

**Title: The nonfulfillment of democracy in Afghanistan**

**Why has the realization of democracy failed in Afghanistan within the  
last two decades?**



Bachelor thesis in political science  
University of Stavanger

Candidate number: 256105

Supervisor: Murat Yildirim

Submitted date: 11.05.2022

Word count: 9217

## **Abstract**

The thesis's aim involves explaining why the realization of democracy failed in Afghanistan during the last 20 Years. Afghanistan is a nation experiencing tension and insecurity because of the lack of peace in the region; democracy has been a problem in Afghanistan because of the emergency of various terrorist groups. The introduction is the first section of the thesis. The section explains how democracy has been affected in Afghanistan. The introduction consists of the study objectives on how the realization of democracy failed in Afghanistan during the last 20 Years. The paper consists of the literature review section. In this part, the researcher analyses past materials concerning democracy. Various terminologies related to democracy are defined and expounded in this section. The theory of planned behavior is also explained in this section and its connection with the democracy issue. Democracy remains an elusive prospect in Afghanistan because the Taliban continue to use the threat of violence. When political leaders make policies to control people's behavior in a nation, this can contribute to the national building. The methodology is the other section in this thesis. The researcher explains how the data was collected through a systematic review method. PRISMA model was used in the study to collect and evaluate articles that relate to the research topic. Discussion and analysis form the other part of the thesis. The research collected explains that the failed democratization process in Afghanistan points to ethnic domination, injustice, and endemic political corruption. The top-down state rebuilding approach failed to achieve democracy because it lacked support from local groups. Islamic culture contributed significantly to the failed democratization and nation-building. Effective policies which protect humans and enhance good governance can contribute to the democracy which has failed in Afghanistan for many years.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	4
1.1 Fight Against Taliban .....	5
1.2 Role of NATO in Afghanistan .....	5
1.3 Role of the International Community .....	6
2. Theoretical Perspective .....	7
2.1 National Building .....	7
2.2 The Essence of Democracy .....	9
2.3 A Theory of the Democratization.....	10
2.4 Criteria for Democratization .....	11
2.5 Democratic Culture .....	11
2.6 Civil Culture .....	13
2.7 Religion and Democracy .....	15
2.8 Religions Incompatible with Democracy .....	15
3. Methodology.....	16
3.1 Research Method .....	17
3.2 Research Design .....	17
3.4 Data Collection .....	19
3.5 Ethical Considerations .....	20
4. Discussion and Analyzation .....	20
5. Summary and Conclusion .....	25
References.....	27

## 1. Introduction

2. 1. The US troops with its NATO allies invaded Afghanistan after the saddened and catastrophically terrorist attack on 11th September 2001. The main purpose of the invasion was to eradicate Al Qaeda and defeat the fundamentalist regime of the Taliban. Following the fall of the Taliban regime, a new government was established with the support of the international community, and this new government shaped a new phase of the political structure in Afghanistan. Since December 2001, the international coalition forces struggled to maintain peace, security, and stability in Afghanistan. Between 2002 and 2021 the government of Afghanistan has gotten outstanding support from international coalition forces in terms of advancing security, building democratic institutions, fighting corruption, building physical infrastructure, and supporting women's rights. In the two decades since, so much treasure has been spent on fixing a fragile state, so many lost their lives for bringing peace and so many others were wounded for defending human rights and democratic values. Nevertheless, the Afghan people experienced a fragile democracy for the last two decades, but even this fragile democracy did not improve. Lack of accountability and loyalty among the Afghan leaders hampered the safeguarding of peace and democratization process in Afghanistan. On the contrary, during the last days of the US-troops withdrawal process the insecurity, war, and bloodshed intensified, the anti-governmental insurgency amplified their insurgency activities, suppressed human rights, and shattered the law of the state. Simultaneously, the US forces with their NATO alliance withdraw irresponsibly from Afghanistan, the fragile state of Afghanistan falls, and consequently, the Taliban claimed victory against the US invasion on the 15th of August 2021. Finally, after two decades of the disastrous war in the territory of Afghanistan, neither peace was obtained, nor that fragile democracy endured. I have contemplated writing my bachelor assignment thesis about the fiasco of the realization of democracy in Afghanistan. Broadly speaking, I am converging the problem over this question: *Why has the realization of democracy failed in Afghanistan within the last two decades?*

## **1.1 Fight Against Taliban**

The United States government played a significant role in overthrowing the Taliban. The United States and its allies invaded and scattered the Taliban in 2001, defeating the Al-Qaida regime. After being overthrown, most of the Taliban supporters scattered. In Afghanistan, the presence of U.S. forces provided the Taliban with an anti-colonialist rallying cry for recruits. The United States and NATO have spent billions of dollars equipping Afghanistan forces to handle the Taliban and overpower their leadership.

Afghanistan forces also contributed to the fight against the Taliban by slowing their momentum. The Afghan forces have been on the frontline in the fight against the Taliban. However, their action also affected most Afghans as the fire exchange resulted in many casualties. Furthermore, the Taliban have murdered any captured Afghan force member to reduce their operations against Taliban rule. In addition, the Afghan forces lacked adequate personnel to support the fight against the Taliban.

The Taliban has been scattered and overthrown because their leadership is brutal and repressive. The 1996 to 2001 regime involved repressive practices and harsh interpretations of Islamic law. The Taliban rule did not recognize women's rights; they were barred from education and forced to wear clothing that completely covered their bodies. Oppression towards women and girls contributed to the Taliban's downfall; their leadership bars girls from school and women from working outside their homes (Kalnitski, 2021). The Taliban was also overthrown because of its harsh ruling, especially when interpreting Islamic law. Under the Taliban rule, women have no freedom movement outside their homes; they have compulsory dress codes and have no access to employment and education. The Taliban leadership focuses on restricting the right to peace.

