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OCCHIALÌ – RIVISTA SUL MEDITERRANEO ISLAMICO (N.10/2022)

## INDICE

### EDITORIALE

» p. 5

### SEZIONE – STUDI E RICERCHE

*Afghanistan: fundamentalism and its regional and international consequences*  
– Mohammad Mousa Akbari

» p. 9

*Taliban, Intellectual Foundations and Practices*  
– Muhammad Moosa Noori

» p. 32

*Discourse Analysis of “Caliphate Political Islam” in Afghanistan*  
— Amanullah Shafaee

» p. 51

*Obstacles to modernization in Afghanistan*  
— Abdullah Zakawat

» p. 66

*The Taliban and state-building (Islamic Emirate)*  
— Mohammad Hossain Kholousi

» p. 79

*The situation of Afghan women before and after the Taliban government takeover in 2021*  
— Basera Muzaffari, Ferishta Sardary, Hafiza Mohibe, Saleha Yaqubi  
» p. 93

### SEZIONE – RECENSIONI

Istituto Andrea Wolf, “*Jin Jiyan Azadî. La rivoluzione delle donne in Kurdistan*” (Tamu Edizioni, 2022)  
— Sara Mazzei

» p. 106



## EDITORIALE

SARA MAZZEI

This special number was born from the conference on Afghanistan held at the University of Calabria on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2021 and contains mostly papers written by Afghan researchers and scholars who participated in it.

The conference was built thanks to the effort of the Afghan scholars and researchers themselves and of various professors of the University of Calabria, such as professor Vingelli, Corradi, D'Agostino, Della Corte and Fedele, of the Department of Political and Social Sciences, and professor Leccese and Ventura of the Department of Culture, Education and Society.

Unfortunately, this is the first issue of the journal to be published following the death of Professor Ventura, founder, inspirer and father of the journal as well as its scientific director from the beginning until this summer, when his guide was lost.

Aware that it is almost impossible to summarise in a few lines his dedication to the study of complex realities such as Afghanistan, his generosity towards his neighbour and his open-mindedness, I would nevertheless like to open this issue by recalling how Alberto knew how to combine the depth of historical and theological analysis with a practical commitment to the most practical and tedious issues, from which he never shied away.

An example of this commitment was during the preparation of the conference, which took place during the period when strict regulations regarding covid and green pass possession were in force. His personal involvement was crucial in validating the green passes of the Afghan scholars who were to attend the conference; documents written in Persian and dated in the Islamic calendar.

Since the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, he has participated in numerous public initiatives and programmes in which he was asked to explain to the



general public what was happening in this country whose reality is often unknown to most.

He did so with the capacity for synthesis and simplification of great scholars and communicators, capable of conveying and making complex issues, understood through a lifetime of study, understood by non-experts.

He welcomed exiled Afghan scholars to his study, putting them at ease, and showing them his most precious books, of which he was most proud. I would therefore like to leave room for the testimonies of these men and women who knew him during such a difficult time in their lives and for those of his colleagues who cooperated with him in organising the conference.

«Professor Ventura's name and memory should be honoured. He was a committed and profound thinker who, with a human perspective and scientific commitment, held a seminar on Afghanistan studies at the University of Calabria with the collaboration of Prof. Vingeli and other colleagues in the year 2021 on the critical situation in Afghanistan with a sense of human responsibility. Ventura was a committed, ethical and dignified person. May his memory be cherished». — *Musa Akbari*

«Professor Alberto Ventura. He was one of the prominent and famous professors at the University of Calabria. I met Professor Ventura at the beginning of my coming to Italy in September 2021. The background for this acquaintance was provided by Professor Giovanna Vingelli, who is one of the university's professors of political sociology. Professor Ventura was a professor at the Faculty of Culture of the University of Calabria and had many studies on mysticism. He also had knowledge and studies about the ideas and ideals of Talibanism. Professor Alberto Ventura and Professor Vingelli cooperated a lot to organize a seminar about Afghanistan. Professor Ventura was a decent and compassionate person, especially for the immigrants, and he always tried to provide them with cooperation and education. I ask God for forgiveness and eternal peace for him». — *Abdullah Zakawat*



«By completing the article, I want to pay tribute to the memories of a great person I had the opportunity to meet briefly. When I first met Professor Alberto Ventura, I had just left my country and was still struggling with the anguish of being away from it and the sense of hopelessness. This was a pivotal time in my life. He and his colleagues at the University of Calabria demonstrated to us that there is still hope and that there are people out there with ears to hear and eyes to see human suffering. With their assistance, my friends and I were able to glimpse a new horizon in front of us. Rather than remaining silent, we spoke at the university about the state of my country and its people, and fresh rays of hope were unlocked, encouraging us to work harder and remain optimistic. Unfortunately, life prevented me from getting to know him more; nonetheless, in the few time I did have the chance to meet him, I discovered that he was an honourable, knowledgeable, and humble person. May his memory always be cherished». — *Saleha Yaqubi*

«Alberto had the ability - rare among Italian academics - to combine research and teaching work with political and social intent. I remember him being clear and determined while organising the conference with colleagues from Afghanistan, in the campaign for the freedom of the Kurdish leader Ocalan - he signed immediately and helped me collect dozens of signatures at the University of Calabria. He knew how to be on the right side. His contribution was also fundamental in the construction of the Centre for Interreligious Coexistence». — *Maria Laura Corradi*



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**SEZIONE/SECTION**  
*STUDI E RICERCHE /*  
*ANALYSES AND RESEARCHES*



# Afghanistan: fundamentalism and its regional and international consequences

MOHAMMAD MOUSA AKBARI

**ABSTRACT:** Fundamentalism basically means returning to past values. Islamic fundamentalists include groups and movements with different interpretations of the fundamental principles and beliefs of Islam. By providing a strict interpretation of Islam, they justify violence, killings, terror and terrorism as religious and religious justifications. This research deals with the consequences of this issue through the analytical-descriptive method and the use of historical sources and evidence. The findings show that fundamentalism in the region has entered a new phase of its life as political Islam emerges. Global wars, the Cold War, the failures caused by them, and the performance of some international powers have led fundamentalist groups to become more radical and violent. Fundamentalism has confronted Afghanistan with violence, killings, assassinations and political instability for more than 40 years. Terrorist acts are the most important consequence of fundamentalism at the international and regional level. With the Taliban re-dominating Afghanistan, there are growing concerns about large-scale terrorist threats.

**KEYWORDS:** Afghanistan, fundamentalism, regional crisis, global threat, and terrorism.

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## PROLOGUE

Fundamentalism in the word means loyalty and stubbornness to the early roots of religion and ideology, and its purpose is to return to the fundamental principles of religion, and hence it is regressive and reactionary in belief and thought. The fundamentalists believe that certain moral and religious orders taken from the holy texts should be openly accepted in all collective demands and should be implemented. «In the meantime, Islamic fundamentalism also includes the meaning of returning to the main principles and beliefs of Islam» (Haqqat, 2013: 111). The term fundamentalism means «return to Islam» (Rova, 1999: 86); that is, paying attention to the principles and values of the predecessors and predecessors, in the Islamic world and among Muslims, is considered a religious duty and a factor of salvation in the face of current world developments. In other words, fundamentalists emphasize the implementation and Islamization of social relations. This belief has been shown to be generally strict and violent in the implementation of Sharia law. This process gradually intensified during the existence of fundamentalist groups and currents.



## Fundamentalism

has been used to describe any movement that wants the complete and unquestioning implementation of the teachings of the Qur'an and Sharia. Fundamentalism has become a sign and manifestation of militancy, nervousness and intolerance for many in the Western world (Masoudnia, 2011: 84).

There are different views about the origin of Islamic fundamentalism. The difference in viewpoint is a natural thing because every researcher looks at a subject and issue from a specific perspective and attitude. Fundamentalism can be considered in three different ways:

- 1- Islamic fundamentalism is presented as a reaction and response to the crisis caused after the First World War and in the face of the problem of the nation-state in the Middle East.
- 2- The point of view proposed by Huntington. He considers the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction to the invasion of the West and the context of the clash of civilizations, which pits the Islamic civilization against the Christian-Jewish civilization.
- 3- Fundamentalism is linked with political Islam, which itself is defined as a new credible force for positive changes and is decorated with the slogan "Islam is the solution". In this view, Islam and its teachings are seen as a powerful capacity different from secularism (Ehtishami, 2012: 248).

The first view considers fundamentalism as a historical reaction that Muslims have shown. The second point of view sees fundamentalism as a civilizational reality that has the capacity to confront other civilizations. But the third point of view relies on the political aspect and talks about the social and political capacity of Islam. This capacity may be presented to the world with a fundamentalist view.

## PRINCIPLES OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Islamic fundamentalism explains the relationship between man and God and the environment with special readings of religious texts from different perspectives. This attitude is kind of idealistic and at the same time extremely practical. The principles and themes raised in this thinking can be considered as follows:

- 1- Belief in the comprehensiveness of Islam: Islam is not only limited to the private sphere and is focused on spiritual matters. Islam is both creed and worship, nation and nationality, world and hereafter, politics and ethics, war and peace, book and sword.



2- Linking religion and politics in Islam: Islam is a complete plan and design, society and politics cannot be excluded from its jurisdiction and inclusion.

3- Returning to principles and foundations: they believed in fundamental values and principles with the idea of discovering them for the reconstruction and management of society. Fundamentalism is not compatible with epistemological and moral relativism.

4- Establishing the Islamic government: Islamic fundamentalism believes in the establishment of the Islamic government and considers its existence as a rational and religious necessity.

5- Pragmatism and combativeness: Islamic fundamentalism is pragmatic and combative; Because establishing divine sovereignty and ending the non-Islamic situation requires a lot of activity, effort and effort. Sayyid Qutb proposed Jihad and an armed struggle to realize Islamic sovereignty. Jihad includes a wide range of efforts that are considered necessary for the establishment of Islamic rule (Khosravi, 2009: 125).

The aforementioned principles show that for the realization of the Islamic ideal, which is usually considered a religious and religious duty, all-out efforts and the use of weapons and armed struggle are necessary and essential. As a divine duty and a religious duty, Jihad is the fundamental principle in fundamentalist thinking, which opens the way for violence under the pretext of struggle and gives it religious justification. Also, the principles show that fundamentalist thinking in its political nature wants to Islamize society and manage it according to the proposed model of this thinking. The management of society based on the model of fundamentalism in some Islamic countries is shown by some fundamentalist groups, who do not believe in fundamental rights, human rights, freedom of expression and civility. As an example, the Taliban group is a complete symbol of radical fundamentalist thinking and believes in managing society based on its own model and interpretation of Islam. In this model, all affairs have found meaning and meaning in the circle of Sharia and no law can be valid instead of Sharia.

## FUNDAMENTALIST MOVEMENTS

Fundamentalism or Salafism has many followers and branches among Muslims. But all currents and movements are not the same. They may share many principles, but they can be separated from each other in many cases. Dealing with all branches requires another space. In this opportunity, two major thoughts and movements in the Islamic world, which have different branches, are mentioned in order to clarify the issue.

### **(a) 1- Wahhabi-Salafi trend**

The basis of Wahhabi thought goes back to Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792) from Saudi Arabia. Religiously, he was a follower of the Sunni Hanafi religion



and was influenced by the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi and Muhammad Hayat al-Sundi. The Wahhabi and Salafi movements are generally conservative and fundamentalist, they generally do not allow the killing of innocent people. Only some of its branches, which are *Takfiri Salafis*, consider violence and killing permissible. The *Takfiri* movement is a very small minority among the large Salafi movement.

According to their thoughts, behaviour and political events, the Salafi currents can be divided into three distinct currents in the Arab world, which include traditional Sunnis, jihadist Salafis, and scientific Salafis. The Sunnis are in the ruling apparatus of Saudi Arabia and its scholars, the jihadist Salafis are affiliated with Al-Qaeda, and the scientific Salafis emphasize the text and not armed operations, which are mostly in Kuwait and Bahrain (Vaazi, 2012: 373).

Beliefs of *Takfiri Salafis* include *Takfir*, rejection of political authority, rejection of the rules of Jihad, and rejection of the sanctity of suicide and terrorism. Al-Qaeda movement ranks among *Takfiri* groups. The most important ideological elements of al-Qaeda are as follows:

- A) *Takfir*: They allow themselves to declare war against other Muslims as infidels and apostates if they do not accept their actions. Non-Muslims are regarded as blasphemers, only deserving of death.
- B) The rules of political authority: Traditional Islam has its own legitimate rulers who should not be against Sharia law. Al-Qaeda considers any political power holder who does not follow their beliefs to be illegitimate and kills them.
- C) Rules of Jihad: According to the majority of Muslims, Jihad becomes obligatory in Islam when Islamic lands are threatened or attacked. Jihad also has its own rules, including avoiding the killing of civilians. Al-Qaeda does not adhere to those rules and allows the killing of civilians.
- D) Sanctity of suicide: In Islam, Christianity and Judaism, suicide is an unforgivable sin. But al-Qaeda considers suicide operations as martyrdom and those who commit this act are called martyrs who will go to heaven.
- E) Terrorism: Al-Qaeda allows killing and terrorism and considers it an Islamic duty. In fact, Al-Qaeda's ideology is more political (Milton, 2005; 182). According to the principles and intellectual foundations of takfiri currents such as al-Qaeda or ISIS, violence, killing, massacre and terror are among the main beliefs of these groups, which is also evident in their behaviour and actions.



## **(b) 2- Muslim Brotherhood**

The Muslim Brotherhood is a transnational and Sunni Islamist movement that is popular in many Islamic countries, including Arab countries. The founder of this thought is Hasan Al-Bana (1887-1924) from Egypt. He had a deep impact on Islamic thoughts in the 20th century. According to the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic laws are comprehensive and include all matters of life in this world and the next.

The ultimate goal of the Muslim Brotherhood is to establish an Islamic system in accordance with Sharia. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Bana. The basic slogan of this movement is: God is our ultimate goal, the Prophet is our leader, the Qur'an is our constitution, Jihad in the way of God is our way, and martyrdom in the way of God is our greatest ideal (Jannati, 2011: 9).

The main extremist groups and currents, which agree with the Muslim Brotherhood and which emerged in Egypt after that, are one, *Jamaat-e-Islami* (1970), which is an Egyptian Islamist movement. It is recognized as a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union. Second, Islamic Jihad or the Islamic Jihad Organization was founded in the 1970s. This organization is sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council due to its alliance with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and its activities are prohibited in many countries. Yusuf Qarzawi (1926-2022) believes that the Muslim Brotherhood is not only the greatest contemporary Islamic movement but also the mother and axis of other Islamic movements. Between the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and its affiliates, such as Jordan's *Islamic Action Front* and Kuwait's *Jamaat al-Islah* on the one hand, and *Islamic Jamaat* or *Al-Takfir and Hijra*, *Islamic Jihad* of Egypt, *Islamic Armed Front* of Algeria and Al-Qaeda on the other hand, there is a fundamental distinction. The first group (members of the Brotherhood) believe in Islamizing society through peaceful means and participation in democratic processes. The second group only believes in violent methods. The second group is also called warmongers, extremists or jihadists (Abbaszadeh, 2009: 119).

The thought of *Akhwanism* spread from Arab lands to other Islamic countries due to religious connections. In Afghanistan, the Taliban group, which is aligned with Al-Qaeda, follows the extremist currents related to the Muslim Brotherhood in *Takfiri* thinking.

Afghanistan, which has a special geopolitical position in the region, has witnessed a lot of violence by fundamentalists and extremist groups. The reformist movements were suppressed and destroyed in the light of this fundamentalist view. For example, the reformist actions of Amanullah Khan and the reforms during the communist regimes were challenged by relatively fundamentalist forces and groups. Also, twenty years of efforts under the title of the Islamic Republic and democracy with the supervision and presence of international powers were finally overthrown by the fundamentalist and



extremist Taliban group on August 15, 2021. Fundamentalist thinking and its relatively violent behaviour have always deprived Afghanistan of development, rationality, civility and peace. Of course, it should be noted that these currents and groups have always been responsible for proxy wars under the influence of regional and international powers with social backgrounds. Because the leaders of these currents see their survival in dependence and backwardness! The consequences of this thinking, with the terrorist behaviour of Afghanistan, have made the region and the world face serious security threats. There is no single and universally accepted definition of terrorism. But in the word "it means creating terror among people or intimidating others" (Abdullahi, 2009: 35). Some define terrorism as: "the systematic use of intimidation or unpredictable violence against governments, people or individuals to achieve a political goal" (Tayeb, 2001: 56).

The culture of international relations states the definition of terrorism: "Terrorism is the activities of state or non-state actors who use political methods and means to achieve their goals" (Plane, 1988:201).

In general, terrorism can be identified through its indicators, which include: using violent means and creating terror through illegal means, achieving political and ideological goals, the unpredictability of attacks, and repetition of the act. Organized action, trying to publicize fear and terror and killing innocent people to achieve political and religious goals (Metallabi, 2015: 122).

According to the concept and indicators, terrorist behaviours appropriate to the group's goals are generally carried out by radical fundamentalist currents. The consequences of terrorist acts aimed at the goals and the amount of violence carried out at different national, regional and international levels are considered a serious threat.

The growth and expansion of *takfiri* and violent fundamentalism have led to terrorist and suicidal behaviours in the region and the world. Terrorist acts of extremist and fundamentalist groups endanger security at the national, regional and international levels. Terrorism is an old concept in political literature. Although this concept has a long history, it gained global importance in the first decade of the 21st century. In 2001, some terrorists affiliated with the Al-Qaeda group made the historical incident of September 11th. It is after this time that the religious aspect of terrorism was brought up in the world and extremist and Islamic fundamentalist groups were introduced as terrorists. Calling all fundamentalist groups terrorists is incorrect because

Al-Qaeda belongs only to a group of radical Islamic fundamentalists. In this way, religious terrorism, which is one of the sub-branches of terrorism, took on a global dimension. Religious terrorists justify their actions with religious principles. Radical Islamic fundamentalists with a superficial view and an apparent interpretation of Islamic teachings such as Jihad, Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb introduced their mission to destroy the infidels and establish an Islamic government' (Nabawi and others, 2014: 5).

Political Islam, or the political idea of Islam, according to Rowa:



is based on the traditions and orders of the beginning of Islam and the era of the four caliphs [...] Islamists look at the way of the head of Islam as an example and model of Islamic political behavior and the excellence of an Islamic society (Rowa, 1999: 12).

That is the management of Islamic society according to Sharia, which is considered as law. The term political Islam means Islam with a political suffix, is a new term that has been proposed since the modern era, especially the popularization of the doctrine of secularism. The resistance of Muslims against the dominance of Western culture, in its political face, the term political Islam emerged. Therefore, political Islam is said to use the language of religion and historical references to mobilize the Muslim population for political action at the domestic and international levels. In other words,

it is a form of instrumentalization [teachings] of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that seek political goals" (Denoeux, 2002:56).

This definition is based on the means of constructing Islamic teachings to achieve domestic political goals. An instrumental look does not give a precise definition. In the definition by John Esposito, it is used in the general form: "Political Islam is a religious value in private and public life" (Esposito, 2009: 22).

The latter definition looks at the reaction of Muslims as a solution to political and social issues. This is not the place to analyze the correctness and incorrectness of such views. In general, there is no logical problem with the way Muslims look at socio-political phenomena through the lens of religion. The only issue that remains is whether the existing views and interpretations of Islamic teachings can meet the needs of the modern age or not! The capability and lack of capability of the interpretations were in the direction of being responsive. It needs analysis and interpretation in its own place and requires another field. Therefore, the confrontation of various Islamic groups and currents with political and social issues is seen more in the spectrum of fundamentalists who have a strict and inflexible view. In other words, fundamentalist groups in different spectrums have dealt with political and social issues with traditional and old interpretations with their relative theoretical differences.

The political reaction of Muslims consequently opened Islam and Islamic teachings to the world of politics. There are different understandings and interpretations of religious teachings and texts in the Islamic world. In the debate between tradition and modernity in most regions of the Islamic world, strict interpretations have many supporters. In Afghanistan, Islamist groups and currents in a relatively traditional and closed social context; have formed Their understanding of religious teachings as superficial and elementary. The nature of politics and power in Afghanistan also has an ethnic and tribal basis. This situation has determined the multi-layer relationship in the power structure and its interaction with the environment in a special way. Just as



an ethno-oriented government needs the continuous support of the tribes to maintain and survive, which must be supported at any cost, and it is natural that the supporters of such a government try to control more political power, and the people in power have to obey their will (Sajjadi, 2001: 69).

This mutual dependence has provided the ground for the intervention of regional and international powers in many cases. From within the ethnocentric political structure, currents and groups supporting the interests of the tribe emerged with a religious flavour. The Taliban is a clear example of this process. This essay aims to explain the consequences of fundamentalism as a research problem with an analytical-descriptive method at three national, regional and international levels.

### **HISTORY OF FUNDAMENTALISM IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

In a general view, Afghanistan is a country with a population of about 35 to 40 million people, 99% of which are Muslims, and the religious thinking of the people of this land is structured in the form of existing religions. Among the religions, the majority (about 70%) are followers of the four Sunni religions, with the Hanafi religion being the majority. About 29% of followers of the Shia religion - both Ismaili and Jafari Shia - with the majority of Jafari Shia. The remaining 1% is given by the Hindu minority. From the social point of view, the interaction between the followers of religions has generally been peaceful and fraternal. The problem starts when politics shows its face in society by using religion as a tool (Rajaei, 2009: 168). In addition to the cultural structure, the social structure and population structure of the country can generally be identified in the form of four major ethnic groups: Pashtun, Hazara, Tajik, Uzbek and other small ethnic groups. There have been political tensions between ethnic groups in Afghanistan throughout history because the circulation of power has generally been associated with violence and in a few cases with a democratic appearance and hidden threats.

The social structure in Afghanistan has a special feature. The foundation stone and structure of social life in this land are based on the construction of the tribe. This means that the values in Afghanistan in different dimensions are made up of tribal values. The ruling values of the Afghan society have been justified by their tribal nature as social traditions with the support of religious justification.

The characteristics of tribal culture reveal many ambiguities and unspeakables of the hidden national crisis in Afghanistan. One of the characteristics is lack of adaptation, lack of flexibility and interaction with other cultures (Vaazi, 2002: 68).

Generally, it is tried to seek religious and religious justification for behaviours in the social and political arena. The characteristic of inflexibility in the context of religious and religious culture is more solidarity and non-conformity. This situation has prepared



the ground for the acceptance of strict ideas and interpretations of religion, which eventually forms an inflexible society.

In the middle centuries, Muslim countries had a flourishing civilization. The works left from that era can still be seen in Spain, Egypt, Syria, Iran, India and other regions. But with the passing of that time and the beginning of the decline of Islamic civilization, which is considered from the 14th century, the Islamic lands began a period of intellectual and cultural stagnation. The main consequence of this intellectual and cultural stagnation was the collapse of scientific and philosophical traditions. The works of the era of intellectual and cultural stagnation show that the flow of thinking, criticism and innovation was painful and abandoned. After the beginning of the new era in the West, the only current that arose among Muslims is called retrograde or Salafism. This trend emerged from two parts of the Islamic world with slight differences that were due to social and cultural origins. One in the Arabian Peninsula, which was led by Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, and is known as *Wahhabism*. The other is in the Indian subcontinent, where Shah Waliullah Dehlavi is the founder of the Deobandi School. The common point of these two currents was to escape from the existing situation and return to the past. Both currents believed that Muslims have distanced themselves from the original line of Islam. The goal of both currents was to purify the religion from superstitions and return to the text with the interpretation of the Salaf.

