).

The result was the international community’s, including the United Nations and NATO, Afghanistan Campaign against Bin Laden and the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001(Maley, 2002; 1-2, 250).

### The Afghan war of 2001-2002

The Afghan war began on the night of 7 October 2001, with air strikes aimed initially at destroying the Taliban’s limited air defences and communications infrastructure. However, as Afghanistan had little fixed infrastructure to destroy, the early attacks produced few results. On the 15 October, Special Operation Forces teams were inserted to make contact with the major Northern Alliance warlords. Then a three-part campaign followed, divided roughly into a northern phase involving control of the city of Mazar-i-Sharif, a southern phase centred on the city of Kandahar, and subsequent battles against Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces at Tora Bora and during Operation Anaconda in the Shah-i-Kot Valley. The fight for Mazar-i-Sharif started on 21 October when General Abdul Rashid Dostum, supported by the US Special Operation Forces, took the village of Bisqab on the banks of the Dar-ye Suf south of Mazar. Following this were engagements at Cobaki, Chapchall, and Oiteman over the next few days as Dostum fought his way up the river Valley. The key battle arose on 5 November when Dostum’s troops overran Taliban forces occupying old Soviet-build defensive positions at the village of Bai Beche. Shortly thereafter, General Muhammed Atta’s forces and their accompanying Special Operation Forces captured Ac´capruk on the Balkh River, and the door swung open for a rapid advance to Mazar, which were overturned by Atta and Dostum’s troops on 10 November. The fall of Mazar severely damaged the Taliban position in northern Afghanistan. Three days later the Taliban lost control of Kabul and after a twelve-day siege, a force of approximately five thousand Taliban and Al-Qaeda survivors encircled in the city of Kunduz surrendered on 26 November. The attention then shifted to the Taliban’s stronghold of Kandahar in the south. On the night of 6 December Mullah Muhammed Omar and the rest of the senior Taliban leadership fled after a series of battles, and thereby ending Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Many Al-Qaeda defenders escaped and fled across the border into Pakistan (Baylis et al., 2007; 279).

In 1999 the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan referred to a ”*developing international norm in favour of intervention to protect civilians from wholesale slaughter”* (Annan, 1999). One of the mechanisms of this norm was “*a new commitment to humanitarian action”* and a new definition of state interests so that “*the collective interest is the national interest”* (Annan, 1999). According to Glanville, the Secretary-General is here referring to the prescriptive norm of humanitarian intervention. While a great deal of the debate concerning humanitarian intervention has centred upon the conditions under which intervention is suitable and legitimate – the permissive norm – Annan suggests that the question of creating the political will to intervene in the absence of material self-interest - the prescriptive norm – is also significant (Glanville, 2006; 157). Finnemore concludes further that “*liberals of a more classical (...) type might argue that these interventions have been motivated by an interest in promoting democracy and liberal values (...) [but] the UN, and especially the US, have emphasised the humanitarian rather than the democratising nature of these interventions, both rhetorically and in their actions on the ground*”(Finnemore, 1996; 157).

According to George W. Bush, the US-led intervention in Afghanistan was a war of self-defence. However, he also added a humanitarian argument for the invasion. He told Afghans that “*the oppressed people of Afghanistan will know the generosity of America and its allies. As we strike military targets, we’ll also drop food, medicine and supplies to the starving and suffering men and women and children of Afghanistan*” (Bush, 2001)[[10]](#footnote-10). Liberal caution in seeing force as the last resort makes it difficult to undertake preventive actions in the name of self-defence only, though if used together with other liberal principles, as for instance securing human rights, preventive actions potentially gain some form of legitimacy. Realists would argue that national interests were the reason for the US-led intervention. US may assist in a humanitarian crisis, but their participation will likely be predicated by their national interests. State behaviour is governed by what governments consider to be in their interest, they are selective about when to intervene causing an inconsistency in policy. According to Mearsheimer, the actions of the US in Afghanistan are consistent with the logic of offensive realism as offensive realism rests on the assumption that great powers “*are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals, with hegemony as their final goal*” (Mearsheimer, 2001; 29). Kegley assumes that US, a global hegemon, promotes a new set of norms that then becomes the common practice, which tends to take on an aura of obligation for other states as well. Decision-makers, like Bush, will in order to justify intervention promote the prescriptive norm of humanitarian intervention.

Discovering that self-interest is often a greater impediment to humanitarian action than international law, some practitioners and scholars have tried to change the focus of debate about intervention from permission to prescription – from the rights of states to their responsibilities. In 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) suggested changing the terms of the discussion from ‘the right to intervene’ to ‘the responsibility to protect’ (ICISS, 2001; 17). The responsibility to protect insists that states have a primary responsibility to protect their own citizens. In the event that they are either unable or unwilling to do so, the responsibility to end atrocities and mass killing is transferred to the wider international community (Wheeler, 2005; 2).