## **1.2 Role of NATO in Afghanistan**

NATO plays a significant role in Afghanistan, especially after freedom from Taliban leadership, especially during the reconstruction process. One of NATO's roles in Afghanistan involves providing security. The international community deployed NATO forces to enable the Afghan government to provide security for the state and protect the state from terrorist activities. Since 2003, NATO has been assisting the Afghan government in exercising and extending its power and authority across the country (Rynning, 2020). The organization has also paved the way for rebuilding and effective

governance in Afghanistan. In addition, NATO has provided security to Afghanistan through the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force ISAF.

Afghanistan has enjoyed peace due to NATO's intervention to maintain peace through the ISAF. The security organization is an essential component of the international community's involvement in Afghanistan, assisting the Afghan authorities in providing security and stability and creating the conditions for peace in the nation. Security Council Resolutions mandates NATO to maintain peace in members states through the ISAFs (Connah,2021). The main goal for maintaining peace involves enabling the Afghan government to develop a secure and stable environment. Therefore, the forces collaborate with the Afghan National Security Forces to execute security and stability operations.

NATO also provided training to the Afghan police force. The ISAF takes the lead role in training the Afghan police to reform the country's police force. The training allowed Afghan forces to gain skills and tactics for defending their country against the enemy. The organization also provides mentoring services where ISAF operatives offer non-police skills. The ISAF also participated in patrol operations. The mentoring operation occurred in coordination centres and security committees. NATO commissions ISAF to offer military support to operations share information and informal mentoring and guidance (Rynning 2020). The IASF assists the Afghan police at the tactical level through support and advice. The forces ensure peace sustainability by disarming individuals who own weapons illegally.

### **1.3 Role of the International Community**

The international community plays a significant role in helping Afghanistan rebuild its nation after devastation due to the Taliban attack. The community enables a country to build peace and stability after a terrorist attack. One of the roles of the international community involves building democratic institutions in Afghanistan (Connah, 2021). Democracy remains an elusive prospect in Afghanistan because the Taliban continue to use the threat of violence. The country requires a stable democratic institution, and the international community plays a lead role in ensuring the Afghan people achieve democracy.

Afghanistan requires the protection of civil rights. The international community also plays a considerable role in protecting civil rights. The international community ensures civil rights protection by establishing a local structure that guarantees the citizens

equal social opportunities and legal protection, notwithstanding race, religion, or other features. Afghan people require protection of political rights because the terrorist attacks destroyed basic structures that govern politics. The international community plays a significant role in establishing local structures that facilitate stronger acquaintances between citizens and representatives to legitimize the political processes (Connah, 2021). International law recognizes and protects the rights of women and minorities. The international community requires demonstrating the political will and cooperation to protect the rights of women and minorities in Afghanistan.

## **2. Theoretical Perspective**

A review of literature consists of analyzing past research concerning the research topic. Theories and past studies get evaluated in this section to show their connection with the studied subject. The section aims to explain the reasons for the failure to realize democracy failed in Afghanistan during the last 20 years. The section consists of the theoretical review, which explains various topics' theories. The basic information explained involves democracy and its failure in Afghanistan for the last 20 years. Various theories of democracy are discussed in the section.

### **2.1 National Building**

National building involves constructing a national identity using the state's power. According to research, the national building involves using armed force to enhance democracy after a period of conflict (Connah, 2021). Nations experience conflict at different levels. There are some countries where conflict occurs in specific communities and locations. However, in other nations, conflict may occur within the whole nation. Terrorism is one of the causes of conflict. Nation-building involves the unintended consequence of national policies. When political leaders make policies to control people's behavior in a nation, this can contribute to the national building.

There are various considerations when making policies that enhance the national building. National identity is an important consideration because it influences the policies made. A country makes policies that focus on the political, social, and economic context. Therefore, this leads to the need for a national identity which helps in showing the type of people living in that nation and their culture.

Cultural factors are some of the elements which form the national identity. Every country has its own culture, which influences how they do things. For example, most of the people in Afghanistan are Muslims; hence get guidance from their religious practices. Therefore, when developing policies, the government considers the people's national identity to develop laws that do not contradict the people's beliefs.

When building the nation, people interact in different ways. A Social network theory is a study of how individuals, institutions, or people network with each in a network. The most prominent individual element in a social network is the networks, while the smallest detail is the actors (Cropanzano et al., 2018). Since networks are made of actors and the specific relationships between those actors, networks can be assumed of neighborhoods. In a social network theory, the actors who are sometimes referred to as the nodes may be organizations, companies, or individuals. They are usually the smallest in a network setup.

Social network theory consists of conceited networks, socio-centric networks, and the open-network system. In Egocentric or arrogant network type, single nodes or individuals, for example, a sole company which is the node being connected to all its suppliers. On the other hand, socio-centric networks are closed networks by nature (Cropanzano et al., 2018). In an open-system network, boundary lines are not well defined, making this type of network the most difficult to understand. One significant example of this type of network is the connection between institutions or corporations. In social networks theory, scientists are mainly concerned with the interactions between the constituent members of the network setup.

In social network theory, scientists seek to understand why individuals interact, how they interact, and the levels of closeness in such interactions. Considering that there are many types of relationships, such as reciprocal and direct relationships, they can be narrowed down to strong and weak ties. Strong links are whereby individuals contact one another, while in weak ties, individuals barely communicate, and they would even be surprised when contacted (Cropanzano et al., 2018). According to research, strong ties are more valuable than weak ties. Social network theory helps explain how individuals are connected and how members relate in a group, and this is one of its major strengths.



## 2.2 The Essence of Democracy

The essence of democracy involves the cornerstone which holds democracy in a nation. Every country runs well because of the democracy when doing things. But, according to Jalil (2021), there are many nations where the citizens do not enjoy the democracy required. Electoral participation is one of the areas in which democracy is required. In this practice, people weigh the costs of voting against their benefits.

