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Representing Afghanistan: The United States and Democracy's Imposition

Brantley Hawkins

Political Science Honors Senior Thesis

Professor Matthew Singer

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There is an ongoing mission in Afghanistan driven by external political forces. At its core this mission hopes to establish peace, to protect the populace, and to install democracy. Each of these goals has remained just that, a goal, for the past eight years as the American and international mission in Afghanistan has enjoyed varied levels of commitment. Currently, the stagnant progress in Afghanistan has led the international community to become increasingly concerned about the viability of a future Afghan state. Most of these questions take root in the question over whether or not an Afghan state can function without the auspices of international terrorism. Inevitably, the normative question of what exactly that government should be arises from this base concern. In formulating a response to this question, the consensus of western society has been to install representative democracy. This answer has been a recurring theme in the post Cold War era as states such as Bosnia and Somalia bear witness to the ill effects of external democratic imposition.

I hypothesize that the current mold of externally driven state-building is unlikely to result in what western actors seek it to establish: representative democracy. By primarily examining the current situation in Afghanistan, I claim that external installation of representative democracy is modally flawed in that its process mandates choice. Representative democracy by definition constitutes a government reflective of its people, or electorate. Thus, freedom of choice is necessary for a functional representative democracy. From this, one can deduce that because an essential function of democracy is choice, its implementation lies with the presence of choice. State-building is an imposition that eliminates that necessary ingredient. The two stand as polar opposites that cannot effectively collaborate.

Literature Review

Externally driven state-building is most simply characterized as political modernization, as per prevailing international norms. In the advent of political disorder, imbedded social inequality, or some other far-reaching variable of internationally outdated rule, external actors compel themselves toward intervention and proximate means of coordinated political development. The contemporary literature, and the frame in which I will examine current state-building procedure, is rooted in the era following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In this period, state-building is defined by a coinciding international commitment to democracy. Due in part to the political void created by the extinction of the Soviet Union, unstable regimes have tested the international dedication to, and very process of state-building.¹ These rigorous and diverse tests have opened an avenue for scholarly debate to fill. Some scholars assert that achieving the democratic reform that state-building seeks hinges on the dedication of external forces.² Others attest to the role of local leaders in facilitating successful transitions.³ Whether to introduce institutional structure before expansive political

¹ Ignatieff, Michael. 2003. The Burden. *New York Times Magazine*. January 5. 22-7, 50-54.

² McDonagh, Ecaterina. 2008. Is Democracy Promotion Effective in Moldova? The Impact of European Institutions on Development of Civil and Political Rights in Moldova. *Democratization* 15, (1): 142.

Burnell, Peter J. 2000. *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization*. Democratization studies. London: F. Cass.

Walter, Barbara F., and Jack L. Snyder. 1999. *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Von Hippel, Karin. 2000. *Democracy by Force : U.S. Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War World*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

³ Chesterman, Simon, Michael Ignatieff, Ramesh Chandra Thakur, International Peace Academy, and United Nations University. 2005. *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance*. Tokyo ; New York: United Nations University Press.

activity is another feature of the debate that has been detailed at length.⁴ Another line of reasoning and evidence questions the very validity of imposed democracy.⁵ Taken collectively, a theme of necessary procedural reform of state-building resonates.

Attention to the presence of domestic choice is noticeably absent from most of the literature in the field. I believe that this is a major concern because democracy is founded on the notion of extended participation and choice. External efforts of state-building significantly reduce the element of domestic choice by crafting democracy on the basis of prevailing international norms that may not necessarily constitute the preference of the state at issue. Therefore, the ability of outside actors to induce democratic reform by state-building is limited at best. To understand this concept, we must first understand what I mean by state-building, as it has proven to be a dynamic concept, changing with both time and context.⁶ Then, I will outline general theories of political development that have served as the basis for contemporary state-building action. The crux of scholarly debate in this section is had over the way in which to approach state-building, from the “top” or “bottom” of society. The efficacy of state-building is had by which approach is taken, and not by the idea of an overtly intrusive external force. Next, I introduce a section where theories more directly allude to the inherent ineffectiveness embodied in

⁴ Huntington, Samuel P., Harvard University, and Center for International Affairs. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Zakaria, Fareed. 2003. *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

⁵ Bastian, Sunil, and Robin Luckham. 2003. *Can Democracy be Designed? : The Politics of Institutional Choice in Conflict-Torn Societies*. London ; New York: Zed Books.

Kidane Mengisteab, and Cyril K. Daddieh. 1999. *State building and democratization in Africa: faith, hope, and realities*. Westport, Conn: Praeger.

Schmidt, John R. 2008. Can Outsiders Bring Democracy to Post-Conflict States? *Orbis* 52, (1) (01): 107-22.

Grey, Robert D. 1997. *Democratic theory and post-communist change*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

⁶ Haass, Richard. 1999. *Intervention: The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World*. Rev. ed. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

state-building. Throughout my review of the field, particular attention will be paid to the debate between domestic and external capacity to produce democracy. Yet, as will be noted, even those scholars that argue for greater domestic influence hesitate in asserting that external state-building is most severely handicapped in exporting democracy. I conclude by presenting the case of Afghanistan as an example of failed policy victim to the recursive consequences of current state-building theory and practice.

First, we must differentiate types of intervention in order to understand exactly the pretenses under which my claim operates. Diane Ethier defines control, conditionality, and incentive-based strategies as the three possible strategies to be employed by democracy promoters.⁷ Control, much like its title implies, is witnessed when an external force conquers and occupies a particular state and thus controls the course of development. Conditionality is a method in which negotiations between two sovereign states set the stage. One state seeks to be granted certain advantages that another state can provide, but the only way those advantages will be conferred rest on the condition of the state desiring advantages to have already undertaken democratic reform. The final strategy available to democracy promoters is the incentive-based approach in which the promoter lends “free” advantages to a particular state in the hope that this will inspire democratic reform. Conditions and incentives do not prove to be as invasive as the control strategy and therefore are not beholden to the claim that I establish. For purposes of my study, the control strategy will be used synonymously with “state-building.” What, then, does state-building hope to accomplish?

⁷ Ethier, Diane. 2003. Is Democracy Promotion Effective? Comparing Conditionality and Incentives. *Democratization* 10, (1) (Spring2003): 99-120.

Luckham argues that the liberal democratic mold that state-building seeks to implant consists of the rule of law, civil society, political rights and freedom, and an accountable government.⁸ The problematic of state-building procedure then primarily arises in emphasizing certain aspects over others and establishing a developmental order for democratic variables. In developing societies, the order of reform can be a pivotal determinant of ensuing political order or chaos. Samuel Huntington first made this point apparent by arguing that a developed civic society devoid of institutional modernity invariably struggles. He termed the condition praetorianism, and essentially defined its occurrence as incongruent social group interaction resulting from a lack of the necessary intermediary of facilitative political institutions.⁹ In this circumstance, there is no basis of legitimacy for competing social groups, absent power-sharing methods, and no process by which regime change can take place. While his contemporaries argued that political development was linearly progressive, Huntington contended that a lack of sufficient political institutions disrupted the evolution of development and most often led to political chaos. So the importance of social and economic development was diminished, or at least equated to institutional development. In *The Future of Freedom*, Fareed Zakaria updates portions of Huntington's model for application to the contemporary "Third World." Specifically, his argument elaborates on the success of liberal authoritarian regimes in China, Singapore, and Chile in spite of the significantly less impressive record of developing democracies on economic and social growth. He purports the idea of "delegation," the process of distancing political, and especially

⁸ Bastian and Luckham (2003)

⁹ Huntington (1968) pp. 196

economic, institutions from “day-to-day politics.”¹⁰ Such a method initially establishes developing countries in the liberal authoritarian mold, with the intention of creating respected rule of law and over time an increasingly active civil society. Institutions before politics and more authoritative local leaders are two central features of Zakaria’s “top-down” claim of state-building. The “top-down” approach sees outside actors focus on the strengthening of institutions and leaders, rather than “bottom-up” policies that maintain a development of civil society to be paramount.¹¹ Now that we understand the ways in which societies are thought to be developed more properly, we must understand how external forces go about realizing this concept in practice.

A general method for top-down state building procedure is articulated by Francis Fukuyama in *State Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Post-conflict reconstruction, the creation of self-sustaining institutions, and the eventual expansion of state authority constitute the linear phases of state-building.¹² The first phase consists of external forces infusing security and stability by providing military force and/or humanitarian relief. Creating institutions and expanding their scope are treated as two separate phases, but are necessarily linked. Though the analysis is clearly focused on developing institutional structure before building an active civic population, Fukuyama labors to point out that institutional development is largely contextually dependent.¹³ Effective state-building procedure requires political institutions that have a significant degree of local character.¹⁴ In this estimation, the extent to which international

¹⁰ Zakaria (2003) pp. 252

¹¹ Chesterman et al (2005)

¹² Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press. 100.

¹³ Ibid. 43

¹⁴ Ibid. 91

norms can be exerted onto a particular state not already adhering to these codes is limited. Here, Fukuyama hints that even the methodical approach he prescribes is necessarily limited by domestic cooperation. However, his conclusions emphasize a greater commitment to the effect that a developed state-building plan such as his own can have on developing democracy. Thus, his institutional development focus is necessarily highlighted as the main feature of his work.

Varying from Fukuyama's analysis, Chesterman, Ignatieff, and Thakur stress the presence of an "enlightened leader" in the top-down model of state-building.¹⁵ In deviating from the structural flow of top-down policy, enlightened leadership in their estimation is largely independent from the efforts of outside actors. Enlightened leaders, as evidenced by transitions in Costa Rica, Singapore, and Mozambique, rally the population and yield considerable concentrated political power while progressively decentralizing their position as their society becomes more capable for democratic participation. Here the role of external forces is pushed to the margins as the authors limit international action to humanitarian mediation and the "facilitation of local processes."¹⁶ So, in this estimation, outside actors must realize that political development is most influenced by the presence of charismatic democratic leaders. Thus, the allusion to greater domestic control becomes clear in this work. Both Fukuyama and Chesterman focus their conceptions of political development on the more significant role played by institutions. The next two studies represent a shift towards the "bottom-up" approach of state-building, specifically the ways in which civil society can affect the success of new-found democracies.

¹⁵ Chesterman et al (2005) pp. 384

¹⁶ Ibid.

In State Building under Foreign Supervision: Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1996-2003, Sabic also attends to a three-pronged approach to state-building procedure, wherein the first two elements of security building and institutional development align with the method discussed by Fukuyama. However, his third deviates from the script outlined by Fukuyama in that it cites “norm building” as a core element of state-building.¹⁷ This phase constitutes a transformation of social identity where new values blur previously destructive social divisions.¹⁸ Thus, internal conflict that may have contributed to the political disorder present prior to state-building procedure is mediated under a new sense of social identity. For purposes of inducing democracy, developed norms rooted in the efficacy of democracy engender peaceful relations between otherwise disparate social groups and constitute civil society.

David Lovell goes further than Sabic by citing the establishment of civil society as the most dominant feature of state-building procedure.¹⁹ Civil society has also been described as a “means of improving democratic deliberation, creating more ‘public space,’ and curbing public distrust and cynicism.”²⁰ Although Lovell states the proper foundation of democracy is civil society, he struggles to delineate what exactly constitutes civil society beyond a general judgment concerning its ability to control government. A specific part of the argument is tailored around the relation of elections and civil society. The former bears no legitimacy without the function of the latter. This line of reasoning is extended to supposed democratic institutions at large as Lovell

¹⁷ Sabic, Senada Selo. 2005. *State Building under Foreign Supervision: Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1996-2003*. Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defence. pp. 121

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 122

¹⁹ Lovell, David W. 2007. Promoting Democracy: The Challenge of Creating a Civil Society. *Comparative Sociology* 6, (3) (08): 324-43.