There has for a long time been a debate on whether to use the responsibility to protect or to use the right to intervene. One of the scholars who criticise the right to intervene is Richard Falk (Falk). Falk argues that the responsibility to protect over the right to intervene can cause some misunderstandings as well as being moralising. Another aspect which Falk emphasises is the importance of the geopolitical aspect when deciding to intervene, which will be lost in the responsibility to protect aspect (Falk, 2011). Falk stated in an interview in 2009 on the case of Afghanistan that

“*what is not in the debate, and what puzzles me, especially after the US’ experiences in Iraq and the earlier experiences in Vietnam, is the difficulty bordering on impossibility of finding a military solution for a political conflict of this kind. The latter part of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty first century are very impressive in the degree to which they show that the politics of self-determination will eventually overcome a militarily superior intervention. In other words, military dominance doesn’t any longer ensure the intervener of a successful political outcome*” (Falk, 2009)[[11]](#footnote-11).

However, the idea of a ‘responsibility to protect’ has since 2005 been endorsed by the UN General Assembly during the World Summit. Its advocates argue that it will play a vital role in building consensus about humanitarian action whilst making it harder for states to violate humanitarian justification (Wheeler, 2005; 2). While it is evident that the development of norms prescribing and permitting humanitarian intervention inevitably entails the erosion of the prohibitive norm of non-intervention as codified in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, it is interesting to observe the coexistence of the prohibitive and prescriptive norms in the World Summit document. The document approves the prescriptive norm of intervention in the form of a ‘responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity’, but it does so within the restrictions of the strictures of the prohibitive norm – Article 2(4) and Chapter VII exception to it[[12]](#footnote-12) (Glanville, 2006; 160). The relative strength of the prescriptive and prohibitive norms and the point at which the right of sovereign states to be free from intervention gives way to the binds of the international community to protect victims of human rights violations are not made clear in the World Summit document (Glanville, 2006; 160).

Through a neo-realistic perspective, the great powers were sceptical of 2001 ICISS report. The US government rejected the idea on the grounds that it could not offer pre-commitments to engage its military forces in states where it did not have any national interests at stake. Furthermore, the US government found it difficult to bind itself to criteria that would constrain its right to decide when and where to use force (Wheeler, 2005; 25-26).

## The Afghan view and the process of peace and reconciliation

While momentum continues to change towards pursuing a peace agreement for Afghanistan, ambiguities stay in the US military and political strategy, and there are questions about the capability of the Afghan government to successfully lead a settlement and the insurgent’s interest in one. A growing body of commentary focuses on international and US strategy, but to be durable an agreement will need to entail some broad-based political and social agreements among Afghans. The crucial intra-Afghan dimension of the peace process needs detailed analysis of the views of Afghan actors. The first part of this section will be based on findings from interviews with Afghan leaders and opinion-formers in political, military, economic, and social arenas about their opinion on the conflict and the issues that a peace process will have to address[[13]](#footnote-13). This section will entail a description of some key elements of actor understandings of the conflict, including the role of ethnicity and factionalism with focus on the debate of the Pashtuns, and the issues for a peace process. This will be followed by an examination of the ideational and relational factors that influence the peace and reconciliation process through views on the current peace plans, and concludes with some implications for a durable peace process. Throughout the section the earlier described theories will be applied, however, emphasis will be laid on social constructivism and its focus on norms, values and identities.

### The conflict and issues for a peace agreement

Various themes are prominent among the interviewees’ perceptions of what drives the conflict in Afghanistan. One of the understandings is that the conflict is driven by a combination of external and internal factors that interact in complex ways. However, as the conflict has increased, the impact of the presence and actions of NATO troops and the legitimacy problems of the Afghan government have become increasingly significant, alongside longer-standing issues grounded in regional politics or factional competition. Afghans across different groups view the US as a key party to the conflict whose direct participation in a peace process is vital to its success, and therefore question the efficiency of US emphasis on an “Afghan-led” reconciliation strategy. Hence, there is a need for clearer US policy and signalling if Afghan actors are to take the prospect of a negotiated agreement seriously (Nixon, 2011; 1). A former Taliban official lists the overlapping fault lines:

“*You see the competition between Iran and America, America and Russia, competition between Pakistan and India, China and America. Afghanistan is the ground for all this competition. People from Somalia, Arabs, Sudanese, Central Asian countries like Chechens, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan are here in Afghanistan to fight so-called terrorists. China, Pakistan, Russia and Iran don’t want America to succeed in Afghanistan*” (PRIO, 2011). According to Mearsheimer, this is an expression of states acting on behalf of their own national interests. Some of these states may have joined the international alliance on the argument of preventing human rights violation but the actual reason will likely come down to self-interests.

None of the interviewees sees these external factors as working alone. A few interviewed suggest that Afghan leaders act on behalf of foreign interests, either as their ambitions have led them to sell out the national interest in exchange for foreign support, or in the case of Taliban perhaps because Pakistan leaves them no choice: the *“root of this war is outside but the branches are inside Afghanistan*”, according to a Wolesi Jirga member from the northern province (PRIO, 2011; 8)[[14]](#footnote-14).