Afghanistan was separated from Pakistan due to its geographical and geopolitical location and close connection with the Indian subcontinent. Also, the connection of fundamentalist groups provided the ground for radical behaviour. The desperate reaction of religious scholars against the growth and development of the Western world was also mixed with a racist view; As Sayyed Qutb clearly says: "*White people are our first enemy, whether they are in America or Europe*" (Khalidi, 1991: 51). Geographically named Afghanistan, which became Afghanistan much later. The Indian continent has been influenced by the thinking of the ruler in that system. Due to its proximity to the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan has naturally been influenced by the prevailing thinking in that order. According to Siraj al-Tawarikh Faiz Mohammad Kateb Hazara, some of the current regions of Pakistan, India and Kashmir are squatters of former Kings of Afghanistan and have been called as clean areas of the world and the paradise of India" (Kateb, 1952:11). The prevailing culture of this region cannot be denied Islamic color and smell and, in a fundamentalist way. The common interpretation of religious beliefs was generally in the hands of traditional clerics of the time. In Afghan society, traditional beliefs in the form of religious and religious teachings are of particular importance and credibility. Nothing is as sacred as religious teachings.

After the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the formation of national governments, which is the experience of entering the modern world. Muslim thinkers were faced with the question, how can Islam and its values be defended against the changes that have occurred in such an environment? The movement of the Muslim



Brotherhood led by Hassan al-Banna was a reaction that was created for the first time. This school of thought had a peaceful approach to the plan of the government and the Islamic state. However, after the assassination of Hassan al-Banna in 1949, the Muslim Brotherhood faced an ideological vacuum. Sayyid Qutb's ideas led to the reconstruction and reunification of the Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1960s. Unlike Hasan al-Banna, who was looking for gradual and peaceful political methods to achieve Islamic government; Sayyid Qutb had a revolutionary and armed approach and believed that only with the help of the sword and the book (Quran) can the Islamic government be implemented on earth. Although Sayyid Qutb's ideas did not lead to his desired Islamic government they created wide-ranging divisions within the Muslim Brotherhood, which later led to the emergence of radical and *takfiri* groups such as Al-Qaeda.

The continuation of fundamentalist thinking in the Indian subcontinent can be identified with the face of Abul Ali Maududi (1979-1903).

Abul Ala Maududi is one of the prominent thinkers of the Islamic world who believed in the realization of the Islamic ideal. In his thoughts, concepts such as God's sovereignty, Islamic political system, confrontation with the West, Islamic education and Jihad have a special place. With the formation of the country of Pakistan in 1947 and the feedback of Maududi's ideas, Islamic fundamentalism appeared in this country and was effective in its growth and development (Nora et al., 2018: 66).

The creation of the state of Pakistan fulfilled part of Maududi's ideal and focused on jihad throughout the world. He believed that

Islam is not just a pure belief but also a life plan. The members of this group should first establish an Islamic system in Pakistan and then engage in Jihad against oppressive and non-religious governments around the world (Maudodi, 2004: 42).

The movements and struggles of the Islamic world have generally been based on the principle of Islamization of the society and the rule of Sharia orders or at least the conformity of customary laws with Sharia. But the problem is in the interpretation of Sharia, that the interpretation with a fundamentalist mentality does not respond to today's needs. In many cases, some Islamic principles and rules taken from Sharia are not compatible with modern values and beliefs of human life. The existing interpretations are also alien to the temporality and spatiality of modern life and its necessities, or in some cases are completely opposite. As a result, the establishment of the Islamic system is accompanied by a kind of dictatorship and oppression; because there is no flexibility and correct understanding of the conformity of the requirements of modern life with Sharia. In other words, the relationship between Islam and modernism, which is one of the requirements of the modern world, is incompatible with the thinking of fundamentalists. According to the visionaries, the manifestations of new civilization are the handiwork of infidels and must be destroyed. The concrete example of this



thinking can be traced to the first period of the Taliban government in the 1990s, which banned the use of television.

Despite the cultural and geographical differences of different regions, Islamization movements are considered to be the common point of most political movements in the Islamic world for the purpose of Sharia rule.

Despite all the differences between the contemporary Islamic movements, active groups such as the groups of thoughts of Hasan al-Bana (1949-1906) and Abul-Ali Maududi (1979-1903) meet at one point. The revolutionary political thoughts of Shiism are similar to the views of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has preserved its characteristics to some extent and can be considered reformist and more dependent on the spirit of intention. There is an orientation: a) Arab Middle East, Sunni; b) Indian subcontinent, Sunni; c) Iran and the Arab Middle East, Shiism (Rova, 1999: 2).

Islamism is the basis of all movements. But they have unique cultural-geographical differences, each of which can be examined and reflected in its own place.

In the Sunni Arab Middle East, the most important intellectual trend of fundamentalism in the form of the Muslim Brotherhood organization affiliated with the centre of Egypt has various branches such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (1952) and Islamic Jihad, whose thoughts are influenced by fanatical ideas. In the Indian subcontinent mentioned groups such as *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Pakistan, *Jamaat-e-Islami* of India and *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Bangladesh. These three groups are generally influenced by the thoughts of Abul Ali Maududi. In Afghanistan, *Hizb-e-Islami* and *Jamiat-e-Islami*, and in Tunisia, *Hizb-ul-Ennahda* and the Islamic Movement in the former Soviet Union are active groups. For a long time, the mentioned currents have been associated with non-political Wahhabism movements in Saudi Arabia and the *Ahl al-Hadith* movement in Pakistan (Rova, 1999: 3). Islamists in the Indian subcontinent were able to seize political power with the separation of Pakistan from India in 1947 with the claim of political Islam. This fact itself intensified the activities of fundamentalist and radical Islamic groups. Of course, it should be noted that some powers of that period, such as Britain, welcomed the emergence of such conditions in the region and contributed to its creation.

In the meantime, the Shiite revolutionary movement (1979) was able to create an Islamic revolution in Iran and gained political power and formed a government. Several Shiite groups in Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq were influenced by the Iranian revolution and took a model from it due to their religious affinity. The revolutionary movement of Shiism in Iran, with its special interpretation of Islam, has had a great psychological and mental impact on non-Shia groups in the Islamic world and has stimulated them towards political Islam. As an example, we can mention the Taliban group in Afghanistan. The success of the Taliban group, both in the 1990s and on August 15, 2021, in both stages, has acquired psychological and mental abilities from the Islamic Revolution of Iran.



The political experience of Islamic groups in Afghanistan is practically keyed by the coming to power of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which was affiliated with the former Soviet Union. Politics and power in Afghanistan are ethnic and tribal in nature. Political groups are also based to some extent on ethnic and tribal structure. The tradition of the tribe has its own special feature, inflexibility is one of the characteristics of the tribal structure market. In fact, the will and interests of the nation and tribe are considered to be a symbol of the legitimacy of political and social actions. The politics and power of the tribal leader are inflexible, radical and harsh according to the tradition.

The Afghan government [in the common sense of the tribe] was born among the tribes and the symbols of legitimacy that hang from it are not alien to the villagers (Rova, 1990: 25)

The basis of the government's legitimacy is the tribal beliefs, which are considered Islamic according to the religious interpretation and are inflexible. Extremist religious interpretations along with their tribal beliefs have played a major role in strengthening fundamentalism in Afghanistan. The tribal mentality has created a closed and backward society in various political, economic, cultural and military fields. This process considers "the nation as the manifestation of the political ideal of the leaders" (Moradi, 2011: 298). Ethnic politics and power have always faced crises and often the circulation of power in Afghanistan has been bloody and violent. Violent behaviours are generally associated with religious justification. Political actions in Afghan society need two things, one is highlighting issues as tribal values and the other is showing them as religious doctrine.

The process of Jihad and the battle against the former Soviet Union can be seen as the political reaction of the Islamist groups, which was associated with the theme of fundamentalism. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on December 24, 1979, caused a new page of political actions in the region and the world. Islamists in Afghanistan and the region were mobilized under the pretext of confronting the communist ideology and imposed a devastating war on society. This war was not the only war of the Afghan people; rather, regional and international powers have been directly or indirectly involved in supporting jihadist groups. In order to expand its presence to the shores of the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Union used the *Pashtunistan* strategy of Dawood Khan, the then-president of Afghanistan.

Soviet positions on the issue of Pashtunistan opened a new chapter in relations between Moscow and Kabul, in which military cooperation was the most important chapter. The cooperation that finally led to the coup of trained officers in Moscow against Dawood in 1978 and the heinous murder of him and his family, and the occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Red Army in 1979 (Mousavi, 2009: 103).



The powers involved in Afghanistan's politics were also aware of this fact (that is, the centrality of tribal values and presenting them as religious and religious beliefs to consolidate the foundations of tribal power) and have benefited from it.

And this is something that the British understood very well and realized that their power supply is in the consolidation of tribalism that the Soviets are following in Afghanistan today (Rova, 1990: 97).

The interaction of the powers to protect their interests in Afghanistan has always been through the lens of the interests of the tribe and this has provided the interests of the parties, and this issue has forever provided the ground for the intervention of the powers to influence and use various groups and currents, including fundamentalist and extremist currents. Is. The geopolitical position of Afghanistan in the region and the conflict of powers - for example, Britain and Tsarist Russia - have practically considered Afghanistan as a buffer zone, to reduce the rival's influence, open and hidden interventions have always been going on and caused the growth of groups and visionary currents. According to documents and historical sources:

The British, by exerting influence on the possessions of Duranis and dividing parts of it and consolidating the influence of the tribal leaders on the remaining parts, practically created a buffer zone between their Indian possessions and the Central Asian possessions of Tsarist Russia and Qajar Iran (Arianfar, Beta: 12).

Historical evidence shows that the powers, especially the big international powers, sacrifice the weak and small powers in political equations for their interests and those of their allies. Development and transformation in a region take place in the interest of international powers and provides the ground for big and small regional developments. As

political developments in the field of international relations in the 1970s, including the defeat of the Arabs against Israel, the victory of the Iranian revolution, and the invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union, launched a new wave of Islamism in the Middle East. The spark of many movements was created in this decade throughout the Islamic world in an atmosphere of failure and hope (Kolayi; 2009: 122).

Such waves are always the right opportunity for the intervention of powers because achieving benefits is done by using the groups and currents involved in the crisis in a two-way interaction. The former Soviet invasion of Afghanistan caused the reaction of several groups and currents, including fundamentalist currents. The resistance against Soviet military aggression, which was accompanied by international condemnation, opened the hands of the opposition powers to support the fundamentalist groups in Afghanistan. Fundamentalist groups grew and expanded with the support of several



regional and international powers. The result of these cooperations and supports is a devastating war, endless migration, the destruction of the country's infrastructure, and finally a permanent crisis and political instability that continues until now.

### **REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF FUNDAMENTALISM**

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the war against this aggression fueled new dimensions of fundamentalist behaviour in the region and the world. Jihad as a religious value against the encroachment of a superpower on the territory of a Muslim country (such as Afghanistan) intensified the wave of national and regional jihadism. In such a way that

In 1979, with the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan, thousands of volunteer fighters from all over the Islamic world were drawn to the region for Jihad against the Soviet Union and to help the Afghan people. This war actually led to the internationalization of the Islamist movement and its increasing tendency to regional and international violence (Rubins, 2002: 25).

According to some interpretations, the growth and expansion of fundamentalism in the 1980s and 1990s is the result of the aggression of the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan. As an example, Daniel Byrman says:

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, it established a chain of events that led to the formation of Al-Qaeda (Byman, 2015; 4).

The type of performance of international powers and regional powers has had a serious impact on the intensification of fundamentalist behaviours at the regional and world level. Because the regional powers also acted as their powerful arm in collusion with the important international powers. Fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban or Al-Qaeda grew and expanded after the crisis created by the Great Powers. The existence of fundamentalist and extremist groups has changed the relations of regional powers in many cases. A concrete example is the experience of Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

Before the 1990s, Islamists only wanted to overthrow their own corrupt governments. But after the war between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan

“[...] some Arab Mujahidin, who were mainly from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, returned to their homeland to fight against their governments. But when they faced the repression of their governments, which were strongly supported by the United States, many of them went under the umbrella of Al-Qaeda and found the execution of terrorist attacks against the United States as the only practical way to change the regimes in their countries” (Timoty, 2004: 100).



The result of the dual behaviour of international and regional powers theoretically provided the ground for the emergence of regional and international terrorism. Therefore, it is these powers that have played a major role in the emergence and strengthening of fundamentalist behaviours at the regional and international levels. According to fundamentalists, Islamic countries that cooperate or have some kind of affiliation with America or the European Union are not considered Islamic and their regimes must be changed. In the review, we see that some fundamentalist groups secretly or openly, or for political reasons, in many cases, communicated with America and received the necessary support and assistance for the struggle. Concrete examples of these groups such as *Hizb-e-Islami*, *Mahaz Melli*, and *Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan* can be mentioned, which had direct relations with Pakistan and also benefited from American military aid.

In the war in Afghanistan until the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, which was carried out under the name of Jihad, fundamentalist groups and currents from all over the world gathered in Afghanistan. These groups gained a lot of military and war facilities during the whole war with the Soviet Union. This gave them the courage to expand their desired actions under the title of Jihad. With the growth of fundamentalism in the region, violence, immigration, political instability and permanent crisis also intensified. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan and the defeat of Dr. Najib's government by the Mujahideen, the Jihadi groups felt that they had won the war; but they failed to form an efficient and responsive government. On the contrary, we witnessed conflicts and bloody internal wars in Afghanistan. Jihadi groups based in Pakistan, who were generally Sunni followers, entered Afghanistan after the formation of an Islamic state. During the arrival of some of these groups, they entered into conflict and war. As an example, two major political parties and currents such as *Hizb-e-Islami* led by Golbedin Hekmatyar and *Jamiat-e-Islami* led by Burhanuddin Rabbani had political differences after entering Kabul and becoming involved in the civil war.

Radical and extremist groups have fueled violence and increased instability in the region by using religious teachings such as jihad. Although most of the countries of the region themselves were involved in the financing of the fundamentalist jihadist forces with the leadership of some international powers. In many cases, countries that accept immigrants in the region, such as Pakistan and Iran, have benefited from immigrants. They have destabilized the region and intensified the crisis for their own benefit, by strengthening jihadi forces and groups by Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, as well as using them as a tool in many cases and fueling Terrorist behaviours as an example of suicide forces that are trained and equipped in Pakistan. They can be called violent and destabilizing groups in the region and the world. For example, the Taliban is a group that, with its main base in Pakistan and the support of its government, fought against NATO forces in Afghanistan for twenty years. Finally, the US agreement with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar (2020), strengthened this fundamentalist and radical group.



After the agreement with the US, the Taliban managed to overthrow the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and capture Kabul in less than a year. Shortly after the Taliban took over, Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was hit by an American drone in Kabul. This is a clear sign of the re-strengthening of fundamentalist and radical groups in the region.

With the beginning of the Afghanistan war in the eighties, regional tensions intensified and the grounds for cooperation between the group and the fundamentalist currents were provided. Regional powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, as well as international powers in collusion with each other, caused the growth and expansion of fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. For example:

Afghanistan war was the best and most appropriate time to expand the cooperation between the Brotherhood and the Wahhabis. The office of the Muslim Brotherhood in Peshawar, which was run by a Jordanian of Palestinian origin, Abdullah Azzam, funded the Mujahideen of Afghanistan by attracting financial aid from Saudi Arabia (Rova, 1999: 129).

Therefore, with the growth and spread of fundamentalist groups, the security threat in the region has intensified. In such a way that some countries such as Russia have officially expressed concern and acknowledged that with the Taliban's dominance in Afghanistan, more than twenty terrorist groups with at least ten thousand troops are operating in Afghanistan. The security threat has caused serious concerns for many countries bordering Afghanistan after the Taliban took over. The security situation of the region and the concerns caused by the risk of terrorism and terrorist activities are a direct consequence of the growth and strengthening of fundamentalist groups. Security threats are gradually fueling regional tensions and causing them to spread. In the current situation, Afghanistan's neighbouring countries feel insecure due to the re-establishment of Taliban power, and out of necessity, they may adopt a policy of appeasement with this group. This situation will strengthen the Taliban and its permanent ally, Al-Qaeda, which will make the security of the region vulnerable and face serious security risks in the long run. The concern of the governments of the region in a situation where Afghanistan is ruled by a terrorist group (Taliban) is reasonable and appropriate; because radical and *takfiri* movements can easily infiltrate Afghanistan and attack their desired targets from there.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF FUNDAMENTALISM**

Islamic fundamentalist groups and movements around the world are considered suitable tools for international powers to achieve their goals. In international relations, governments focusing on the principle of strategic interests benefit from all the tools and abilities to achieve strategic goals. Weak and corrupt governments, as well as



fundamentalist groups and movements around the world, are considered suitable tools for the powers that be.

The policy of powers in the field of international relations along with supporting corrupt governments around the world; They indirectly turned Islamic fundamentalists into international terrorist groups (Laqueur, 2004: 100).

Before the 1990s, Islamists only wanted to overthrow their corrupt governments. But at the end of this decade, they concluded that:

We must direct the fight to the enemy whose hands are setting fire to our countries, to cut off its hands... because the coalition of our enemies led by the United States of America will not allow Islamists to come to power anywhere in the world. (Gerges, 2005: 27).

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in America, which targeted the world trade towers, a new chapter in international relations began. In the fight against international terrorism, which had seriously threatened the security of the world, the threats caused by terrorist behaviours were considered uncontrollable. The warning of the United Nations and the agreement and immediate action of the Security Council regarding the fight against international terrorism was a response to the September 11 incident. The anti-terrorist approach of the United Nations in 2001, especially the Security Council, which is directly responsible for international peace and security, faced serious challenges shortly after the start of the struggle. These challenges were precisely caused by the conflict of interests of the great powers, which showed its true face based on the US agreement with the Taliban. The leadership of the United States of America in the fight against terrorism and the use of NATO's military power in suppressing Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan for twenty years and finally the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan and its handover to the Taliban showed that the powers The international community does not have a serious decision to fight terrorism. According to some people, the action of the United States itself caused the extremist groups to disperse widely in the region and react.

"Afghanistan's geography with Central Asia has been one of the external factors intensifying fundamentalism in the region" (Ahmadi and others, 2018: 173).

The great game of international powers brought the fundamentalists into dangerous international games. The transformation of the process of "Jihad" of localism into "Jihad" of internationalism is in the light of the political and military games of major international powers such as the former Soviet Union and America in the Cold War atmosphere and the intensification of fundamentalism after the end of the Cold War. According to Lewis and Huntington, the behaviour of powers in international relations intensified the anti-Western sentiments in the form of religious violence among Islamic



fundamentalists "[...] Islam, like other world religions, sometimes promotes a state of violence in its followers" (Lewis, 1990: 61). Undoubtedly, external factors of the escalation of violence in the world are directly or indirectly related to the behaviour of international powers. What if some powers instigate violence and killing by using the tools of fundamentalist groups? A concrete example of this is the agreement of the United States after twenty years of war with the fundamentalist and terrorist group of the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, and finally handing over Afghanistan to them, which is a clear sign of instrumental use.

Some soft and indirect movements have also caused the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and the resulting violence. In his controversial book, *Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington clearly states that the major problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism, but Islam itself; a different civilization whose people believe in their cultural superiority and the humiliation of their power has worried them (Huntington, 1996: 210-219). Apart from the principle of Huntington's claim, which reminds us of cultural and civilizational differences in the world. Pointing to the feeling of inferiority of Muslims and the Islamic world will make not only the fundamentalists but all the followers of Islam react. However, fundamentalists may act faster and more violently. This theory, in turn, became the basis for the regular activities of the fundamentalists. Because the book (*The Clash of Civilizations*) indirectly addresses the violence between the followers of civilizations, especially incompatible civilizations in the history of mankind. In addition to the differences in interests, alignments in the two fields of theory and behaviour intensify approaches and orientations, usually in the form of projecting politics and making enemies. The realities of the international space after the Cold War, the new arrangement of powers with the creation of a new concept called the fight against international terrorism in 2001 was a new experience of international action.

Fundamentalist thoughts can be seen among all religions and civilizations. As in examining the types and criteria of terrorism in its religious type, violent behaviour may exist. Of course, in some religious groups and currents, such as Al-Qaeda and the like, more violence and killings are seen. Since 1979, along with the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan, the issue of Jihad became prominent in the ideology of Islamic fundamentalists. Although not all Salafists are violent; some extremist currents within it, such as Al-Qaeda, prescribe violence and terror as important tools to achieve their goals. There are enough evidence and clues that extremist fundamentalists have been promoting and encouraging terrorist and suicide operations in recent decades. Since the incident of September 11, 2001, dozens and hundreds of terrorist and suicide cases have occurred in Afghanistan and terrorist groups have taken responsibility for it.

Jihad and jihadism in the sense of using random violence and terror is a completely new phenomenon, which became popular among Salafi and fundamentalist currents in the Islamic world since the end of the 20th century. According to John Esposito,



Since the end of the 20th century, the word Jihad has been used by liberation movements (such as the Afghan Mujahideen, the separatists of Chechnya, Kashmir, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad) as well as terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda to legitimize their actions and create Motivation is used in followers. Jihadists consider Jihad as a global religious duty for Muslims to create a global Islamic revolution with global unity and cohesion (Esposito, 2005: 14).

International action after September 11, 2001, in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, created a lot of hope. It was expected that fundamentalism and its consequences would be destroyed or at least reduced. But such a thing did not happen, on the contrary, after the twenty presence of international powers in Afghanistan, this strategic geography was once again at the disposal of the fundamentalist and terrorist group of the Taliban. In addition, the Taliban group obtained weapons facilities that were left over from the ousted government. According to the American claim, light and heavy weapons worth more than eighty billion dollars have fallen into the hands of the Taliban. A few months after the Taliban took control of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was targeted and killed by US drones in the heart of Kabul. This fact proves the connection and cooperation between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. The current situation in Afghanistan, which is ruled by the Taliban, has increased the risk of strengthening, spreading, and the presence of terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

Therefore, the main consequence of fundamentalism at the international level is the threat to global peace and security. Because there is no guarantee that the Taliban will not commit terrorist acts in the international arena in collusion with other terrorist groups. Now the Taliban are looking for international legitimacy, they are benefiting from various ways to put pressure on governments in the international arena to recognize them. Terrorist behaviour and threats of terrorist activities have been repeatedly raised by the Taliban as means of pressure and reflected in the media as it is in the interest of the world to recognize the Taliban. The threat caused by terrorist attacks led to an increasing menace to global security. Fighting terrorism and eradicating it requires the serious determination of governments at the international level. With the beginning of the fourth wave of terrorism in the 1980s, the world witnessed increasing violence and terrorist attacks and this trend is still continuing.

## CONCLUSION

The thinking and behaviour of fundamentalism with a long history in the region and Afghanistan show serious dangers and threats. The behaviour of fundamentalists is synonymous with violence and terror. The threats and dangers caused by the behaviour of fundamentalists are not limited only to Afghanistan and the region; rather, with their expansion and growth, threats and risks will be global. The evidence indicates that in



regional and international equations, some great powers have always used radical movements and groups as a tool to exert pressure against their rivals. The support of regional and international powers to Jihad groups in Afghanistan in the 1980s finally led to the strengthening of Al-Qaeda. The alternating instrumental policy of the powers regarding the Islamic fundamentalist groups, as much as it has a temporary benefit to put pressure on the rival, entails serious security threats and dangers for the region and the world. The process of supporting the fundamentalist groups and currents has made them stronger and more powerful and equipped with new war tools and facilities. The growth and spread of fundamentalism that started at the end of the 20th century and continues until now have imposed unfortunate consequences on human society.