The essence of democracy requires people to have the freedom to control their lives by doing what is required in society. The social exchange theory is one of the most important concepts to understand the essence of democracy. George Homans established social exchange theory, and it suggests that social behavior is the outcome of an exchange course. According to this theory, the primary purpose of a relationship is to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. Players or the people in a relationship usually weigh the associated potential benefits and risks in a social relationship. Usually, when the associated risks outweigh the reward people expect, a connection is terminated or abandoned (Jalil, 2021). According to this theory, various associations are generally built on certain quantitative conditions of giving and take. However, such conditions do not necessarily mean that the people in such relationships are necessary.

Social exchange theory typically suggests that the treasuring of the expected reimbursements and the costs associated with each kind of relationship determines if the players will choose to go on or not with the connection. This theory analyzes the refunds and charges of a social rapport. According to this theory, costs are the things that one sees as negativities in a relationship (Yin, 2018). Such things which a person may see as negativity while staking at a relationship are money, time, and to some extent, effort. For example, a business setup is whereby an employee borrows money from the employer. In this case, the employer may find this a high cost of maintaining an employee.

Jalil (2021) explains how the Afghanistan people risk their lives as they vote for leaders who do not support democracy. The main aim of democracy is to bring people together through national activities. However, when a government fails to achieve this, it breaches democracy. People have the right to property, life, and liberty. When the government or a political system deprives the people of these rights, there is no democracy.

The international community has been a key player in enhancing democracy in various nations. Countries like Afghanistan have been experiencing insecurity caused by

political unrest in the Middle East. The issues occur because of the lack of democracy because of the government laws and regulations which target some people. Carson and Elstub (2019) explain that politicians in those nations are only interested in benefiting themselves, leaving them to suffer. The international community has failed to enhance democracy in those nations because of the personal interest of some diplomats.

### 2.3 A Theory of the Democratization

Democracy is a method used by a country or institution to make political decisions where some individuals gain power or leadership through the decision of people's votes. Democracy entails the existence of equal political rights in a country. Democracy political systems allow citizens to create their preferences, reveal their preferences to the government and other citizens, and consider their preferences equally on the government acts (Clark et al., 2017). However, no country can fully recognize democracy as an ideal system.

Ideal democracy has the following characteristics and essence: Election of leaders and other officials is done through free and fair elections. All citizens of legal age have the right to make decisions and vote in elections. Adult still has the right to run for elections. The elected leaders have the constitutional power to control government decisions (Jalil, 2021). Every citizen has the right to join parties of their choice and independent association. People also have the freedom to express themselves on political affairs.

Democratization is a process through which a country or society embraces democracy. Historically Political developments to establish democracy began in the 12 centuries before industrialization. Industrialization created social and economic forces which facilitated the development of modern society. The historical development of democracy was also affected by the development of national identity. Strong communities could bind people together, which enabled faster industrialization and political development. Democratization has established accountability for elections, law, and leadership and has developed civil society (Jalil, 2021).

Democratic civil society is characterized by high participation in institutional and national elections. There is also a high degree of competition for various political positions. Ideal democratic civil society is associated with: the establishment of the rule of law whereby no person in the society is above the law. There is an establishment of accountability for those who govern the society, and there are also free and fair elections.

The democracy of a society or country depends on civil culture and religion (Clark et al., 2017).

## 2.4 Criteria for Democratization

Democratization involves the transition to a more political regime. A nation that wants to achieve democratization develops towards democracy by making various changes in its political system. Clark et al. (2017) explained the origin of the modern democratic culture. The procedures which people use in the modern democratic culture are old. According to research, a country can achieve democratization by moving from the authoritarian nature towards achieving full democracy (Skaaning, 2020). Likewise, the nations in a semi-authoritarian political system can achieve democratization by adopting a more accommodating political system that will involve the citizens in the government.

When achieving democratization, there is a need for freedom of speech. People interact with one another in different ways. The advancement of technology contributed to better-achieving democracy by allowing people to express themselves. According to research, various elements are used in defining democracy. The first element involves selecting and replacing the government through free and fair polls (Skaaning, 2020). People in a democratic society engage in elections to select their leaders who will represent them in the national government. In developing nations like the African states, many elections face irregularities that affect the free and fair. Research explains that many influential leaders deny the citizens democracy by rigging elections.

## 2.5 Democratic Culture

Democratic culture involves the desire and capability of individuals to participate in government and public affairs which affect them. People may engage in these affairs together or individually. The people's desire to come together and achieve a peaceful and united nation is the beginning of democracy. Dictatorship is the main threat to democracy. According to Clark et al. (2017), a civic culture consists of being ready to participate in national programs. Communication and persuasion form part of a civic culture where people accept and moderate change in the political system. When people come together, they express themselves by pointing out their worth and how they like to get treated by the political system; this involves changing the policies which have no value to the nation and adopting the ones which enhance democracy and growth among the people.

Democratic culture is achieved through attitude and behavioral change, which bring people together to participate in public affairs. However, in the last two decades, technological advancement has been an issue in enhancing democracy. Research explains that the advancement in technology has contributed to the emergency of terrorism groups which affect the democratic culture. Technology contributes to behavioral changes hence affecting people's desire for democracy. Youths are the most affected by the technological changes which contribute to the behavioral changes that lead them to join terrorist groups. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an approach that describes how people admit and utilize technology systems. The framework studies human factors that affect the acceptance of technology. Fred Davis and Richard Bagozzi developed the TAM theory in 1989 (Rahimi et al., 2018). Davis proposed the theory when he was defending his doctoral thesis.

TAM theory replaced the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which focused on attitudes and intentions when assessing how individuals accept and use technology. TAM is specific on modeling users' perceptions of adopting and using new technology. The information system theory focuses on using perception to assess the acceptance and adoption of a particular technology (Rahimi et al., 2018). Davis and Bagozzi developed the TAM theory after organizations began introducing information systems in their operations. The theory provides a specific traditional approach to technology and users' perceptions of its acceptability.