Another viewpoint is that the weakness of the political and social institutions of Afghanistan renders vulnerable to foreign interests, as for instance an “*underdeveloped army and police force threaten our territorial integrity and allow our neighbours, particularly Pakistan, to interfere in our affairs in order to promote its own interests*” says a Wolesi Jirga member from the western province (PRIO, 2011; 8) A Wolesi Jirga member from the south-eastern province explains this argument by stating that unemployment or poverty, or the lack of education, enables this vulnerability to foreign designs (PRIO, 2011; 8). According to many of the interviewees, the internal problems and conflicts of Afghanistan have become increasingly prominent as the post-2001 conflict worsens, and are intensified and enabled by foreign influences. Especially among these problems are the failings of the Afghan government and a comprehensive perception of its capture by economic, ethnic, criminal and factional interests (Nixon, 2011; 8).

While several of the interviews stress the criminal and economics motivations of those empowered by government, several also point to perceived imbalance in the distribution of resources and power among ethnic and other factional groups as driving the conflict. For instance, former Mujaheddin and commanders from parties dominated by *Hazara* of *Tajik* leaders claim “*the Pashtuns are not yet ready to share power with other ethnic groups*” and that the international community and the governments’ moves to limit their influence led to the resurgence of the Taliban: “*now these [Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara] leaders are in a condition of political isolation and the Taliban became able to return back to Afghanistan”* (PRIO, 2011; 12). However, the view that northerners, *Panjshiris* in particular, but also the parties of other minorities, have dominated government, persists among many Pashtun leaders who also claim to have carried the larger burden of the conflict, and is particularly heavy among *Kuchi* leaders who point to alleged official bias in recent conflicts over pasture in Behsud, Wardak. A businessman argues that “*when the incontrovertible presence of one Pashtun Minister or another is raised, these individuals can be dismissed as “Americans” or “technocrats” who are not true representatives*” (PRIO, 2011; 12).

From an ethnographic point of view the Pashtun perspective is crucial. With the collapse of the Taliban regime and the signing of the Bonn Agreement in 2001[[15]](#footnote-15), Pashtun dominance in Afghanistan was brought to an end. Thus, there was an essential change in the traditional balance of power. Historically the largest, most powerful and influential ethnic group, the Pashtun are currently significantly under-represented in the central government, which is dominated by Tajiks and Uzbeks of the Northern Alliance. This position in administration and power has created dissatisfaction among the Pashtun. A large part of the Pashtun were uprooted by ethnic violence in the north and the west of Afghanistan, nevertheless, the Pashtun remain the largest ethnic group and therefore in an increasingly democratic system are likely to regain their influence, especially through the current President Karzai, a Pashtun albeit not aligned to any political party (MRG Directory). However, to many non-Pashtun, the election of a Pashtun President challenged the idea of reconciliation when they “*hear the President and other top officials describing the Taliban as disaffected brothers (...) These have strengthened fears that some people look at the issue as a Pashtun process not a national one*” (PRIO, 2011; 13). In a constructive context, these sceptics are afraid that the Pushtun identity will shape the national interests through identity claims. The distinction between Others and Selves will then affect how interactions between these two groups unfold.

Diverse and complex, personal, local, tribal, and national grievances impel the insurgent recruitment in the country[[16]](#footnote-16). The insurgency is a ‘network of networks’ with elements of varying motivations and different organising principles. Although, a growing body of primary research with insurgents discovers their stated objectives mainly consists of the removal of foreign forces and Western influence, and correcting un-Islamic, predatory or corrupt government. This view is supported by a Taliban commander: “*the Taliban’s enemy is foreign troops and Afghan government, we are fighting with both (...) I am fighting to release this Islamic country from these non-Muslim foreign troops and Taliban should win and make an Islamic government*” (PRIO, 2011; 8).

The awareness of the influence of geopolitics combines with the perceived failure of the US to deal with Pakistan’s complicity to generate a widespread view that the US is not a benevolent interested party. Rather it is a principal belligerent in the conflict. Across social and political boundaries the “*common perception is that America doesn’t want peace and security for its long-term strategy*”, according to a Wolesi Jirga member from the south-eastern province (PRIO, 2011; 8). As an alternative, there is a strong view of a US military campaign prosecuted independently of Afghan government strategy: *“Karzai himself says he does not know or control how many foreign forces come or go from Afghanistan (...) the outsiders play the decisive role*”(PRIO, 2011; 8). According to constructivism this is an expression of how concepts can have various meanings, and that states can have rival understandings of humanitarian intervention and to what constitutes sovereignty and will fight to try and have collectively accepted their favoured meaning.

The military strategy practised by the US generates doubts about the US sincerity or commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. A member of the Wolesi Jirga from the northern province views the situation this way: “*The US is no longer seen as a friendly country here to support us but most now think that the US and other countries are here to advance their strategic interests (...) this makes people see the US as an aggressor*”(PRIO, 2011; 9). Although there are considerable constituencies who welcome the pressure that the military ‘surge’ has brought to bear, there are furthermore, doubts about its sustainability and the possibility of a successful transition to Afghan forces. The ‘win at all costs’ strategy expressed by a number of Afghan supporters of military escalation actually entails three components, only one of which they observe occurring: reform the Afghan government, fight hard in Afghanistan, and apply more pressure on Pakistan. According to a Chief Executive of a logistics company “*the United States needs to make it clear whether they really want to end the Taliban and bring peace here. If so, they need to assert more pressure on Pakistan. If the Afghan government has done one thing in the past few years, it is to show that Pakistan is key to solving Taliban. But the intention of the United States and their commitment is really a question to me. Do they really want to end it here?*” (PRIO, 2011; 9).