A) Fundamentalist Islamic groups in Afghanistan have turned this country into ruins and deprived the people of this land of peace and peaceful life. Afghanistan has not seen peace for more than forty years and in this half-century, it has experienced violence, killing, destruction and finally crisis in political, social, economic and military dimensions. Visionary groups, both moderate and radical, have been positioned as tools of external powers in the past forty years. This has prepared the ground for the intervention of external powers, both regional and international. The result of external interventions with the cooperation of radical Islamic groups has brought permanent crisis, political instability, and political and economic collapse. Fundamentalist groups, among other factors, are considered to be the cause of the continuation of the crisis in Afghanistan. Despite the growth of terrorist groups such as the Taliban, the current crises have an uncertain future. These crises are not limited only to the geography of Afghanistan; because due to its geopolitical location, there is a possibility of their spilling over to the countries of the region and the international level.

B) The mutual security of countries requires permanent cooperation at both regional and international levels. Insecurity and crisis at an important and strategic point will affect neighbouring countries and the region. Fundamentalist Islamic groups in Afghanistan are always in contact with neighbouring countries and the region from various cultural, economic and political aspects. The mutual interaction of the countries of the region with the fundamentalist groups by providing the ground for intervention increases the possibility of the penetration of fundamentalist thinking and its consequences in the region. After the Taliban terrorist group regained control in Afghanistan, the countries of the region, while secretly cooperating with the Taliban, have worried about the security of the region. The competition of the countries of the region with the geopolitical position of Afghanistan, in a reciprocal cycle, strengthens and consolidates the fundamentalist groups in the region. There is a danger that the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and the region will become a breeding ground for fundamentalist groups of its extremist type.

C) The international interests of the powers provide the ground for their international presence with instrumental policy towards the fundamentalist groups. Many fundamentalist groups, even of the extremist type, have close relations and secret



and open cooperation with some important international powers. After twenty years of the presence of major international powers in Afghanistan, and then handing it over to the Taliban terrorist group, many of whose leaders are on the blacklist of terrorism, the danger and threat to international security have become serious. America's agreement with the Taliban group in Qatar with the slogan of changing the Taliban led to the downfall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; it actually shows the serious interaction of the powers with the fundamentalist currents and groups of its radical type. The rise of extremist and fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban, which is practically related to Al-Qaeda, and their acquisition of advanced weapons facilities, have increased security risks and threats at the international level. This empowerment provides the ground psychologically and mentally for other existing groups around the world. There is a possibility that extremist groups will get advanced weapons facilities in the region. If achieved, it is considered a serious risk and threat to international security.

The existence of the half-corner crisis in Afghanistan and the resulting war and strife, due to various reasons, there is a possibility of its spread and influence in other countries. The constant insecurity and crisis in Afghanistan expose the countries of the region and the world to a serious security threat. The incident of September 11, 2001, is good proof of this issue. The instrumental use of extremist groups and currents in Afghanistan and the region, as much as it serves the goals of regional and international powers, also entails increasing risks and threats.

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# Taliban, Intellectual Foundations and Practices

MUHAMMAD MOOSA NOORI

**ABSTRACT:** Islamic fundamentalism refers to certain tendencies of Islamism in the Islamic world that commit acts of violence and extremism. Taliban in Afghanistan is one of those fundamentalist Muslim groups that two times have come to power in Afghanistan, once in the 1990s (1996-2001) for about five years, and again in the August of 2021 that still are in power in Afghanistan. In the present study, to have a better understanding of the Taliban fundamentalist group in Afghanistan, the intellectual foundations of this extremist Islamic group and other factors affecting the emergence of this group and some of the group's activities have been analyzed. In this article, the intellectual and effective thought perspective of the Taliban Fundamentalist group was introduced as influenced by the Deobandism of the Indian Subcontinent. After Deobandism, the Pashtun governor's tribal culture as well as the phenomenon of Afghan Arabs (al-Qaeda and Wahhabism) have been studied as other factors influencing the Taliban.

**KEYWORDS:** Taliban, Islamic fundamentalism, Afghan Arabs, al-Qaeda, Pashtun Governor's Tribalism..

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“Il mare è pietra, / riposo finale. [...] Il mare è la mia Terra”.  
(Mario Ricca)<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

*“Fundamentalism is equivalent to the Latin word *Fundamentum*, which means the foundation or basis of something”* (Oxford English Dictionary, word *fundamentum*). The equivalent of this word in Arabic, *al-Uṣūliyya*, is which means returning to principles and foundations, these principles and foundations can be in the form of one religion, one ideology or one school. Therefore, fundamentalism means emphasizing the foundation, the basis of the foundation, and the principle of a belief.

Religious fundamentalism means returning to the principles that represent the basis of religion. This term is used for closed religious' groups. that their mainstream, from which they have arisen. Due to work compromise or negligence, they are accused of forgetting the fundamental religious principles and they do not accept them, and they consider themselves the true representatives of the religion and want to return and reinterpret religious foundations according to their desired ideology (Zahedani and Hamidi 2012, 75 and 103).

<sup>1</sup> The *exergo* presents some verses from a friend see Ricca 2012), to whom I wrote an introduction: cf. Astori 2012.



Religious fundamentalism is actually a type of political-social movement with religious origins that in their beliefs try to bring changes in society and eliminate corruption. On the other hand, religious fundamentalism is a global phenomenon that does not belong to a particular religion or place. It is branch can be found in all major religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

Religious fundamentalists believe in the certainty of the holy texts, but at the same time, they have a selective approach to these texts. They take religion's aspects and characteristics, which is the best basis of their identity.

Criticism of Secularism and Modernism is one of the other main features of religious fundamentalism. They show an extreme reaction to the anti-religious currents common in the modern era. Fundamentalism is the result of modernity that has become a tool against modernity itself.

The thought and actions of religious fundamentalists are based on following their charismatic leader. Also, most religious fundamentalist movements are ideologically strongly influenced by Hazaralisms ideas (Zahedani and Hamidizadeh 2012, 103).

In terms of historical roots, the word fundamentalism was first used in the early 20th century for a Protestant Christian religious sect in the United States of America. This sect, which originated from the Protestant Church in the United States in the late 19th century, separated from the Protestant body and has been growing as an extremist group (Hoshengi and Paketchi 2011, 43). This Christian sect believed in the revelation of the words and phrases of the Christian holy book and emphasized following its rules. They also rejected Western modernism's attitude towards religion. This Christian sect attacked modern values from the point of view that these values intend to destroy the traditional culture. This group, which published a publication called "The Fundaments", believed in a literal interpretation of the Bible and wanted to implement every single part of the instructions of the Christian religion (Moradi 2006, 49).

Since the seventies of the 20th century, this term has also been used for Muslims. Most of the researchers return the roots and factors of Islamic fundamentalism to the historical conditions of the Western colonial period and consider its formation in response to the critical conditions of the Islamic world in the last three centuries.<sup>2</sup> The relationship of power changed between Europe and the Islamic world with the fall of the Osmani Empire, the response of the political elites, intellectuals and religious leaders in the Islamic world to this change of power relations was in two ways. Westerners emphasized the acceptance of western values and secularism to this new changing of power, religious modernists were in favour of Islamizing western institutional models such as political, legal, and educational institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> "Harair Dekamjian" believes that the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the confrontation with Europe raised the necessity of re-examining Islamic thoughts and ideas. The Islamic society gave a local cultural response to these conditions, which were consists of returning to Islam and Its fundamental principles (Dekamjian 1998, 21).



Over time and as a result of the union of the Western colonial powers with the pro-Western native elites on the side of the west who had adopted the policy of secularization, new governments based on secular nationalism emerged as a replacement for the Osmani Empire throughout the Middle East and North Africa after the First World War.

In reaction to the emergence of these new governments and the spread of Western secular values in Islamic societies under the domination of Western colonialism, Islamic fundamentalism was formed. From the point of view of Islamic fundamentalists of Islamic, secularism is a deviation from the basic principles and rules and returning to religious principles and foundations according to the Islamic society of the first time of the Prophet. And the khalagai of Rashidin is a return to the real principles and rules. The Islamic fundamentalist reaction gradually became the political dominate debate in most Islamic countries in the last three decades of the 20th century (Fath-Abadi 2009, 111-110).

Today, some people call all the Islamic movements of the new era fundamentalist, but in fact, certain tendencies of Islamism can be introduced under the title of Islamic fundamentalism and the aim of Islamic fundamentalism also refers to violent and extreme acts that some Muslim groups do (Tavassoli, Saai and Others 2010, 188). This approach is fed by different historical and social intellectual bases according to the different conditions and atmospheres of Islamic countries. Fundamentalism in Afghanistan is also a cultural, social and historical phenomenon that has rooted in the culture, history and religion of the Afghan society. Fundamentalism in Afghanistan, which officially emerged in the form of the Taliban group at the end of 1994, and in a short period turned itself into an important debate pole inside Afghanistan. Which has a historical background during Jihad and before that has not emerged from the political-social and cultural events of Afghanistan.

To gain a clearer understanding of this extremist and Taliban fundamentalist group, we examine its intellectual foundations, cultural and social contexts, and some functions of this group.

## 2. The intellectual foundations of the Taliban

The Taliban fundamentalist group in Afghanistan has been intellectually influenced by the following currents of thought.

### 2.1 Deobandism and Talibanism

The first current of thought influencing the fundamentalist and extremist group of Talibanism is fundamentalist of Deobandism. It is generally believed that the fundamentalist movements in the region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, which emerged in the form of the Taliban, are rooted in the Deobandi School (Panah and Rafiei 2011,



265). Regarding the formation of Deobandism, it should be said that this school emerged in India under British rule as a leading movement to fight for the survival of the Muslim community within the boundaries of colonial governments led by non-Muslims, aiming at unity and reform. The main theoreticians of Deobandism were Muhammad Qasim Nanatvi (1877-1833 AD) and Rashid Ahmad Khanqohi (1829-1905 AD), in the second half of the 19th century AD, in 1867 AD. They founded the first famous "Deoband" school in central India in a town of the same name in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India (Rashid 2003, 185-186).

"Deoband" school gradually turned into a school of thought. People educated in that school or related to that way of thinking are referred to as "Deobandi". The founders of this Madrasa were strict and precise Ḥanafī, and in the principles of education and dogmatic thinking, they followed the theological beliefs and schools of Ash'arī and Matridiyyah. Their school, renewal of speech studies in India has set Muslims as a model of diligence - deleted up-to-date knowledge from their curriculum and removed new knowledge from their teaching materials (Aziz 1988, 83). The Deobandis have a general similarity to Wahhabism in terms of belief, like Wahhabism, they are against other Islamic sects, show great sensitivity and provide a special interpretation of "monotheism and polytheism". The Deobandis were determined to educate a new generation of Islamic scholars who would revive Islamic values based on intellectual education, spiritual experiences, Sharia law and Tariqat, and they intended to teach students in colleges how to interpret Sharī'ah and harmonize the main texts of Sharī'ah with the existing facts. The Deobandis had a limited role for women and were against all types of ranking in Islamic society and rejected Shi'a as well. But the Taliban had extreme views of these ideas, which to this extent, were never approved by the main Deobandis. The Deobandis established schools all over India and Afghan students attended these schools in search of a better understanding of how Islam could overcome colonialism. In 1879, there were 12 Deobandi Madrasah /schools all over India and there were many Afghan students who were described as hot-tempered (Rashid 2003, 186-187).

After the Deobandi school got a political colour, the scholars affiliated with it, with the cooperation of several scholars affiliated with other factions, created the group "Jami 'at Ulema of India" in 1919. After the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan in 1947, Deobandi schools were developed in Pakistan. The Deobandis founded Jami'at Ulema-e- Islam, which was a purely religious movement. In 1962, in the North-West Frontier Province, their leader "Maulana Ghulam Qouth Hazar" turned Jamiat Ulema-e- Islam, into a political party, and as a result, this party quickly divided into several groups. Among them, Maulana Mufti Mahmood was an energetic leader who took over the leadership of the Pashtun wing of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam in the North-West Frontier Province (Rashid, 2003, 186). Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam Pakistan has been divided into two groups, the majority and the minority. The majority faction is led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman and the minority faction is led by Maulana Samiul Haq.



These two leaders both belong to the Pashtun ethnic group, and intellectually, they are staunch supporters of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the way of the Caliphs and Companions, who believe in the theories of the Salaf scholars and are opposed to *Ijtihād* and modernity. The relations between these two leaders of "Pashtuns of Deobandi descent" with the Taliban group are very deep and deep-rooted (Arefi, 2001, 261). This party agreed with the issue that Muslims can live in a society with other religions (Nazif Kar, 2003, 132).

The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Party of Pakistan has always competed with the Jamaat-e-Islami Party of Pakistan since its establishment. The Jamiat Ulama Islam, which was a branch of the Jamiat Ulama of India, was influenced by Deobandi scholars, and Jamaat Islami, which is another fundamentalist group influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, is a more modernist reading of Islam. The rivalry between Deobandis (Jamaat-ul-Ulema Islam) and Jamaat-e-Islami had a serious impact on the jihadist parties of Afghanistan. Radicals such as Hizb-e-Islami Hekmatyar, Jamiat-e-Islami Burhanuddin Rabbani, etc. were more influenced by Jamaat-e-Islami, and fundamentalists such as the Islamic Movement of Mawlavi Mohammadi and Hizb-e-Islami Younis Khalis, etc.

The teachings and intellectual foundations of Talibanism are also rooted in the teachings and foundations of Deobandism. Therefore, the origin of this group can be traced through Deobandi religious schools in Pakistan. The fact that eight of the ministers of the Taliban cabinet during the rule of this group were students of the Haqqani school of Maulana Sami-ul-Haq (a branch group of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam with Deobandi ideas) is good evidence of the influence of Deobandi scholars' ideas on the Taliban (Sajjadi 2009, 314-315).

In a situation where Jamiat Ulema Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami were engaged in competition among the jihadist parties of Afghanistan, during the 1980s, Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan was led with the help of Jamaat-e-Islami, which was the main rival of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam inside Pakistan. The connection of Pakistan Inter-Service Intelligent (ISI) with Jamaat-e-Islami was an important political tool in distributing aid to Mujahideen. Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, which was now headed by Mufti Mahmud's son of Maulana Fazlur Rahman, was not given any political role and the small groups of pro-Deobandi Afghan Mujahideen were largely ignored.

Jamiat Ulema Islam used this opportunity to establish hundreds of schools along the Pashtun belt in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. A place that provided free education, food, shelter and system education for Pakistani youth as well as Afghan refugees. These schools were organized to educate the new generation of Afghans in the post-Russian era. Although the Deobandis did not receive political support, the military regime of Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan funded madrassas of any sectarian belief. As a result, in 1971, there were only 900 Madrasa /schools in Pakistan, but at the end of the Zia-ul-Haq era in 1988, there were 8,000 registered religious schools and 2,500 unregistered schools, where more than half a million students were studying.



Most of these schools were located in rural areas and Afghan refugee camps and were run by Mullahs who did not have enough education. They were far from the initial reform agenda in Deobandi schools. Their interpretation of the Sharia was heavily influenced by the "Pashtun Wali" which is the tribal law of the Pashtuns, while financial aid from Saudi Arabia was also paid to these schools and parties that were in favour of the Wahhabi religion (Rashid, 2003, 185-189).

After the Mujahideen captured Kabul in 1992, Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligent (ISI) continued to ignore the growing influence of the Jamiat Ulema Islam on the Pashtuns of the south. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam was completely isolated politically in Pakistan. They were against the first government of Benazir Bhutto (1990-1988) and the first government of Nawaz Sharif (1992-1990).

In the 1993 elections, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam united with the Pakistan People's Party, which had won and was led by Benazir Bhutto, and thus became a part of the ruling coalition. Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam's access to the corridors of power for the first time allowed them to establish close relations with the army, the Pakistan Inter-Service Intelligent (ISI) and the Ministry of Interior under the supervision of General Nasrullah Babur. Babur was looking for a new group of Pashtuns who could raise the fortunes of Pashtuns in Afghanistan and make Pakistan's trade with Central Asia accessible through southern Afghanistan. Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam provided this opportunity for him. The leader of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, was elected as the head of the foreign affairs committee of the National Assembly. This position enabled him to influence foreign policy for the first time. He used his position to visit Washington and the capitals of European countries to promote the Taliban and persuade Saudi Arabia and Khalij Fars countries to provide financial support to the Taliban (Rashid, 2003, 189-190).

Dozens of extremist groups branched off from the line of thought of Jamiat Ulama Islam. The reason for this was the Deobandi tradition, which without any hierarchy, with the presence of a trained and capable Mullah, or a famous person in the place, started a school and intellectual base. The most important branch group of Jamiat Ulema Islam was led by Maulana Sami-ul-Haq, who was a political and religious leader, a member of the National Assembly and a senator, and his school became the main training centre for the Taliban leadership. In 1999, at least eight of the Taliban cabinet ministers in Kabul graduated from Darul Uloom Haq, Haqqani and dozens of other graduates served as Taliban governors in provinces or as military commanders, judges and bureaucrats. Yunus Khalis and Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, the leaders of the traditional Mujahideen parties, both studied in Haqqanieh. Haqqania is located in Akure Khatak in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. There is a boarding school for 1,500 students, a high school for 1,000 students and 12 smaller affiliated schools. This place was started in 1947 by Sami Haq's father, Maulana Abdul Haq, who was a student and then a teacher in Deoband.



In February 1999, the school faced a staggering 15,000 applicants for about 400 new places, making it the most popular school in northern Pakistan (Rashid, 2003, 190-191).

The fundamentalist group of the Taliban has a close relationship with the groups that have branched off from the Deobandi school of thought, especially with the groups related to the Jamiat Ulama of Pakistan, and has enjoyed their spiritual, material and even human support. At the same time, this relationship with the "Islamic scholarly community" was and is more than other groups due to cultural, linguistic and racial factors as well as political experience. Maulana Fazlur Rahman and Samiul Haq are both of Pashtun origin and have tremendous influence in Baluchistan and Sarhad provinces, which are the main home of Pashtuns in Pakistan. This relationship caused the Taliban to hand over the management of their military training centres in Afghanistan to Jamiat Ulema Pakistan in 1996. Also, different branches of Jamiat Ulama of Pakistan should undertake the task of recruiting Pakistanis and Arabs who fought alongside the Taliban (Rashid, 1999, 36, 2-3).

## **2.2 Taliban and Afghan-Arabs (Al-Qaeda/Wahhabism)**

Afghan Arabs are Arabs who took part in the war against the former Soviet Union and the puppet communist government of Afghanistan along with the Jihadi parties. The aforementioned Arabs were followers of the fundamentalist group Al-Qaeda and had Wahhabi thinking. After the establishment of the communist government in Afghanistan and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviets, radical and fundamentalist Arabs, who mostly had Salafi and Wahhabi ideas, turned their attention to Afghanistan. On the other hand, the financial resources of the aforementioned Arabs who volunteered to participate in the anti-communist jihad in Afghanistan, caused them to attract the attention of Jihadi parties. As a result, the presence of Arab forces in the Afghan Jihad became bold and widespread.

The most prominent face of the Afghan Arabs was Abdullah Azzam, who was called "Amir Mujahideen Arabs in Afghanistan". Azzam was a Palestinian who, after being expelled from Palestine, went to Jordan and then to Syria. In 1964, he received a bachelor's degree in theology from Damascus University and joined the Muslim Brotherhood Party at the same time. He received his master's degree in principles of jurisprudence in 1969 and his doctorate in principles of jurisprudence from Al-Azhar of Egypt in 1973 and taught in Jordanian universities until 1980. After his relations with the Jordanian ruling body became strained, he went to King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. In 1980, he went to the Islamic University of Islamabad to get to know the Afghan Jihad closely. Little by little, he left the teaching chair and directly entered the Afghan jihad. He founded the school of "Services of the Mujahideen" to organize the aid of the Arab world to the Afghan Jihad and to introduce the Afghan Jihad to the Arab



world, he founded the "Al-Jihad" magazine. Abdullah Azzam was murdered in 1989 along with his two sons Mohammad and Ibrahim in Peshawar, Pakistan.

After the death of Abdullah Azzam, one of his disciples named Osama bin Laden, a disgruntled Saudi millionaire, took over the task of organizing the Afghan-Arab forces. Osama Bin Laden had met Abdullah Azzam in Mecca several times during Hajj and was influenced by him and respected him as his leader (al-Nablisi 2007, 135; Rashid 2003, 206). Then, during the lifetime of Abdullah Azzam, he came to Pakistan and was strongly influenced by him. Abdullah Azzam gave him the command of the Afghan-Arab military forces. Bin Laden mainly used his wealth and Saudi Arabia's aid to implement Mujahideen projects and promote Wahhabism among Afghans. For this, he created an organization called "Qaida al-Ansar", which later united with "Jamaa al-Jihad" led by Ayman al-Zawahiri and created a new organization called "Qaida al-Jihad" (al-Qaeda). In the new organization, Osama bin Laden was appointed as the leader and Ayman al-Zawahiri as the deputy (Mozhdeh 2003, 47-48). Al-Ansar Base and later Al-Jihad Base established special military bases in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan (Nangarhar and Paktika). But their extreme actions disgusted most of the people of Afghanistan. In addition, the Arab-Afghans, with the support of the extreme Pashtun and pro-Wahhabi Mujahideen, alienated non-Pashtuns and Shiites (Rashid 2003, 272). Therefore, from the very beginning, Al-Qaeda, which is an extremist and fundamentalist group, has been communicating and interacting with Pashtun extremist groups.

Ahmad Shah Masood, one of the commanders of the Islamic Jamiat Party of Afghanistan, also confirms this connection between Al-Qaeda and Pashtun fundamentalist parties. After he was driven from Kabul by the Taliban, in 1997 he criticized the Afghan Arabs and said: "We did not have good relations with the Afghan Arabs during the Jihad years. Sayyaf and Golbedin Hekmatyar had very good relations. When we entered Kabul in 1992, the Afghan Arabs went to war with us alongside Hekmatyar, we request them to leave our homeland (Moradi 2006, 86; Rashid 2003, 272-273).

After the assassination of Abdullah Ezzam and the pressure of the Pakistani government to deport Afghan Arabs, Osama had to leave Afghanistan for Sudan in 1991 along with several Afghan-Arab leaders (al-Nablisi 2007, 142). The meeting of Jihadi commanders belonging to the Khalis, Hekmatyar and Sayyaf parties in Sudan with Osama bin Laden provided the grounds for his return to Afghanistan (Mozhdeh 2003, 66; Sajjadi, 2009, 317-318), and Bin Laden returned to Jalalabad in Afghanistan in May 1996 (al-Nablisi 2007, 144). Until the capture of Kabul and Jalalabad by the Taliban in September 1996, he was under the protection of the Jalalabad Council. In 1997, he moved to Kandahar by establishing a friendly relationship with Mullah Omar and was supported by the Taliban (Rashid 2003, 209).

As the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden managed to make a place for himself in the ranks of the Taliban by using his material resources. Bin Laden tried to make



himself more popular with their leadership by sending several hundred Arab-Afghan fighters to participate in the 1997 and 1998 Taliban attacks in northern Afghanistan (Rashid 2003, 186-187). These Wahhabi fighters helped the Taliban in the massacre of Shi'a Hazaras in the north. Also, a hundred Arab-Afghans stationed at the "Rishkhor" military base were fighting against Massoud's forces on the Kabul front, and it was felt that Bin Laden's global vision was increasingly overshadowing the thinking of prominent Taliban leaders (Rashid 2003, 218).