Fred Davis proposed the TAM model in his dissertation, issued in 1989 (Rahimi et al., 2018). Davis offered the TAM when the introduction of information systems rapidly increased among organizations. The proposed theory focused on understanding why users reject or accept a technology. The purpose of the TAM theory involves measuring the adoption of a new technology based on user attitudes.

The theory emphasized explaining the dynamics of system adoption, use, and implementation dynamics for users and vendors. Since Davis proposed, the model has become one of the most applied in organizations that use information systems. There has been intense research on user acceptance for several decades, especially for adopting and using technology. Researchers have developed several models that assess user acceptability (Rahimi et al., 2018). However, the TAM theory is the only model that assesses user acceptability of new technology, focusing on information systems. TAM

provides a framework for further research on why users decide to accept or reject new technology and ways of improving acceptance.

The key feature of the TAM theory is that it emphasizes user perception to assess the acceptability of new technology. The basic reasoning behind user perception towards technology acceptability is essential in explaining the TAM theory. The developer of technology may perceive the technology as user-friendly and practical (Rahimi et al., 2018). However, the user may not accept a new technology unless their perceptions align with its developer's. When users encounter new technology, several factors affect how and when they adopt and use technology. TAM has become one of the accepted theories in assessing factors that affect user acceptance of new technologies.

Perceived usefulness, attitude, and ease of use are the main determinants of technology acceptability in any setting. Perceived usefulness and ease of use of technology contribute to user attitude towards technology usage. A user is likely to approve a technology if they feel it improve their performance and has easy operational steps. Attitude towards using a technology predicts the behavioral intention to use a given technology (Rahimi et al., 2018). The behavioral intention to use indicates that a person plans to use a technology because it has benefits and is easy to operate. Behavioral intention implies that a person is willing to use a technology or engage in a given behavior. A person with behavioral intention to use technology has a greater possibility of engaging in actual use.

A democratic culture protects the interests of all citizens. People have the right to do what is good and interact freely. In a democratic culture, the government sets rules and regulations that prevent terrorism by ensuring that young people do not engage in adverse activities that can lead to terrorism (Skaaning, 2020). In some nations, the government monitors social media groups to prevent the influence of those platforms. Unfortunately, technology has been one of the fastest influencing people's behaviors to join terrorism.

## 2.6 Civil Culture

Civil culture is the political culture that involves acceptance of the authority of a country and believing in taking part in civic duties such as elections. It is a mixture of the participant, subject, and parochial political cultures. This diverse nature of civil culture connects the contradicting democratic system between government power/effectiveness and government accountability. The subject and parochial civil culture enable the people to

increase their political activities and involvement (Ciftci et al., 2019). One of the political activities that citizens get involved in is exercising their democratic rights through political elections.

A country or society that has adopted democracy as its civic, political culture enjoys several benefits. Democratization has established accountability for elections, law, and leadership and has developed civil society. In a democratic culture, the majority rules the society because this represents the most benefits to the people (Clark et al., 2017). Citizens become politically active in the society, which consolidates democracy, enables effective governance and proper decision making.

Civil culture-oriented society enables its people to discuss free politics of their nation, tolerate with the opposition parties, have pride in aspects of the country, active involvement in elections, freedom of political associations, get fair treatment from government authorities, have civil cooperation and trust and also participate in political competitions (Ciftci et al., 2019). However, in some countries, civil political culture has been weakened by civil wars, lack of civic education, drug abuse, and bad governance

In Afghanistan, the war between the Soviet and Afghan led to the destruction of the civic culture of Afghanistan. The invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan left huge destruction because of the lethal and modern weapons used in the war. The destruction of ecological zones, including Afghanistan's capital Kabul, affected the society and ruined their political confidence, ruining their civil political culture (Ciftci et al., 2019). This war violated Afghanistan's people's rights to participate in political activities such as electing leaders. The government became in control of the warlords of Afghanistan and the people who led the Soviet invasion of the country. Some individuals in the country acted above the law, and the citizens could not receive fair treatment from the government, which violated their civic culture of democracy.

Furthermore, the good principles among Afghanistan people, such as; loyalty and tolerance for others, commitment to academic learning, respecting women, and lack of ostentation, were all lost, weakening society's culture. The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan contributed to insecurity, whereby people were concerned more with saving their lives than civic culture. Bad governance led to drug abuse, such as heroin, which ruined many people's lives by making them addicts and discouraging their participation in civic duties.

## 2.7 Religion and Democracy

Religion is a social-cultural system associated with worshiping or believing in supernatural beings controlling power, usually God or gods. There exist different religions that share different beliefs. Religion usually influences politics differently. There has always been tension between political systems and religion. Therefore, this indicates relations between religion and democracy (Ciftci et al., 2019). Democracy and religion differ and agree in several ways. Firstly, democracy believes in the power of people where the choice of people decides a leader. According to Clark et al. (2017), religion has been a valid partner of a democratic society. Since the origin of democracy, people have had the freedom of religion—social and religious behavior help boost the democratic attitude among people.

On the other hand, religion is about the word of God and believes power is with God. Religion argues that God makes all leaders. The main conflict between political systems arises when the political system prohibits some religious practices or when religion denies some human rights or disrespects democracy. However, religion also contributes positively to strengthening democracy (Ciftci et al., 2019). Some religious activities enhance civic skills and norms, especially in the church. They also provide bases for several social movements. Church attendance contributes to the support of democracy by influencing electoral turnout, protest activism, and memberships of political parties.

## 2.8 Religions Incompatible with Democracy

Some religions have opposed political systems, including democracy, because of their beliefs. Christianity is one of the religions incompatibles with democracy for different reasons (Clark et al., 2017). First, some Christian groups such as the Amish, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Hutterites, and others believe kingdoms only belong to heaven and not on earth, thus disagreeing with the world politics hence failing to support democracy (Ciftci et al., 2019).