As previously stated, many Afghans believe that the conflict has causes outside its borders, including the interference of neighbouring countries, and that Pakistan’s influence figures highly on the list. Several reasons entail some widely shared by analysts: that Pakistan is countering Indian influence in Afghanistan to preserve strategic depth, while using political Islamism to undermine Pashtun nationalism in cross-border areas. Many Afghan leaders also tend to harbour more general suspicions that Pakistan wishes for a perpetually weak Afghanistan to more easily exploit refugees and natural resources.

Some point to the Iranian interests in the conflict as Iran opposes to an armed US presence on its border. Furthermore, some argue that the attempt at democratisation in Afghanistan presents a threat to the Iranian system: “*If democracy were effective in Afghanistan, Iranian people would pressure to change their political system to democracy, which would leave no place for Iranian mullahs*” argues a former Afghan Deputy Minister (Nixon, 2011; 7).

For some actors the announcement of US withdrawal without a clear linkage to a peace process makes a process less credible, while for others confusion over withdrawal dates casts doubts on the objectives of the US in Afghanistan. While some political leaders view negotiation as undesirable and continued military action as a necessity, many believe that a clear framework for NATO withdrawal, perhaps with other changes to military posture, and connected to the prevention of terrorism may provide possibilities within a peace process. Evidence on the Taliban proposes that full withdrawal of foreign forces may not be necessary for an agreement, but that a framework for withdrawal agreed with their leaders will be. A former Taliban official noted that “*ceasing aerial attacks, or legal recognition of foreign forces, could form part of negotiated solution*” (PRIO, 2011; 16). Furthermore, several Taliban commanders in both north and south seemed to suggest that two interrelated conditions, an agreement on US withdrawal and a cease-fire order from Mullah Omar or their superiors, would be significant in a decision to cease-fighting, and that they would welcome such an order (Nixon, 2011; 16).

Due to the legitimacy problems of the government, along with demands for the withdrawal of foreign forces and the prevention of terrorism, a peace agreement must address reform to be sustainable. Reform proposals by the Taliban are as yet vague, but they may emphasise on elements of “reform” rather than straightforward involvement in the illegitimate system of power-sharing. Most actors thinks that constitutional reform should not be a barrier to peace, but also that it is not the most pressing issue in getting an agreement; key principles of the constitution could be confirmed while considering alterations through established or modified mechanisms in correspondence with a peace process (Nixon, 2011; 2).

### Current peace strategies

The strategy pursued by NATO in order to pressure the insurgency and bring about either victory or some form of political agreement currently involves two significant dimensions beyond military pressure: the “reintegration” of groups of combatants to weaken the insurgency, and the “transition” of security responsibilities to a reinforced Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The perceptions of actors on these two elements tend to support the general picture of a lack of coherence among the requirements of a military and a political solution to the conflict. The Afghan government points to the High Peace Council[[17]](#footnote-17) as the public face of its efforts towards reconciliation, but interviewees point to serious limitations to the potential of the council (Nixon, 2011; 21). A former governor and National Consultative Peace Jirga delegate view the council as government commission, not a peoples’ national representative body (PRIO, 2011; 23). Some of the most dismissive felt the council was a cash cow and political manoeuvre to divert Karzai’s opposition: “*The council was created not for the sake of peace but to employ a number of unemployed leaders and prevent them from creating mischief*”, one journalist argues (PRIO, 2011; 23).

A different perspective on the role of the High Peace Council was that they were representatives of the government for a peace process, and that there should be an equivalent negotiating team presented by the opposition, as well as regional and international actors. These wide variations of viewpoints on the purpose, likely prospects, and suitability of the council, a general theme was that the council would not succeed as a mediator between the government and the insurgency (Nixon, 2011; 24-25).

Among Afghan conversational partners there are supporters of fighting as well as of a negotiating strategy, but very few believe this to be likely to bring serious results in the Afghan context. In the absence of a broader reconciliation process, many Taliban commanders see the process as one of surrender, not reconciliation or reintegration, and unlikely to succeed. Preliminary conclusions from ongoing research on reintegration suggests that the APRP has failed to adequately address main concerns on vocational training, security, and community development, and is only attracting limited attention from groups of uncertain affiliation due to a fear of being targeted and the lack of a broader reconciliation framework. Several Taliban commanders interviewed believed that the APRP did not address the core question: “*I heard about this reintegration program. I am not interested in this program, because our aim is to release Afghanistan from these foreign troops*” (PRIO, 2011; 22).

As conflicts frequently continue while negotiations are required, and parties pursue military and political means in parallel, the sense is that a coherent multidimensional strategy to bring the conflict to an end is still not apparent. The implication is that were the US and NATO to pursue the core aim of achieving a negotiated agreement it might entail changes to both the reintegration and transition dimensions of its military approach (Nixon, 2011; 22).