Afghan Arabs and al-Qaeda played an effective role in the Taliban's anti-western policies. By destroying the Buddha statue in Bamyan, the Taliban caused widespread public protests. By arresting the internal and external employees of foreign institutions under the pretext of promoting Christianity, they aroused the opinions of the Western governments against them, although the purpose of all these behaviours was to attract the attention of the extreme fundamentalists of the Islamic world, including Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden.

The influence of Osama bin Laden within the Taliban reached a point that caused a split in the ranks of the Taliban. During the previous government of the Taliban, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Taliban, Ahmad Mutawakkul, who was more or less moderate, demanded the expulsion of Bin Laden from Afghanistan to reduce the international pressure against the Taliban, but Mullah Omar and a wide range of his group seriously supported Osama bin Laden (Sajjadi, 2009, 319).

### **2.3 Religious schools and Emersion of the Taliban**

During Jihad, attention to religious sciences increased among people. The reason for this was the social prestige of religious scholars in society, apart from the closure of public schools and private schools. The religious scholars, who were in the lower social hierarchy in the past, gained tremendous power in the society and the people started Jihad against the communist government with their Fatwa/orders. With the desire of families to send their children to religious schools, jihadist organizations started establishing religious schools in the refugee camps, and Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, contributed huge sums of money to these schools. Schools established by jihadi organizations in Pakistan provided the necessary background for Talibanism. Most of the members of the leadership of the Taliban were students of religious studies who had studied in these schools, and in those schools, they got acquainted with the religious ideas of Deobandi, Jamaat-e-Islami and Akhwanism (Sajjadi, 2009, 320-321).

Therefore, it can be said that the Taliban fundamentalist group intellectually goes back to the Salafist school of Deoband, Al-Qaeda, Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia and the extremist and Salafist thinking of the Haqqani school of Pakistan and other Salafist schools of Deoband in northern Pakistan. Violence in the application of Sharia law, bigotry and dogmatism and finally opposition to Shiite thought are the prominent



features of the Deobandi school, al-Qaeda and Saudi Wahhabism, which has also emerged in the visionary group of the Taliban.

### 3. Cultural-social contexts

The Taliban fundamentalist group is culturally and socially rooted in the traditional Pashtun society and Pashtun culture and customs; Because this kinetic group originated from the Pashtun community of Afghanistan and from the heart of rural people who have strong traditional and tribal ties, with the consideration of tradition and customs in the culture position and thought of Pashtuns, they cannot ignore the influence of Pashtun ethnic and tribal culture. This influence is noticeable in the political thoughts and behaviour of the Taliban leaders pretty well. For example, the model selection of the political system and the ways of legitimizing it can be considered one of the effectiveness of tribal culture. Because the model of the anti-government system in the political thinking of the Taliban, in which one person is placed at the head of the government in an absolute manner and does not give any role to other members of the nation, is very similar to the model of the traditional tribal government system in the rural community of Pashtuns. In the model of the administrative system of the tribe, a person who is the head of the tribe is considered superior to all the people and his will has the aspect of legality. Also, the actions of the tribal leader are immune from any kind of criticism. In the Taliban government system, the relationship between the nation and the emir is similar to the relationship between the members of the tribe and the tribal leader. Because in such a system, the people not only do not have the right to monitor or participate in the government, but it also does not have the right to live freely in the circle of private life. (Arefi 1999, 191-212).

In fact, in terms of the social context, the fundamentalist group, the Taliban, is the result of tribal culture and the birth of the famous custom of Pashtunwali. Therefore, before dealing with the definition of Pashtunwali, it seems necessary to describe the concept of Pashtun.

#### 3.1 Pashtun

The Pashtuns are one of the major ethnic groups of Afghanistan, who have special racial and cultural characteristics and their language is Pashto. There are various opinions about the racial origin of the Pashtuns. According to a traditional theory among the Pashtuns themselves, which is documented by ethnic Genealogy, the science of genealogy is ancient and mythological history. They consider themselves descendants of Bani Israel, according to ethnic traditions among the Pashtuns in the 17th century it was recorded in a book called (Makhzan Afghani) that the great ancestor of the Pashtuns was a person named Afghana who lived during the reign of Prophet Dawood. During the dispersion of the Jewish, the Afghana kids took refuge in the Ghor



Mountains and settled there. After the advent of Islam, the head of this tribe named Qays accepted Islam and started Jihad to spread the Islam religion. It is also said that Qays went to Medina and was honoured by Khalid bin Waleed for the presence of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Prophet changed his name from Qays to Abdul-Rashid, but scientists reject this theory for historical and linguistic reasons and consider Pashtuns a branch of the Indo-European branch of the Aryan race, which during of history and in the process of formation of nations, some elements, Indian, Tajik Turks and They have also attracted the Arabs and created a nation with a specific language and culture. (Farhang 1371, 23-24). Most historians consider the first habitat of the Pashtuns to be the Suleiman Mountains and its adjacent lands west of the Sand River (Gregorian 1388, 52). Currently, Pashtuns live on both sides of the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtuns of Afghanistan are concentrated in the southeast, east and southwest of Afghanistan, and their two main groups are Durani and Gholjai tribes. Tribal culture and life are common among Pashtuns, and they direct their activities based on a tribal charter called Pashtunwali. And gives strength to their communities.

### **3.2 Pashtunwali**

Afghan Pashtuns have a special kind of customs and traditions called Pashtunwali, Pashtunwali is both a set of laws and an ideology in Pashtun tradition (Roa 1990, 28).

Experts have provided different definitions of Pashtunwali; some consider Pashtunwali to be a collection of customary laws that were common among Pashtuns before the establishment of the city government. Others consider Pashtunwali as both an ideology and customary law, which has an executive guarantee and the institutions that implement it (Tajik, Hojjat and Aeinifar 2017, 54, as cited in, Roa 1990, 62/ Mary Lewis 1988, 42). Some have introduced it as an unwritten tradition of the Pashtuns (Tajik, Hojjat and Aeinifar 2017, 54, as cited in, Abutalebi 1376) Pashtunwali rules and regulations cover a wide range of Pashtun behaviour and human relations. The most important principles of this collection are stigma, retaliation or revenge and hospitality (Mary Lewis 1988,42).

### **3.3 Principles of Pashtunwali**

Pashtunwali content is made up of principles, the most important of which are as follows.

- *The principle of stigma*: stigma in the word means shame, disgrace, fault, modesty, dignity, and respect (Amed dictionary the word "Nang"). Keeping a woman's full Hijab and keeping a strict distance between women and strangers (non-mahrams), as well as defending a woman against dishonour is rooted in this principle. But the concept of honour, which is another term from the set of shame, has a wider meaning. Honour, which is the protection of privacy, means privacy in a more limited sense, it refers to the chastity and respect of women and the duty of men to protect them. But in a broader



sense, it means the women of the family and the women of the entire Afghan society are the honour of Pashtun land, which must be protected. Some researchers identify gold, women, and land as Pashtun honour and believe that living in a rural family or Pashtun community, you must be able to protect your honour. If someone cannot defend his honour, he will lose his honour in society and that person will no longer have a place in the Pashtun family, village, or larger communities of Pashtun (Tajik, Hojjat and Aeinifar 2017, 55, as cited in Miakhil 2009, 3).

The principle of stigma is the central point of the Pashtunwali debate because most of the basic principles of Pashtunwali, in connection with this principle find meaning and sense and were created in line with the realization of this principle (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 195).

Keeping fully the women's Hijab, keeping strick distance from strangers (non-mahrams) and also defending women against insulting them has rooted in the principle of stigma in Pashtun culture (Zahedi 2021, 136). Because of the great importance of this concept, Pashtunwali is sometimes called Nangwali.

People with stigma are a source of pride and fame for themselves and their families in the Pashtun ethnic culture, be calling stigma less is considered the worst insulting and belittling, which may lead to very intense emotional reactions (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 196).

Although Islam emphasized the chastity and chastity of Muslim women and the sensitivity of men towards their women, the policy of complete gender isolation and exclusion applied to women in the Taliban regime and the fact that women are completely deprived of their social rights and political participation are mostly originated from the tribal culture rather than from Islamic teachings and rules.

- *The principle of retaliation or revenge:* Another feature of the ethnic culture of the Pashtun community is the principle of retribution or revenge. According to this principle, it is the duty and right of every human being to be the executor of justice and take revenge for the atrocities committed against him (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 197). Tikhanov defined retaliation as "*the law of revenge of blood with blood*", which may continue for centuries (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 197, as cited in Tikhanov, beta, 10). In the first step, the aggressor or oppressor is the subject to revenge, but if the aggressor is not available, revenge may be taken from his relatives and even from his family and descendants. On the one hand, this revenge may be delayed for years, but it is a shame for a Pashtun to forget or forgive it. Although it is against Sharia butoring will never be accepted in the principles of Pashtunism (Elphinstone 2009, 170).

The collapse of Kabul in 1992 in the hands of non-Pashtun ethnic groups and the formation of a government by Tajiks was considered a kind of violation of the Pashtuns' privacy and the tarnishing of Pashtun's shame. Because the Pashtuns, who have always had political sovereignty in Afghanistan throughout history, with the formation of a non-Pashtun government, felt severe humiliation in themselves, this provided the necessary motivations for the formation of the Pashtun revivalist movement. Therefore,



one of the main motives for the formation of the Taliban movement can be considered to restore the dignity of the Pashtuns, which had deteriorated during the Mujahidin government According to (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 197).

The Taliban movement was based on this revenge principle, when they took over control of Mazar-e- sharif, created a very terrible example of violence and revenge of tribal culture, demonstrated, and committed a full-scale genocide of Hazaras.

*-The principle of hospitality:* One of the famous patterns of behaviour among the Pashtun tribes is the principle of hospitality, which is considered one of their national pride. In the ethnic culture, Pashtun throwing guests out of the host house even despite poverty is a kind of humiliation of hospitality. In addition to honouring guests, the custom of hospitality has broader social and political implications. The custom of hospitality is considered one of the ways to gain power in the tribal system, and it is the host proves his political and economic superiority by offering his wealth. the most important implication of hospitality is that the host must ensure the safety of his guest (Elphinstone 2009, 220).

For more than three decades, Afghanistan was a meeting place for religious extremists such as Osama bin Laden, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, one of the leaders of al-Qaeda, and today many of the leaders of al-Qaeda and Daish live in Afghanistan. The principle of hospitality has been influential in the emergence of religious extremists, individuals and groups and Afghanistan has become a safe place for the activities and ideological and military training of these people and extremist groups. The "Afghan Arabs" phenomenon, which was previously examined, was the gathering of extremist fundamentalists from all over the Islamic world and receiving military and religious training in Afghanistan since the Arab volunteers were mainly commuting and travelling among Pashtun groups. They intensified the ethnic and tribal fundamentalism among the Afghan groups, especially in the Pashtun areas (Ahmadi 2005, 52-48).

Therefore, hosting Pashtuns in the form of the principle of hospitality to their Arab customers is one of the factors that played an effective role in the formation of the extreme and violent views and rise of the extremist Taliban group. Based on this principle, the Taliban supported Osama bin Laden and refused to hand over him and their other Arab guests to America.

### **3.4 Pashtunwali and Sharia**

On the other hand, the border between the Pashtun governor and the Sharia has never been clear for the Pashtuns, therefore the punishments of the Taliban were mainly taken from the Pashtun governor and not from the Sharia and were applied to different degrees and levels in the Pashtun-inhabited areas. But it was never common among other ethnic groups, the Taliban were determined to impose Pashtun-Wali sharia laws on all ethnic groups (Rashid 2003, 177). A brief look at the actions of this group during its rule over Afghanistan makes it clear that the action of this group has roots in Pashtun



Vali or Pashtun governorship. For example, the beliefs of the Taliban, whose practical expression is in the form of measuring beards, men imposing limits on the dead - those who had trimmed their beards, imprisoning women, keeping them at home and making it mandatory for women to wear a burqa, banning photography and watching TV, and so on. It appeared that all of them were influenced by the Pashtun rules of the governor. Based on this, the Taliban give Islam the colour of ethnicity and use it to legitimize their actions. Such an understanding of Islam presented by the Taliban confirms the explanation called "the inverted Orientalism of Islam" that has been raised contrary to Orientalist theories, which have an essentialist approach to Islam. Contrary to orientalist theories that have an essentialist approach towards Islam and present Islamism as homogeneous and coherent, according to Orientalists, Islam is just a simple name for many societies and cultures. According to them, Islam is diverse in practice, so it cannot be reduced to its inherent and fixed characteristics. The anti-essentialist and anti-oriental view of Islam can be seen in its most severe form in the work of Hamid Al-Zein. In his studies, he concludes that the multiplicity of Islamic activities and trends and the different uses of Islam in many contexts indicate that there is not a single thing called Islam, but there are Islams (Babi Saeed 2000, 44).

In Orientalist explanations of Muslim societies, Islam is at the centre and plays the core role. While in the narratives of inverted Orientalism, Islam is not at the centre but divided and spread. In Orientalism, we are faced with the reduction of parts to the gap (that is local events are explained by referring to the essence of Islam) but in the opposite, in Orientalism, we are faced with the reduction of the gap to its constituent parts (that is Islam spreads in local phenomena). The vacuum caused by the division of Islam as a general concept is filled by a set of small Islams (it means planning Islamic activities). These small Islams are also easily introduced and recognized by other categories and ethnicity is one of the most important and main of these categories. According to the concept of Islam as an ethnicity, Islamic identity is at the heart of ethnic ties and contradictions, Islam is an ethnic border and sign, a sign for an ethnic identity that has existed so far (Babi Saeed 2000, 45). Based on this, the role of Islam is completely taking place in the second level. In other words, Islam is considered a dictionary whose job is to legitimize and confirm the representations. The explanation presented in the inverted orientalist theory of Islam is very close to the Taliban's perception of Islam. The Taliban also play the same role as Islam that is given in explaining the inverted Orientalism of Islam. For this reason, the fundamentalist discourse of the Taliban does not consider ideological boundaries seriously, what is of primary importance to them is ethnicity, for this reason, they are a Pashtun fundamentalist if ethnic interests require it. He/she can easily deal with a Marxist and unite against another nation or tribe, from the leaders and commanders of the Taliban to the ordinary soldiers of this group. They paid attention to their origins and ethnic and tribal affiliations and although religious and ideological tendencies were considered the most important characteristic of this group, it was the secondary importance. Therefore,



we can see that the Taliban Emirate, “*in the cities of Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-e-Sharif the cities where Pashtuns are in the minority. Taliban government officials such as Mayors, police chiefs and other senior managers have been elected from among the Pashtuns of Kandahar who either do not know Farsi or speak this language with difficulty. In the local councils, there are no prominent indigenous or native members*” (Rashid 2001, 158). In the Pashto culture, to which the Taliban are ethnically indebted to this culture, they value the system value that governs and tribe more than their membership in the country. Peter Marsden describes the connection of the Taliban with Pashtun values and their ethnic traditions, it is like this “*because the Taliban has emerged from the depths of the Pashtun society, its philosophy is very indebted to the Pashtun governor. However, it can be said that the Taliban matured or originated from tradition in which scholars usually ask people to temporarily give up the Pashtun governorship for the sake of Sharia law and fight against the common enemy. However, it is interesting that the Taliban matured in the Pashtun tribal areas and not in the north, where the religious tradition was very different*” (Marsden 2009, 129).

#### **4. The performance of the Taliban against women**

In the performance section of the Taliban, as an example, we will examine the performance of this group against women.

Women and the way women are viewed have a special place in the Taliban's thinking. The years of Taliban rule in the first period of their rule were difficult and unpleasant times for all the people of Afghanistan, but for women more than others, it was accompanied by difficulty and bitterness (Kurna 2013, 62). The Taliban's understanding of women's socio-political rights meant depriving them of any social activities, and accordingly they ordered women not to appear in public.

During their previous rule, the Taliban imposed the strictest regulations on women. Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, has taken a hostile stance against the severe international pressure regarding the violation of women's rights and declared: “*Women's access to education and training in educational centres means applying the policy of disbelief and promoting immorality and prostitution in Afghanistan*”.

The Taliban will never allow women to study and work in governmental and non-governmental organizations (Esmatullahi 1999, 137). Out of the 33 decrees issued by the Taliban in 1996 in Kabul, 14 are for women and 17 are shared between men and women.

This way of looking at women in the fundamentalist thinking of Talibanism, apart from the extreme religious view of the Taliban, is influenced by the social structure of the tribal and traditional society of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan. In the traditional society of Afghanistan, women are confined to their homes, they take care of children and keep house. Rural women milk cows, bake bread, feed cattle, and work side by side with men.



They also wear hijab at home and rarely leave the house, except with the permission of her husband and relatives. Most of the women do not have birth certificates. Men are not willing to tell the names of their wives and daughters to strangers (Farzan 2003, 46). On the other hand, in the traditional, closed and tribal society, the tribe's solidarity is tied to the issue of women; In such a way that disrespecting the woman of a tribe is considered disrespectful to all members of the tribe.

Relating the dignity and prestige of the tribe to the issue of women has caused the limitation of women in social interactions. In Talabani's thinking, the woman is enclosed in the framework of Deobandi religious teachings and the Pashtun tribal tradition of "Pashtun Wali" and her honourable life is life in the corner of the house and behind the curtain (Sajjadi 2009, 337).

When Mullah Omar was asked in an interview, why did you completely prevent women from working in the areas under your control? He replied that God has created men and women completely different from each other to perform separate and different tasks on earth. We have a proverb that says: "*work inside the house is a woman's duty, and the outside world belongs to warrior men*" (Kazem Abdullah 2005, 443). This way of looking at women is exactly the same tribal view that the Arab tribal community had towards women during the dark period.

Based on this point of view, the Taliban, both in the first period of their rule and in the period of their current rule over Afghanistan, when they opened the important cities of Afghanistan, they tried to impose restrictions on women, by closing girls' schools, they deprived girls of their rights. They were deprived of education. During the previous period of Taliban rule over Afghanistan, when the Taliban captured Herat, they closed all girls' schools in this city. Many boys' schools with female teachers were also closed. They also segregated the few active hospitals, closed the bathrooms and prohibited women from going to the market. As a result, the women of Herati were the first group of Afghan women who protested against the excesses of the Taliban at that time. On October 17, 1996, more than 100 women protested in front of one of the government offices in opposition to the closing of the city's baths. The Taliban religious police beat and arrested the protesting women. After that, their agents entered the houses and warned the men not to send their wives out of the house (Rashid 2003, 179).

After the fall of the former Taliban government in 2001, during the twenty years of the republic (2001-2021), due to the widespread presence of the international community and the support of donors for women's rights, a good platform has been provided for the improvement of women's lives and their political and social activities. and good educational opportunities were provided for girls. Many girls achieved higher education and studied at the world's best universities. The educated class, who were more familiar with technology, worked in important administrative positions and created a good system in Afghanistan.

It can be said that the republic's political system was formed with women's participation and decisive role. During this period, the presence of Afghan women in the



parliament, cabinet, armed forces, press and civil society was not only unprecedented in the history of Afghanistan but also surpassed many countries in the region.

After the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan in August 2021, women were deprived of work and girls were not allowed to go to public universities and schools. The ban on girls going to school continues until seven months have passed since the Taliban took over. The Taliban have imposed restrictions on women's travel and even treatment. Many women's rights activists and women protestors have been arrested (Shahabi 2022)

After the Taliban took over, Afghan women suffered enormous costs in all aspects and many cases irreparable. For example, Zainab Abdullahi was a young girl who died in the shooting of Taliban gunmen in the month of Jadi 1400/January 2022. The protesting girls and women are not hidden from anyone, but the beating and physical and psychological torture of women has been reduced to the extent of names and attractive news headlines, and women were caught by the Taliban, tortured and forced to give false and forced confessions against the struggle. They demand their rights and what a huge amount of insult, pain and shame it imposes on women, and after that what is the state of individual and family life as well as mental and psychological of these women and it is not reflected in the media in any way (Shahabi 2022).

## Conclusion

The Deobandi School of thought is the most important intellectual and ideological origin of the fundamentalist group of Talibanism. Linguistic, cultural and racial factors play a decisive role in this relationship. Culturally and socially, the emergence of the Taliban is rooted in the traditional Pashtun society and Pashtun culture and customs. In fact, the social platform of the Taliban fundamentalist group is Pashtun culture and the functions of this group are also rooted in Pashtun.

Afghan Arabs (fundamentalists with Salafist and Wahhabi ideas) played a significant role in the birth of the Taliban, and the Taliban's anti-Western and anti-Shia policies have been heavily influenced by Afghan Arabs. The performance of this group against women is influenced by the extreme religious views of the Taliban and the social structure of the tribal and traditional society of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan, which is considered the origin of the Taliban group.

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# Discourse Analysis of “Caliphate Political Islam” in Afghanistan

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**ABSTRACT:** In Afghanistan, we have recently experienced different types of political Islam. What is caliphate political Islam and what are its roots and main elements in Afghanistan? The main idea of this article is to answer the above questions. Findings show that Caliphate Political Islam in Afghanistan has always been present in the background of politics and power in Afghanistan, but in the two periods of 1881 to 1919 and after 1996 it became one of the main actors in the political and social life of this country. In these periods, generally "Caliphate" has been the focal point of the doctrine and the main elements such as the Islamic Emirate, the Amir al-Mu'minin, Sharia, Sunnah, jihad, Pashtunism, Security, and Cosmopolitanism are located around it. In these periods, Caliphate Political Islam has competed with other kinds of political Islam, at times it has succeeded and taken power as the hegemonic discourse in Afghanistan. This Islam lost its credibility through the hegemony of nationalist and liberal-democratic discourses, for the first time at the beginning of the reign of Shah Amanullah (1919) and the second time with the fall of the Taliban regime (2001).

**KEYWORDS:** Political Islam, Caliphate, Abdul Rahman Khan, Taliban, Afghanistan

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## INTRODUCTION

The fact is that Afghanistan, since its establishment as an independent state in 1747, has been involved in various forms of Political Islam. In the collection of Afghan Political Islam, from the past to the present, we can enumerate many different types and varieties of Islamism, which due to substantive differences, cannot be grouped under a single discourse. The discourse of Caliphate Political Islam - which this article is responsible for analyzing - is very important among the various types of political Islam in Afghanistan because it is rooted in the political history of Islam and is known as one of the oldest discourses of political Islam in Afghanistan. This kind of political Islam has played an important role in the power equations of Afghanistan in the ups and downs of Afghanistan's political history, especially in the last decades of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and has played a prominent role in Afghanistan's political interactions.

Caliphate Political Islam works like a network. The "Caliphate" is located in the centre, and other important elements are gathered around it. In total, Caliphate-oriented tendencies in Afghanistan, which have been manifested in several historical periods of this country, can be analyzed in the framework of discourse theory and its identity and record can be recognized from other types of Political Islam. It is assumed that Caliphate Political Islam has a separate political nature and identity. Although this kind



of Islam has common elements and implications with other kinds of Political Islam collection, in the end, its political identity will be different from other Islams, including Shariatee and Velayatee Political Islam. The actions of agents of this kind in Afghanistan show that the idea of reviving the Caliphate is still alive for a range of Afghan Islamists.