²⁰ Eberly, Don E. 2000. *The Essential Civil Society Reader: Classic Essays in the American Civil Society Debate*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

stresses the simplicity of establishing formal rules and procedure but the severe complexity of initiating an understanding and devotion to those institutions. In his analysis, the construction of civil society and democratic regimes in general is a long, arduous process that should span at least six decades. Without a proper understanding of how to create civil society, the extent of this time frame for external state-building seems to fit well. Lovell's "bottom-up" approach to state-building interventions as an effective means of democracy promotion is contingent on the commitment of those intervening forces.²¹ The degree to which external actors comprehend the intricacies of civil society is the metric for effective state-building procedure in this view.

Karin von Hippel represents another proponent of the necessity of comprehensive international commitment.²² However, it must be noted that von Hippel represents a profound shift in the scholarly debate as she does not ascribe to one of civil society construction or institution building being preferable to another. Instead, her focus draws back from the domestic circumstances and contextual intricacies to the ability of outside actors to comprehend procedure and their desire to stay the course. External state-building method is laid out in a three stage process consisting of security building, empowering civil society while strengthening democratic institutions, and coordinating international aid.²³ Institution building and expansive civic development is seen as a mutually constitutive process. But von Hippel replaces the centrality of civil society with a critical assessment of current international policy. By examining case studies in Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, she identifies the culprit for past failures to be the lack of external commitment. As exhibited in the post-conflict reconstruction and

²¹ Lovell (2007) pp. 340

²² Von Hippel (2000)

²³ Ibid. 193

development in Germany and Japan following the end of World War Two, external state-building succeeded because of coordinated, dedicated outside actors.²⁴ This is not to say that more involvement always trumps less, or that as time progresses so does the resiliency of the implanted democracy. Instead, a thorough understanding of the delicate balance needed between external democratic establishment and local influence and ownership of that establishment must be had.²⁵

Thus far, the scholarly literature reviewed here has demonstrated disagreement over how external forces can work towards this balance, without explicitly questioning whether external forces can reach such a balance.

Bastian and Luckham, enlisting a skeptical view of external state-building at large, state the following:

“...Institutional design is an apparent oxymoron. Institutions in the sense that many political thinkers use the term evolve, grow, become rooted or become ‘institutionalised’ – the metaphors are organic – and are not ‘accident and force’ and political manipulation may turn them on their heads and produce perverse and unforeseen outcomes...”²⁶

Yet they go on to qualify this statement by underscoring no more preferable alternatives to external “political manipulation.” Their institutional focus of state-building leads to their claim of political disorder, humanitarian crisis, etc. in the absence of international intervention. Bosnia without the Dayton Agreement, despite its numerous structural deficiencies, would be left far worse off, as would other examples of Sri Lanka, South

²⁴ Ibid. 206

²⁵ Merkel, Wolfgang, and Sonja Grimm. 2009. *War and Democratization: Legality, Legitimacy and Effectiveness*. London: Routledge.

Sabic (2005)

Von Hippell (2000)

²⁶ Bastian and Luckham (2003) pp. 304

Africa, and Uganda without their own respective state-building experiences.²⁷ In this estimation, outside actors can never be a panacea to domestic political disorder, but their efforts are significant in mediating crises. Though Bastian and Luckham fail to go as far to say that democracy cannot be externally installed, their analysis does offer support for the claim that the scope of international efforts is limited beyond its ability to mediate conflict and subdue humanitarian abuse. Others are more forthright in their criticism.²⁸

Schmidt is one such critic that questions the ability of external actors to initiate institutional and civil society development alike to bring a particular occupied society toward democracy. He establishes that although a noticeable correlation exists between democracy and economic development, the presence of the latter does not necessitate the occurrence of the former. Other potential democratic influences such as ethnic diversity, secularism, regional dynamics, and political culture are also found to be related but not necessarily determinant of stable democracies. He instead focuses on the attitudes of domestic political actors. This belief is not to be confused with the support of external development of civil society, nor the presence of civil society before evolved institutions. In support of this claim, Schmidt cites the democratic transitions of Namibia and El Salvador as being had by rebel factions coming to the realization that military action held no course for future development. Thus, in this situation that illustrates Schmidt's view, domestic factional attitudes turned society towards democracy, irrespective of whether

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 304-305

²⁸ Dempsey, Gary T., with Roger Fontaine. 2001 *Fool's Errands: America's Recent Encounters with Nation Building*. Washington, DC: CATO Institute.

Di Palma, Giuseppe. 1990. *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schmidt (2008)

Schmitter, Philippe. 1986. An Introduction to Southern European Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey. In *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe*, edited by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, 3–10. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.

widespread civic participation had been achieved. Schmidt continues by stating that outside actors are limited to an advisory role that is effectually unable to undertake any action that can ensure a lasting democratic regime.²⁹ Thus, external state-building can establish security, design constitutions, organize elections, and facilitate economic development, but no more. These remedies are only temporary and lack substance if domestic forces do not possess “ownership”³⁰ of their newfound institutions. And domestic accountability cannot be made to work from the outside. Therefore, models of external state-building that debate the efficacy of either top-down or bottom-up approaches miss the point that once the external force “removes the scaffolding”³¹ for democracy, the strength of the lasting structure hinges on domestic attitudes.

Most relevant to my claim of state-building as an ineffective means of democracy promotion is the balance between domestic and external influence in installing democracy. Whether or not democracy is employed from the institutional level or the civilian base, the common theme of external action balanced with domestic support pervades the literature. For example, in contrasting Karin von Hippel with Bastian and Luckham, it is seen that each holds institutional development and civil society creation in relatively equal measure, but vary their respective studies on the commitment of the international community. These interpretational conflicts of effective state-building procedure are currently at work.

The challenges in Afghanistan reflect much of the state-building paradigm. As Astri Suhrke notes, the fledgling Afghan democracy is excessively dependent on foreign

²⁹ Schmidt (2008)

³⁰ Chesterman et al (2005)

³¹ Sabic (2005)

involvement for its very function.³² The international community has “created a state so dependent on external support that it deprives [democracy] of its meaning.”³³ Those external forces currently involved in Afghanistan’s state-building endeavor are struggling with the functionality of an exit strategy that will sustain democracy in Afghanistan. As noted, a multitude of views contend that either the wrong facilitative approach is being employed or that such an approach is practically nonexistent. My research intends to focus on Afghanistan and its consequences in the post-Cold War environment at large. A variety of externally driven state-building operations have been instigated in this time period, yet each has failed to install sustainable representative democracy.³⁴ Owing to these circumstances, I will focus on the inability of external actors to establish democracy through state-building. Such a process is thoroughly invasive to the point that the popular sovereignty element of democracy is violated. When choice is removed from the domestic populace, whatever system of government prevails cannot, by definition, constitute democracy.

Research Design / Theory

I claim that contemporary external state-building fails to engender democracy in target states primarily because its very procedure is undemocratic. Military intervention and external policy directives remove the critical element of popular sovereignty from the supposed democratization process, thus rendering any subsequent manufactured government inherently undemocratic. In theory, an undemocratic government does not

³² Suhrke, Astri 2009. In *War and Democratization: Legality, Legitimacy and Effectiveness*, edited by in Wolfgang Merkel and Sonja Grimm.. London: Routledge.

³³ Ibid. 189

³⁴ Dobbins, James. 2003. *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

equate to an unstable one, yet in the current international arrangement that is geared toward establishing democracy; when democracy does not work (or is rejected) there is an absence of widespread rule of law that *does* equate to instability. I rely on the current state of Afghanistan in order to demonstrate the practical implications of my theory. The mission in Afghanistan is the most contemporary example of external state-building, and thus builds on preceding examples while offering insights into the direction of future policy.

To analyze the efficacy of my claim, I define the international context in which my claim operates. Western liberal democratic values have homogenized the international order and created a new construct for state-building procedure in the post-Cold War era. The absence of an ideological competitive superpower has provided considerably more range to external state-building that seeks to establish democracy.

Proceeding in the arena of post-Cold War international relations, I define what constitutes external state-building as a means of democracy promotion. This definition is dissected in three parts. First, I will distinguish other means that states have employed to promote democracy around the globe. These methods do not inhibit domestic choice to the extent that state-building does, and thus are not subject to my claim. Using these parameters, I will identify other supplemental cases to be examined in the post-Cold War era. Second, I examine whether or not contemporary external state-building can ever be employed without democracy being actively pursued. This point is significant because of the argument that in Afghanistan, the intervening forces initially had no overt intentions of establishing a sustainable democratic government. Serving as the basis for this particular discussion is Mark Peceny's account of "proliberalization" policies in

Democracy at the Point of Bayonets (1999). My third point of analysis rests on the specific state-building approach. That is, whether the intervening force focuses on institution building or the construction of civil society.

With external state-building clearly defined, I then move to develop parameters for measurement of that which it seeks to affect: democratic change. To the extent that I identify multiple comparable cases, I will primarily utilize the Polity IV³⁵ data set in order to track longitudinal democratic developments in individual states. I combine the methods of James Meernik³⁶ and Mark Peceny³⁷ in analyzing the Polity data. My approach traces the overall democratic rating (as formulated by Polity IV) for time periods before, during, and after interventions. But to begin, I use the case study of Afghanistan to examine the most contemporary policies of external state-building. I employ the Freedom House Index, Congressional Research Service, International Crisis Group, etc. to qualify factors such as the presence of free and fair elections, governing capacity, and development. Upon establishing a general policy framework, I look to parallel the case of Afghanistan to other state-building efforts.

International Context

The normative basis and strategic implications for military intervention dramatically shifted upon the collapse of the Soviet Union. Prior to its collapse, the Soviet Union represented a political, economic, and social alternative which often manifested itself into a threat to Western liberalism in international politics. The world at

³⁵ Gurr, Ted R., Monty G. Marshall, and Keith Jagers. *Polity IV Project*. Political Instability Task Force, 21 Sept. 2009. Web. 10 Nov. 2009. <<http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>>.

³⁶ Meernik, James. 1996. United States Military Intervention and the Promotion of Democracy. *Journal of Peace Research* 33, (4) (Nov.): 391-402.

³⁷ Peceny, Mark. 1999. *Democracy at the point of bayonets*. University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press

large was divided by the two competing power structures. These spheres of influence, enforced by burgeoning nuclear armaments on both sides of the divide, defined the boundaries by which the opposing ideologies operated. Any expansion or conflict at these borders represented points of contention, as noted in Korea and Vietnam. For these instances, the West relied on a policy of containment. That is, even overt military interventions were not necessarily geared toward establishing lasting democratic government.³⁸ Thus, many interventions in this period of containment did not overtly seek to construct representative democracy in target states. So, the element of domestic choice, for which my claim is primarily concerned with, was marginalized. Because the West sought to check Soviet expansion with stable regimes rather than definitive democratic ones, popular sovereignty was not a necessary ingredient. Representative democracy is dependent on the will of the people, not more general political authority. Therefore, external state-building during the Cold War was not necessarily linked with democracy promotion.

Notably, West Germany and Japan seem unfit to this model of uninspired democratic reform. These examples, positioned at the onset of the Cold War seem to depict concerted external commitment to sustained democracy. However, as I move into definitions of state-building, we will see that these states had preexisting institutions that significantly separate them from my study.³⁹ Furthermore, I utilize one of Laurence

³⁸ Haass, Richard. 1999. *Intervention: The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World*. Rev. ed. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

³⁹ Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press. 100

Whitehead's five clusters of intervention to differentiate these instances from the Cold War.⁴⁰

In the post-Cold War era, intervention has taken an about-face with the now more universal norms of democracy pervading international politics. In fact, Neil MacFarlane argues that intervention has become “a mechanism for the promotion of purportedly universal norms.”⁴¹ Two elements of this statement are worthy of closer attention. First, the qualification of “universal norms” by the word “purportedly” illustrates that the emergent international order is not all inclusive. Thus, the notion that the developing world is on a linear path toward Western liberal values is speculative. Second, intervention is described as a mechanism. For those international actors that do ascribe to the “universal norms,” intervention is programmed to spread Western liberalism. Therefore, in taking these two elements together, we can infer that those states which are the subject of military intervention are not necessarily preordained to be receptive of democracy. And an external imposition of democracy can violate the critical element of popular sovereignty.