### Implications for a durable peace process

The US is perceived to act out its military strategy independently of the Afghan government, and must engage in negotiating a peace agreement as it has control over the main issue such an agreement must address: the withdrawal of NATO forces in return for a Taliban settlement on terrorism (Nixon, 2011; 2). Until the US clearly indicates its willingness to take part in a peace process, not just support in the abstract, insurgents and other Afghan constituencies will not take the process seriously (Nixon, 2011; 27).

The aspect of US involvement mentioned most often by the interviewees was the need for the US to pressure Pakistan. Views vary on the ideal role of Pakistan, but to balance Pakistani interests with Taliban autonomy, the US should probably support and participate in channels with both parties (Nixon, 2011; 2, 27). However, others argue that the US needs to put pressure on Pakistan. In the words of a former Taliban official and High Peace Council member: “*My advice is to enter directly into a dialogue with Taliban, don’t let them again be used by the regional powers. Dissociate them from supporters. They have no real commonality with the Pakistan government in values or politics. If they had some support or some power, they wouldn’t like Pakistan*” (PRIO, 2011; 27).

The recognition and legitimisation that comes from direct negotiations with the Taliban would potentially open space for Taliban leaders, commanders, and followers to recognize their positions more clearly as separate from Pakistan, although the logistical and security challenges remain daunting (Nixon, 2011; 27).

When examining the withdrawal or substantial drawdown of NATO forces, a peace process will likely involve discussion of the future and composition of the ANSF. Some of the interviewees see reform as vital if future armed conflict is to be avoided (PRIO, 2011; 28).

A peace agreement will need integration into security forces that can ensure the security concerns of large groups of insurgents without giving away tracts of territory to their free military rein. Meanwhile, accommodation with insurgent networks and fighters must not incite remilitarisation of the conflict by other groups. This challenge should also take into consideration possible scenarios for international resources and will for post-conflict international peacekeeping and disarmament efforts as it is possible that both financial constraints and caution over involvement of forces in Afghanistan will affect potential participants in such activities (Nixon, 2011; 29).

Long-term settlements on joint participation and integration of conflicting parties in security forces could be negotiated. However, another solution may be defining of areas of responsibility. There are varying views on power-sharing, with some commanders claiming that Taliban would accept local control, and others insisting that only national influence will be acceptable. A Taliban commander from the northern province elaborates that “*it is good to have a joint government. I can’t claim that people who work with the government are non-muslim, they are all muslim (...) Taliban don’t want certain parts of Afghanistan for them. It is not possible that one part be controlled by Taliban and the other part is controlled by Afghans and foreigners*” (PRIO, 2011; 30). However, Mullah Omar does not rule out negotiations with the Americans or power-sharing with the present Afghan Government. Furthermore, he asserts that the Taliban have no interest in monopolising power. He also implicitly admits that the Taliban have been negotiating with the Americans, but he insists that the conversations have been on the release of prisoners and are not a political dialogue:

”*IE [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan] considers [the] establishment of an independent Islamic regime as a conducive mechanism for sustainability of religious and worldly interests of the country and the countrymen. For this purpose, every legitimate option can be considered in order to reach this goal. The contacts which have been made with some parties for the release of prisoners can’t be called a comprehensive negotiation for the solution of the current imbroglio of the country. However, the Islamic Emirate, as an efficient political and military entity, has a specific and independent agenda in this regard which has been elucidated time and again*” (Rashid, 2011).

Omar accepts that all ethnic groups will have participation in governing the future Afghanistan and tries to play down the position taking by some non-Pashtuns in the former Northern Alliance stating that they will never negotiate with the Taliban. He opposes the idea of long-term bases in Afghanistan, whilst not accepting a limited withdrawal of US-NATO troops as he would like the US and NATO to immediately withdraw all their forces. Omar underpin that the Taliban will not accept an imposed regime and they demand complete independence for Afghanistan (Rashid, 2011). Mill would here argue that states are accorded the right to non-intervention, and that democracy and human rights cannot take form if they are imposed by outsiders. Opposing this view is Doyle, stating that intervention is legitimate is the majority of the state shows general disaffection with their government.

By generating broader legitimacy for a peace process it could possibly be the way to ensure that ensure that it combines elements of the reform and power-sharing perspectives, in such a manner that each of these elements incentivise and reinforce the other (Nixon, 2011; 30). One way to this might be to build the peace process around the aim of broader inclusion in politics. Several interviewees portray a lack of political space between the government and its constituent factions and the Taliban. A way to encourage such space may be to form a peace process that can assist to identity and mobilise common interests across groups or incorporate new interests (Nixon, 2011; 30). A leader of a political party elaborates further on the matter: “*Since Bonn political power has been dominated by people who have risen through fighting and violence. As a political activist, I do not recommend their exclusion but I think we need to maintain a balance and make sure that violence or threats of violence are not the appropriate means to political power. I think Afghanistan cannot move forward with a single group of people. We need more diverse individuals and broader support base for our government*” (PRIO, 2011; 30).