### THE CONCEPT OF CALIPHATE POLITICAL ISLAM

"Political Islam", which, like many political terms, comes from the western world, suffers from a great deal of conceptual unrest. Because this term is often confused with words such as fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism in the literature of Western and Islamic scholars (Fuller, 2003: X). Regarding the nature of political Islam, Abdul Qadir Odeh believes that Islam is not just a religion, but a religion and a state. According to him, the essence of Islam is such that everything in the Qur'an and Sunnah cannot be realized without the existence of an Islamic state (Odeh, 1981: 79). Abdullah Hussein al-Sadmi, another historian of the Arab world, writes: "*Political Islam is a set of political thoughts and goals that originate from Islamic law*" (Al-Sadmi, 2014: 29). Nazia Ayoubi in her book *Political Islam* also believes that political Islam is a doctrine or movement that believes that Islam has a theory of politics and government (Ayoubi, 1991: 44). During the twentieth century, many types and varieties of political Islam were associated with the issue of power in different countries, which, according to Edward Said, has played an important role in the instability and epistemological complexity of Islamism:

We are talking about Saudi anti-communist Muslims, we are talking about brave Afghan Muslim men, and we are talking about genuine Muslims like Sadat, the Saudi royal family and Zia-ul-Haq. We are talking about Khomeini's Islamic military and Gaddafi's third Islamic way. In Egypt, the Islamic Associations; in Saudi Arabia, the Muslim militias that gather at the Medina Mosque; in Syria, the Associations of Islamic pioneers against the Ba'athist regime; In Iran, the Islamic Mujahideen, the Fada'is and the freedom fighters are all a small part of an opposition movement. (Said, 1981: 60).

Now there are various caliphate trends in the world, and the Taliban in Afghanistan is one of them. Hizb ut Tahrir and ISIS are two other examples. The difference is that the Taliban in Afghanistan have limited the territory of the caliphate within the borders of Afghanistan, but Hizb ut-Tahrir and ISIS do not recognize international borders and seek to establish a global caliphate. Also, the desired caliphate of the Taliban is mixed with Afghan culture and traditions. While ISIS and Hizb ut-Tahrir are more Salafist and want to return to the caliphate system in the style of the time of the Prophet of Islam and his successors. In the following, we will discuss the indicators of the Taliban's desired



caliphate to make the difference between this current and other caliphate's currents clearer.

### THE ROOTS OF CALIPHATE POLITICAL ISLAM IN AFGHANISTAN

Dust Mohammad Khan, one of the powerful rulers of nineteenth-century Afghanistan, was the first ruler to call himself "*Amir al-Mominin*" in 1835 (Rashtia, 1957: 61). Dust Mohammad Khan was aware of the miraculous power of the Amir al-Mu'minin. With this tactic, he managed to advance his affairs in the face of the British. Dust Mohammad Khan's use of religious teachings, especially in the face of foreign forces, became a tradition that was followed by Amir Abdul Rahman Khan and his son Amir Habibullah Khan. Abdul Rahman Khan (1880-1901) perfected the idea of Dust Mohammad Khan. After seizing power, he did not spare any effort to even dream of showing himself as the Caliph of the Prophet of Islam.

After Abdul Rahman Khan, the avoidance of his son Habibaullah Khan (1901-1919) from carrying the title of "King" and being content with the title of "Amir" cannot be justified except as a conscious attribution to a religious source. Habibullah Khan, relying on the same belief and method of his father, considered his power sacred and placed himself among the prophets and said: "A king and a prophet are like two jewels in one ring" (Ghobar, vol. 1, 1985: 1125).

With the rise to power of Shah Amanullah (1919) and the adoption of modernist plans, it took a while for the idea of a Caliphate to emerge, but Habibaullah Kalkani, after ascending the throne (1929), showed that he also longed for the Amir al-Mu'minin. This title was given to him by Hazrat Mujadadi, the leader of Naqshbandi Sufism (Marsden, 2000: 54). Habibullah's rule was short and he failed to implement the Caliphate theory. With Nader Shah coming to power, the caliphate was delayed until the 1978 coup of the People's Democratic Party and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. From this time, political Islam took an organizational form and appeared in various forms.

Mohammad Nader Shah (1930) also had a significant view of the teachings of the Caliphate. In the first proclamation he issued after gaining power, he mentioned the religion of the Messenger of God and gave a religious aspect to all matters (Farrokh, 1992: 516). He forced the dependent Mullahs (clergymen in local dialect), including the Fagheer Takab, to show his great system by writing large sums of money, without giving official titles and positions, and without exposing the government's connection with him, by writing books, pamphlets, and oral and written propaganda. Based on Quranic verses, these mullahs considered him as one of the Caliphs and deputies of the holy essence of God (Haeri, 1995: 205). After the overthrow of the monarchy and the proclamation of the republic in 1973, the idea of a Caliphate disappeared from Afghan thought for several decades, until the rise of the Taliban (1994). In the beginning, this



group focused only on creating security and enforcing the *Shari'a* and avoided creating a political system. But after rapid military victories, Molla Omar considered establishing a government to restore security and religion. After capturing Kabul in 1996, the Taliban called their political system the "*Islamic Emirate*". According to the theoreticians of Jamiat-ul-Ulama, the Islamic Emirate was considered the best option considering Afghanistan's traditional and Sharia-oriented society. Because of the model of the caliphate system in the political thinking of the Taliban, although it is essentially an Islamic model, no Muslim doubts that it is Islamic.

The theory of the Islamic Emirate is fully compatible with the Caliphate. Because this system has followed the path that the Caliphate had followed in the beginning of Islam. As a number of Sunni religious scholars and elites gathered in Kandahar under the name of the Council of Settlement and after the election of Mullah Mohammad Omar as Amir al-Mu'minin, had pledged allegiance to him (Sajjadi, 2001: 229).

In fact, the caliphate group of the Taliban is now the most important representative of political Islam in Afghanistan. This is despite the fact that before the Taliban, two parties "Islamic Jamieat" and "Islamic Hizb" were in charge of this role. Jamiat-e-Islami led by Burhanuddin Rabbani and Hizb-e-Islami led by Hekmatyar represented the Muslim Brotherhood in Afghanistan. In fact, Ikhwani parties can be considered the organizational roots of the Taliban in the 1980s. Rabbani and Hekmatyar tried to prove their loyalty to the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood by translating the books of Hassan al-Banna, Seyyed Qutb and Muhammad Qutb. Rabbani was the most important figure of the Brotherhood, who became the head of the Islamic State in 1992 after fourteen years of war against the Marxist government. Rabbani and Hekmatyar believed that the beliefs and values of the beginning of Islam can be applied in contemporary Afghanistan and have no conflict with the values and beliefs of the world (Roy, 2010: 49-50).

### **“CALIPHATE” AS THE CENTRE OF THE SYSTEM**

In the Caliphate Political Islam, the "Caliphate" is at the focal point. The content of the political literature of the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century shows that the rulers who aspired to the Caliphate were deprived of knowledge about the historical importance and effectiveness of this institution in the political history of Islam. In his view, the terms "Caliph of the Muslims" and "Amir al-Mu'minin" were important because they gave them divine legitimacy. These two concepts are similar but different in some ways. Amir al-Momineen is a general title that even those who do not believe in the theory of caliphate may use it. While the caliph is the one who is the leader of the caliphate system. This



system is a special style of administration that is rooted in the history of Islam. While "Amir al-Momineen" is a title that even kings and emirs use in Islamic societies.

In his view, mythology was more effective in persuading the illiterate masses, who lacked political insight. Therefore, after coming to power, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan did not try to show that the Caliphate system is the oldest political system in the history of Islam. Rather, he pretended that the government under his leadership in Afghanistan was a system like the government of the Prophet of Islam and that the Caliphs after him, were approved and cared for by God. Therefore, he tried to dispel such doubts by putting together such myths and placing himself in the place of saints:

"I saw and heard unseen works from God and I heard a voice. Many horses, numbering about twenty thousand, came gently behind me, as they came closer, the sound became louder until it became clear to me that they had joined my companions." (Abd al-Rahman, n.d: 171).

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the agents of the discourse of Caliphate Political Islam developed a newer and more philosophical version of the Caliphate system. From the study of the content of this version, it appears that the revival of the ideal of the Islamic Caliphate under the title of the *Islamic Imirate* has been very important for the bearers of this idea. This idea, which shows itself in the face of the Taliban, by dividing the world into *Dar ul-Islam* and *Dar ul-Kufr* (Lewis, 1999: 142), believed that the first nucleus of the Caliphate could be placed in *Dar ul-Islam* of Afghanistan and after consolidating its foundations, the territory of the Caliphate spread beyond the borders of Afghanistan. In the Taliban's opinion, Afghan society was suffering from a disease whose medicine was in Islam. From the Taliban perspective, the Islamic Caliphate system under the leadership of Amir al-Mu'minin could better heal the pain of Muslims in Afghanistan than any other system (Marsden, 1379: 86). To this end, the Caliphate succeeded in choosing Amir al-Mu'minin for the "Islamic Imirate of Afghanistan" system through the Settlement Council, and then issued a *fatwa* on the jihad against the jihadist Islamists who ruled parts of Afghanistan (Mojdeh, 2003: 36).

The political history of Afghanistan shows that the idea of the caliphate was raised many times during the period of rulers such as Abdul Rahman Khan (1880-1901) and Shah Amanullah (1929-1919), but this idea was never implemented. Until the emergence of the Taliban in the 1990s, a system similar to the caliphate was established, which was called the "Islamic Emirate". Although there is a century between these two periods, it is a sign that the Political Islam of the Caliphate, despite appearing in different forms and led by different agents, has a strong presence in the background of Afghan politics. When we examine the record of these Islamist activists in Afghanistan in the context of discourse, it becomes clear that the concept of "Caliphate" is at the center and other important elements are in its orbit.



## ELEMENTS OF THE CALIPHATE POLITICAL ISLAM

### 1-Islamic Imirate

Conceptually, the "*Imirate*" is a model of a political system that can be another face for the Caliphate. In today's usage, the Imirate is mainly referred to as small and autonomous lands in the Arab world, whose ruler calls himself "*Amir*". In Afghanistan, the classical rulers of this country have shown great enthusiasm in using the word "*Imirate*". Before the reign of Shah Amanullah (1919), most Afghan rulers preferred the title of *Amir* to any other title. In the last decade of the twentieth century, at the suggestion of the *Jamiat Ulema* of Pakistan, the title "*Islamic Imirate*" was accepted by the Taliban, and on October 13, 1997, Mullah Mohammad Omar issued a decree naming the Taliban organization "*Islamic Imirate of Afghanistan*." (Farzan, 2010: 216).

For the Taliban, the Islamic Imirate was not the ideal goal of their political system. Rather, it was only the first step in establishing a complete Islamic society. The Taliban had said that they would see the Islamic Imirate in the true sense of the word after their domination of Afghanistan was complete (Shafaei, 2014: 399). The Islamic Imirate, which was considered a model of the Caliphate, also had a historical background in the Islamic world and, for its part, could attract the attention of many Islamic idealists. In addition, according to a researcher in the field of movements:

"The choice of the Islamic Imirate as the only model of legitimate government among other models in the Islamic world and the new world could have other motives. What is more, the placement of an absolute person at the head of a system of government that has no role for the rest of the nation is very similar to the model of the tribal rule system common in Pashtun rural communities. In the model of the tribal administrative system, the head of the tribe is immune from any criticism." (Mousavi, 2011: 115).

### 2-Amir al-Momenin

"*Amir al-mu'minin*" is a word that differs between Sunnis and Shiites. Shiites believe that the title of *Amir al-Mu'minin* belongs to Imam Ali who was given to him by the Prophet Muhammad. But Sunnis believe that Omar used this title for the first time (Lewis, 1999: 100). With a nostalgic approach to the Caliphate of the Companions, Abdul Rahman Khan believed that mere attribution to its actual meaning (Caliph-Amir) could legitimize his rule. The extravagant emphasis of these rulers on the word *Amir* and the avoidance of the title "king" cannot be justified except by a conscious attribution to a religious source. What is more, the word *Amir* in a way reflects the title of *Amir al-Mo'minin*, which some Caliphs and their representatives in different parts of



the Islamic world used to connect their government to the political systems of early Islam (Shafaee, 2014: 62).

But in the late twentieth century, the founder of the Taliban movement officially earned the title of "Amir al-Mu'minin" in 1996 at a gathering of high-ranking Mullahs in Kandahar. From then on, Mullah Mohammad Omar behaved as if he had relied on the place of the Prophet and the Righteous Caliphs. He symbolically wore the most sacred work in Afghanistan, namely the robes of Prophet Mohammad (Mubarak's Khirgeh), which was in fact the source of the symbolic legitimacy of his power (Milli, 1999: 32). Of course, Mullah Mohammad Omar was well aware that the label of Amir al-Mu'minin would have difficult consequences for him. The first challenge for him was his scientific weakness and low religious education (Korna, 2004: 56), which in the future made it difficult for him to issue a fatwa in the position of Amir al-Mu'minin. But despite this shortcoming, when Mullah Mohammad Omar began to give fatwa, made him a one-year-old ruler who did not give much credit to the advisory council. Because in the Emirate system, the result of the council is not binding on the Amir al-Mu'minin and has only a declarative and informative aspect (Mojdeh, 2003: 51).

### 3- Pashtunism

In the political history of Islam, being a Quraysh was considered an important condition or preference for the Caliph. But after the transfer of the Caliphate to the Ottoman Turks, many theorists abandoned the Caliphate to Quraysh and focused on other conditions. But in Afghanistan, Religious leaders reconstructed the ethnic element differently. Instead of being Quraysh, they considered Pashtunism as a condition for the survival of the Afghan government. During the reigns of Abdul Rahman Khan and Habibullah Khan, both the Amirs and their successors, considered Afghanistan to be the ancestral home of the Pashtuns and, as a result, their right to rule. Accordingly, the anti-government movements of non-Pashtuns were considered a rebellion against the Caliph and as a result apostasy from the religion. History remembers how the general uprising of the Hazaras (1890-1893) against Abd al-Rahman Khan was suppressed on the charge of revolting against the Amir al-Mu'minin and treated like non-Muslim groups in the early days of Islam (Mousavi, 2000: 157).

Afghanistan's new Caliphs incorporated the element of Pashtunism more nakedly into the Caliphate's Islamic discourse. Undoubtedly, in the intellectual and theoretical foundations of the Taliban, there is a clear trace of the thoughts and ideas of Shah Ouliya, the founder of the Deobandism School. Regarding the Caliphate of Shah Waliullah, like most Sunni scholars, he summarizes the method of establishing the Islamic Caliphate in four cases: the allegiance of the people of settlement, council, installation and domination. Interestingly, he considered one of the characteristics of the Caliph as relative-ethnic honor, which is consistent with the thinking of the Taliban, who consider themselves attributed to a superior ethnic group (Mousavi, 2011: 119).



Olivier Roy, a French expert on Afghanistan, also believes that ethnic-tribal interests strongly influenced the Taliban movement. The majority of Pashtuns joined them even if they did not accept the Taliban. All Pashtun commanders joined and accepted the Taliban without any ideological affiliation (Roy, 2010: 142). The Taliban's harsh treatment of minorities, especially the several large-scale massacres of Hazaras in Bamyan and Balkh provinces, also showed that the Taliban Caliphate saw the Pashtuns' superiority in eliminating and purging non-Pashtuns. Genghis Pahlawan describes it:

Pashtunism is one of the ideological pillars of the Taliban in the management of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Pashtunism refers to a trend that recognizes the blood, tribal, and racial superiority of Pashtuns over other ethnic groups and nationalities in Afghanistan. Pashtunism believes that Afghanistan is a Pashtun land and that other ethnic groups have no rights in it. Therefore, the government and all the destinies of the country should be in the hands of the Pashtuns. Afghanistan is the property of the Pashtuns and they live wherever they want; they put pastures and run the country however they want. (Pahlawan, 1998: 30).

#### 4- Sunnah

The Islamic Caliphate in the history of Islam has always been formed and continued in the context of traditions. This has been especially evident from the time of the Umayyad Caliphate until the end of the Ottoman Empire. Afghanistan was a completely traditional society before the reign of Shah Amanullah (1919) and all political interactions in this country were based on traditions. Abd al-Rahman Khan and Habibullah Khan saw Afghanistan as a large tribe, according to the tradition of power among the Pashtun tribes. Amirs's view of women, confrontation with the opposition, foreign policy, and the legitimacy of the government was another version of the Pashtun tradition that has prevailed in the country for hundreds of years.

The new agents of Caliphate Political Islam also failed to break free from the barriers of tradition. The Taliban have shown that they remain committed to the traditions of Afghan society. To the extent that the leaders of this movement justified or delayed the implementation of the Shari'a when there was a confrontation between them. Concerning women's education, for example, the Taliban had in principle accepted their religious right to education, but due to its incompatibility with Pashtun's zeal (Pashtunwali), they were forced to close the gates of girls' schools. Because in the Pashtun tribal tradition,

*"The woman is confined within the framework of the Deobandi religious teachings and the Pashtun tribal tradition, and her honorable life is living in the corner of the house and behind the curtain"* (Johnson, n.d: 90).



Pashtunwali is a respected tradition among Pashtuns that includes principles such as honor, hospitality, and hatred. The Shari'a Taliban, unable to comply with the religion, were aware that some of the strict Pashtun provincial rules might not be in line with the religion. The commitment of Afghanistan's New Caliphs to this tradition was evident even in the Taliban's administrative system. Vahid Mozhdeh writes about what is called "*Andivali*":

What set the Taliban's system apart from any other system in the world was the importance of the issue of "*Andivalism*" in that system. The word "Andival" in Pashto and Dari means higher than friend or comrade. It can be said that those who work in a group or team are called together. The Taliban's system had no adaptation to the needs of the government and the structure of a government in the usual way, and this clearly showed that the Taliban did not have a clear plan for a government in mind (Mojdeh, 2003: 44).

## 5-Jihad

The record of the Caliphs in Afghanistan shows that they have adopted the doctrine of "*Jihad*" in important passages of their political life. Amir Abdul Rahman Khan was the ruler who, between the Pashtun Sunni scholars, was able to activate his government's war under the holy doctrine of Jihad. In fact, the doctrine of Jihad was a trump card given to the Amir by high-ranking Mullahs to suppress his opponents with the label of infidel and apostate. He did not face a particular challenge in dealing with the non-Muslims of eastern Afghanistan (the Nuristanis, one of the ethnic minorities in Afghanistan), but he did not have an easy task with the Hazara Shiites. Therefore, after the work of Amir's troops reached a stalemate in the Hazarajat and met with stubborn resistance from the Hazaras, he was forced to mobilize the Sunni masses under the doctrine of jihad against them under the label of apostasy. By Seyed Askar Mousavi:

The Hazaras were Shiites and Abdul Rahman Sunni calls them atheists. With the help of Sunni mullahs, he was able to declare war on the Hazaras as Jihad, and by obtaining Fatwas from them, he propagated this war as a religious duty for the Sunnis. Abdul Rahman fought in two cases in the name of religion; One against the Hazaras with the title that they are Shiites and the other against the Nuristanis who were considered infidels (Mousavi, 2000: 157).

What Abdul Rahman Khan did in Jihad in the late nineteenth century was repeated by Mullah Mohammad Omar differently in the last decade of the twentieth century. He called the beginning of his uprising in Kandahar against what he called criminals Jihad and called on all religious scholars in 1994 to join the Mujahideen. Mullah Mohammad Omar apply the doctrine of Jihad against those who were the founders of the discourse of Jihad. After hundreds of Pashtun mullahs gathered in Kandahar in 1996 at the



invitation of Mullah Omar to clarify the Taliban's future policies and the religious status of Mullah Mohammad Omar, a high-ranking Mullahs cleric declared that Jihad against the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani was permissible (Farzan, 1389: 151). From then on, Mullah Mohammad Omar in his official signature mentions the words "*Amir al-Momenin*" and "*Mujahid*" before and after his name.

## 6-Security

Historically, security has been inextricably linked to the Caliphate for two reasons: First, security was the function of the Caliphate, which had the task of providing public security. Second, the establishment of security has played an important role in the legitimacy of the government, and its absence or disruption has been seen as the incompetence of the Caliph and has damaged his sanctity. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Abd al-Rahman Khan made good use of the security element in gaining legitimacy and achieving unity in Afghanistan. He had not inherited a unified and stable government from anyone. Rather, by suppressing the plaintiffs and those he called insurgents, he established central government authority over large parts of Afghanistan. Abd al-Rahman Khan believed that such successes were not the product of human labor and that it was God's providence and grace that, firstly, made him the Amir of the Emirate and, secondly, made him successful in creating national security and public order. He has written:

*"When I came to the throne, because there was a state of rebellion in the country, I secretly ordered spies and investigators to report to me whatever was going on among the people, and for many reasons I found those who were loyal and friendly. And I dealt kindly with them, but I completely politicized those who had hostile fantasies and were instigators of sedition and corruption."* (Abd al-Rahman, n.d.: 281)

But on this side of the Caliphate discourse, Mullah Mohammad Omar, after completing the work of the arbitrary groups in Kandahar, an aura of holiness emerged around him. He claimed that he was chosen by God and was ordered by the Prophet of Islam to start his uprising against what he described as the loss of security and the disregard of the Shari'a (Milli, 1999: 32). From then on, Mullah Mohammad Omar continuously advised the Taliban security forces to maintain discipline, especially in large cities. For example, after the capture of Kabul (1996) by the Taliban, Radio Shariat addressed all the officials and combat forces of this group:

"The message of the Amir al-Mu'min Mūjahid (Mullah Omar) to the Taliban and all members of the movement in Kabul is to provide security and tranquility for the residents of the capital, who have always suffered from insecurity, and to take any action that threatens the security of citizens." (Sarafraz, 2011: 109).



## 7-Shariat

In the discourse of the Caliphs, the application of the Shari'a is proof of the efficiency and legitimacy of the Caliphate. Regarding Afghanistan, it can be said that although there is a century between the two claimants to the position of Amir al-Mu'minin, their Shari'a actions are close to each other. The slight difference between Amir Abdul Rahman Khan and Mullah Mohammad Omar is that the former, due to his low interest in religious literacy, formed an assembly of Mullahs who issued Fatwas for Amir's political purposes when necessary. But Mullah Mohammad Omar, despite his incomplete religious education, issued his own Fatwa, and of course, the Mullah approved his Fatwa. Amir Abdul Rahman Khan in difficult decisions and important historical stages tried to show that his actions are within the framework of religious rules. When he overcame the nationwide uprising of the Hazaras, within the framework of the religious Fatwas of the court Mullah, he purged them and even tried to justify the issue of enslaving the Hazaras and buying and selling their wives and daughters under Islamic slavery laws. To the extent that by order of the Amir, the judiciary was obliged to register the purchase and sale of Hazara labor and sex slaves in accordance with Sharia law in the judiciary and to pay the tithe of the traded amount as Zakat to the state treasury (Farhang, vol. 1, 1995: 403).

On the other hand, The Taliban have shown that they have stood up for the full implementation of religion. The intensity of the Islamic Emirate regime's action in highlighting the doctrine of Shari'at was such that with the implementation of the strictest Fatwas of the Sunni religions, there was not much room left to justify and soften the Shari'at laws. The Taliban was responsible for enforcing the Shariat law.

*"Like the Khavarij, this institution not only did not accept the two principles of insight in religion and insight in practice, but also did not accept to the principle that issues that are not agreed upon by the jurists of the Islamic world should not be included in the unpleasant deeds and people should be persecuted for it."* (Mojdeh, 1382: 53).

Mullah Omar was in fact a follower of the School of Isalat al-Horamah<sup>3</sup>. The sanctity-based view of new phenomena limited the Taliban's social thinking to a theory based on the principle of unauthorized authenticity. In this view, the traces of Salafism and avoidance of new manifestations of contemporary civilization are clearly visible, except in cases where an explicit text on the license is available (Sajjadi, 1998: 243).

## 8-Cosmopolitan

<sup>3</sup> - A theory that considers prohibition as the basis of every Shariah ruling.