Another reason why Christianity disagrees with democracy is that Christianity believes the woman was made from man. Thus, a woman is inferior to a man, but democracy believes in the equality of everybody regardless of their gender. Islam is another religion incompatible with democracy; Islamic people justify their religious action by the book Koran. Koran advocates violence through "holy war" per thirteenth and fourteenth-century texts. Political systems discourage civil war, which differs from Islamic

ones (Ciftci et al., 2019). In Afghanistan, Islamic society declared war called jihad to fight all non-Muslims to free Afghanistan from its oppressors. This war contributed to political instability in the country and the weakening civic culture of its people.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology entails a researcher's finding, choosing, and examining information about a particular research issue. The methodology section focuses on explaining the practical part of the research. Selecting the appropriate methodology ensures that research gets helpful information to answer the research question. Research users examine the methodology section to evaluate the credibility of a research study (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The research methodology for the current study is qualitative since the study focuses on obtaining information about failed democratization process in Afghanistan. The question explores the cause of failed efforts to build democratic institutions in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021. The inquiry is exploratory as it requires research to investigate a real-life setting over two decades. The current research requires qualitative data because it explains the causes of failed democracy.

A researcher can use a qualitative or quantitative methodology to address a research question. The research methodology is observation since the research question requires real-life information (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The study uses a qualitative approach since it requires information on why a democratic institution in Afghanistan has failed from 2001 to 2021. The method allows researchers to gather extensive information on the research topic. The current requires extensive information on democratization in Afghanistan over the past two decades. Therefore, a qualitative approach is appropriate for the research as it seeks vast information on a particular research issue. The current study focuses on Afghanistan's specific country, making the qualitative method suitable since it is effective in small sample sizes.

Research methodology frameworks oversee the choice of the suitable procedural approach for analysis. The methodology explains the research design and method (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The research design allows an experimenter to select the desired method of inquiry to solve a study issue. Various research designs help researchers choose the methodology to guide the data collection process. Selecting the appropriate design is essential in acquiring useful information to answer a research question.



### 3.1 Research Method

The research method explains a researcher's approaches to collecting and analyzing information to answer a research problem. The current research uses a systematic review to analyze evidence on the failed democratization process in Afghanistan for the last twenty. The assessment allows a researcher to evaluate studies on a research question and identify conclusive findings of the inquiry. A systematic is helpful in the research question because it identifies and summarizes the available primary research about a study topic (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). A systematic review methodology requires a researcher to develop a protocol of inclusion and exclusion of evidence on a research topic and perform an extensive literature search for articles that fit the inclusion criteria. The researcher requires searching for evidence on the failed democratization process and identifying those that meet the inclusion criteria.

The methodology entails selecting research past evidence on a research issue to answer the research questions and achieve the study aim. A method of inquiry involves a systematic approach that a researcher can use when controlling experiments to get desired results for a particular problem. The strategy of investigation can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Most inquiring forms are qualitative as they apply an interpretative approach (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Sometimes it becomes challenging for researchers to differentiate between inquiry and methodology. The inquiry process requires a researcher to incorporate qualitative methods to gather, evaluate purposefully, and explain analyzed data.

### 3.2 Research Design

The research design discusses acquiring information to address a research question. The design for the research is an empirical research study. The study focuses on empirical observations associated with the unfeasibility of realizing democracy in Afghanistan for the last two decades. The design is appropriate for the question because it requires a descriptive result. Empirical research enables a researcher to observe and measure a phenomenon using experience (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). An empirical research study is a type of methodology that uses confirmable evidence to arrive at research conclusions. The research relies exclusively on evidence attained through observation or scientific data gathering approaches.

The current research uses an empirical observation research method to examine why democratization has failed in Afghanistan for the last two decades. The assessment allows a researcher to appraise available information on a research inquiry and categorize conclusive answers to the inquiry (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Empirical observation is helpful in research because it derives evidence from experience or an experiment. In addition, the research method allows researchers to change various aspects of a study because it focuses on real-life experiences and not theories.

The design entails the researcher's approach to integrating various aspects of the study to address the research issue. The researcher encounters different problems that require good exploration to get the desired outcomes. Researchers select a research design to utilize the appropriate approaches suitable for the study and set up their studies effectively in the future. A study design enables an experimenter to decide on the proper methods for the study issue (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The plan also determines the research methods and their usefulness in answering the study questions. A research design has characteristics that help obtain bias-free and reliable findings.

Researchers use an empirical observation approach when a research topic lacks a clear definition or has limited past evidence. For example, understanding why democracy failed in Afghanistan requires significant exploration to get adequate information and identify the reasons behind the failed efforts. The design varies as a researcher incorporates new information to answer a research issue. Some research problems can be confusing and require an empirical observation approach to define precisely and get the appropriate solution.

The design is relevant because there is limited information about why the democratization process in Afghanistan has failed after twenty years. The lack of explicit evidence and information about why nation-rebuilding failed in Afghanistan requires a deeper search into the literature to develop a straightforward and reliable answer to the research problem. In empirical observation research, the experimenter starts with a general idea and uses the method to identify problems, focusing on a future experiment (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The empirical review allows an experimenter to experience a better understanding of the current problem.

The design intends to guide the researcher in undertaking a new problem; the researcher has little or no information about the issue. For example, there is little

information about why the reconstruction of democratic institutions in Afghanistan failed for the last two decades. The research question requires an in-depth search to get credible evidence that answers the research problem appropriately. The researcher's information from empirical research leaves room for other researchers to explore the problem and provide their findings (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The empirical study allows a researcher to adapt to any changes during the research activities.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data collection involves researchers' process to analyze data from parameters of interest in a study. Researchers collect data to answer reared research questions and evaluate outcomes. The data gathering techniques can be either primary or secondary, depending on the study requirements and nature of a study problem. The data gathering is essential in a systematic reviews methodology as it presents an inclusive summary of research from the selected sources. Data gathering in systematic review involves explaining practical concepts from review sources that meet the inclusion criteria.