Domestic Choice

If domestic choice is indeed the point at which the establishment of democracy rests, then I must make clear the situations wherein this variable is not present. I have mentioned the three methods (control, conditionality, incentive-based)⁴² that democracy promoters face when confronted with producing democratic governments in target states.

⁴⁰ Whitehead, Laurence. 1996. *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas*. Oxford studies in democratization. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

⁴¹ MacFarlane, S. Neil, “Intervention in Contemporary World Politics”, *Adelphi Paper* 350, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002.

⁴² Ethier, Diane. 2003. Is Democracy Promotion Effective? Comparing Conditionality and Incentives. *Democratization* 10, (1) (Spring2003): 99-120.

The control method involves the military invasion and subsequent occupation of the target state. In this situation, the target state's development is managed by the intervening force through this occupation. I derive my claim from this type of democracy promotion only. Conditionality and incentive-based methods are essentially negotiations between sovereign states that do not meet the intrusive criteria found in control methods.

I use a variation of Blechman and Kaplan's assessment of "political-military" operations⁴³ in order to determine the lack of domestic choice in control situations. They define military intervention as the physical action of uniformed military personnel that intends to change the political environment of another state without continued conflict.⁴⁴ This definition is relevant for my analysis of Afghanistan save for their focus on the lack of continued conflict. The presence of continued conflict does not affect the status of the intervening force as the dominant decision-maker. Instead, the military occupation on its own stands as the point by which the domestic populace loses control of its political future. Blechman and Kaplan describe military presence as a political tool used to cause domestic actors' to act against their otherwise independent inclinations.⁴⁵ Thus in this estimation, military intervention, by definition, works against the will of domestic actors.

In *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets* (1999), Mark Peceny analyzes the extent to which military interventions are premised on overt external decision-making. His book dissects the impact of military interventions on democratization and concludes that "proliberalization" policies can affect these efforts. Proliberalization policies are defined as the:

⁴³ Blechman, Barry M., Stephen S. Kaplan, and Joint Author. 1978. *Force Without War : U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument*. Washington: Brookings Institution.

⁴⁴ Ibid 12

⁴⁵ Ibid 13

“...combination of active support for free and fair elections with active promotion of at least one of the following: centrist political parties, reformist interest groups, reductions in human rights abuses, and/or formal subordination of the military to civilian authority.”⁴⁶

Peceny finds that when the United States exhibits these policies that democratization is largely enhanced. This finding calls attention to the belief that external interventions can “succeed” without establishing democracy. That is, an external actor can undertake a military intervention that is not necessarily intent on constructing a democratic government. While this has been the case in the Cold War, contemporary military interventions do not operate independent of democratic results in the target state. As noted, the post-Cold War era is a period wherein intervention is an instrument for the spread of Western liberalism. For example, the supposed initial limited commitment to humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1993 came to be evaluated by the inability of external forces to engender democratic reforms.⁴⁷ The notion that a lack of initial proliberalization policies in Afghanistan is the cause for the lack of democratization has been espoused.⁴⁸ I document the premeditated international plans for democracy in Afghanistan, which culminated in the Bonn Agreement, to show how democracy has been inseparable from state-building in the post-Cold War era.

The next point to analyze is the specific process of external state-building. The subject of much scholarly debate is whether the external actor should initiate institution

⁴⁶ Peceny (1999)

⁴⁷ Dobbins, James. 2003. *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

⁴⁸ Merkel, Wolfgang, and Sonja Grimm. 2009. *War and Democratization: Legality, Legitimacy and Effectiveness*. London: Routledge.

building in favor of the construction of civil society, or vice versa.⁴⁹ For instance, scholars arguing for the civil society approach believe that the employment of such would positively affect the chances of democratization. I examine the current policy of the United States in Afghanistan in order to determine which method is in effect. Specifically, I will analyze patterns in procedural recommendations made before Congress, USAID, and Congressional Research Service Reports to determine American strategy and resource allocation. To the extent that I identify other cases of military intervention in the post-Cold War era, I will use a similar approach. I expect to find that current external state-building policy, though incorporating some civil society developments, is largely committed to the institutional approach. Though I argue that an external commitment to one or the other approach will not significantly affect the success of democratization, it is important to identify which approach is being employed. Upon identification, I will be positioned to analyze whether or not a variation in approaches is significantly determinant of successful democratization.

As I have described it, the state-building model that is the subject of my analysis is multivariate. In one instance, the procedure must be a control method (military intervention and occupation). In addition, the intervention must seek to create a democratic government. As I argue, this factor is present and indicative of all post-Cold War interventions. I also describe the specific approach (“top” or “bottom”) employed by external actors. Taken collectively, this defines my independent variable of external state-building.

Democratic Change

⁴⁹ Huntington, Samuel P., Harvard University, and Center for International Affairs. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Democratic government is what external state-building in the post-Cold War era promotes, and thus represents the dependent variable of the equation. In order to see how much democracy is affected by external state-building, I use various methods to determine metrics of democratic change. One such method to employ is the Polity IV data set for comparative purposes between separate state-building cases. Specifically, I use the “Regime Authority and Transitions Datasets.” This data is the product of the ongoing Polity project which has sought to provide a quantitative basis for analyzing democracy. Now in its 4th edition, the project has coded over a dozen “authority variables” for 161 states around the world from 1800 to 2008.⁵⁰ These authority variables measure factors such as the political fragmentation of states and the durability of regimes. The former is important in determining the extent of the central authority of a state, whereas the latter measures how long states have gone without seeing significant disruptions in their political environment. These and a number of other variables aggregate to determine, among other things, the democratic score of a state.

Mark Peceny and James Meernik both use the Polity III data sets, but determine different metrics for democratic success. Meernik implements a similar longitudinal analysis to the one I present above.⁵¹ He counts successful transitions as those that have their democratic score improved after an intervention. Peceny is largely critical of this approach, and does not take a mere increase in democratic score to demonstrate successful intervention.⁵² Instead, he delineates democratic governments to be above the score of six on the Polity III scale. Thus, a target state that sees their democratic score

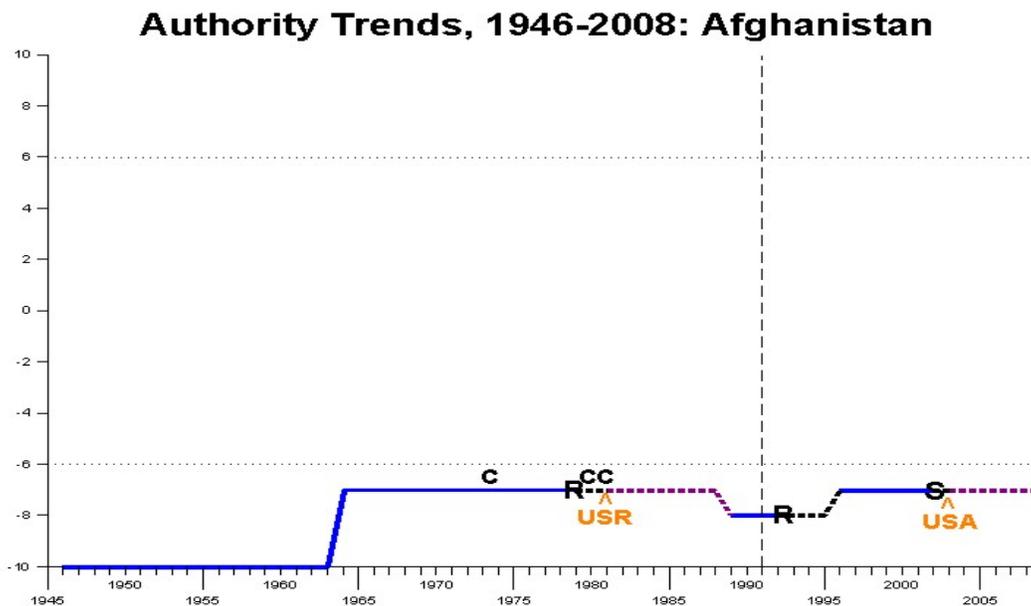
⁵⁰ Gurr (2009)

⁵¹ Meernik (1996) pp. 395

⁵² Peceny (1999) pp. 194

move from 0 to 5 during the course of an intervention is not counted as a successful transition.

Yet, the Polity IV dataset does not sufficiently explain my analysis of external state-building and democracy. A primary reliance on this data reveals democracy in Afghanistan to look like this:



Source: Gurr (2009)

The solid blue line traces the Polity of Afghanistan, whereas the dashed purple line denotes an interruption. Unfortunately, this type of data does not provide the details necessary to an analysis of democratic change over a relatively short timeframe.

As a result, I utilize a range of qualitative data. Specifically, I will use Congressional Research Service, International Crisis Group, CIA World Factbook, and scholarly reports to assess intervention and democratic transition. These studies have a running theme of linking security, governance, and development together to account for success in Afghanistan. Development procedures help to establish security, setting the stage for

institution building and effective governance. In doing so, I examine both the capacity of the Afghanistan government to act as a sovereign state and then more specifically its ability to do so democratically. I will trace how these metrics of democratic transition have been dominated by the international community. Thus, any institutions built from this process are seen as more of an external imposition rather than a domestic product.

Analysis

In this section, I turn to the contemporary state-building effort in Afghanistan. To begin my case study, I argue that the mission in Afghanistan has inescapably been about building democracy. This is important to note because of the claims that Afghan democracy has failed because the US was not actively seeking to establish democracy at one point or another. I contend that military invasion and regime change is always necessarily committed to democracy in the post-Cold War period. Thus, perceived levels of American commitment to democratic state-building are not sufficient to explain gaps in the progress of Afghanistan. In addition, I expand my claim by examining culture as a potential confounding factor. That is, I discuss how pundits argue that certain cultures are more predisposed for democracy than others. In Afghanistan, this could prove problematic as one could simply argue that specific cultural tendencies stand opposed to core democratic values. If this were true, my claim that invasive external state-builders impede future democratic states would seemingly be rendered moot. I make the point that indigenous culture is largely precluded from any decisional capability by the invasive external state-builder. Thus my claim is not severely limited by cultural specificities.

In addition, I contrast sovereign government with general state capacity lacking democratic components against a democratic state. For the former, I argue that the United States certainly can export and erect such a state. Yet the construction of the latter democratic state, of which it is necessarily trying to establish, is not possible. This is important to note because I recognize that external state-builders are able to export state capacity independently of the people's voice. However, when they seek to export *democratic* state capacity, it does not work because of the people's voice is marginalized. So, I am specific in concluding that government which does not espouse to be representative of its people can be imposed by external actors. Afghanistan's institutions may function somewhat independently of international influence, but the degree to which they do is not proper grounds on which to critique democratic progress. The Afghan government has been and continues to be devoid of widespread, substantive Afghan influence. Therefore, the degree to which its president, for example, can exert sovereign decision-making power (which is marginal at best) does not demonstrate democratic progress but only state capacity.

Next, I document how the basic components of government have continuously been usurped by the United States so much so as to preclude democracy. I detail how the international state-building project in Afghanistan has marginalized the will of the Afghan people. In doing so, representative democracy has failed to take root in Afghanistan. Specifically, the institutional framework established by Bonn inhibits Afghan democracy because it precludes Afghan self-determination. Everything that constitutes Afghanistan's government spawns from Bonn. Thus, the near prohibition on Afghan input is critical on establishing the invasiveness of the international state-building

mission. From Bonn, I move to the series of Loya Jirgas which it established. For greater detail, I describe the specific effects of individual actors on democracy in Afghanistan. The domineering role of, for example, U.S. Special Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad exemplifies the total control exerted by the occupation force.