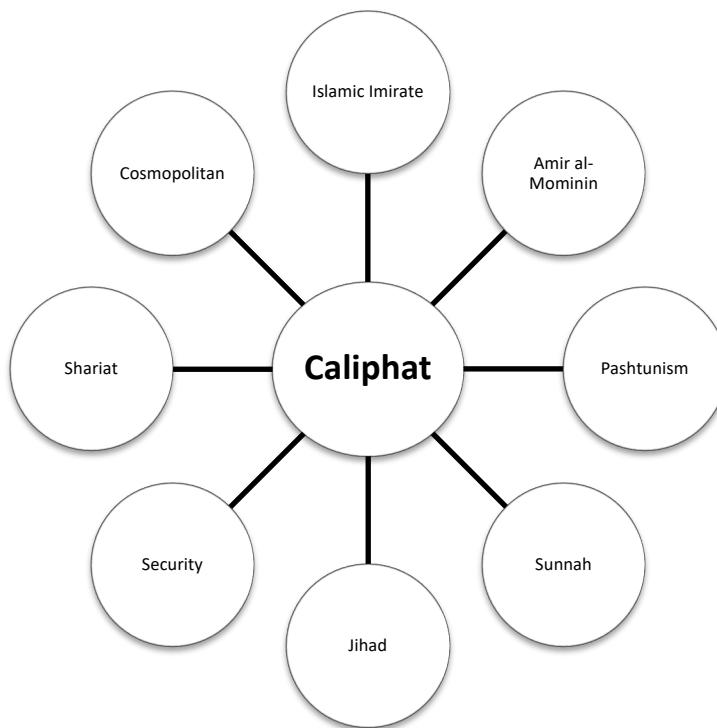


Caliphate Islamists seem to have a strong tendency towards secular doctrine. According to the Caliphates, citizenship is a concept based on belief, not geography and the category of the nation-state. In Afghanistan, the first Caliphate did not have the opportunity to express cosmopolitan ideas. But the theorists of the Islamic Emirate during the Taliban period reflected this doctrine in the elaboration of the Islamic discourse of the Caliphate. With the failure of the Mujahideen to establish a centralized government and the rise of the Taliban, a new wave of Arab, Uzbek, and Caucasian fundamentalists entered Afghanistan. They were under pressure in their home countries, and Afghanistan was a safe haven for bases and organizations. For the Taliban, the financial resources and combat forces of the international militants were also important. As a result, Osama bin Laden and hundreds of al-Qaeda-linked militants returned to Afghanistan and were welcomed by Taliban officials. One of the Taliban commanders welcomed Bin Laden and expressed his feelings for him:

O Sheikh! Our land is not the land of Afghans. Rather, it is the land of God, and our Jihad is not the Afghan Jihad, but the Jihad of the Muslims. Your martyrs are present in every part of Afghanistan and their graves testify to this. You are now between your family, your people and your tribe, and we consider the soil on which you walk to be blessed (Ahmadi, 1998: 132-131).

The central point of cosmopolitan was a double win for the Taliban. On the one hand, the Taliban gained legitimacy by harboring al-Qaeda Mujahideen in the eyes of the Islamic world and the Afghan people as the new center of the Caliphate, and on the other hand, the experience, financial resources and combat forces of foreign fighters were effective in advancing their military goals. Ahmad Rashid believes that the Taliban's support for Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda was at their strategic depth. Rashid refers to an event to prove this hypothesis and writes:

The Taliban's support for bin Laden appears to have a strategic place in the Taliban's official policy. When the Saudi ambassador to Kabul (Salman al-Omari) urged Mullah Hassan Akhund to either execute Bin Laden, deport him or extradite him to the United States, he replied: "We respect you because our Giblah is located in the holy land of Saudi Arabia, otherwise your zeal and masculinity are already known" (Rashid, 2001: 131).



### Elements of Caliphate Political Islam in Afghanistan

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Caliphate Political Islam in Afghanistan has a long history. Some rulers of Afghanistan in the 19th and 20th centuries were interested in the idea of the caliphate. Therefore, the Caliphate political Islam that has been able to be available intermittently for nearly two centuries must be taken seriously. The past has shown that Caliphate Political Islam has been in Afghanistan. This discourse is currently marginalized, but it should not be overlooked that analysts see a chance for the Caliphs to return to power in Afghanistan.

The Political Islam of the Caliphate in Afghanistan at the end of the twentieth century Afghanistan, which appeared in the face of the Taliban, although more developed and organized than a century ago. However, it must be said that this discourse fell into the lap of Pashtunism on the one hand and its approach to international terrorism, on the other hand, were the two main factors at the end of its credibility. The Taliban's role in establishing an ethnic regime in Afghanistan has turned Afghanistan's multicultural society into an incompatible bipolar one. The survival of the Jihadist Islam discourse by non-Pashtun Jihadist parties, especially in central and northern Afghanistan, was largely due to the Taliban's Pashtun actions. This practice extended the credibility of the discourse of Jihadist Islam belonging to non-Pashtun



ethnic minorities and prevented the hegemony of the Caliphs from spreading. On the other hand, Bin Laden's refuge in Afghanistan and it is becoming a safe haven for al-Qaeda led to an international consensus against the Taliban. This consensus was a major factor in the overthrow of the Taliban's regime after 9/11. Now that the Taliban has returned to power in Afghanistan and has revived the "Islamic Emirate" system, the importance of the political Islam discourse of the Caliphate is shown more. This type of political Islam will play a greater role in the future of Afghanistan.

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# Obstacles to modernization in Afghanistan

ABDULLAH ZAKAWAT

**ABSTRACT:** For more than a century, modernization theory has been on the path of transformation and evolution, and many theorists from various schools of thought have accepted that there is a connection between economic transformations and coherent and predictable patterns of cultural and political transformation. The fundamental debate however concerns the possibility of a cause-and-effect relationship between them, that is to say: does economic change cause cultural change or vice versa? Therefore, this will also be the subject of our discussion: according to the cause-and-effect relationship of economic transformation and cultural pattern changes, what is the relationship between these elements in the Afghan society, why the Afghan society always been facing the obstacles of modernization and social changes and has never been able to go beyond the traditional stages. This research, has tried to provide an answer in line with this main question: what are the main obstacles to modernization in Afghanistan? The research hypothesises that the social structure in the form of ethnic and religious divisions is a serious and fundamental obstacle to modernization in this country. Therefore, we are going to examine the analysis models of modernization first. Then, we explore these barriers in the framework of David Apter's theory, which is a structural-functional approach to modernization.

**KEYWORDS:** Modernization, social transformation, obstacles to modernization, social gaps, Afghanistan

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## INTRODUCTION

The main and central claim of the modernization theory is that there is a correlation between industrialization and specific social-political transformation processes, which took place on a wide scale; economic development brings also signs of transformation, such as industrialization together with urbanization. Modernization includes public education, specialization of jobs, expansion of bureaucracy and development of communication, and these phenomena in turn are linked with wider cultural, social and political transformations (Inglehart, 1991, p.3).

Considering the close relationships between the elements of economy, culture and politics and giving importance to the effects of each of the economic or cultural-political levels of the societies, theorists have produced different viewpoints, and here we will discuss the most important of them in brief. Then, we examine the obstacles to modernization in Afghanistan according to the framework of Apter's theory.



## MARX'S POINT OF VIEW

Emphasizing on the effects of economics Marx considers the level of technical progress of the society as determining the shape of the economic system of that society, and believes that the economic system in turn determines the cultural and economic characteristics of the society (Inglehart, 1991, p.7).

In this sense, according to Marx, what is important is the relationship between production and labour in society, whose special work lies in the economy. Thus, in Marx's view, modernization is provided by the transformation in production relations and changes in the foundation of society (Inglehart, 1991, p.9).

## MAX WEBER'S POINT OF VIEW

Max Weber emphasizes the influence of culture; he believes indeed that culture is not a mere phenomenon of the economic system, but it can be considered alone as a major cause, in the sense that culture shapes economic behaviour and is affected by it at the same time. Weber believes that Protestant ethics provides the basis for the emergence of capitalism and the latter phenomenon in turn helped to establish the industrial revolution and the democratic revolution. In general, this attitude is based on the fact that all kinds of belief systems affect both economic and political life and are affected by them.

## THE VIEW OF THE MOST RECENT MARXISTS

Most recent Marxists have transferred the priority from economic feasibility to ideology and culture. Lenin believed that the working class could never achieve the class consciousness necessary for a victorious revolution by itself, therefore he said that the workers should be led by professional revolutionaries who have ideological awareness and insight (Inglehart, 1991, p.4).

Mao also emphasized the power of revolutionary thinking and said that it is not necessary to wait for China to undergo transformation with the expansion of urbanization and industrialization. He believed that if an ideologically coherent group can stir up the feelings of the Chinese masses, even in a peasant society, it can be done. He started the communist revolution (Inglehart, 1991, p.7).

Rostow (1960) and Organski (1965), among other modernization theorists, believe that social transformation is a linear process and includes the transformation of traditional agricultural societies into modern industrial societies<sup>i</sup>. From their point of view, modernization includes a series of successive steps (Rush, 1998, p. 205).



## HUNTINGTON'S POINT OF VIEW

Huntington believes that political modernization requires the rationalization of authority, the differentiation of structures and the expansion of political participation. (Huntington, 1991, p. 139). In this sense, he believes that the flow of economic and social modernization in the developing society causes the emergence of new social groups that want to participate in the political arena, but the slow pace of political modernization in these societies does not provide the necessary opportunities and institutions for the participation of these groups in the political scenario. This situation causes violent political conflicts in these societies. Thus, Huntington considers the main problem of developing societies to be the lack of stable governments and institutionalized political systems (Huntington, 1991, p.150).

David Apter, who has chosen a structural-functional approach to the issue of modernization, has tried to clarify the conditions of modernization that different societies can achieve. These are the conditions:

1. A political system that can adapt to changing conditions.
2. Flexible social structures including extensive division of labour or structural differentiation.
3. A social framework that can provide the necessary skills and knowledge to face technological upheaval (Rush, 1998, p. 248).

According to different theories about modernization, it is possible to examine the obstacles to modernization in Afghanistan concerning its social structure in terms of ethnic and religious divisions, and show that ethnic and religious conflicts are always the main cause of the national identity crisis and the main obstacle in the matter. Therefore, we will follow this discussion in the framework of the Apter theory of modernization, which is a structural-functional model and is more compatible with the mechanism of this discussion, and we will avoid discussing other theories.

## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In a common definition for construction or structure, it can be said as follows: whenever there is a relatively constant relationship between the elements of a set, whose totality is desired, we reach the concept of construction. Therefore, the structure has two aspects: one is the constituent elements and the other is the fixed relationships that connect the structural elements to each other (Tavassoli, 1998, p. 125). In this way, the social structure can be considered as a network of social communication, whose bases and roles are its main basis. If we understand the national structure of a society (a set of sustainable criteria and values that citizens believe in and strive to maintain, regardless of the type of government and policies of the day), we will reach the demographic and human framework in terms of social structure. That regardless of the political structure



of power within it, the members of the society try to establish mutual relations based on certain beliefs, values and criteria, which in turn determine the bases and social roles of individuals and human groups (Sajjadi, 2008, p. 32). Therefore, the meaning of social structure in this research is the demographic and biological mechanism of people who establish mutual social relations based on their own beliefs and standards, and these relations are based on tribal and religious structures in a relatively stable manner based on ethnic and religious standards and beliefs. Therefore, the category of social gaps and especially the conflicts caused by the phenomenon of ethnicity and religion in Afghanistan, that people live based on different and heterogeneous objective criteria, are also very important (Pahlavan, 1993, p. 43).

This research has tried to discuss social conflicts from the perspective of ethnic and religious divides in Afghanistan, which is considered a big obstacle on the path of modernization. In any case, the projection of the effects and reflection of ethnic and religious conflicts among the set of influencing factors in social conflicts and shaping internal strife does not mean that we have to ignore other factors involved in this matter. The idea of this short article is to pay attention to the ethnic and religious heterogeneity as the factors causing the crisis in the process of modernization in Afghanistan, which is tried to be intensively investigated.

## ETHNIC DIVIDES

Afghanistan is one of the few countries in the world due to the multitude of ethnic groups and nationalities in which different and sometimes heterogeneous ethnic groups live.

The same diversity and heterogeneity of ethnic groups, due to the lack of a unifying factor, has caused the (nation-building) process in this country not to be able to overcome the relevant crisis successfully. Therefore, even though many years have passed since the independence of this country, a common national identity has not yet been defined and accepted by all ethnic groups and nationalities, but scattered ethnic identities have replaced the national identity (Arbab Shirani, 1997, p. 47).

If identity includes the concept of existence and the set of individual virtues and behavioural characteristics based on which a person is recognized in a social group and is distinguished from others, it is specially referred to the feeling of solidarity with the great national and ethnic community and awareness, and the feeling of loyalty and sacrifice is recognized in its way. In Afghanistan, however, due to the ethnic structure of the society, this feeling about tribe, clan and descent is more intense than the feeling of solidarity with the national community. Therefore, what has been concrete in this country so far has been scattered ethnic and tribal identities instead of national identity (Sajjadi, 2008, p.52). Since Afghan society has an ethnic and tribal structure, it is natural that the interactions and reactions of the social structure and the circulation of



political power take place only within a particular tribe and tribe. And it is on this basis that the political system in this country, instead of being related to the social system, has been more related to the population sub-systems in the form of tribes and races. And this, in turn, has blocked the political participation of all citizens and ethnic groups, and finally, the non-ruling ethnic groups (non-Pashtuns) have always had a deviant attitude towards the power structure. (Ashraf, 1993, p. 9).

This situation has caused a permanent conflict between the non-ruling ethnic groups and the holders of political power. It is precisely because of this point that the political history of Afghanistan has witnessed violent conflicts and conflicts between ethnic groups and tribes over political sovereignty. Therefore, these tensions are observed not only at the level of ethnic groups but even within a tribe, among its related branches (Sajjadi, 2008, p.52). In a classification, social gaps are divided into active and influential or inactive and dormant groups, based on which, social gaps may be inactive and dormant under certain conditions and do not affect political life and the formation of social forces. But under other conditions, they become active and influential and affect political life (Bashiriyeh, 1995, p. 101). According to this classification of gaps, the ethnic gap in Afghanistan is sometimes active and influential, and sometimes inactive, depending on the time conditions and the structure of political power, which is considered one of the most important conditions affecting the activeness or inactivity of social gaps. But even in inactive and dormant conditions, this gap has been erupting like a volcano, which has led to violent conflicts in the social arena by preparing the least ground. And if it has been dormant at some points, it is not because of the existence of a suitable and controlling solution, but rather it has been influenced by the temporary solution of coercion and physical force. (Sajjadi, 2008, p.58). According to Durkheim, the condition of coercion is capable of creating solidarity to some extent, but such solidarity is incomplete and poses a problem because it threatens its final pressure and then collapses. In such a system, the good of society and most of the citizens are subject to the selfish goals of a limited number of people (Grabb, 1993, p. 108). It is for this reason that with the collapse of the central government or the weakening of the political structure of power, ethnic and group wars and political conflicts occur in this country at various times in the contemporary history of Afghanistan. Therefore, if the power structure in Afghanistan has provided grounds for the intensification of this gap due to the unhealthy and disproportionate stance and treatment of non-ruling (non-Pashtun) ethnic groups, it is because in this structure, while trying to preserve the ethnic identity, social control is based on coercion and there has been no reasonable solution to control, adjust and organize it. Thus, the political power structure in Afghanistan, due to its ethnocentric characteristics, not only has never been able to control and guide the social, ethnic and political conflicts of the ethnic groups and their hostile attitude towards the ruling people and those in power. Rather, it has been the effective factor and foundation of these tensions and conflicts. Of course, this centrality of the element of ethnicity in the political structure of power comes from the belief that those in power, believing that



only the Pashtuns and especially the Mohammadzai family have the competence and ability to manage the country's politics, always marginalize other ethnic groups or they even prevented their presence in the offices. The application of this method, and the dominance of this type of attitude in the administration of the country, apart from being an obstacle to economic, political and social growth and development, has never been able to create a system that, according to David Apter, can cope with the changing conditions and heterogeneous social structure. And in this vein, it has always put other tribes in a hostile and negative position. Thus, as Sajjadi says, the political structure of power has always been in the hands of a certain ethnicity, and the ruling people (Pashtuns), instead of thinking about forming a nation-state composed of all ethnic groups, have always been concerned about the sovereignty and imposition of the Pashtun people over other nationalities, and its efforts have been to make the Afghan nationality in the special sense of the word which means Pashtun. For those reasons, the political structure of power has always been hated and suspected by other ethnic groups (Sajjadi, 2008, p. 58).

From here we come to the second point of David Apter: that the social structure in Afghanistan is not only inflexible, but it has always been rigid, fragile and ethnocentric, and the application of ethnocentric politics in various forms has made deeper negative attitudes towards the society, creating more ethnic conflicts. Therefore, the ethnocentric nature of political power in Afghanistan does not allow the power holders to easily recognize and evaluate the dimensions and importance of different ways of life, knowledge and other diverse values with their ethnicity and descent. And this causes ethnicities never be able to reach the common principles of peaceful life because when a racial or ethnic group believes that its ways of life are superior and its members are more intelligent than other groups, they can't easily recognize and evaluate the dimensions and importance of lifestyles different from its group. Thus, the third principle is meaningful from the point of view of David Apter, who said that a social framework should be able to provide the necessary skills and knowledge to face social transformations and cultural diversity. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan, due to ethnic prejudices and the dominance of ethnocentric attitudes in political governance, the social structure does not produce the necessary skills and knowledge to improve, organize and modernize the country. Rather, it is structured in such a way that even social knowledge and skills are under the influence of strong ethnic tendencies and remain in the hands of the ruling group (Pashtuns). Therefore, such a rigid and patriarchal structure, due to its inflexibility, fragility and dogmatic nature, and due to the weakness of its intellectual foundations, will never give the knowledge and skills of others, and other ethnic groups a chance to emerge. While it is necessary otherwise for every dominant and powerful discourse to open the door to dialogue and interaction with others due to its ability. Therefore, not paying attention to this matter and also persistent ethnocentrism, which, according to Bruce Koen, often does not allow the dominant and minority groups to reach an understanding and have a peaceful



coexistence with each other (Cohen, 1372, p. 306). This type of attitude has caused Afghanistan to be always deprived, never to achieve modernization, and if modernization takes place, as it is called today in the form of democracy, there will be no actual modernization except a fake form of it, which on the face of the coin is Pashtunization but in the form of democracy a hidden Pashtunism, in whose structure the rest of the ethnic groups are still deprived of most of their social rights and political benefits. A clear example of this modernization in the form of democracy can be called the decade of democracy during the time of Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani, in which although other ethnic groups were present in the government, they were never given the opportunity to make decisions and their participation was ineffective (Grape, 1993, p. 108).

## RELIGIOUS DIVIDE

Although the vast majority of the people of Afghanistan are Muslims, in terms of religion and religious practices, the Muslim population of this country is not uniform, and there are many and various religions in this country. Although it is possible to identify the followers of Shia and Sunni in this country, it should not be overlooked that this classification is only acceptable at a general level. While the followers of Sunnis, unlike the Shias, are divided into branches and subgroups in other countries, in Afghanistan they can also be divided into different Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi'i and Maliki schools of thought. Especially if we put the different perceptions and divisions of shari'a, manifestations and religious orders next to these subgroups, we will witness a great diversity of religious and religious thoughts in Afghan society. But if we pay attention to the religious divide, there has been a historical and active divide between the followers of the two main branches of religion in Afghanistan, Sunni and Shia, and it has always had a tremendous impact on the political life of the society, especially the social divide and the lack of national unity (Saei, 1999, p. 74)

The Shiites of Afghanistan, who have long been known as second-class citizens and even lower than that, have never felt aligned with the country's political government due to religious discrimination and the government's support for the Sunni religion while putting Shiites under pressure (Sajjadi, 2008, p. 94). Therefore, the bigoted and humiliating behaviour towards the Shiites and the followers of the Jafari religion has always played an effective and important role in the destruction of practical cohesion and social unity as a factor that aggravates the religious divide.

The religious conflict in Afghanistan, which has been a reflection of the religious discrimination and nervousness of the society and especially the ruling system, has resulted in the social deprivation of the followers of non-ruling religions, especially the Shiites, which consists of:

Religious imposition policy in Afghanistan in the form of:



- 1 Religious annihilation (Shia religion).
- 2 Prohibition of Shiite religious practices.
- 3 Imprisonment, execution and detention of Shia religious leaders.
- 4 Deporting and settling Shia people, especially the Hazaras, in undesirable areas.
- 5 Separation of Shiite and Sunni areas from each other and depriving Shiites of their rights.

6 Imposing economic pressures on the Shia people and especially the Hazaras (Sajjadi, 2008, p. 104).

Thus, in addition to the ethnic and tribal elements in Afghanistan, Hanafi Islam is another tool that has been used to stabilize the political power of the rulers. Naturally, due to Afghanistan rulers' special approach to religion, the followers of other religions, especially the Shiites, have been neglected, and they have been discriminated against to gain the support of the Sunni Hanafi followers. This in itself has intensified the conflict and religious divide between Shia and Sunni. In this way, we can see that the ethnic-tribal conflict of the people and the religious discrimination of the rulers of Afghanistan have kept the Shiites of this country away from the political and social scenes, and this has always increased the existing conflict in the historical process of the country.

Religion-based political participation, which in most cases was accompanied by ethnocentrism and the policy of ethnic discrimination, deprived non-Pashtun Sunnis as well as Shiites and Hazaras of Afghanistan from all the basic rights of citizenship, participation in political affairs and community administration, and participation in political governance (Sharabi, 2001, p. 102). In this sense, it can be said that ethnic and religious conflicts and the resulting divisions are the most important influencing factors on the vision of leaders and rulers, especially the vision of the dominant rulers of Afghanistan (Pashtun). And in fact, it is this attitude that even now, after the fundamental change and transformation in Afghanistan, has not created yet grounds for understanding a peaceful coexistence among all the citizens of the country from different ethnic groups, nationalities and religious sects. Therefore, modernization in Afghanistan has always faced two major and serious obstacles, namely religious and ethnic-tribal conflicts, which have never given the opportunity for constructive change and transformation in accordance with the social, economic and cultural status of all peoples and ethnic groups. If there has been modernization in some historical periods, by the way, this has always been carried out within the structure and relations of domination that was not more than a non-original form of modernization and transformation. And according to Hisham Sharabi, this type of modernization is only a (renovated) dominance (Sharabi, 2001, p. 105): as it was said, in Afghanistan this modernization has always been a hidden Pashtunism.

Even now, the modernization that took place in the form of democracy in Afghanistan during the "decade of democracy under Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani" is worth pondering. But in my opinion, this political system is still caught in the trap of a hidden hegemony due to the existence of ethnic prejudices and the dominance of rigid



religious attitudes and the lack of flexibility of the ruling political power structure in relation to other non-ruling ethnic groups. Still, the rest of the non-ruling tribes are deprived of many of their social rights and political benefits.

## SOLUTIONS

The studies that have been carried out so far in the field of modernization and development of countries indicate that a specific theory for modernization and development in third-world countries cannot be found. But some theorists have proposed theories for development and modernization in these countries, which are:

### **A- Theory of modernization**

This theory is derived from the experience of western countries. In this theory, change and transformation from traditional culture to modern culture is a basic step for political development and modernization. In this theory, political development requires a specific cultural attitude to social and political life, and as long as the indicators of modern culture such as the principle of equality in the law, civil liberty, the originality of the individual, the principle of citizenship rights, the principle of tolerance and civility, flexibility and universality within the culture are not institutionalized, it would be more useless to talk about political modernization and development.