Data gathering involves obtaining the necessary information about the research problem from the included studies in the current study. The study's data collection involves observing why the democratization process failed within the last twenty years. The study will use a PRISMA model to select the articles for the systematic review. The process involves selecting sources that have informed Afghanistan's failed democratization process to answer the research question. A PRISMA model consists of a flow diagram that enables a researcher to record the evidence that meets the inclusion criteria at different stages.

The model allows a researcher to choose sources for reporting systematic reviews of a study problem to improve data gathering. The structure and shape of a PRISMA diagram vary depending on the available inclusion and exclusion protocol. The researcher is responsible for determining the form and shape of a model considering the number of articles for the selected topic. A PRISMA model focuses on getting the relevant articles that a researcher can use to get information and answer a research question. Researchers use the PRISMA model to gather information whose findings are essential in answering a particular study issue.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research involves aspects that govern the use of information when conducting. Systematic reviews rarely have ethical issues because they do not involve human participants. The research applied different ethics to ensure that the data from the articles is valid and reliable. Information confidentiality is an ethical consideration in the study as it will disclose information from the resources to avoid confidentiality issues. Researchers often share information from sources leading to loss of confidentiality and failing to adhere to research ethics. The research will also maintain originality by presenting all results and information simple. The study will not contain copied information which could lead to loss of creativity.

### 4. Discussion and Analyzation

Efforts to assist post-conflict countries in reconstructing democratic institutions meet typical challenges. The reconstruction must urgently address the vacuum of order that conflict creates and decline in authority and capacity due to terrorism activities (Diamond, 2006). International actors face intense legitimacy problems to intervene directly to fill the vacuum. The challenges result in a failed democratization process due to the tension between the imperatives of post-conflict stabilization and the logic of democratization.

The experience of Afghanistan's failed democracy realization process is among the current post-conflict rebuilding processes that suggest several lessons for post-conflict democracy building. According to Diamond (2006), these include mobilizing the local groups and considering culture during the democratization process. The failed democratization process in Afghanistan points to ethnic domination, injustice, and endemic political corruption.

A feature of post-conflict nation-building in the past two decades has focused reliance on formal democratic mechanisms, especially elections, to determine leadership after violent terrorist attacks (Diamond, 2006). Most post-conflict countries experience a complete collapse of preexisting democratic and political institutions leaving the country with no overarching indigenous political authority. However, some encounter a shrunk national authority where the state leadership has power over a territory.

Despite efforts from the international community, NATO, and American forces, democratization efforts in Afghanistan have failed for the last two decades. The

international forces invaded Afghanistan to eradicate Al-Qaida and others through the Taliban leadership. However, the empirical observation of resources from 2001 to 2021 indicates that Afghanistan's democratization process failed after twenty years of struggle to reconstruct democratic institutions (Münch, 2021). Afghan citizens experienced a regime of fragile democracy, but the democratic institutions did not improve. The review indicates that the process of democratization in the Afghan nation failed because of various reasons.

The fiasco in realizing democracy in Afghanistan occurred because the American forces assumed that the nation-building process was a top-down process that focused on the state. The approach involved establishing military forces to dominate all other forces in the territory and impose their will in Afghanistan (Münch, 2021). The assumption was inappropriate because it was following a venerable tradition. The top-down approach to nation-building achieves little success in most nation rebuilding processes, and in Afghanistan, it failed.

The top-down state rebuilding approach failed to achieve democracy because it lacked support from local groups. Afghanistan required a functioning government because it was experiencing a post-terrorist period. The assumption of imposing foreign forces to maintain peace and stability was the totality of a misplaced idea in the democratization process (Diamond, 2006). The top-down approach may not work when the point is a deeply diverse society organized and rooted in local customs and norms, especially where state institutions lack or do not have basic structures.

The American troops and its allies embraced a top-down nation-building strategy destined to fail. America sent their armed forces to support Afghanistan since 2001 with the hope of rebuilding the nation and reconstructing its democratic institution (Münch, 2021). Instead, the United States troops aimed to support the Afghanistan government to sufficiently control its territory, improve regional stability and prevent its use for international terrorism.

Culture played a significant role in the failed democratization process in Afghanistan. The top-down approach to building democratic institutions worked in some states. However, top-down state-building in most states succeeds through compromise and cooperation with the local groups. The successful control of power under government institutions requires the application of assents and cooperation of the people subject to the

government (Münch, 2021). Imposing the approach of nation-building on society against its wishes implies impending failure.

Larson (2021) explains that the nation's two-decade democratization efforts have proven a fiasco; the process failed to deliver justice, equity, or services. The concept of state in Afghanistan is a complicated issue because the state has been a historical issue in Western Europe. History lacks evidence on the existence of a state in a country where externalities and compromise determine the relationships between various local groups and the state rather than a dependable contract.

Islamic culture contributed significantly to the failed democratization and nation-building. Most Afghan people follow Islamism, which constitutes the brand of modern political institutions that believes in Islamic fundamentalism. Islamism claims to recreate a truly Islamic society grounded on Islamic culture (Larson, 2021). The nation-building and democracy process failed because the international community and American troops failed to involve the local Islamic groups. Islamists see the Islamic culture as a political ideology that plays a significant role in functioning all aspects of society.

Democracy appears like an imported concept in Afghanistan; democracy is not an indigenous concept to the Afghan people. Afghanistan indigenes view democracy as alien and unwelcome in the Afghan people's culture. However, some perceive democracy as a Western concept that can fit in the Afghanistan political structure but with some modifications to suit the local groups (Larson, 2021). The imported democracy is different from the conventional Islamic democratic practices. Afghan people consider democracy through international intervention as foreign and unacceptable because it puts the government in foreign hands.

For the past twenty years, the democratization process has failed in Afghanistan because Afghan people perceived the process as a reverse of the local understanding of democracy (Larson, 2021). The American intervention in the peacekeeping and nation-building process rendered the approach unacceptable to the local groups. In addition, the NATO and international community efforts to control the government implied that Afghanistan's leadership is neither for the people nor by the people but foreigners.