From the establishment of institutions, I turn to the deficiencies that these institutions have exhibited since their establishment. I primarily discuss the inability of the Afghan government to independently conduct free and fair elections, maintain budgetary control, establish security, and crack down on the illegal drug trade. In general, Afghanistan's government struggles to enforce its propagated rule of law. This is a byproduct of the lack of legitimacy it retains, which itself is a direct consequence of the invasive United States and international state-building effort.

The current institutions of Afghanistan were created in an undemocratic manner. Anything that materializes from these institutions is therefore not a measure of democracy, but merely state capacity. The Bonn Agreement, which serves as the basis for all institutional development in Afghanistan, was not an Afghan endeavor. It set the course for Afghanistan without sufficient Afghan determination. Therefore, the critical element of self-determination is lacking in the Afghan state. Perhaps this notion of government is neither important nor necessary for authoritative governments. For democracy however, the writ of the general populace is a prerequisite. The common mantra for democracy is "democracy *for* the people and *by* the people." When "*by* the people" is absent, there is no democracy. A government that merely acts in the best interest of the people, or "*for* the people," is not necessarily democratic. This is crucial to understanding the situation in Afghanistan. Their institutions are a UN product, not

Afghan. Their institutions are not “by the people,” and any progress they eventually make in becoming “for the people” does not make them more or less democratic.

As I will describe them, the deficiencies of the Afghan institutions to perform as properly functional shares common ground with Afghanistan’s lack of civil society. Therefore, my description of institutional deficiencies quickly transitions into a discussion of civil society. For example, the conduct of elections can certainly be argued to have as much to do with institutions as a politically educated populace. I also discuss the impact on democratic participation that the involvement, or lack thereof, of the Taliban in the Afghan government. My discussion of the Taliban then moves into the security and illegal drug trade in Afghanistan. Both of these concerns are symptomatic of a population that acts with blatant disregard for the Afghanistan government’s established rule of law. Therefore, the lack of civil society in Afghanistan contributes to its lack of a democratic system. I examine the extent to which the United States plan has inhibited the development of civil society, and whether it mirrors the effects on institutions.

Corruption

Throughout my analysis, I develop the recurring theme of corruption in local Afghanistan politics. Afghanistan is cited as one of the most extensively corrupt governments in the world. Transparency International defines corruption as the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” How does this contribute to my claim that external actors struggle in exporting democracy? One interpretation may be that the rampant perceptions of corruption are a product of the influence of the United States in setting up the power structure in Afghanistan. Because America is not trusted to do well by the Afghan people, this results in the Afghan government (which is measured as an

independent entity by Transparency International) as being the culprit of corruption perceptions. Another interpretation may be that the widespread corruption is evidentiary of the fact that democracy has not worked in Afghanistan. In this model, the creation of institutions by the United States and international community facilitated a government ripe for overall dysfunction. The general failure of the Afghan state to properly function independently is a product of the rampant corruption fostered by external states. In either case, it becomes clear that the overt influence of outside actors has undermined democracy in Afghanistan.

Top-Down

To conclude my analysis, I re-examine the debate of top-down and bottom-up approaches as it relates to Afghanistan. The primary theme in this discussion as it relates to my primary claim is if and when such a debate is warranted. That is, if the following of one or the other can affect the prospects of democracy. The debate itself seems to feed directly into my claim that domestic choice is lacking in both approaches. Thus, the choice between the two in of itself is a fallacy. But given that domestic choice is present, I look at what role the external actor seems best suited for. Indeed, the debate about top-down vs. bottom-up approaches seems to presuppose that self-determination follows the foundational work of the external actor. For example, Fukuyama lays out the linear progression of the state-building paradigm. His model flows as such: post-conflict resolution, the creation of self-sustaining institutions, and the eventual expansion of state authority.⁵³ Beholding the task of creating institutions to the external actor, only later to be transferred, violates the notion of self-determination from the start.

⁵³ Fukuyama (2004) pp. 37

In sum, I discuss how the relative commitment of outside actors (i.e. United States, Pakistan, NATO) causally affects “success” in Afghanistan. I highlight success because, as per my primary claim that external actors cannot sufficiently create democracy in target states, their effect is necessarily limited. So, the type of “success” that is had is founded in state capacity functions such as the ability to control violence as opposed to democratic values. The external state-building effort is supposedly founded on establishing legitimacy in the sovereign, democratic Afghan government they seek to install. Specifically, traditional forms of Afghan legitimacy—Loya Jirgas, Pashtun leaders—have been usurped by the United States to offer some semblance of Afghan control. That very takeover by American and international actors has left the Afghan populace devoid of decision-making capability. Throughout the entire process (elections, security situation, civil society, leadership), the engrained and persistent lack of Afghan self-determination has prevented the formation of representative democracy.

A Democratic Mission

Since October 2001, the United States and United Nations have led an international coalition on a mission for democracy in Afghanistan. The specific procedure of this mission has shifted and evolved over the course of an invasion and occupation, but has continuously been concerned with establishing democratic government.⁵⁴ Initially, the United States was narrowly concerned with immobilizing Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network in the country. In fact, the Bush administration intended to steer clear of any state-building efforts.⁵⁵ Irrespective of this enunciated desire, the United States was involved at every stage of institutional political formation in Afghanistan. As discussed

⁵⁴ United States. Congress. *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress*. By Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale. *Congressional Research Service*. Web. 3 Dec. 2009. pp. 7

⁵⁵ Rashid (2008) pp. 16

previously, military occupation in the post-Cold War era took on additional reconstruction responsibilities. Threats to the international power structure had shifted primarily to relatively small communities within the developing world. Without a significant conventional state power, such as the Soviet Union, to challenge liberal democracy, the democratic order led by the US could proceed unchecked. Thus, where military occupation is had by the forces of liberal democracy (e.g. US, UN, NATO), democratic state-building is a seemingly logical consequence to prevent future threats. The Bush administration could not escape this paradigm. The premeditated and rigid Bonn process is evidentiary of the sustained democratic plan for Afghanistan. Even the administration's support of "warlords," though certainly destructive to any possible semblance of civil society, merely represented an institutional approach to democratic state-building. The regional strongmen were seen as a temporary fix to rampant security concerns, able to be later controlled by the state.

Though this "top-down" approach shifted with the onset of the Obama administration, the commitment to democracy remained the same. A greater emphasis was placed on a more robust civil society. It is important to note that this did not represent a shift to democratic commitment. The state-building policies of the two administrations certainly provide a contrast, but both were and continue to be part of a plan for democracy. Democratic state-building is unavoidable in the post-Cold War era given military invasion. A democratically inclined United Nations, backed by the world's lone superpower, stands unchallenged on the international stage to impose its desired system of government on a transitional state.

Therefore, the mission in Afghanistan has continuously operated within a framework of democratic state-building. This framework was formally enunciated by the Bonn Agreement, which established Afghanistan's interim administration following the ousting of the Taliban in November 2001. Because the general mission in Afghanistan is the establishment of representative democracy, the case is relevant to my primary claim that external actors cannot effectively establish democratic regimes through comprehensive state-building.

But how limited are my conclusions to this specific case? Can they be generalized to form a pattern of U.S. policy and results? Has enough time elapsed to provide a definitive judgment on democracy in Afghanistan? Is democracy failing to take root in Afghanistan because of mitigating cultural factors present amid Afghans? I address these questions at the conclusion of my analysis.

Culture

Cultural specificities are potentially mitigating factors for my analysis. Some scholars choose to ignore the specificities of domestic culture in establishing democracy. In his work on state-building in Germany following World War Two, Richard Merritt states:

“The goal was not to transform basic elements of culture as family, community, and religion. It was rather to modify the ways in which Germans dealt with sociopolitical issues: constraint and liberty, poverty and wealth, war and peace.”⁵⁶

Yet, this viewpoint ignores the fact that sociopolitical processes necessarily intertwine with family, community, and religion. The critical elements of a democratic society

⁵⁶ Merritt (1995) pp. 387

include the “embedding of democratic values in the local culture.”⁵⁷ Moreover, the institutional development of a given state is socially constructed.⁵⁸ Even the marginal influence allotted to domestic influence by the external state-builder goes into shaping some of the institutional specifics. So, any attempt to externally force another system of government on another community must be prepared with the knowledge of the family, community, and religion of that community. If a particular culture does not respect the rights of all its people, or exhibits other ingrained practice that are not in line democracy, then the external actor who seeks to instill democracy must alter that culture. A failure to recognize these important supporting factors inevitably leads to problems. Yet, democracy imposed on any culture, democratically inclined or not, does not allow cultural predispositions to significantly alter the democratization process. The target states’ culture is only allowed to operate within the framework that is granted to them by the external actor. Therefore, culture is made relatively insignificant but not in the sense that Richard Merritt describes.

Another position, from Schmidt, points to culture as seemingly the only variable in the external state-building process:

“But there are no programs or actions they can take that will ensure that the political actors in that society will internalize democratic values and embrace democracy once they leave. Outsiders may create a climate in which democratic change can occur but they cannot ensure that such change will occur.”⁵⁹

This assumes a model of state-building where the presence of external actor can be fully removed (and thereby legitimacy established). This is an interesting position, and one that I will address toward the end of my analysis through my recommendations for future US

⁵⁷ Moore (2002)

⁵⁸ Fukuyama (2004)

⁵⁹ Schmidt (2005)

and international policy in Afghanistan. In addition, Schmidt's assessment contends that democratization necessitates a change in culture. Thus, any cultural predisposition matters. While this certainly may be the case, it is not relevant to my claim directly. Schmidt ignores the tendency of external actors to preclude domestic choice. As per my claim, the elimination of self-determination largely marginalizes the will of the populace. Under such circumstances, the ability of the domestic culture to have any effect on the success of democracy is itself limited. Therefore, the possible effect that culture may indeed have on the development of democracy is unable to be had. The external actor is invasive to the point as to negate cultural impact. Indeed, this is the basis of my claim: that the will of the people is overtaken by the external state-builder. Cultural factors are left unable to significantly determine the future course of government. At best, they are allotted time and space to negotiate within a framework established by the outside actor.

Legitimacy, Sovereignty, Capacity, Democracy

Perhaps the best way to begin the test of my hypothesis is to examine the core element of established democracy: legitimacy. Generating democracy relies on establishing legitimacy amid the populace. The type of democracy that the US is trying to initiate is representative democracy. This type of government necessarily involves the concerted will of the Afghan people. Yet, the Afghan people have systematically disregarded the rule of law that the Afghan state perpetuates. 25% support for the Taliban established in southern region of Kandahar through a Canadian poll.⁶⁰ Opium continues

⁶⁰ Brewster, Murray. "Support for Taliban Hit 'all-time High' in Kandahar Last Spring." *The Globe and Mail*. 7 Apr. 2010. Web. 9 Apr. 2010.

to be illegally traded across the country. Afghan officials on both the federal and state levels continue to exploit their positions of power for personal gain. And rampant voter fraud plagues the vitality of each significant government election. The blatant disrespect for the Afghan government is a result of its lack of a legitimate democratic base.

Is legitimacy necessary for state capacity? Does popular tolerance of state decisions indicate/enhance state capacity? The Afghan government is not legitimate, thus its state capacity is affected. I believe this is evident, but I contend that it is exponentially easier to increase state capacity by external actors as opposed to democracy in a target state. That is, state capacity can, and has been shown to be positively and significantly affected by spending increases, attention, etc. The further supply of American troops to Afghanistan can marginally increase state capacity (how is state capacity defined, from the outside or inside, can alter this assertion). The degree to which legitimacy is created or enhanced is debatable. Afghans may increasingly become more willing to put up a fight against the Afghan state because of its ability to dictate force. Highlight this. It is troublesome, and even misguided, to get bogged down into arguing whether or not political legitimacy will be sufficiently established upon a complete monopolization of force in Afghanistan. My main claim is that holding this as a goal is detrimental to democracy-building because it ignores the fact that the participation of the people is still limited to an international framework. Therefore, democracy is precluded from the start. Efforts to initiate democracy hinge on a complete restructuring of the Afghan government, one in which Afghans sufficiently impact the process of building the state.