Proponents of this theory limit the only way to achieve modernization and political development in the western experience, and in this case, there would not be any other way except changing from traditional culture to modernization. Although this theory has serious criticisms and flaws, we can point out the one-line nature of modernization and development both from the theoretical and scientific point of view and from the behavioural and practical point of view, but with a little tolerance, it can be considered as A solution in a society like Afghanistan.

The main problem that exists in this theory from the scientific point of view is that, except for the western society, the social conditions and contexts of other societies are not taken into consideration, while western societies in terms of culture and social characteristics generally have very serious differences with the societies of the third world, including Afghanistan. so how will it be possible for this model to be responsive in the Afghan society, the history also shows that during the time of Shah Amanullah Khan, reforms and modernization in Afghanistan led to failure regardless of the social and cultural conditions of the society.

From a practical point of view, the stabilization of modernization and development in Southeast Asian countries shows that modernization based on western models is not the only way to achieve development and the rule of law. Therefore, it can be concluded that modernization and political development and the rule of law need the social contexts of a society more than anything else. If there are no social contexts for



modernization and political development, it will be very difficult to achieve modernization.

### **B. The theory of dependence**

This theory is inspired by the theories of neo-Marxist revolution, which sees the modernization and development of third-world countries in contrast to the first theory in reducing the link of these countries with the centre, i.e. western and colonial countries, and believes that western countries exploit third world countries in pursuit of their interests. It evaluates third-world countries based on the external cause and considers the realization of development and modernization to require the occurrence of a socialist and labour revolution (Sue, 2013, p. 109).

### **C- All-round development model**

Since different models of modernization and dependence could not solve the problem of backwardness and underdevelopment of third-world countries, development sociologists sought to find an all-around solution for development. In recent years, in the framework of this new approach, three models of sustainable development, integrated development, and human development have been proposed. When it comes to comprehensive development, it means that development should include all parts of society and be simultaneous (Lehsaizadeh, 2010, p.87)

Among the three mentioned theories, although each one has its own weaknesses and strengths, but at the same time, the modernization model, in addition to its shortcomings, is considered a superior and feasible model even in third-world societies.

Therefore, the modernization theory is acceptable to everyone, which has become a hegemonic discourse. But this point does not mean that a country like Afghanistan can achieve political modernization and development by completely following this western model. Because third world countries, including Afghanistan, have serious and fundamental differences from western societies in terms of culture and social structure, and to achieve political modernization and development while using the great and valuable achievements of western societies, attention should be paid to the objective conditions of Afghan society and considering the cultural and Islamic characteristics of this country.

## **THE SOLUTION FOR MODERNIZATION IN AFGHANISTAN**

Political modernization and development in third-world countries, including Afghanistan, is one of the most important and fundamental issues, and the basic question that exists, in this case, is how to overcome this difficult path and create areas for political modernization and development?



The important issue in the discussion of political modernization and development is to provide grounds for political modernization and development. For this purpose, the theorists of the modernization school for the development of third-world countries have each addressed a specific aspect of the social contexts of political development.

According to the theories of modernization and accuracy in David Apter's criteria for modernization and political development, the solution to modernization and political development of Afghanistan can be narrated as follows.

#### **THE TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND THE CREATION OF A CONVERGENT SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

The social structure of Afghanistan due to the traditional and tribal culture and the lack of understanding and flexibility has been one of the main obstacles to political modernization and development and a serious obstacle to the institutionalization of democracy and rule of law.

Naturally, in order to follow the path of modernization and political development and legalism, cultural change and transformation must be done first. Because the nature of tribal society based on tribal culture is an obstacle to political modernization and development. Traditional and tribal culture is in fact absolutist and dogmatic and the acceptance of distinctions and differences in this kind of culture is very weak. Usually, in tribal culture, there is either absolute friendship or absolute enmity. In the field of politics, positions are drawn between absolute friendship and enmity, cooperation and convergence, and competition and criticism are not acceptable in such a culture.

In fact, dogmatic thinking and absolutism towards issues destroys the possibility of interaction, understanding, convergence and respect for others' point of view and gradually becomes the basis of monopoly.

Therefore, in order to take a step towards modernization and political development in society, a flexible culture is needed which, according to David Apter, can adjust and adapt to environmental and social changes, because maybe everyone can agree that in modernization, cultural changes are very fundamental.

Anyway, transitioning from traditional and tribal society and creating a transformation in people's beliefs and behaviour is a prerequisite for walking the difficult path of political and law-based modernization and development in society.

Of course, we should not forget that cultural, political, social and economic transformation is one of the important tasks of intellectuals. Considering this strategy to overcome the traditional and tribal culture of Afghan society, as well as to create a rule-based structure and achieve modernization, it is definitely important to promote the culture of tolerance and expand civil institutions. Promoting such a culture in society will surely reduce religious conflicts and ethnic-tribal conflicts, and by reducing these



conflicts, all the ethnic groups, according to the opportunities they have, can use their positions and dignities according to their capacities and potentials.

## RESULT

According to David Apter's structural-functional theory, we saw that the social structure and political power in Afghanistan, due to the basic ethnic and religious divide, has always been persistently hegemonic and in the hands of only one ethnic group (Pashtuns). Therefore, this social structure, due to the inflexibility and neglect of other tribes and ethnicities alongside the ruling tribe, has always been a source of tension and crisis, and this has caused chaos and conflict in this country. In this sense, the social structure of Afghanistan, according to David Apter's theoretical model, has not been able to reach the three basic principles that are a prerequisite for modernization:

1. it has not been able to have a flexible structure that includes a wide division of work among all ethnic groups and tribes.
2. it has not been able to create a political system that adapts to the changing and changeable conditions and the diverse cultures of Afghanistan.
3. it has not been able to create a social framework that can provide the necessary social skills and knowledge for all groups and communities in Afghanistan for social transformation and changes.

Thus, as long as the social structure has not been changed and the ethnic and religious divisions within it have not been resolved, modernization in this country will never exist in its original and natural form; and if modernization takes place, it will be a different form of original modernization.

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OCCHIALÌ – RIVISTA SUL MEDITERRANEO ISLAMICO (N.10/2022)

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# The Taliban and state-building (Islamic Emirate)

MOHAMMAD HOSSAIN KHOLOUSI

**ABSTRACT:** Afghanistan was established as a nation-state in the 18th century. The monarchy became the constitutional system in the first half of the twentieth century. Subsequently, in the early 1970s, the political system of the republic emerged. The Soviet invasion in 1979 led to the creation of a puppet state that collapsed with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Mujāhidīn were unsuccessful in state-building, and the Taliban established the Islamic Emirate at the end of the twentieth century. Thus, over two centuries of historical experience in Afghanistan, both modern and reactionary governments have been formed. The Taliban group seeks to create a pre-modern historical state in the age of globalization. The establishment of such a government at such a time raises many questions; how the Taliban group create such a government; how they seized political power and how they interacted with the world; is one of the most important questions in this area. This article tries to answer the first question, which is related to the formation of the state or what is called state-building. The article hypothesizes: "The Taliban is establishing a government of a historical nature by resorting to ethnic and religious extremism; based on religious texts, historical customs and local customs, they form a state that has been rebuilt into historical political systems." This paper tries to test its claim using the method of description and analysis.

**KEYWORDS:** Afghanistan, Taliban, Pashtunwāli, Deobandiyah, Islamic Emirate

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## INTRODUCTION

The formation of the Taliban Islamic Movement is rooted in Afghanistan's *jihad* against the Soviet Union. In 1979, the 40th Division of the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan and formed a government led by *Babruk Karmal*<sup>1</sup>. Geopolitical variables were influential in this event; in the bipolar world of that day, in the face of this invasion, the full support of the West and the Arab countries against the Soviets was concentrated. Finally, in 1989, the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan, and in 1991, the dictatorship collapsed. *Mujāhidīn*<sup>2</sup> were unable to establish a national government, and from there, numerous riots broke out. In 1994, the Taliban entered a religious school in *Kandahar* in response to attacks by local insurgents. They continued their political and military activities under the same name "Taliban". The Taliban were soon able to seize the capital, Kabul, in 1996.

<sup>1</sup> At the same time as the occupation of Afghanistan, he was appointed as the President of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in December 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Armed Islamic groups who waged *Jihad* against the Soviet attack. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989, they could not form an inclusive government.



From the point of view of Islamic militants, the victory of the Taliban was considered the victory of Islam, and this is how the global missions defined themselves in order to play an international role. From then on, they also contacted the *Al-Qāidaglobal* network, which irritated the United States. The collapse of the Twin Towers eventually led to a military confrontation with the Taliban on September 11, 2001, and the group was ousted the same year. The US presence in Afghanistan was welcomed by the people of Afghanistan; It caused the formation of the central government based on the constitution, and civil institutions and the expansion of human rights and citizenship rights, But on the contrary, it caused regional and trans-regional sensitivities, which prolonged the war in Afghanistan. The growing power of regional and anti-US forces eventually, the spread of corruption, injustice and ethnicism, led to the Taliban's victory, and on August 15, 2021, the Taliban unexpectedly regained political power in Kabul, and their governance once again attracted international attention.

## 1. STATE-BUILDING

The term “State-building” has different uses. In this text, state-building does not mean establishing a country with those four elements; People, territory, government and sovereignty. In this text, state-building refers to a process that started from the 90s onwards: "the creation of new governmental institutions and the strengthening of existing ones" (Fukuyama 2004, 17). So State-building means government building in which the establishment of legislative, judicial and executive institutions is important.

Based on the Taliban's historical and classic approach to government, the elements of state-building are somewhat different from modern state-building. In this way, in the Taliban state-building, these components are elements of state-building; Divine legitimacy, historical traditions (Pashtunwāli ), special religious readings (Deobandi, Salafi, Ikhwani) and the classical structure of the state.

### ***Explaining the Taliban state-building based on Ibn Khaldun's Aşabīyyah***

There are various theories about state-building from a theoretical point of view, but one theory that can explain the Taliban's menus in the field of state-building is *Ibn Khaldun's* famous theory of *Aşabīyyah* (tribal solidarity). *Ibn Khaldūn* divided political life into primitive and civil stages. In his view, the basis of the need for social life is to meet the needs of individuals (Ibn Khaldūn 2014, Vo. 2, 467). *Aşabīyyah* can be considered the basis of society, government formation and development (Ibid, 480). Civil life comes into being despite the order that is realized in the existence of the state.



*Aşabīyyah* favours the formation of the state and consequently the factor of transition from primitive life to civil life (Ibid, 467-468, 472).

*Farid Rofa'i*, one of the commentators on Ibn Khaldūn's theory, has defined *Aşabīyyah* in his works as follows: "*Aşabīyyah* is co-operation and co-operation between each other and is achieved between those who are brought closer by one of the links in their lives, such as close or distant kinship or co-religion or profession in a political belief." (Rifā‘ī 1927, 75). According to this, prejudice or *Aşabīyyah* means strong solidarity between members of society, the output of which is manifested in the form of self and others, and there is a strong sense of solidarity between insiders. There is also a degree of hatred, distrust and suspicion towards others (strangers) to the extent that there is a sense of dependence between insiders. According to *Ibn Khaldūn*, such *Aşabīyyah* occurs first among families, and then among tribes (Ibn Khaldūn 2014, Vo. 2, 496). Based on *Aşabīyyah* among the tribes, each tribe which has more nervousness and a more savage temperament, causes others to form a state (Ibid, 495).

*Ibn Khaldūn* classifies several states; Rational states, religious states, ethnic states, and other types of states. Among such states, *Ibn Khaldūn* concludes that *Aşabīyyah* arises based on kinship (Ibid, 481). Religion is another force that increases *Aşabīyyah* and a religious state cannot be achieved without *Aşabīyyah* (Ibid, 519-520). The presidency is achieved through domination and is one of those who have more *Aşabīyyah* (Ibid, 485).

*Ibn Khaldūn* explains the formation of the state among Muslims and the historical evolution based on this theory. The formation of national governments influenced by the Westphalian order with the domination of colonial governments and the development of modern ideas has forced Islamists to consider the establishment of an Islamic state. These currents, which see the benefits of politics and the political system in the past, tend to *Ibn Khaldūn's* way of state-building. All these currents are appropriate cases to explain *Aşabīyyah* in *Ibn Khaldūn's* theory (Mir Ahmadi 2016, 13). Accordingly, if the Taliban movement creates a state-building based on ethnic *Aşabīyyah* and religious call, and refers to it as religious zeal or ethnic zeal, they are in fact relating to *Ibn Khaldūn's* theory.

### ***Ethnic and religious foundations of Aşabīyyah in the Islamic Tehreek-e-Taliban***

There are theoretical elements based on which ethnic and tribal tensions can be observed in the Taliban. four basic and important elements as *Aşabīyyah* transmitters in order of importance are *Pashtunwāli*, *Diwbandīyya*, *Wahhabism* and the *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*.



## A) Pashtunwāli

*Pashtuns* are one of the most important and relatively populous ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Pashtuns have held monopoly power since the formation of the Afghan government, and only in a very short period has this domination been eroded. The decision-making core and discursive credibility of the Taliban belong to Pashtun.

This tribal society, culturally, socially and politically, has its own customs and traditions called *Pashtunwāli*. Most of the people who belong to this ethnic group have a primitive and rural life. Pashtuns are usually militant and violent, and women are harsh in the harsh, arid environment in which they grew up. As usual, women are not given many rights. Much of what we see today in the practical scene of the Taliban's practical policies and operational strategies in state-building and political management is rooted in the same Pashtun culture (Collins 2011, 9-10). All tribal *Pashtuns* also followed *Pashtunwāli*, a Social code which gave the tribal *Jirga* or council the right to make judgments on cases from a traditional pantheon of laws and punishments, especially when it came to disputes over ownership of land and women and murder (Rashid 2000, 112).

*Salafi-jihadi* ideology is formulated or secured in the form of the custom of *Pashtunwāli* tribes as follows: Taliban's violent treatment of the people under their control reflects the *Pashtuns'* habit of hatred and revenge. The militarism shows the importance of the zeal and courage of the Pashtun. Ethnic dialogues are seen as indicative of their fear or possibly cowardice and are therefore considered cowardice in overcoming opposition. The *caliphate* system, although the Islamic model is pervasive; but its confinement to a particular ethnicity reflects a *Pashtun* tribal system. The monopoly of power and political sovereignty is a reproduction of the monopoly of politics in Afghanistan, which is one of the *Pashtun* ethnic customs. Accordingly, every Pashtun considers himself the owner of political power and political sovereignty, and this approach leads to the marginalization and isolation of other ethnic groups, especially the Hazaras (Bagheri Dolatabad, Bagheri, Nahaj, 2019: 97). Some scholars believe that based on *Pashtunwāli* tradition, the Taliban supported *bin Laden* and refused to hand him over to the United States (Georges 2017, 119).

The book of the *Emirate Islami*, which is the manifesto of the Taliban, mentioned that Afghans have been Muslims for generations and only accept Islamic laws (Haqqani 2022, 24). Haqqani distinguished between two types of customary traditions; Past customs and new traditions that have emerged during the presence of the international. In this book, society is required to pay serious attention to past traditions and eliminate new traditions (Ibid, 39). In the first category, Haqqani mentioned the habits and customs of Afghans, which are the same customs of *Pashtunwāli*: courage and action, willingness to fight, women being secretive, honouring religious scholars, hospitality, and following Abu Hanifa's jurisprudence (Ibid, 39- 40). He also stated that following other religious sects is considered shameful for Afghans (Ibid, 37). He also praised



*Ahmad Shah Durrani*, the founder of the Pashtun government in Afghanistan, and considered the title of father appropriate for him (Ibid, 190). In this way, *Pashtunwāli* has regained its historical prestige and history has prevailed in the struggle between history and development.

## B) **Diwbandīyya**

*Diwbandīyya* is a branch of *Sunni Hanafi* Islam. Among the *Sunni* jurisprudence, *Hanafi* is known as rationalism and moderation; but two important developments have caused the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent to stay away from these features of the *Hanafi* branch. The first is the confrontation of Muslim identity with Hinduism, which led to the alienation and ex-communication of Hindus. The second was the colonial invasion of India, which, in addition to the first identity confrontation, caused another identity confrontation. In addition, the founder of this school, *Shah Valiullah Dehlavi*, had studied in the *Hejaz* and was influenced by the *Salafism* of this land (Shafaq Khawati 2020, 17-16).

*Diwbandīyya* has long been a fanatic of women and religious minorities, opposed all forms of hierarchy in the Muslim community and rejected the *Shia* (Rashid 2000, 88). The interpretation of *Sharia* by these schools is influenced by *Pashtunwali* (Ibid, 90). *Haqqani* states in his book about religious minorities that they should be prevented from entering the *Taliban* judiciary. He based his view on the same historical prejudice and pointed out that following Afghan *non-Hanafi* religions has been a disgrace and humiliation. According to *Haqqani*, in the history of Islamic states, the judiciary has always been a follower of the *Hanafi* branch (Haqqani 2022, 37-38). But with the influence of *Salafism*, their realm of prejudice has also increased. In the current beliefs of the *Deobandis*, the religion of *jihad* is known as the only way to fight against infidelity and polytheism, which in this regard is linked to *Wahhabism* and *Salafism* (Shafei, 2013). For the first time, the limitation of *jihad* was made by *Ibn Taymiyyah*. He cited a narration that considered *jihad* as the journey of Muslims (*Ibn Taymiyyah* N D, 157). Extensive financial support from the Saudi government for these schools, in addition to financial dependence, also creates intellectual dependence, and it is as if *Diwbandīyya* has also turned to political radicalism.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan. A significant proportion of immigrants were educated in religious schools, which were under the *Deoband School*. *Jamiat Ulama*<sup>3</sup> was not much noticed before the war in Afghanistan; But during the *jihad*, he was most active in the religious education

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<sup>3</sup> *Jamiat Ulama Islam* was founded in 1945 by *Maulana Shabir Ahmad Usmani*, before the partition of India, with the aim of fighting British colonialism. After partition, it was transferred to Pakistan and developed its activities during the *Jihad* in Afghanistan.



of Afghan immigrants in the states bordering Afghanistan (Rashid 2000, 89)<sup>4</sup>. *Haqqani* Academy of Sciences, with its harsh and extremist reading of Islamic law, was able to play a significant role in creating the "*Taliban Islamic Emirate*" in the Afghanistan Valley. *Haqqani*, the author of the book *Al-Amara al-Islamiyya*, also graduated from the same *Darul Uloom*, and most members of the Taliban cabinet are graduates of the school. Some of the teachers of this school have stated: "We are proud that we teach the Taliban" (Ibid, 92). The school supported *bin Laden's* fatwa in 1998. Using the principle of *jihad*, the fatwa argues that US aggression is the basis for the formation of armed resistance and that targeting American civilians and soldiers is mandatory for all Muslims.

### C) Wahhabism

*Ibn Taymiyyah* considered the first three centuries of Islam to be the ideal age for Muslims and tried to refer to the rest of the times as this golden age. His views and ideas were revived in the eighteenth century, and *Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab* in the Arab world and *Shah Wali al-Dehlavi* in the Indian subcontinent spread his views and ideas. What was important for both of them was the removal of Islamic societies from the manifestations of polytheism and the establishment of a pure Islamic government, which was achieved by returning to the *Salaf Saleh* tradition. The establishment of the Saudi royal government was based on the idea of *Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab*.

The Saudi government uses the sanctity of Muslim holy places; That is, *Mecca* and *Medina* are considered the position of leadership for themselves in the world of Islam. This position led to the spread of Wahhabi thought in the territory of Islamic *Ummah*. Two important events in 1979 promoted Saudi Arabia's position among Muslims: First, it was *Sadat's* Camp David peace that weakened Egypt's position among Muslim and Arab nations. The second was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which provided the basis for Saudi leadership in the Islamic world.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided an opportunity for Saudi Arabia to project. Not only Saudi Arabia, but a significant part of the Arab states sent their politicized radical elements to this war in order to protect themselves from them inside their countries, and also to the people of the Muslim states with the support of the *Mujahedeen* of Afghanistan. Show yourself. Thus, Afghanistan's *jihad* against the Soviet Union is the basis of many radical currents in the *Sunni* world. The support of the West and the Arab world for these currents at that time attracted the attention of the Islamic countries to these currents (see: Cooley 2002, 42). As a result, *jihad* in Afghanistan provided a link between extremists, who came together with *Wahhabi*

<sup>4</sup> There were only 900 *madrasae* (schools) in 1971, but at the end of Zia's rule (1988), it increased to 8000 *madrasae* (Rashid 2000, 89).



*Salafism* and the *Egyptian Brotherhood* with the support of Western and Arab governments.

The Taliban consider themselves *Hanafi*, claiming that they are not *Wahhabis*, But the fact is that the roots of all extremist currents today go back to *Salafism*; which reached such a state by combining the views of *Ibn Taymiyyah*, *Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab*, and *Sayyid Qutb* in a process of time. As a preacher of this idea, *Abdullah Azzam* went to Pakistan to support *jihad* during the Soviet invasion and propagated this extremist ideology among the *Diwbandīyya* schools and the ranks of the *Mujahedeen*. This movement called the *Salafi* and *jihadist* movements believe that in order to start *jihad*, one must conquer territory to be the starting point for global *jihad*. Based on this idea, in 1996, many fundamentalists from around the world gathered in Afghanistan for Taliban global *jihad*; More than 35,000 atmospheric fighters from 43 countries (Gasper 2001; Rashid 2000, 130) *Haqqani* has resorted to various reasons for banning women from co-education. One of these arguments is the fatwa of *Ibn Baz* (Haqqani 2022, 274).

#### **D) Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn (Muslim brothers)**

Muslims' confrontation with modernity and the invasion of the colonial powers into the Islamic lands raised questions and, as a result, answers for them. Meanwhile, *Sayed Jamal Uddin Afghani* proposed the idea of returning to himself. From his and his followers' ideas and thoughts, an organization called *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* emerged in 1928. This group was not political at first; but the events of the 1950s in the Arab world politicized it.

*Sayyid Qutb* believed that the call of Islam was made in order to enslave and alienate the people from the rule of kings and rulers and to bring them under the rule of God (sayyid Qutb 1979, 46). It is not possible to move people towards such a society simply by expressing religion (propaganda); because the establishment of this new monotheistic society requires the elimination of the ignorant order and organizations that have dominated the people. Accordingly, *jihad* is carried out for this purpose (Ibid, 56). According to *Sayed Qutb*, *jihad* is not the defence of the land; as any government seems, *jihad* is the process of liberating nations from ungodly rule. Hence it is not limited to a specific land (Ibid, 59). *Sayyid Qutb* believes that peace in Islam alone is not original; That is, peace is not the main goal of society; rather, peace is important in divine sovereignty and departure from human sovereignty (Ibid, 66). Opposite to this divine call is ignorance, which, despite its diversity, refers to societies in which man is dominated by man (Ibid, 47).

*Sayed Qutb's* thought entered Afghanistan in the seventies in two ways;

First, the students of religious sciences who were acquainted with this idea in Egypt, after leaving for Kabul, began to propagate the idea of *Sayyid Qutb* at Kabul University. At this time, the left current; *The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan* was also



active in this university. People like *Mohammad Niazi*, *Burhanuddin Rabbani*, who was educated in Egypt and was a professor at Kabul University, formed the *Muslim youth group*. The Soviet Union's military invasion of Afghanistan led the population to act as a recruiting center against the Soviet occupation. Many members of the Taliban; Like *Mullah Omar*, the leader of this group was the *Mujahedeen* of the 1970s against the Soviets, who had previously embraced *Sayed Qutb's* jihadist ideology (Tanin 2005, 134-136).