An example of potential common interests lies among civil society, minorities, women and human rights, activists, and some religious leaders. A wide current of opinion challenges the significance given to the ethnic *jihadi* leaders in current power structures and emphasises the need to entail the concerns of victims and non-combatants in an agreement. Together with an increasing urban, youth and educated populations that would resists reversal of post-2001 gains in civil and economic life, substantial forces have interests in broad considerations of rights, including those of girls and women, which if outlined in appropriate terms including Islamic ones, can shape a common position that may affect a peace process (Nixon, 2011; 31).

A durable agreement may not involve radical restructuring of the Afghan state. However, it will have to address how people are seen to receive power and privileges. The intra-Afghan peace process should be focused towards broader inclusion of non-combatants, identification and facilitation of shared and new interests. Exploring multi-track diplomacy, ombudspersons, civilian commissions, national dialogues and other means of including diverse interests should be a priority (Nixon, 2011; 3).

## Sub-conclusion

The analysis illustrates that there are several parallels between the “humanitarian intervention” of the Soviet Union from 1979-1989 and the ongoing “humanitarian intervention” by the US and the forces of the international community. Modern humanitarianism is likely to resort on direct intervention, but the latter can still be based on self-interests as the realists argue is the case with both of these interventions. As in the Cold War age, there are ‘attractive’ and less ‘attractive’ conflicts, and Afghanistan is an attractive conflict due to geopolitics.

A development in world politics is the belief of the US administration that the forging of a new world order based on liberal values is both possible and desirable, and that US military power is the way to achieve this new world order. However, liberal caution in seeing force as the last resort makes it difficult to undertake preventive actions in the name of self-defence only, though if used together with other liberal principles, as for instance liberal democracy, securing human rights, preventive actions potentially gain some form of norm-based legitimacy. This has for the US and the international alliance resulted in more than ten years of fighting a guerrilla war in the Afghan quicksand.

When countries, like the US, were at their height of their power, they could ignore *Blowback* as minor unintended consequences. However, with a US in crisis, the consequences are not so minor, yet the White House and Pentagon appear to feel the need to pursue the operations even more vigorously and openly, according to Wallerstein. Now the US and the international community has decided it is time to withdraw their forces and start negotiations with the Taliban, as the costs of the war is getting grave.

However, there are various obstacles to the peace process, especially the role played by neighbouring countries and the international community. The ethnic and factional factors are being overlooked by these external factors, which is slowing down the process of peace and reconciliation as well as creating domestic frictions.

# Conclusion

Throughout its history, Afghanistan has been subject to interventions by external powers, most of them due to geopolitics. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was such an example, and some may argue that the US and the international community’s current intervention is no exception. The US used power politics in Afghanistan in the late 1970s and the 1980s during the Cold War period and the Soviet invasion. This was done by financing and arming the Islamic extremist force of Mujaheddin, which later became the opposing part in the current conflict, the Taliban. The Soviets then left Afghanistan and the US left the Mujaheddin well armed in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, and thereby, in the words of Hillary Clinton, “*creating a mess, frankly, that at the time we did not recognize, we were happy to see the Soviet Union fall*”. From a *Blowback* perspective, the US aid to the Mujaheddin during the Soviet/Afghan war was the Americans reaping what it had sowed.

The US is still using power politics in Afghanistan today. Although, this time it is not to stop the “Red Army” from a further emerge. This time it was, according to George W. Bush, in a manner of self-defence. However, Bush nevertheless felt the need to add a humanitarian argument for the invasion as well. This reveals a norm of great power logic overwhelming the humanitarian rationale for intervention, where interventions can be used to justify violations of the principle of national sovereignty. The alliance of the international society invading Afghanistan aimed at creating a liberal democratic society by using power politics and interventionist policies. However, this enforcement of both military and a political ideology is one of the obstacles to creating peace in Afghanistan.

While the debate about the permission to intervene continues to rage, humanitarian intervention continues to occur. Kofi Annan spoke in 1999 of a “*developing international norm in favour of intervention to protect civilians from wholesale slaughter*” and a “*new commitment to humanitarian action*”. However, the argument of “*responsibility to protect*” is now viewed by many Pashtuns as a main source of the conflict, including the international alliances and the neighbouring countries lack of considerations for Afghan sovereignty.

Due to my uncritical use of the theories, I am now able to criticise them. The approach taken by the US and the international community, as well as the IR theories of liberalism and neo-realism, lacks the historical and cultural aspect needed in order to create peace in Afghanistan. This examination has elucidated how history, norms and values plays a vital role for the Afghans and therefore underpins the social constructivist aspects of the conflict. The Taliban identity is based on a common political culture, which state-building should be based upon in order to create peace and reconciliation. The Taliban has opened up to the idea of a political dialogue and negotiations, however, the presence of foreign troops still remain an issue. Until the US clearly indicates its willingness to take part in a peace process, not just support in the abstract, insurgents and other constituencies will not take the peace process seriously. Furthermore, many Afghan actors require the US to put pressure on Pakistan. In the words of a Wolesi Jirga member: “*the root of this war is outside but the branches are inside Afghanistan*”.