A state can be legitimate and simultaneously not democratic. Tacit legitimacy can exist to confer the right of undemocratic states. But Fukuyama defines legitimacy as the

“voluntary acceptance by the majority of the population in every area of the government’s right and responsibility to rule at the national level and throughout the land, and the willingness of most people to pay taxes and serve in the army to enable to government to achieve that task.”⁶¹ In this model, the act of conferring legitimacy is very deliberate and unmistakable, a circumstance obviously lacking in Afghanistan.

David Shams, in *Democracy’s Dilemma*, theorizes that there are two factors determining state legitimacy: effectiveness in governance and the suitability of the ideological foundation based on which it governs to the core ethical values that the society upholds.⁶² This analysis seems to suggest that democracy is necessarily something of a cultured state. That is, the specific ideology of a given country needs to be imprinted on its government for the condition of legitimacy to even begin to be met.

But importantly, I believe that the second condition of Shams’ legitimacy definition lacks clarity. For instance, the ideological foundation of the current Afghan government was artificially inseminated under the guise of matching ideological foundation. This circumstance itself represents a violation of the ideological foundations of the state founded on the ethics of the society which it governs. The entire process of emulating ideologies is confounded. The population recognizes that their will is being precluded from the process of government formation. Therefore, any notion that domestic ideology can be replicated is lost. Also, even if such a procedure were successful, it is not sufficient to establish legitimacy because the society itself was not the determinant of its power establishment. So, in this sense, the two conditions listed above do not adequately account for state legitimacy. It is necessary that the domestic population actually go into

⁶¹ Fukuyama (2004) pp. 109

⁶² Shams (2007) pp. 4

shaping their government. This is a crucial point to be able to firm up for purposes of my overarching claim. It provides an important distinction for legitimacy; one of the distinguishing factors for democratic government.

At every level of Afghan society, there has been a perpetual denial of popular will. The ability of the people to become involved citizens and consequently supportive citizens is absent; thus legitimacy flounders.⁶³ I first turn to the state institutions of Afghanistan to demonstrate the lack of Afghan self-determination.

Institutional Ownership

Security, governing capacity, and development have all been targeted as measurements of success in Afghanistan.⁶⁴ The three factors are generally seen as mutually constitutive; so improved security is seen as improving governing capacity. Thus, the recent resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and a deteriorating security environment moving forward has demonstrated the inability of the Afghan government to govern. The primary reason for the Afghan government's deficiencies is its lack of legitimacy among its constituency. Even the use of the term 'constituency' must be qualified because the Afghan government has often oscillated between serving the people within its territorial borders and the international community. The existence of the Afghan state is so dependent on foreign aid and intervention that it has lost policy-making and enforcing power. This is evident in the inability of Afghanistan to engage in basic sovereign state activities as maintaining a national budget, conducting elections,

⁶³ Anderson, Christopher. *Losers' Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

⁶⁴ United States. Congress. *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*. By Kenneth Katzman. *Congressional Research Service*. Web. 25 Sept. 2009.
United States. Congress. *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*. By Kenneth Katzman. *Congressional Research Service*. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.

providing for its own national security, and deterring criminality. A state without the ability to do such is more likened to a client state. So, along with its struggle for democracy, Afghanistan is facing a fight for its sovereignty.

These circumstances are found in an external state-building procedure that is guilty of overriding popular domestic sentiment. Despite international rhetoric of Afghan responsibility, the security and governance in Afghanistan has largely been channeled through nearly every entity except supposed Afghan institutions. Some of this outside channeling is necessarily a part of the external state-building mold, and thus lends credence to the claim that external state-building detracts from the authority and legitimacy of the domestic government. Therefore, the current policy of external state-building is diametrically opposed to the formation of democratic regimes.

Roughly two months after the start of combat operations in Afghanistan, the Bonn Agreement had established an interim government. The UN-led conference began meetings in late November, and had set the course for democracy promotion in Afghanistan by mid-December. The expediency of this process attests to the amount of preliminary groundwork that the international community had for Afghanistan and state-building projects in general. Throughout the 1990s, the UN had expressed the need for representative government committed to human rights in Afghanistan.⁶⁵ The Bonn Agreement sought to put these plans into action. So, it was no surprise that when all of the Afghan factions were invited to Bonn in December 2001, they were presented with a preconceived draft agreement. At the behest of international calls for quick resolution, the

⁶⁵ Suhrke, Astri 2009. In *War and Democratization: Legality, Legitimacy and Effectiveness*, edited by in Wolfgang Merkel and Sonja Grimm.. London: Routledge. pp. 178

agreement was signed within a week.⁶⁶ Bonn established an independent human rights commission and a Supreme Court of Afghanistan. Presidential and parliamentary elections were also outlined as a necessary part of the Afghan state. In aggregate, the agreement outlined a political and economic plan for a democratic Afghanistan.

The Afghans selected by America and the UN to take part in the Bonn Agreement were forced to work within an already established framework. In fact, the Afghan “representatives” were presented with a prepared agreement by UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi. Details of the document had already been leaked to the press prior to any Afghan presence at Bonn.⁶⁷ Their participation was largely a formality in the process. The real decision-making was left with the international community. Democracy was the order of the day, and the various Afghan delegations had no power to decide such independently. Yet, even if the Afghans present in Bonn had held any authority, they arguably were not accurately representative of Afghanistan. All of the members from three of the Afghan delegations were selected by the UN and were either exiles or leaders of armed factions in Afghanistan. The “Cyprus Group” had ties with Iran; the “Rome Group” with the former King exiled in Italy; and the “Peshawar Group” with Pakistan.⁶⁸ This fact alone brings into question the ability of such a group to prove a proper sample representation for Afghanistan. Each individual group was primarily composed of expatriates whose power and support resided in foreign entities.

These handpicked Afghan expatriates were all apart of the pre-1978 Afghan bourgeoisie, and nothing short of completely removed from contemporary Afghan

⁶⁶ Ibid 180

⁶⁷ Suhrke (2009) pp. 180

⁶⁸ Kolhatkar and Ingalls (2006) pp. 97

politics and people.⁶⁹ The delegation from Rome did not contain a member that had set foot in Afghanistan since the Soviets invaded in the 1970s. The Peshawar group was thoroughly composed of members from one bourgeois Afghan family.⁷⁰

The other delegation was drawn from the leaders of the Northern Alliance. Before Bonn, the Northern Alliance had taken to occupying and administering Kabul. Yet in the face of this occupation, the UN gave the order that any territorial conquest would not be legitimized by the new government.⁷¹ At this time, the Northern Alliance was very much divided following the assassination of Ahmad Shah Masud which had taken place two days prior to 9/11. One faction of the NA consisted of warlords such as Mohammed Fahim that were primarily concerned with regaining their regional hegemony that had been lost under the Taliban. The other pole of the NA, with leaders such as future presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah and Younus Qanuni, sought to foster a broad based coalition democratic government. Yet they collectively agreed that the Northern Alliance, having sacrificed most in removing the Taliban, should retain majority control over any new government.

Aside from these facts, the UN mandated that each group have female members, and that no Taliban were included.⁷² The theme of Taliban exclusion has continued since and become more problematic because of the group's increasing appeal among Pashtuns. But even at this juncture, at Bonn, the Taliban constituted a significant and dynamic group that was wholly shut out of the process because of a segment of its followers. More importantly, the Afghan people at large were entirely excluded from the Bonn process.

⁶⁹ M. Jamil Hanifi, "Editing the Past: Colonial Production of Hegemony through the 'Loya Jirga' in Afghanistan," *Iranian Studies* 37, no. 2 (June 2004): 295-322

⁷⁰ Rashid (2009) pp. 103

⁷¹ Rashid (2009) pp. 102

⁷² Rashid (2009) pp. 102

The so-called representatives present were the antithesis to the democratic process. As a collective group, the Afghans at Bonn had no mandate to act on behalf of the people in any sort of democratic fashion. Therefore, the “who” that was missing at Bonn was essentially everyone that mattered for purposes of democracy.

In addition, the Northern Alliance delegation resembled a continuation of strongman Afghan politics. Only now, the international community purported that they were now valuable democratic facilitators. Instead, as stated, the Afghans present at Bonn were devoid of any significant decision-making capabilities. This fact is evidenced by the initial selection of the interim Afghan leader.

Abdul Sattar Sirat received the most support at the conference when the delegation voted to elect an interim president. Sirat came to the table with such initial support primarily because of his role as a top official under the ex-King Zahir Shah in the 1970s.⁷³ This period in Afghan history continues to occupy a revered spot in the country’s collective nostalgia. Thus, when the conference emerged to reboot Afghan politics, Sirat emerged as a viable candidate to restore respectable Afghan governance. The now famed Hamid Karzai received no votes in this initial ballot. On December 3, 2001, the London *Guardian* reported that Sirat was “almost certain to be the next leader of Afghanistan.”⁷⁴ Yet, Sirat’s appeal did not carry well outside of Afghanistan. The reverence that Afghans held for Sirat and the former King was not shared by the international community because of a general international unfamiliarity with that regime. Therefore, his candidacy was halted. The *New York Times* reported that the

⁷³ Kolkahthar (2007) pp. 240

⁷⁴ McCarthy, Rory, and Ewen MacAskill. "King's Aide Is Favourite to Be Next Leader." *The Guardian*. 3 Dec. 2001. Web. 1 Apr. 2010.

delegates at Bonn submitted to international demands for an interim government headed by Hamid Karzai.⁷⁵

Burhanuddin Rabbani embodied another hurdle that the international community faced in implementing its domineering plan. Rabbani had served as the President of Afghanistan from 1992 to 1996, and still laid claim to the position.⁷⁶ Upon receiving backing from Russia, Rabbani took on a new position of power at Bonn and sought to undermine the plans for Northern Alliance domination headed by the young Tajik, Yunus Qanuni.⁷⁷ This could not stand as the UN demanded democratic elections to determine a new leader. A series of phone calls from world leaders aimed to convince Rabbani to step down in order to make way for the international plan. None was more poignant than the one fielded by US Special Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, in which he restated the plight of the Taliban since the American invasion. This conversation was followed up by a misfiring U.S. jet near Rabbani's residence in Afghanistan.⁷⁸ Rabbani subsequently ceased his presidential demands.

Hamid Karzai was then selected to head the interim administration until a new constitution could be drafted. Karzai, an ethnic Durrani Pashtun, represented the traditional ruling class of Afghanistan that had been in effect since the eighteenth century.⁷⁹ He was seen as a relatively non-controversial figure in the international community because of his fluency in English and lack of a private militia. Moreover, Karzai is believed to have served as a consultant for the Union Oil Company of

⁷⁵ Onishi, Norimitsu. "A NATION CHALLENGED: WAR IN SOUTH; G.I.'s Had Crucial Role In Battle for Kandahar." *The New York Times* 15 Dec. 2001. Web. 1 Apr. 2010.

⁷⁶ Rashid (2009) pp. 103

⁷⁷ Rashid (2009) pp. 104

⁷⁸ Rashid (2009) pp. 104

⁷⁹ Katzman (Dec 2009)

California (Unocal) in the mid-1990s. Around this time, there was a proposal to construct an energy pipeline passing through Afghanistan.⁸⁰ The Bush administration, which held energy policy as one of its primary initiatives, was keen to have an Afghan leader who was sympathetic to any future US energy plans in the region. Karzai's worth to the international community was sufficiently evident, as was his superficial appeal for legitimacy from the Afghan people.