The concern that the foreign presence and advent of democracy in Afghanistan could threaten Afghan culture played a significant role in the failed democratization process (Larson, 2021). The local groups are against foreign democracy and support a

democracy that upholds the Afghan culture, especially the Islam traditions and practices. Most Afghan people are against democracy that follows Western practices and traditions. The human rights declarations that the democratization process wanted to install in Afghanistan are not adoptable under the Islamic culture.

The intensified post-2001 reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan opened most parts of the country to the media (Larson, 2021). The nation-building efforts increased access to electricity in urban areas. Availability of electricity in Afghanistan amplified access to visual media; previously, Taliban leadership had access to media. The media brought information about the Western culture that the locals could not control. The information and images about Western practices and traditions contributed to the negative perceptions of Western culture. Since then, the Western culture has received criticism leading to the failed democratization process in Afghanistan.

The American armed forces approached the democratization process and identified that Afghanistan lacked robust democratic and state institutions. Establishing robust state institutions constituted the only approach to creating a stable nation with robust law and order. Since 2001, the international alliance forces have fought to sustain Afghanistan's peace, security, and stability (Waqas et al., 2019). For the last two decades, the Government of Afghanistan has gotten outstanding support from international community forces regarding progressing security, reconstructing democratic institutions, fighting corruption, rebuilding physical infrastructure, and supporting women's rights.

Policy failure also contributed significantly to the failed nation rebuilding and democratization process in Afghanistan. The United States military troops approached Afghanistan to carry out the policy goals whose initiators were American politicians. During the Afghanistan democracy reconstruction process, many policymakers had never seen Afghanistan and had a diminutive understanding of Afghan traditions and practices (Waqas et al., 2019). The individuals had military intelligence and the resources to build a democratic institution in Afghanistan, but they lacked the knowledge of incorporating Afghan culture.

The failed democracy process is attributable to the lack of a local group inclusion in the policy-making process. The basics of any policy require a contribution to the people it affects. America's policy in Afghanistan laced legitimacy because it came from a foreign power (Waqas et al., 2019). The partnerships between America and the Afghan

Government led to a new era of Taliban and Islamic State (ISIS) in Afghanistan. The American policymakers' lack of empathetic listening and knowledge about what was truly happening on the ground destabilized the policy agenda.

Afghan republic fell because societal traditions and practices were incompatible with democracy, and the nation was simply an uncontrollable collapse. The collapse of democracy in Afghanistan points to the centralized political institutions that America imposed on the government after the 2001 invasion (Waqas et al., 2019). The democratization and nation-building process lacked citizen involvement in overseeing the government. The holdovers from Afghanistan's past leadership weakened citizen trust in government. The vast foreign aid during the post-2001 system fostered corruption leading to a failed democratization process. After two decades, Afghans were reluctant to fight for a foreign government that lacked dignity for the Afghan culture.

America and the international community have been accountable for the failed democratization process in Afghanistan for the last two decades. America and the international community's policy choices during the Afghanistan nation-building process largely contributed to the failure. The international forces committed many avoidable mistakes in the Afghanistan nation-building process. The policies that America applied in the state-building process lacked legitimacy among the Afghan society. For example, in 2004, the Afghan constitution installed a government in Afghanistan that offered few opportunities to Afghanistan people to participate in government oversight (Waqas et al., 2019). The action widened the gap between citizens' realities and American intervention over the years.

The international community focused on consolidating power which is different from state-building. The international coalition flooded Afghanistan with resources with minimal monitoring because they wanted a quick fix (Waqas et al., 2019). The action undermined national legitimacy resulting in the development of parallel state institutions. The foreign intervention took two decades, but it failed to obtain peace and reform the dysfunctional institutions in Afghanistan.

Lack of accountability and loyalty among the Afghan leaders hindered the conservation of Afghanistan's peace and democratization process. NATO, American forces, and the international community did not incorporate the local groups (Waqas et al.,



2019). Instead, the international coalition forces poured resources into the corrupt, non-representative administration of Afghanistan's first post-Taliban president, Hamid Karzai.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

Democracy has failed in Afghanistan for the last two decades because of the ethnic domination and injustice in the region. Political leaders make policies that do not support good governance, affecting people's freedom. Women and children suffer the most from the political injustices in Afghanistan. The government policies and laws deny children and women primary rights, hence affecting their freedom. The collapse of democracy in Afghanistan points to the centralized political institutions that America imposed on the government after the 2001 invasion. The research explains that the American government conquered Afghanistan in 2001 and imposed various policies which contributed to the collapse of democracy.

The failed democratization process is a case of policy failure. The democratization process failed because the policy approach did not align with the culture of the Afghan people. Culture is an essential aspect for consideration when rebuilding nations. The international community and America used policies that did not include the local groups. The policies failed because the people that formulated them did not know Afghan traditions and practices. The American troops did not understand the Afghanistan culture and used western traditions to execute the policies.

The highly centralized government that America and the international community imposed after the 2001 takeover contributed to the failed democratization process. The international intervention denied local groups opportunities to oversee the government. After the international community took control over the Afghanistan government for Taliban leadership, it formed a new government. However, the new government involved foreigners leaving out locals who knew the democratic needs of the country. Moreover, the foreign-dominated government failed to rebuild the democratic institution in Afghanistan because it fostered corruption.

The local groups felt that the international force intervention was installing a reverse of their perception of democracy. Democracy for Afghanistan involves a government for the people and by the people. The American troops did not allow the Afghan people to enjoy leading the country for themselves. The rebuilding of democratic institutions encountered resistance because Afghanistan perceived the process interfering

with their traditions and practices. The international forces approach the democratization process using western practices incompatible with the Afghan people.