The peace process is affected by the colliding ideational and relation norms. The analysis has revealed some of the various nerve centres including democracy, peace negotiations and sex. Liberal democracy is a foreign concept to the Afghan and the enforcement of this ideology will unlikely be favourable to the process of peace and reconciliation. Negotiations must include a mediator that is able to remain neutral and create sustainable frameworks as the ethnic groups may not be acquainted with the negotiating customs used by the international community, which might lead to an abruption of the process. The mediator must also take the different identities and values into consideration as the process will be unlikely to succeed for instance at the hands of a female mediator. The Taliban believe that women should have minimal rights in the Afghan society and have no political influence. This will cause a severe friction between the negotiating parties and a mediator will have to address this issue with caution and ideational understanding.

The conflict is so complex that almost any understanding of its sources will form a part, but only a part, of the story. However, a peace process must inevitably diminish these complex dynamics to a set of issues, agreements and assurances. Attempting to do so without taking into account the depth and diversity of Afghan views on what will bring about peace to their country is a dangerous undertaking. Meanwhile, discussion and refinement of frameworks that might be applied to a peace process may cause new understandings of the conflict, and possibly, help to transform it.

# Acknowledgements

This paper is the product of a comprehensive document study only made possible by the help of associate professor, Johannes Dragsbæk Schmidt. I want to thank him for all his insights and analysis, which helped me tackle the crucial issues that this paper deals with.

Furthermore, Annette Kanstrup-Jensen has been of great help trough her extensive literary knowledge on Afghanistan, and her hands-on knowledge from the development scene within Afghanistan.

Many people contributed to the success of this paper by collecting years of research, for instance Oliver Roy, Ahmed Rashid and William Maley, and for that I am grateful.

Last but not least I would like to thank Per Sørensen for his indispensible graphical assistance.

Sofie Bøgelund Kristensen

Aalborg

# References

**Books**

Baylis, John, Wirtz, James, Gray, Colin S., Cohen, Eliot (2007): *Strategy in the Contemporary World – An introduction to Strategic Studies*, Oxford University Press, UK.

Baylis, John, Smith, S., & Owens, Patricia (2008): *The globalization of world politics*, 4. Edition, Oxford University Press, New York; US

Beitz, Charles (1979): *Political Theory and International Relations*, Princeton University Press, US

Clements, Frank (2003): *Conflict in Afghanistan: A Historical Encyclopaedia*, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Date, US

Devetak, Richard, Burke, Anthony, George, Jim (2012):  *An Introduction to International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.

Doyle, Michael (1997): *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism*, W.W. Norton and Co., New York, US.

Finnemore, Martha (1996): *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, Columbia University Press.

Finnemore, Martha (2003): *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing beliefs about the use of force*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, US.

Holzgrefe, J.L. and Keohane, Robert O. (2003): *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas*, Cambridge University Press, New York, US.

Keohane, Robert O. (1986): *Neorealism and its critics*, Columbia University Press, New York, US.

Kolodziej, Edward A. (2005): *Security and International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, New York, US.

Maley, William (2002): *The Afghanistan wars*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, US.

Mearsheimer, John (2001): *Tragedy of great power politics*, W.W. Norton, New York, US.

Mill, John Stuart (1973): “*A Few Words on Non-Intervention*‟ in G. Himmelfarb (ed.), Essays on Politics and Culture(Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith).

Mill, John Stuart (1983): *On Liberty*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK.

Walzer, Michael (1992): *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, Second edition, Basic Books, New York, US.

Wendt, Alexander (1999): *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, UK.

Wheeler. N. J. and Alex J. Bellamy (2005): *Humanitarian Intervention in World Politics* in John Baylis and Steve Smith (Third ed.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford University Press.

Yin, Robert K. (2009): *Case study research – design and methods*, Sage Publications, New York, US.

**Working papers**

Aliyev, Huseyn (2011): *Neo-Realism and Humanitarian Action: From Cold War to Our Days*, The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, Feinstein International Center, US.

Bellamy, Alex J. (2003): *Humanitarian Intervention and the Three Traditions*, Global Society, Volume 17 issue 1.

Buchanan, Allen and Keohane, Robert O. (2004): *The Preventive Use of Force: A Cosmopolitan Institutional Proposal*, Ethics and International Affairs 18: 1-4.

Doyle, Michael (1986): *Liberalism and World Politics*, American Political Science Review 80 (4), US.

Greener, Beth K. (2007): *Liberalism and the Use of Force: Core Themes and Conceptual Tensions*, Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, Sage Publications.

Glanville, Luke (2006): *Norms, interests and humanitarian intervention*, Global Change, Peace and Security: formerly Pacifica Review: Peace, Security & Global Change, 18:3.

Jahn, Beate (2012): *Humanitarian intervention – What’s in a name?*, Palgrave Macmillan Journals, International Politics, Volume 49 Issue 1, January.

Kegley Jr., Charles W. and Raymond, Gregory A. (2004): *Global Terrorism and Military Preemption: Policy Problems and Normative Perils*, International Politics, 41.