The degree to which Karzai's background proved to be a legitimizing factor was at least matched by the perceived illegitimacy of foreign forces dictating Afghan government that shone through during the Bonn process. Traditional source of Afghan power are averse to outside influence. This fact is most evident from British colonial rule and Soviet occupation. Thus, Karzai's relationship with the West, which was not matched by any other Afghan at the time, was held in disdain by Afghans. The fact that his official participation in the Bonn process was conducted through the Rome group, which actively ignored him, contributed to the notion of puppetry associated with his administration. When Karzai was thrust to the head of the interim administration, he was notified by satellite phone because he had taken no direct part at Bonn. His acceptance of the position, over the phone, constituted his only personal address to the conference. The international community wanted Karzai, and they had him at the expense of legitimacy in their new government.

From the outset, Bonn created a framework within which the Afghanistan state-building project would work. This is an important feature of my analysis of democratic progress in Afghanistan because it makes clear that this had always been the goal.

⁸⁰ Engdahl, William. *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order*. London: Pluto, 2004. Print. (pp. 254)

Despite the U.S. support for local “warlords” in Afghanistan that was widely cited as counterintuitive to democracy, its actions were merely a part of the more general pro-democracy philosophy enunciated at Bonn. Indeed the Bonn Agreement provided a formal basis for international action in Afghanistan going forward.

The international community had an idea of what post-Taliban Afghanistan should look like that operated independently of the Afghan people. This is not to say that Bonn’s commitment to democratic reform was the antithesis to Afghan desires, only that the international community retained their commitment irrespective of the fact that it could be. The Bonn Agreement committed to legitimacy insofar as it fit their standing notions of proper government. Apart from anointing Karzai as head of the interim government, Bonn sought legitimacy by calling for an emergency Loya Jirga to be held.⁸¹ However, this traditional Afghan form of decision-making, much like Karzai’s traditional ruling background, soon became seen as a foreign instrument.

In June 2002, per the transition setup by the Bonn Agreement, an emergency Loya Jirga was held in Kabul and attended by over 1,000 delegates from across the country.⁸² The Loya Jirga is a traditional forum that has served as the source of legal authority since the eighteenth century.⁸³ Traditionally, there is a relative lack of structure in the proceedings of the LJ. The very calling to assemble the LJ is always situational, and lacks a clear pattern of occurrence. A multitude of issues can be the subject of a single LJ, as the forum is viewed as a most general problem-solving mechanism. Moreover, there are no time limits placed on the deliberation of issues. To further add to

⁸¹ Rashid, Ahmed. 2008. *Descent into Chaos: The US and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*. New York: Viking.

⁸² Katzman (Dec 2009)

⁸³ Rashid (2008) pp. 241

the lengthy process, consensus is always a goal of the process. Decisions can only be made as an agreeing group and arguments can drag out for days in order to achieve just that.⁸⁴

Yet, the history of the Loya Jirga (LJ) may not be as benevolently democratic as it is commonly depicted. Iranian scholar M. Jamil Hanifi contends that the historical use of the LJ has been misrepresented. He argues that the LJ is strictly a local decision-making body. In fact, he argues that the Loya Jirga is defined by its ability to exert tribal autonomy, and should not be used by any “external agency, such as the state.”⁸⁵ Thus, its introduction on the state level in the formation of the modern Afghan state in 1747 is an illegitimate use of the LJ. Hanifi explains that despite common Afghan perceptions of free and fair debate, the LJ has never exhibited such procedures. In fact, the entire basis for these perceptions is based on highly misinformed, fantasized reports by travelling Europeans witnessing the 1747 LJ. Hanifi looks at the 1924 LJ (for which the most significant documentation remains) and shows that its process merely operated to reinforce the existing elite power structure. He argues that this continued throughout the 20th century, over the course of eight subsequent Loya Jirgas. As for the 2002 emergency LJ, Hanifi says the following:

“For the first time in its history this tool of deception was exposed for what it really is—a consent-producing machinery constructed out of colonial misrepresentations unrelated to the Pashtuns, Afghan tribes, or tribalism, and independent of the wishes and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan.”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Rashid (2009) pp. 137

⁸⁵ M. Jamil Hanifi, “Editing the Past: Colonial Production of Hegemony through the ‘Loya Jirga’ in Afghanistan,” *Iranian Studies* 37, no. 2 (June 2004): 295-322

⁸⁶ *Ibid*

In this view, the use of the Loya Jirga in 2002 merely served to reinforce the neocolonial system of domination in Afghanistan. Its basis for use on the state level is based on Western ideals. This conflicts with its original foundations as a local, tribal device. Its perpetuated use has thus served to deceive the Afghan population. Much of this commentary is useful for theoretical discussions of the proper use of the LJ, but the fact is that Afghans generally accepted the LJ as a means of decision-making. In fact, though a number of Loya Jirgas had been held throughout the Soviet occupation, yet not one was considered representative or legitimate by the Afghan population. The last one that was held in any kind of esteem was in 1964 under the former King. Therefore, there was a precedent for expectations of legitimacy for the Loya Jirga.⁸⁷ As decision-making tool, it had a standard by which the one initiated by the international community could be legitimately judged.

As such, in 2002, the emergency LJ began by electing members through an indirect process supervised by the UN. Over 1,000 members were selected by voting participants throughout the country, but problems with warlords saw that these votes were neither free nor fair. There were rampant cases of threatening, harassing, and even kidnapping of proposed delegates. As a result, only a third of the delegates declared themselves to be acting as free and independent representatives.⁸⁸ The UN also tasked itself with selecting another 500 delegates to allow for women and expatriates to serve.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Rashid (2009) pp. 138

⁸⁸ Rashid (2009) pp. 139

⁸⁹ Rashid (2009) pp. 138

Afghans imagined that the ethnic imbalances in government perpetuated at Bonn would be the key issue to correct at the Loya Jirga proceedings.⁹⁰ The substantial Tajik presence in the Northern Alliance initiated fears of minority rule in the new government. At the beginning of the emergency Loya Jirga, the International Crisis Group cited the extreme Pashtun discontent that would result if they felt excluded from the process. One of the primary Pashtun wishes was to have former King Zahir be an integral figure.⁹¹ On the other hand, the Northern Alliance threatened to completely pull out of the process if Zahir Shah was granted the presidency. Once more, the pivotal circumstance was decided by the United States. US Special Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad judged it necessary to preclude the former King from returning to the seat of power in order to move forward with democracy in Afghanistan. Zahir Shah was promptly handed the ceremonial title of “Father of the Nation.”⁹² An unidentified delegate commented: “The unceremonious manner in which... [the former King] was shown the exit... created the impression that the Loya Jirga was a rubber stamp for the Panjshiri-dominated Interim Authority.”⁹³

Throughout the process, there were questions as to the extent of the authority that the proceedings commanded at their conclusion. Most notably, the US special advisor to Afghanistan interrupted debate to promote Karzai’s candidacy and dubious election procedures were implemented at the end of debate for the benefit of Karzai.⁹⁴ He also coaxed three Northern Alliance members that were in charge of the Defense, Foreign

⁹⁰ "The Loya Jirga: One Small Step Forward?" *International Crisis Group*. 16 May 2002. Web. 28 Dec. 2009.

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Rashid (2009) pp. 140

⁹³ Crews, Robert D., and Amin Tarzi. *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2008. Print. Pp. 289

⁹⁴ Suhrke (2009) pp. 127

Affairs, and Interior ministries into stepping down in order to appease Pashtuns.⁹⁵

Subsequently, many Afghans lost faith in a process they felt was being externally fixed and driven. Rasul Amin, the acting Education Minister, stated that “the perception that Karzai had betrayed his ethnic Pashtuns is now firmly in the minds of the Pashtuns.”⁹⁶

The marginalization of the Pashtuns led to a disillusionment with the process that culminated in greater Pashtun support for the Taliban in subsequent years. Although the Loya Jirga did allow the country a glimpse at political debate and offered promise for future discussion, overt external interference proved to marginalize popular sovereignty during the process. In its early stages of democratic transition, the Afghan people were increasingly becoming second fiddle to an international agenda.

The third step of the four step process laid by the Bonn Agreement was to ratify a constitution. In December 2003, a Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) was held in Kabul to do just that for Afghanistan. The 500-member delegation, selected under the authority of the UN, had established the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan by January 2004.⁹⁷ A strong president, backed by a bicameral legislature was set up as the central authority of the state. The president served a five-year term and was granted the power to appoint one-third of the members of the upper house of the legislature as well as national and district judges.⁹⁸ The legislature, or National Assembly, was comprised of the 249-seat Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) and the 102-seat Meshrano Jirga (House of the Elders). As a

⁹⁵ Rashid (2009) pp. 140

⁹⁶ "Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation." *International Crisis Group*. 5 Aug. 2003. Web. 30 Dec. 2009.

⁹⁷ Bowman and Dale (Dec 2009) pp. 10

⁹⁸ Rashid (2008) pp. 212

legislative body, the National Assembly was granted the power to enact laws, appropriate the budget, and impeach the president.⁹⁹

Despite the declaration of these formal rules, severe disdain for the process of the CLJ was evident. The *Financial Times (London)* reported the following:

“The behind-the-scenes deal making was evident on the first day when Mojaddedi was elected chairman, defeating Abdul Hafiz Mansoor, a newspaper editor and Karzai critic, 251 votes to 154. The decision is a pointer to the outcome of deliberations on the constitution itself.”¹⁰⁰

Afghanistan was widely believed to be on a pre-determined path that failed to resemble any significant democratic machinations. At this very early stage, the common sentiment around Afghanistan was that “all that matter[ed] in Afghanistan [was] a public relations victory, regardless of the completely catastrophic reality.”¹⁰¹

Most of the established enumerated powers had little effect in practice as the Afghan state was itself dependent on international aid and guidance. In fact, the framing of the constitution itself was subject to the demands of the international community. The final document succumbed to major international human rights conventions that stipulated, among other things, religious freedom and the outlawing of institutionalized gender and ethnic discrimination.¹⁰² Domestic aversion to these stipulations became most evident as several cases of religious conversion away from Islam were judged as criminal offenses to be met with most severe punishments such as death. The UN had to step in to prevent these punishments, which it felt to be morally wrong, from being carried out.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ "Freedom in the World." *Freedom House Index*. 2009. Web. 9 Nov. 2009.

¹⁰⁰ "Loya Jirga Dances to Karzai's Tune" *Financial Times (London)* December 23, 2003

¹⁰¹ Symonds, Peter. "Afghanistan's Loya Jirga Convened to Rubber-stamp an Anti-democratic Constitution." *World Socialist Website*. 18 Dec. 2003. Web. 2 Apr. 2010.

¹⁰² Rashid (2009) pp. 213

¹⁰³ Rashid (2009) pp. 345

Whether or not the Afghan society at large was ready for such expansive freedoms was disregarded as the international community provided a benchmark for Afghan politics. To conclude the deliberation of the CLJ, the first post-Taliban elections were scheduled to be conducted within a year. Yet, as I describe in the next section, the elections merely underscored the Afghan state's dependence on foreign assistance. In addition, problems of security, governance, and development continued to persist after the internationally lauded 2004-2005 round of presidential and parliamentary elections.

Individual Leaders and Mandates

Throughout the development process that was Bonn and the various Loya Jirgas, a number of individual characters came to distinguish the proceedings. The autonomy that many of these individuals exhibited was directly symptomatic of the structured external state-building effort. The US and UN empowered a handful of leaders because they could not effectively communicate their desired democratic machinations directly to the Afghan population. Zalmay Khalilzad, Hamid Karzai, and various Afghan "warlords" represent the primary recipients of international endorsement. On the other hand, Zahir Shah, Abdul Sattar Sirat, Abdul Haq, and Burhanuddin Rabbani were decidedly not favorites on the international stage. The latter group became effectively shut out of the political process by the corrupt processes of the former group founded in international support. Corrupt political leaders are a significant impediment to democracy. I believe that corruption is more inherent in top-down democratization because of the fact that individual leaders are necessarily afforded more autonomy as they mold institutions rather than the population at large.