Afghanistan leaders lacked accountability for resource usage during the nation-building process. As a result, the international community and the United States flooded Afghanistan government with resources to reconstruct the failed nation, sustain peace and rebuild democratic institutions. Unfortunately, the international intervention in Afghanistan has not unfolded according to anyone's expectations. For many Afghans, nation-building's two-decade process has proven bitterly unsatisfactory in its failure to deliver justice, equity and services.

The United States intervention to initiate democratic institutions in Afghanistan failed for the last two decades because of the approach. The American troops approached Afghanistan's reconstruction process as a top-down strategy. The top-down strategy forces establishing military forces to rule over other forces in a country. A top-down approach to democratization may not work in a country with diverse and organized social groups. The strategy failed in Afghanistan because it lacked local support.

The democratization process in Afghanistan failed because it lacked support for Islamism. Islam is the largest religion in Afghanistan. Islam believes it perceives religion as a tradition that should control every aspect of life in Afghanistan, especially politics. The practices of western people are different from those of Islam people. The Afghan people perceived the democratization process led by foreigners as an alien concept that could never support the locals. The perception that foreign-initiated democratic institutions would bring alien practices erodes Afghan culture.

In conclusion, democracy in Afghanistan collapsed in 2001 after removing the Taliban from the government and other government rules and regulations set to govern the people. The international community and the United States spent about two decades in Afghanistan trying to reconstruct the fragile democracy, sustain peace and rebuild the nation. The two-decade democratization efforts hit a dead-end in 2021, and the American government withdrew United States troops from Afghanistan. The culture was a significant reason for the failed realization of democracy within the last twenty years.

The failed democratization process in Afghanistan was a case of failed policies. The international forces employed inadequate reconstruction policies, which were bound to fail. The democratization process did not involve Afghanistan locals in forming and

executing policies to rebuild the nation and reconstruct the fragile democratic institutions. The Afghanistan people perceived that a foreign-led democratization process was an alien concept that lacked local participation, regard for Islamism, and Afghanistan people's practices and traditions.

## References

- Carson, L., & Elstub, S. (2019). Comparing participatory and deliberative democracy. *New Democracy Research and Development Note*, new Democracy Foundation. <https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RD-Note-Comparing-Participatory-and-Deliberative-Democracy.pdf>
- Ciftci, S., Wuthrich, F. M., & Shamaileh, A. (2019). Islam, religious outlooks, and support for democracy. *Political Research Quarterly*, 72(2), 435-449. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1065912918793233>
- Clark, W. R., Golder, M., & Golder, S. N. (2017). *Principles of comparative politics*. CQ Press. <https://www.vitalsource.com/products/principles-of-comparative-politics-william-roberts-clark-matt-v9781506318134>
- Connah, L. (2021). US intervention in Afghanistan: Justifying the Unjustifiable? *South Asia Research*, 41(1), 70-86. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0262728020964609>
- Cropanzano, R., Anthony, E. L., Daniels, S. R., & Hall, A. V. (2017). Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Annals*, 11(1), 479-516. <https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/annals.2015.0099>
- Diamond, L. (2006). Promoting democracy in post-conflict and failed states. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), 93-116. <http://www.tfd.org.tw/export/sites/tfd/files/publication/journal/dj0202/05.pdf>
- Jalil, M. (2021). Essence of Muhammad Hatta's democracy: relevance to the development of regional autonomy. *Utopía y praxis latinoamericana: revista internacional de filosofía iberoamericana y teoría social*, (2), 417-430. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=8051662>

- Kalnitski, V. (2021). Experiences at the strategic level of the Afghanistan operation. <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/182254>
- Larson, A. (2021). *Democracy in Afghanistan*: United States Institute of Peace. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4dbfc8c72.pdf>
- Münch, P. (2021). Creating common sense: getting NATO to Afghanistan. *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 19(2), 138-166. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s42738-021-00067-0>
- Pandey, P., & Pandey, M. M. (2021). *Research methodology tools and techniques*. Bridge Center. <http://dspace.vnbrims.org:13000/jspui/bitstream/123456789/4666/1/RESEARCH%20METHODOLOGY%20TOOLS%20AND%20TECHNIQUES.pdf>
- Rahimi, B., Nadri, H., Afshar, H. L., & Timpka, T. (2018). A systematic review of the technology acceptance model in health informatics. *Applied clinical informatics*, 9(03), 604-634. <https://www.thieme-connect.com/products/ejournals/pdf/10.1055/s-0038-1668091.pdf>
- Rynning, S. (2020). NATO in Afghanistan. In *NATO in Afghanistan*. Stanford University Press. <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9780804784948/html>
- Skaaning, S. E. (2020). Waves of autocratization and democratization: a critical note on conceptualization and measurement. *Democratization*, 27(8), 1533-1542. [https://pure.au.dk/portal/files/211506495/Waves\\_of\\_autocratization\\_and\\_democratization\\_Accepted\\_manuscript\\_2020.pdf](https://pure.au.dk/portal/files/211506495/Waves_of_autocratization_and_democratization_Accepted_manuscript_2020.pdf)
- Waqas, M., Saleem, M. M., & Rahman, Z. (2019). Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan: A Legal-Anthropological Approach to the Applicability of Peshawar Accords and Bonn Agreement. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, 39(1). [https://www.academia.edu/download/60082790/PJSS-Vol39-No1\\_2019-0220190722-13769-19fv3v6.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/60082790/PJSS-Vol39-No1_2019-0220190722-13769-19fv3v6.pdf)
- Wilson, M. C., Morgan, R. K., Medzihorsky, J., Maxwell, L., Maerz, S. F., Lührmann, A., ... & Lindberg, S. I. (2020). Successful and failed episodes of democratization: Conceptualization, identification, and description. *V-Dem Working Paper*, 97. [https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/handle/2077/63313/gupea\\_2077\\_63313\\_3.pdf;jsessionid=1182725E19F0CDB3B97CDD3C40705E94?sequence=3](https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/handle/2077/63313/gupea_2077_63313_3.pdf;jsessionid=1182725E19F0CDB3B97CDD3C40705E94?sequence=3)