Nixon, Hamish in (2011): *Achieving Durable Peace: Afghan Perspectives on a Peace Process*, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) paper, Norway.

Pogge, Thomas (1992): *Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty*, Ethics, 103.

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) paper (2011): *Achieving Durable Peace: Afghan Perspectives on a Peace Process*, Oslo, Norway.

Roy, Olivier (2004): *Development and political legitimacy: the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan*, Conflict, Security & Development, 4:2 August.

Roy, Olivier (1991): *The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War*, Adelphi Papers, Published by Brassey’s for the IISS, UK.

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) (2001): *The Responsibility to Protect*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

**World Wide Web**

Annan, Kofi, ‘Speech of the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly’, 20 September 1999, <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/1999/sg2381.html> Accessed 07-06-12.

Bush, George W. (2001),The newspaper “The Indianapolis Star”, ‘Bush Announces Military Strikes in Afghanistan’, 9 October, <http://www2.indystar.com/library/factfiles/crime/national/2001/sept11/transcripts/1007bush.html> Accessed 13-06-12.

Falk, Richard (2011): *Can Humanitarian Intervention ever be Humanitarian?*, <http://richardfalk.wordpress.com/2011/08/04/can-humanitarian-intervention-ever-be-humanitarian/> Accessed 20-06-12.

Interview with Hillary Clinton on Fox News, <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article31276.htm> Accessed 13-02-12.

Interview with Richard Falk from 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRuGyH1fa5Y> Accessed 20-06-12.

Johnson, Chalmers (2004): *Abolish the CIA!*, <http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/1984/> Accessed on 01-06-12.

Minority Rights Group (MRG), World Directory of Minorities <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=5433&tmpl=printpage> Accessed on 20-06-12.

OECD’s official webpage, [http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3746,en\_21571361\_42277499\_42283112\_1\_1\_1\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0%2C3746%2Cen_21571361_42277499_42283112_1_1_1_1%2C00.html) Accessed 27-05-12.

Rashid, Ahmed (2011): *What the Taliban Say They Want*, september 29, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/way-out-afghanistan/> Accessed 20-06-12.

United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan (UNDP) <http://www.undp.org.af/undp/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=28> Accessed 28-06-12.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (2012): *Blowback, or Impossible Dilemmas of Declining Powers*, <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/06/15-2> Accessed 18-06-12.

1. For further information see <http://www.undp.org.af/undp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=68> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Furthermore, an extension of this perspective has been made by Immanuel Wallerstein and his edition will be briefly described in the analysis cf. The history of external intervention in Afghanistan. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Humanitarian intervention” is an ambiguous concept. According to J. L. Holzgrefe, humanitarian intervention is ‘the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals other than its own citizens, without the permission of the state within whose territory force is applied’ (Holzgrefe, 2003; 18). This is the definition that will be in evidence throughout the study. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. World System Theory view the external dimension as determinant of the internal *per se* (Wallerstein, Immanuel (2004): *World-Systems Analysis – An* Introduction, Duke University Press, US) However, this thesis regards this issue as unresolved and a contextual issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It is a state with weak capacity to carry out the basic state functions of governing a population and its territory and that lacks the ability or political will to develop mutually constructive and reinforcing relations with society (OECD). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This is an accordance to social constructivism, see Social constructivism. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For further information on the role of the Pashtuns see the section The conflict and issues for a peace agreement. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. E.g. Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan is an alliance of militant groups in Pakistan formed in 2007 to unify groups fighting against the Pakistani military. They maintain close ties to senior al-Qaida leaders, including al-Qaida’s former head of operations in Pakistan. For further information see Ahmed Rashid (2012): “*Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan”*. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Samuel Huntington argues in the theory *The clash of civilizations* that people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world. For further information see Samuel Huntington (1997): *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*, Touchstone, New York. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. According to the British charity organisation, Oxfam, the US Agency for International Development has spent more than US $4.4 billion in Afghanistan since 2002, but that the figure for the US military spending of $35 billion. For further information see <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/31902.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For further information and to view the full interview see the section References [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For further information see the UN General Assembly document A/69/L.1 (2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The interviews are made as a part of an ongoing project by three leading international institutions to identify and clarify through dialogue and research issues and options for Afghanistan to move towards durable peace. For further information see Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Wolesi Jirga is Pashto for The House of the People, which is the lower house of the bicameral National Assembly of Afghanistan. The House of the People has the primary responsibility for creating and ratifying laws and approving the Presidents’ action. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions (The Bonn Agreement) was the first of series of agreements designed to re-build the state of Afghanistan following the US invasion in 2001. For further information see United Nations. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. There is a debate about this matter, for further information see for instance Antonio Giustozzi (2008): *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, Hurst & Company, London; Martine van Bijlert (2010): *Militancy and Conflict in Zabul and Uruzgan*, New America Foundation, Washington D.C. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The High Peace Council named in 2010 exists of 70 members and is chaired by *Jamiat* leader Burhanuddin Rabbani. It has become the main public component of the Afghan Government’s peace plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)