Though there are certainly leaders in conventionally regarded democratic states that prove to exhibit corrupt and overall indecent behavior, they can at least lay claim to a mandate. Although I am not arguing that such leaders in ‘established’ democracies do not threaten the very foundations of their government, their doing so is not specifically relevant to my claim. I contend that the leaders described below pose and exhibit an exponentially greater threat to democracy because their very foundation of power lacks a democratic basis. Though one could argue that 40% voter participation in the United States is not necessarily conducive to providing mandates for representatives, I believe that is a different paper. In Afghanistan, the source of power for leaders was and is the international community. As a result, Afghan leaders are not accountable to the people which they govern. Moreover, because of the inability (or unwillingness) of the US and UN to properly construct institutions as well as civil society, individual leaders very much become institutions within themselves in Afghanistan. The authoritative significance of individuals in shaping Afghan government, and thus impeding democracy, has no greater embodiment than Zalmay Khalilzad.

From 2002 to 2005, U.S. Special Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad operated as the “viceroys” of Afghanistan. He was directly involved with the appointment of provincial governors, infrastructure development, security operations, and maintaining pro-American attitudes throughout Afghanistan.¹⁰⁴ The BBC succinctly reported that “no major decisions by the Afghan government have been made without his involvement.”¹⁰⁵ As an ambassador, Khalilzad’s capacity to dominate Afghanistan’s government seriously limited the ability of the state to be both democratic and sovereign. Any semblance of

¹⁰⁴ Kolhatkar and Ingalls (2006) pp. 129

¹⁰⁵ "Zalmay Khalilzad: US Power Broker." *BBC News*. 8 Jan. 2007. Web. 18 Feb. 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4736394.stm>.

democracy present in Afghanistan was completely undermined by the all-encompassing power of America's "viceroy." As a US ambassador, Khalilzad was responsible for acting in accordance foremost with US interests. This clashes with and derails a democratic process that necessitates Afghan determination. His interference with the process of the emergency Loya Jirga proved a significant determinant in the election of Hamid Karzai. During the proceedings, Khalilzad cut debate short and precluded the former King Zahir Shah from assuming the presidency.¹⁰⁶ Seema Samar, a prominent Afghan female delegate at the Loya Jirga, cried "This is not democracy, it is a rubber stamp. Everything has already been decided by the powerful ones."¹⁰⁷

Perhaps necessarily, the installing force is compelled to make sure things "go its way." This sentiment invariably leads to a domineering approach like that mentioned above. It is somewhat ironic that the quest for democracy is so great that it becomes so involved so that its very process prohibits democracy's establishment. Yet the US and UN placed so much emphasis on doing just that.

Abdul Haq, a prominent Pashtun and enemy of the Taliban, refused US support immediately after 9/11. Consequently, as he re-entered Afghanistan from Pakistan, he was captured and killed by the Taliban. Hamid Karzai embarked on a similar mission simultaneously, but had the backing of the US military; his survival is well documented.¹⁰⁸ Now, I certainly am not suggesting that the US was complicit in Abdul Haq's death. Instead, I provide the contrast of Haq and Karzai in order to highlight the significant role that the US has to play in Afghan state development. The leaders of

¹⁰⁶ Rashid (2006) pp. 137

¹⁰⁷ "Tempers Flare at Loya Jirga." *BBC News*. 12 June 2002. Web. 18 Feb. 2010.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2039665.stm>.

¹⁰⁸ Rotberg (2007) pp. 4

Afghanistan, out of necessity for both survival and political power, must ally themselves with the United States. Along with this alliance comes the control and desires elicited by the United States. At this point, the Afghan leaders become incapable of serving as democratic representatives of Afghanistan. Accountability, and sources of authority in a democracy are supposed to rest with the people being governed; not some external entity. Haq's case is an example of a leader not supported by the United States who ends up dead. This is a primary example of how the power of the US was more significant in determining the course of the Afghan state than the Afghans themselves, thus removing Afghan self-determination from the process.

As long as Karzai is in power, his regime exemplifies international pervasiveness. The Afghans were stripped of the right to grant the mandate to Karzai. A mandate for rule is necessary in democracy because it effectively transfers power from the people to the elected official. Democracy's power is theoretically retained with the people. Representative democracy works on this premise. Therefore, it is sufficient alone to point to the Bonn process which allowed Karzai the false platform of distinguished leader. But in Karzai's case, Bonn is certainly not the only exceptional example. The rampant fraud and uncertainty of his official election also lend credence to the claim that he does not retain a mandate from the Afghan people.

As we will see, the Karzai government has failed to independently manage elections. In addition, the legislature has been unable to provide for its own national security, appropriate a national budget and control the illegal production and trade of opium. Instead, these activities have been coordinated and carried out by international forces. For instance, in 2005, the World Bank determined that 90 percent of the Afghan

national budget was dependent on foreign aid.¹⁰⁹ A legislature that has no authority over its own budget effectively loses its mandate. Foreign donors control where the money is allocated, thereby dictating policy. Over three-fourths of the aid received by Afghanistan is not administered by its domestic institutions.¹¹⁰ The National Assembly is thus rendered a hollow body with no sustained ability to represent the Afghan people.

Security

Much like the Bonn Agreement, the Tokyo conference, in early 2002, provided a benchmark for external invasiveness. The arrangement delegated specific state roles for international roles in Afghanistan. Responsibilities for certain sectors of Afghanistan government and society were divided among the five main international state actors as follows: United States for the army, Germany for the police, Italy for the judiciary, the United Kingdom for counternarcotics, and Japan for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program.¹¹¹ The DDR program has been responsible for disarming over 60,000 combatants in Afghanistan. The basic functions of the Afghan state rest in the hands of the international community. Independently, Afghan institutions have little to no capacity to perform basic state functions. Each of the above five countries is responsible for integral parts of the law and order structure in Afghanistan. Ideally, the countries would play a facilitative role in which their duties are eventually taken over by Afghans. However, such a transition has not happened.¹¹² The guidelines

¹⁰⁹ World Bank. *Afghanistan. Managing Public Finance for Development*, December 2005, p.94.

¹¹⁰ Riechmann, Deb. "Afghan Officials Want to Direct More Foreign Aid." *Yahoo! News*. The Associated Press, 13 Apr. 2010. Web. 13 Apr. 2010.

¹¹¹ Bowman and Dale (Dec 2009) pp. 12

¹¹² Rotberg (2007) pp. 4

established in Tokyo have failed to develop independent Afghan sustainability, and further contributed to its security crisis.

I must underscore that the inability of Afghanistan to provide for its own security is not necessarily linked with democracy specifically. Instead, it is more generally indicative of its deficiencies in state capacity. A state unable to monopolize the use of force within its jurisdiction does not fit within the basic definitional parameters of statehood. The Afghan state has continuously struggled with both the basic functions of sovereign and democratic government. Democracy, being a specific type of rule, does not purposefully exist without sovereignty. And conversely, sovereignty, broadly encompassing a variety of types of rule, can and does exist without democracy. I am primarily concerned with democracy, but sovereignty certainly affects the development of democracy. For this reason, it is necessary to link the two in my discussion. Upon doing so, I conclude that it is impossible to regard Afghanistan as a functioning democracy and hard to conceptualize it as one moving toward sovereign democracy. Without external intervention, would Afghanistan be a less-failed state? Probably not, but that is of no concern to my claim; because with external intervention, there is no chance for democracy. The degree to which the target state is made to be less of a failed state is not indicative of democratic progress.

U.S. policy shifts concerning troop levels and other metrics of commitment are the most significant determinants of Afghan security. Yet the situation proves a bit more complex in practice. For example, a more concentrated U.S. effort has added to the resolve of the Taliban.¹¹³ Thus, while heightened US military commitment in the short term may enhance security, it may in fact contribute to its long term volatility. Yet it must

¹¹³ Rotberg (2007) pp. 79

be noted that the Afghan National Army (ANA) has been credited with increased involvement in counterinsurgency operations over the past few years. In 2008, ANA-led combined security operations increased to 62% from 49% the previous year.¹¹⁴ This cited improvement has led many Afghans to regard the ANA as Afghanistan's only functional national institution.¹¹⁵ Reiterate that US responsible for overall management. Theme

Preventing violence and maintaining security are as much a civil society problem as they are an institutional problem. That is, both the state and the general population are culpable to such deficiencies. This is true for holding successful elections as well as the aggregate mission of establishing democracy. Both sides have a part to play, and while it is debatable as to which proves more significant, I point out that each is sufficiently handicapped during the course of external state-building.

Civil Society Development

The international mission in Afghanistan has largely been dominated by propping up institutions. This policy has seen it fit to confine civil society to a secondary role in Afghan's democracy development. I describe the consequences of this policy below. Election problems, continued violence, warlords, Taliban. Later, I address the question of whether an international policy concentrated on civil society development rather than institutional development would prove more successful in democracy development. For now, I consign the following concerns: How has civil society development been neglected (i.e. PRTs), and why that poses a serious problem to prospects for Afghan democracy (i.e. successful elections). My analysis revolves around the concern that if there is no substantial base of informed people with access and influence to the state, then

¹¹⁴ Bowman and Dale (Dec 2009) pp. 38

¹¹⁵ Bowman and Dale (Dec 2009) pp. 39

there is no government accountability. And once there is no government accountability, there is no democracy.

The international commitment to “civil society” programs enacted through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), and civilian agencies has demonstrated the complexity of installing democracy. The Afghan government regards many of these operations as a subversive force in its own quest to manage civil administration at local levels. In 2003, about two thousand international NGOs were performing various operations in Afghanistan relating to economic and social development.¹¹⁶ A significant amount of aid money is transferred to Afghanistan through these NGOs, and this soon became a point of contention with the Afghan government. The Afghan government argued that in order to develop the governing capacity of Afghan institutions, there had to be more direct government presence. In many instances, NGOs trumped the ability of the supposed authority of the Afghan government in providing services for the people of Afghanistan. This circumstance drew authority and legitimacy away from the Afghan state and toward these NGOs and their donors. PRTs, though more of a military outfit, also supplanted the writ of the Afghan government around the country. Though their intent was to show the nationwide reconstruction coordination capability of the Afghan government,¹¹⁷ they were often devoid of such management and left to rely on local cooperation and the assistance of regional “warlords.”¹¹⁸

International complicity with regional strongmen certainly affected the progress of civil society, which in turn, impeded democracy. Yet, we must understand that this

¹¹⁶ Suhrke (2009) pp. 116

¹¹⁷ Bowman and Dale (Dec 2009)

¹¹⁸ Rashid (2008) pp. 198

“warlord appeasement was not an indication of lackluster international commitment to democracy. Instead, it merely represented policy preference where civil society could conceivably be comprised in favor of an institutional focus. Ishmael Khan, the former governor of Herat, and Mohammed Fahim, the former Defense Minister in the Northern Alliance, are some of the most notorious “warlords” to have shown their ability to intercept international aid to disburse themselves, setup illegal checkpoints to collect tolls, monopolize the use of force in their respective regions, and intimidate voters and conduct election fraud.¹¹⁹

Elections

Election timetables stemming from the Bonn Agreement and the pair of Loya Jirgas set mid-2004 as a deadline for the holding of presidential, parliamentary, and provincial elections. Afghanistan, however, was not ready for this specific timeframe. Indeed, this sentiment was echoed by reports that claimed over a third of Afghanistan was unfit for elections. Registration concerns, fraudulent ballots, insufficient resources, and local intimidation threatened to drain the process of legitimacy.¹²⁰ Parliamentary and provincial elections ended up being delayed until September 2005. However, the presidential election was only marginally delayed to October 2004, coincidentally coinciding with U.S. President George Bush’s re-election campaign. Substantial international oversight saw that the presidential election proceeded relatively smoothly. Despite allegations of fraud and strongman intimidation, there was a generally agreed upon 80% voter turnout.¹²¹ But does this relatively high turnout actually substantiate the

¹¹⁹ Kolkahtar pp. 111

¹²⁰ Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, “Afghan Elections: The Great Gamble,” Kabul, November 2003.

¹²¹ Katzman (Dec 2009) pp. 10

claim that democratic progress had been made in Afghanistan? The number provides little insight on the functionality of the Afghan government. Taking into account the degree to which the election process was operated by the international community, the number reveals only a lack of governing capacity in Afghanistan after three years of transitional regime. The time following the 2004 presidential election proved evidentiary of the Afghan state's deficiencies. As international attention subsided as a result of "successful" presidential elections, lingering problems were exacerbated.

The international community had demonstrated its capacity to prop up an election process in 2004. There was no semblance of an Afghan election, more like an international exhibition. This point was made clear in 2009 when the international community made inroads on removing its façade. Turnout in Kandahar province was estimated at a low of 7 percent and a high of 15. There were several thousand 'observers' monitoring and intimidating voters at the polls. In some instances, this observation devolved into the selling of votes.¹²² In similar fashion to the 2005 presidential election, there were significant registration problems. Afghans were able to obtain multiple voter cards, allowing them to individually cast multiple votes. In addition, technological mishaps precluded many voter cards from being properly invalidated. Thus, individuals used the same voting card to cast multiple votes. Furthermore, the indelible ink whose purpose it was to physically mark voters to prevent recast ballots was found to be easily washable. The integrity of the pollsters also came into question as they stuffed ballots and invalidated votes that did not coincide with their political leanings.¹²³ After several weeks

¹²² Van Linschoten, Alex S. "Go Tell the World About Our Fake Election." *The AfPak Channel*. Foreign Policy, 21 Aug. 2009. Web. 22 Aug. 2009.

¹²³ Van Linschoten, Alex S. "Go Tell the World About Our Fake Election." *The AfPak Channel*. Foreign Policy, 21 Aug. 2009. Web. 22 Aug. 2009.

of tallying votes, the 50% victory threshold had not decidedly been met, and two contenders remained. Incumbent President Karzai and challenger Abdullah Abdullah negotiated a secret agreement to avoid another round of elections.¹²⁴ In the end, the result seemed fitting: a corrupt ending to a corrupt process.

Currently, there are parliamentary elections scheduled to be conducted in May 2010. However, due to the uproar over the presidential election inconsistencies, there are suggestions of postponement.¹²⁵ This story reads awfully familiar to the one heard prior to the first round of presidential parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005. Electoral progress has quite effectively evaded Afghanistan. This is a problem especially in Afghanistan's development because it has no successful election to emulate. There is no foundation to build from. As the new political round of elections approaches, the familiar problems become embedded in the very function of elections.

This fact is demonstrative of the failure of the external state-building project to instantiate widespread civic participation. Institutional focus creates a figure head, a legislative body and the like, but engenders no belief with the people. Therefore, you have institutions and government that do not match the current desires of the people. Apathy and outright disrespect when it comes time to hold institutional events such as elections are expected consequences. The institutional processes that are supposed to be upheld are not sufficiently compatible with the people because they have not been determined by the people. Thus, there should be no surprise when irregularities such as those mentioned above define an election; and a further disregard for governmental rules

¹²⁴ Tristam, Pierre. "Karzai Wins Dirty as Abdullah Quits Run-Off in Afghan Election." *About.com*. 31 Oct. 2009. Web. 6 Feb. 2010.

¹²⁵ Riechmann, Deb, and Rahim Faiez. "Should Afghanistan's Next Election Be Delayed?" *ABC News*. The Associated Press, 25 Dec. 2009. Web.

and regulations in general. Perhaps the most common example of this civic disobedience is the illegal drug trade in Afghanistan.

By 2006, opium production and trade accounted for nearly half of the Afghanistan's gross domestic product.¹²⁶ In 2007, Afghanistan had become responsible for 93 percent of the world's heroin. Operating in direct violation of state law, drug traders exposed the enforcement deficiencies of the Afghan government. Coinciding with the escalated drug trade, the Taliban insurgency gained strength. Both of these issues were and continue to be managed by the international community. Beyond the inability of the Afghanistan government to enforce its law as any proper state should be able to, the illegal trade of opium illustrates the disconnect between the government and the people. A significant portion of Afghans deliberately disobey the established state rule of law. Either they do not feel that the government is sufficiently representative of their needs (thus what they do should not be regulated by their government) or more simply that their actions are not beholden to anyone but themselves. Neither of these stipulations is copasetic with democracy because the people and its representatives fundamentally oppose one another. This is the consequence of external, rather than internal/domestic, political determination.

In fact, a significant part of the Afghan population is shut out of Afghan politics. The extent to which the Taliban should be included is a major determinant of civil society development. The United States, because of its primary stated goal of fighting terrorism, has largely sought to extricate the Taliban from Afghanistan's institutions. In fact, the Taliban were framed more or less as one in the same with al-Qaeda by the Bush administration. Even now, that the Taliban are increasingly being realized as unable to

¹²⁶ Rashid (2009) pp. 329

fully suppress, the part that they play is dependent on the United States. So, this example serves to illustrate two separate, but equally important points to my claim. The first is that the continuous shutting out of the Taliban, a large and politically relevant force in Afghanistan, albeit with violent tendencies (but what political force is not now or once had not been violent in Afghanistan?), is effectually shut out of the political process. The second is that the fate of Taliban involvement rests with the United States and even Pakistan more so than an independently minded Afghanistan.

For instance, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has recently been cited for detaining members of the Taliban that are most receptive to Afghan government collaboration.¹²⁷ This has halted any progress of reconciliation between the Taliban and the Afghan government. Once more, a pivotal role in Afghanistan's democracy is usurped by external actors.

The DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) program has its controversies surrounding the reintegration of these combatants.¹²⁸ Concern arises over the extent to which the Taliban should be part of democracy in Afghanistan. Notably, former UN special advisor Lakhdar Brahimi and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan disagreed about this very issue when contemplating the absence of Taliban representatives at the Bonn discussions.¹²⁹ The former argues the case that the Taliban still constitute something of the Afghan social structure, and thus demanded at least the offer of inclusion and constructive dialogue. Annan contends that the Taliban are inherently opposed to democracy and the so-called marketplace of ideas; so their

¹²⁷ Partlow, Joshua, and Karen DeYoung. "Afghan Officials Say Pakistan's Arrest of Taliban Leader Threatens Peace Talks." *The Washington Post* 10 Apr. 2010. Web.

¹²⁸ Rashid (2008) pp. 209

¹²⁹ Rashid (2008) pp. 104

proposed inclusion in the state-building process would prove counterproductive. The question of inclusion is indicative of many of the policy questions facing the international community. How can democracy be achieved in seemingly undemocratic ways?

Top-Down and Future Policy

Clearly the Afghan government suffers from a lack of legitimacy primarily because of its extreme dependence on international assistance. Afghanistan is overly dependent on international community to support security, governance and development.¹³⁰ And to the degree that this is the case, one becomes hard pressed in determining the future of Afghanistan. If the entire government is founded on principles that are seen as illegitimate to the Afghan people at large, then the international path to democracy that Afghanistan is currently on leads to nowhere. This is, in short, my initial claim; that external state-building is invasive to the point that domestic choice is eliminated and the subsequent proposed democratic government lacks a legitimate foundation. At each level of its society, Afghanistan has demonstrated that it is not independently moving toward democracy. The international community has only shown its ability to create an illusion of democratic capability by running elections and erecting hollow institutions. This process has limited the development of civic society, a necessary component of democracy, and thus reduced the government in Afghanistan to nothing more than a client state.

As described, the Afghanistan government is deficient of both state capacity and democracy. Furthermore, at every level of Afghan government, their sovereignty is violated by a domineering international presence. This presence effectively acts as the primary decision maker in Afghanistan, thus precluding its democratic development.

¹³⁰ Bowman and Dale (Dec 2009) pp. 12

What can be done to alleviate these problems? Can the U.S. affect change in state capacity better than it can in democratic reform? My answer is yes. I emphasize the Bonn Agreement once more because its formulation, which largely determined the course of the Afghan government, was wholly undemocratic. From 2001 to 2008, the United States largely concentrated its state-building efforts on erecting institutions. The Bonn Agreement, series of constitutional loya jirgas were had in a mad dash to construct a government for the world to see. During this time, the United States developed a notorious rapport with regional 'warlords' that served to undermine any sense of liberal democratic social change in Afghanistan. This poses a problem because the warlords inhibit the free and fair expression of the people that reside in their sector. Strongman politics is directly antithetical to democracy. Some argue that United States complicity with the warlords is indicative of a lack of commitment to democratic government. However, a steadfast American commitment to democracy relegated its support of warlords to a mere policy preference. Moreover, public critique of American 'warlord policy' engineered a change of philosophy for the new administration. Its efforts have been marked by a renewed concentration on civil society reforms. But is this any better? An in earnest civil society certainly allows for greater sustainability than the semblance of hollow institutions. For this reason, I contend that a concentration on developing civic programs would most assist democratic state-building. Yet, the degree to which civil society is in fact a participatory, sovereign element determines whether it is in fact a significant factor in the political process. Such a circumstance is, like institutions, contingent on the invasiveness of the external state-builder. But since civil society is not as easily propped up to resemble its ideal, the facilitative role of the external state-builder

seems more feasible. Problems still reside in the interim while civil society is supposed to develop, and this presents the most significant impediment to this method. A lack of institutions may yet preclude the development of civil society. From this circular debate, my conclusion is that democracy is had from within.

Democracy in Afghanistan has failed precisely because of the external state-building effort undertaken to initiate its very occurrence. The inherent invasiveness that external actors exhibit in their attempt to foster democratic government precludes the necessary democratic component of domestic choice. I have shown the specific ways in which domestic populations are excluded from the state formation process in Afghanistan. For one, there is a lack of institutional ownership. That is, the UN and US have sufficiently created institutions that cannot effectively operate in any sovereign capacity, and bear no responsibility to the Afghan population of which it claims to represent. Similarly, the individual leaders in Afghanistan lack a mandate from the Afghan people. Their “election” to positions of power was significantly, if not completely, determined by outside forces. Another consequence of the exclusion of the domestic population is the inability of the people to sufficiently imprint its desires and needs on the government. In turn, the policies of the state struggle to match the preferences of the people. This leads to a deterioration of respect for state decisions on the part of the population at large. Herein, the state demonstrates a lack of capacity to enforce its rule of law. So, we see that democratic governance as well as governance in general is negatively affected by external intervention. In sum, the state lacks the legitimacy necessary for democratic process. And this fact is evident in common participatory functions such as elections. In Afghanistan, the contrast between the

elections of 2004 and 2009 illustrate the dependence on external action for the process to retain any semblance of functionality. Such dependency is simply not sufficient for democracy.

The framework of external invasiveness and democratic process that I argue under is generally applicable to other cases in the post-Cold War period. Similar problems of establishing democracy have been evidenced in Sudan, Bosnia, and Iraq. The pivotal question then becomes: Is Afghanistan the worst case scenario for democratic development or the best? A case can be made that because democracy never had a solid foundation in the first place that the odds were against democratic development in the first place. Yet, as I have shown, the chance for that development was never granted. From the beginning, Afghan democracy existed only in the misguided illusions of the international community. Yet, Afghanistan also had all the more reason for success because of the concerted international attention. At the dawn of a new era of international terrorism, post 9/11, and the start of the 21st century, Afghanistan was the flagship for external state-building. There was heavy international investment in Afghanistan. Moreover, a plethora of international support and consensus was built behind the state-building project. But even the best plan that the international community could muster miserably failed to install democracy in Afghanistan. This demonstrates the structural flaws in the present external state-building plan. In fact, I have argued that the myriad of problems plaguing democracy in Afghanistan have been exacerbated by the increased international attention and intervention.