Secondly, a radical form of the Brotherhood thinking was incited by the Afghan Arabs who took part in the Afghan *jihad*. The two ideologies of fundamentalist Islam, namely *Wahhabism* in Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, were united. Muslims following these two extremist ideas came together with US support in the *Hindu Kush* Mountains of Afghanistan (Abdul Samad, 2011: 75). *Abdullah Azzam*, a professor of theology at Riyadh University representing both schools of thought, was transferred to Pakistan at the time of the *jihad*. He played a significant role in the development of *Salafi-Brotherhood* thought among the *Mujāhidīn*. In addition, *Bin Laden* was influenced by the thought of *Sayyid Qutb* and *Ayman al-Zawahiri* was a student of *Sayyid Qutb*. After leaving for *jihad* in the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, they were favored by the *Pashtuns* and with this wide connection, they spread their extremist ideas (Shafaq Khawati 2020, 19).

The Taliban, based on *Sayyid Qutb's* view, consider *jihad* to be the cause of eliminating infidels, the dignity of believers, repelling evil and corruption, and, as a result, establishing an Islamic system. The withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan is considered a step in the *jihad*. Since then, the establishment of the Islamic State and the implementation of Islamic law in Afghanistan has been considered the goal of *jihad* (Haqqani 2022, 18). This is the maximum view of *jihad* that *Ibn Taymiyyah* first proposed and then theorized by *Sayyid Qutb* as the most important strategy of struggle in response to modernism and colonialism.

### ***Taliban's goals in establishing the Islamic Emirate***

State-building based on prejudice is xenophobic. Most of the Taliban's theoretical foundations emphasize alienation. Atheists and those who do not believe in the existence of God are the first circles of this zeal. Followers of religions other than Islam, including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, etc., are in the second circle of this alienation. Islamic sects such as Shiites are the third link in this zeal. Women, as human beings who participate in politics and have rights, are the fourth link in this alienation. If *non-Pashtun* ethnicities want a share of power, they are in the next circle of alienation. For the Taliban, in accordance with the ideology and ideology of the Taliban, two very important goals are considered: the formation of an *Islamic caliphate* and the complete monopoly of power.



## A) The formation of the Islamic Caliphate

In the Taliban state-building, the formation of an *Islamic caliphate* is considered an important goal. The caliphate that existed in the past Islamic states, with the difference that: First, in most of the history of Muslims, the position of *caliphate* belonged to sultans and military commanders, and they had minimal or maximum connections with religious communities. Influenced by Iranian aggression, the Taliban are seeking to establish a *caliphate* in which power is held by religiously educated religious scholars. So is the current Taliban cabinet. Second, in all institutions, laws and regulations, the traditional and petrified reading of the Taliban should be based on religion. *Samangani*<sup>5</sup>, a spokesman for the Taliban in Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, described us as "our" territory and explained that our *Amir al-Mu'minin* is the *Amir al-Mu'minin* of the whole world.

The *Emirate* and *Caliphate* are not two independent political models; *Islamic Emirate* is a small part or territory of the *Islamic Caliphate*. In the vast empires of the past in the form of the *Islamic Caliphate*, the Emirate existed. These empires consisted of small emirates, and the emirates defined a specific emirate territory. Today, because the *Islamic Caliphate* has been abolished and its revival requires the preparation of mindsets and the conquest of vast lands, the ground for its realization has not yet been prepared. *Islamic Emirate* of Taliban is in fact a small emirate of that mental realm that tries to provide the basis for the formation and objectification of the *Islamic Caliphate* in the world through *jihad* (Horasani 2019).

## B) Ethnic monopoly of power

The background of the Taliban is *Pashtun*. Apart from religious goals, they also have ethnic goals, and part of their social prestige among the tribes goes back to their ethnic extremism. Extremist ethnicity is popular among *Pashtun* elites. The monopoly of power is the common denominator between most *Pashtun* political actors, including the royal, republican, and fundamentalist ones. *Gholam Mohammad Farhad*<sup>6</sup>, a member of parliament during the constitutional monarchy, defended the exclusive legitimacy of the *Pashto* language (Farhang 1988, 492). During the Republic, *Mohammad Ashraf Ghani*<sup>7</sup> handed over all government powers to a three-member team, all of whom were *Pashtun*. The share of *Pashtun* in the first and second cabinets of the Taliban is more than ninety per cent. *Mullah Niazi* had announced to the *Shiites* through the loudspeakers of a

<sup>5</sup> Inamullah Samangani, a member of the Uzbek origin of the Taliban group, who is one of the Taliban's spokespersons, said the above words in an interview with Tolo local TV.

<sup>6</sup> The leader of the Afghan Nation Party, who was a radical nationalist, and most of the *Pashtun* political elites follow his radical views.

<sup>7</sup> The last president of Afghanistan who fled to the United Arab Emirates on August 15, 2021.



mosque in the city of *Mazar-e-Sharif*: You must either become *Sunni* or leave Afghanistan or you will all be killed (Kholousi; Binesh; Ansarey 2011, 297).

Thus, from an ethnic point of view, what matters is that the Taliban define an ethnic mission for themselves. They also strongly believe that the *Pashtuns* are the main owners of Afghanistan. This proprietary view of the state territory is rooted in conquest and *jihad*; in the sense that *Pashtuns* conquered Afghanistan and eventually own the land. They are the only ones who can determine who or who rules. On this basis, they believe that we have taken over this land by force of the sword, and since we have conquered this land, we have the authority to do so, and we decide who can live in this society and what their rights will be.

## 2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ISLAMIC EMIRATE

Taliban Islamic Emirate is a reconstruction of the simple governments of the classical Islamic era. In this type of government, society is divided into two ruling classes and the subjects. Participation in government and participation in the structure of such a government belongs to the ruling class. People are not defined as citizens, and obedience to government orders is considered their most important duty. In the absence of popular legitimacy and their participation, there has been a structure from the past that consists mainly of three spectrums; it includes the rulers, scholars and companions of the court and the office. In such a government, there is no separation of powers, accountability to the people, the right of the people to legislate, and institutions that represent the will of the people, such as parliament, and women are excluded from participating in politics.

### A) Amir al-Mu'minin

This title first appeared during the reign of the second *caliph*. *Amir al-Mu'minin* is in charge of the people who are Muslims (*Mumen*) (Haqqani 2022, 52). From a historical perspective, allegiance to rulers has taken many forms. The popular method is allegiance, in which a group of people first consults to appoint a caliph or emir. They are among those who have conditions such as; they have the maturity, intellect, masculinity, justice, commitment to Islam and belief in a righteous predecessor, they choose one as the caliph. While explaining these conditions, Haqqani has provided several reasons for the incompetence of women in the position of community leader (Ibid, 80-82). They choose one of the four conditions: maturity, intellect, commitment to Islam and belief in a righteous predecessor as the *caliph*. What is important is to pay attention to the fact that the general public is obliged, based on allegiance, to obey the *Amir al-Mu'minin* (Māwardī, N D: 23-24). Taliban spokesmen in televised debates have repeatedly referred to the allegiance of the *ulema* to the legitimacy of their government.



The fundamentalists accept this institution with the same traditional approach of the past. Any ruling and order of the *Amir al-Mu'minin* are placed after the order of God or the Prophet, and he is introduced to the people as the guardian of the matter mentioned in the Qur'an.

### **B) Leadership Council**

The Leadership Council or the Assembly of Elders and Nobles, or in other words, some jurists, *Ejmae Ahle hal va aqd*, is another institution that is considered in the structure of the *Islamic Emirate*. This council has an important function in terms of legitimizing the government. Special allegiance belongs to the members of this council. The members of the council appoint a person to the position of emir, caliph or leader. This council has a one-sided function: to ensure the legitimacy of the government. In fact, the council did not play a founding role in the government but justified the determination of those in power. Accordingly, the philosophy of such institutions has not been to prevent tyranny; Rather, it was important to create a government and accept it by the people (Moheq 2019).

*Haqqani* in addition to three general conditions; Puberty, intellect and being a man have set three special conditions. These conditions are: having justice, being a scholar of religious knowledge and knowledge of the interests of the *ummah*, and finally the ability to make decisions (Haqqani 2022, 146). He reiterated that women do not have such a right in the election of the head of state and that women should refrain from any participation in governance (Ibid, 148-152).

### **C) Cabinet**

In his book, *Haqqani* does not mention the current order in the division of government departments. He went to the reconstruction of the past and organized the administrative division of the government based on the ministries and provinces (Ibid, 170-175). He noted that among the ministries, the three Ministries of Defense, Education and Economy are important. (Ibid, 177-182).

In the Taliban government, the cabinet is under the control of the Prime Minister, who has two deputies. After the presidency and his deputies, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil, and the Ministry of Justice are important and influential ministries. The Taliban's cabinet is highly ethnic, and all posts in one cabinet have been given to *Pashtuns*.



#### **D) Judicial system**

The Taliban do not accept the separation of powers, the Taliban judge is chosen by the group's leader. *Sharia* law is the source of Taliban courts' rulings and rulings. *Haqqani* has banned employers from other religions from entering the judiciary (Ibid, 2022: 37). Thus, the Taliban judicial system has three major differences from other judicial systems; First, the level of legal and pre-trial violence in the Taliban government is very high. Secondly, the basis of judgment is only the *Shari'a* laws. Third, it belongs to a religious sect and openly and systematically prevents others from entering.

#### **E) Legislation**

The Taliban are very strict about popular legislation. The Taliban do not recognize parliament as the legislature. According to the Taliban, the legislation belongs to God. Accordingly, the opinion of the common people is as invalid as it is in today's parliaments. *Haqqani* is not satisfied with this and has rejected the republic of the system because it is based on the will of the majority (Ibid, 237-241).

### **3. RESULT**

The Taliban's Islamic provocation stems from the political upheavals that took place in the Middle East and South Asia in the 1970s. This group has historical interests; it does not reflect modern governments and modern ideas about governance. Forming a government based on nervousness, as *Ibn Khaldūn* explained, represents the Taliban's way of building a state. Taliban are poor in terms of producing political thought and do not have a coherent theory of state-building. State-building based on prejudice refers to ethnic origins, cultural contexts, and political-economic connections. Accordingly, in the Taliban government, as the ethnic origin, the *Pashtun* governor plays a decisive role. Taliban belong religiously to the *Deobandi School*, which has gradually adapted to political and radical developments. Both *Salafi* and *Ikhwan*'s tendencies have added to the Taliban's fanaticism and extremism. In line with such fanatical principles, they have created a government that emphasizes alienation and prohibition. In accordance with their historical interests, they have reconstructed a simple image of the structure of classical Islamic governments in the form of the Islamic Emirate. In this simple reconstruction, the separation of powers, the representation of the people, the party system, and the institutions related to civil rights and human rights have been abolished.



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# The situation of Afghan women before and after the Taliban government takeover in 2021

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**ABSTRACT:** This article describes how different types of Afghan governments affected the role and impact of women. It follows the political pathway of the country and its impact on women's education between the time of the Constitutional Monarchy, through the Russian occupation, the first Taliban government, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the present Taliban Dictatorship. Women's education and achievements in entrepreneurship as well as their withdrawal from public and working life altogether under the Taliban rule are discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** Afghanistan, women, education, entrepreneurship, Taliban

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

When Afghanistan was a constitutional monarchy, before 1979, its society was liberal and women living in urban areas played significant roles in education, health care, economy, politics and in social life. Also during the Soviet occupation, 1979-1989, which is widely praised for establishing gender equality in education, women continued to play a significant role in the development of the country. After the first Taliban government<sup>8</sup>, 1996-2001, women were banned from all areas of public life and working life. They lost most of their human rights (violence against women reached its picks) and had to submit to the policies, rules and regulations of the Taliban. In 2001, the Taliban regime was overthrown and replaced by the newly established Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This lasted until 2021. With the support of the international community, women recovered their previous roles and their status in Afghan society and assumed important roles in the reconstruction of their country and beyond. The recapture of the government by the Taliban on August the 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 set an abrupt end to these new

<sup>8</sup> The Taliban (religious 'students' or 'seekers') government, which refers to itself by, 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' is a *Deobandi* Islamic fundamentalist, militant and jihadist political movement in Afghanistan (Ayoob 2019).



developments. “Sometimes the strongest women are the ones who love beyond all faults, cry behind closed doors, and fight battles that nobody knows about” (K. Bromberg, 2021).

Concerning Afghan women, this quotation has a deep meaning as it describes one of their most prominent characteristics: their resilience in the face of excruciating suffering. It applies to women who were forced to stay indoors instead of participating in social life, to women who renounced their human rights and to those who have been killed by the Taliban, because of insisting on their most basic rights, such as health care, education and jobs. During the first Taliban government, they established rigorous rules for women and banned them from all public and working life. After 2001, the Taliban government collapsed and the new Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was established with the help of the international community. Government and non-government institutions have supported women in their efforts to recover their rights, roles and positions in the country. As a result, a large number of Afghan girls accessed basic and higher education and subsequently were included in all areas of working life, including politics. After the recent takeover of the Afghan government by the Taliban, the previous dark days returned for Afghan women. For this reason, the authors of this article fled the country, even though this meant leaving everybody and everything behind and trying to resettle in Italy which welcomed us with generosity for which we are deeply grateful.

It is noteworthy to mention that the contents of the article have been gathered from different sources such as books, reports, websites and personal witnesses of people involved. These last has been observed by the local people and narrated through phone calls, texts and voice messages. Their names and address are kept confidential for their choice.

## 2. GIRLS’ EDUCATION AND WOMEN’S SITUATION UNDER TALIBAN RULE

The first Taliban regime follows an extreme version of the Islamic Code, enforcing rigorous rules including prohibiting women to leave their homes without a male relative and wearing a whole-body veil (Burqa). Besides, using make-up and listening to music were also forbidden. If women broke the rules, they were punished very harshly, including public humiliation and beating. Altogether, women were extremely vulnerable during this period of hopelessness.

After five years, the United States and its international allies overthrew the Taliban government and assisted in the establishment of a more liberal Islamic government. Subsequently, the situation improved for women. Enrolment in educational institutions at all levels rose rapidly, with more than 3.6 million girls enrolled by 2018, more than 2.5 million in primary schools, and over one million in secondary schools. The increase in girls’ secondary education was particularly marked, with nearly 40% enrolled in 2018 compared with 6% in 2003, according to the U.N. children’s agency (Batha 2022).



Women could resume working in all areas and even assume positions as members of parliament.

Since the Taliban retook control of the country on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, they re-introduced some rules and regulations for men and very rigorous restrictions regarding personal freedoms for women. This means that after 20 years of hard work and struggles towards emancipation, women lost their achievements again, most tragically, they lost hope and their dreams turned into nightmares. As a consequence, an enormous number of Afghan women are suffering from depression, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorders and anxiety, and many are tempted to commit or have committed suicide. The majority of Afghan women demonstrated against the Taliban in public. They demanded them to re-open schools and universities for girls and women. During those demonstrations, many women were badly abused, but this did not stop them from continuing to demonstrate. So, the Taliban were forced to re-open primary schools for girls too and also universities to some extent. Secondary and High Schools are not yet open to them. In an internal national Taliban assembly, they have promised to re-establish women's rights in all areas of life, within the framework of their fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic law. After this news was proclaimed in the media, women started having some hope again, but this also got suffocated almost immediately, as nothing changed for the better. According to Taliban policy, girls and boys have to study in separate classes and at separate times, and only female teachers are allowed to teach girls. However, there are not enough female teachers for gender-segregated schooling. Hence, presently, only 70% of Afghan girls are attending primary school in urban areas, and 40% do so in rural areas, according to the Center for Global Development<sup>9</sup>. Only 16% of the pupils in primary schools are girls (Batha, 2021; 2022). Moreover, in the context of the Taliban takeover thousands of educated Afghans, including teachers, fled the country. Therefore, only about 10-15% of female teachers are properly qualified (Batha, 2021). Many families keep their daughters at home, because of safety concerns and transport difficulties. Similarly, those parents who have experienced the first Taliban government, remember the horrific crimes, including the abuse of girls and young women, they had committed. Therefore, they are afraid to send their daughters to school. For example, a 10 years old girl who was studying in grade four has been punished by the Taliban in Bamiyan. The reason for this was that on her way to school, her hair was visible and the Taliban punished her so badly in front of her companions, equally small girls, which made some of them faint. Also, one teacher was beaten badly while she was going home from school (An Afghan girl named Suria Danish). Such incidents frighten parents and tempt them, not to send their daughters to school.

In contrast, in most provinces of Afghanistan, the Taliban restriction could not stop females to continue their studies. They go to universities and go to work with a strict

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/girls-education-casualty-disastrous-withdrawal-afghanistan>



Islamic dress code and wear Niqab (face cover that only leaves space for the eyes). They tolerated any restriction the Taliban made from the day they took over control of the country, but unfortunately, on 25/12/2022 the education minister of the Taliban proclaimed that girls are not allowed to go to universities and are not allowed to go to work. This decision of the rulers caused once again university students and women demonstrated on the streets. In response to this action of women, the Taliban behaved harshly and arrested some of the girls, and took them to an unknown place. This decision of the Taliban caused thousands of women who were working in governmental and non-governmental organizations to lose their jobs, thousands of students to leave their universities, and some foreign organizations who were working, to stop their activities in Afghanistan. The NGO order came in a letter on Saturday 24 December 2022 from Taliban Economy Minister Qari Din Mohammed Hanif. It said any organization found not complying with the order will have its license revoked in Afghanistan. It means those who do not accept their decision have to stop their activities in Afghanistan (Euronews 2022).

On the other hand, in Kandahar city, which is located in the southern part of Afghanistan, and in some other cities, hundreds of male students boycotted their final semester exams. They left the exam hall. They did this in support of female students and told to their professors that they will not give their exams without their female classmates. Besides, hundreds of university professors resigned and left their jobs because of supporting their female colleagues and students.

Afghanistan is the only country that does not have female teachers, doctors, and any other female employees in its offices.

Meanwhile, its unstable political situation pushed the fragile healthcare system to become worsen and on the verge of collapse. After the power-taking of the Taliban regime in the capital, Kabul, the director-general of the WHO said, “Unless urgent actions are taken, the country faces an imminent humanitarian catastrophe”. Afghan Scientific studies (Their name is withheld to protect their life, family, and colleagues in Afghanistan), have shown that lack of clean water, lack of food, shortage of healthcare professionals, poverty, and education limit women’s access to maternal care. The Taliban rule directly and indirectly negatively affects Afghan citizens and especially women’s health. As Afghans resist the Taliban, war has continued since 15 August 2021 in Pushter province and northern regions of Afghanistan. Every day hundreds of people have been killed in explosions in mosques, and education centers. The risk of dying is three times higher among women of childbearing age living near intense fighting than among women in a peacetime setting. Infants are also more than 25% more likely to die young. Thousands of Afghans have also been internally displaced, and the majority of them are women and children. Also, Fear, trauma, and oppressions increase mental health risks. Afghan Scientifics (\*the author, now affiliated with UCSF, is among a handful of Afghan scholars, physicians and refugees



*the university helped to find a safe haven in the Bay Area. Their name is withheld to protect their family and colleagues in Afghanistan).*

In consideration of the current political and social context in Afghanistan, especially the gender apartheid imposed by the Taliban, we can predict the highest rate of illiteracy, mortality, and morbidity among women in Afghanistan within the next couple of years.

### 3. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Throughout history, it has been observed that women in Afghanistan are the most marginalized group of the population. Even though they can assume important roles in the development of Afghan society, they are not granted their rights. They receive less formal education than men and they are not given space to prove their knowledge and abilities. Every single woman and girl in Afghanistan has faced discrimination, no matter which social class, ethnicity and religious affiliation she has. The reason behind this discrimination is the ideology of people. Afghanistan is a traditional patriarchal country, where men look at women and girls as tools of entertainment, as humans with less ability to gain knowledge and skills. Discrimination is not a new phenomenon. It is deeply rooted in the history of Afghanistan. Afghan women always had less important and less prestigious roles than men (Bachelet, 2022). The ongoing conflicts did not allow the people to think openly and to understand that women and girls' participation in their community can influence nation-building.

Girls face discrimination first in their families. The parents and other family members respect and value males higher and ignore the needs and ideas of females. Families give freedom to their sons but not to their daughters. They appreciate the boys for what they do and put barriers in the way of the girls. They imprison them inside the walls of their homes to learn household chores. At the same time, families provide the best facilities for their sons to have a wonderful childhood. This is how discrimination against women starts (Allen and Felbab-Brown 2020).

In 2021, millions of Afghan women have again lost their right to education beyond grade four. Most parents believe that the priority of a girl's life has to be dealing with household chores in order to find a suitable husband. Many families arrange their girls' marriage before they are eighteen. Also for financial reasons, they force them to marry a person, whom they have never met and/or are much older than them (Fore, 2021).

On the other hand, those girls who have access to education face great obstacles. Even if they successfully complete basic schooling, many of them face difficulties to continue in higher education. Many of them cannot continue higher studies because of the traditional, cultural and religious ideas of their family. In addition, women are being discriminated against in getting jobs and a workplace. While men can easily get a job for which their gender is suited, women are thought to be less good at work. A lower



percentage of women take part in different areas such as education for women and girls, health and participation of women in civil and political activities (Yixin Wang 2021).

After the takeover of the country by the Taliban, these discriminations became even more severe. *“Afghan women and girls are facing both the collapse of their rights and dreams and the risks to their basic survival,”* said Halima Kazem-Stojanovic, a core faculty member of SJSU’s Human Rights Institute and a scholar on Afghanistan. *“They are caught between Taliban abuses and actions by the international community that are pushing Afghans further into desperation every day”* (Human rights watch 2022).

Taliban’s ideology is very different and religious.

They believe that women should not study or work outside the home, and as a result, they deny women and girls their basic rights. They are attempting to create a society in which men are the dominant force and have complete control. The Taliban believes in a strict interpretation of religious laws, which can limit citizens' human rights, particularly those of women. They do not consider men and women to be equal and believe that there is no need for women or girls to attend school or work. Women in Afghanistan have faced discrimination based on their gender for many decades, but now that the Taliban is in power, life has become more difficult for them.

Women and girls, on the other hand, feel insecure in Afghanistan; they live in fear and have a deep sense of loss and helplessness.

*“The crisis for women and girls in Afghanistan is escalating, with no end in sight,”* said Heather Barr, Human Rights Watch’s associate women’s rights director. *“Taliban policies have quickly turned many women and girls into virtual prisoners in their own homes, robbing the country of one of its most valuable resources, the skills and talents of the female half of the population”* (Human rights watch 2022). The Taliban want small girls to focus more on religious studies, similar to how girls were only allowed to go to Masjids (Mosques) to learn religious lessons decades ago.

Furthermore, gender inequality existed in Afghanistan due to cultural beliefs, but it has now been exacerbated by the Taliban regime. Afghan women have long been oppressed, discriminated against, and marginalized, and their rights have been violated. Gender inequality is a two-sided issue in which men believe that the oppression of women is justified.

Women are unable to speak up for themselves and challenge these inequalities because those who do so risk being imprisoned by the Taliban or facing difficult challenges such as physical violence. The Taliban is imposing strict rules on women, which is causing a lot of problems in society. Millions of women face difficulties; they are unable to maintain good mental health because they are victims of violence, helplessness, and hopelessness (CBS news 2021).

The Taliban are uninterested in girls' and women's education and refuse to include women in their government. According to Taliban beliefs, men have complete control over everything and women should stay at home so that other men do not spy on them. Women lack basic rights and live in the dark.



#### **4. ACHIEVEMENTS OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS IN AFGHANISTAN BEFORE THE PRESENT OF TALIBAN TAKE OVER**

Entrepreneurship is generally regarded as a force of change, development and innovation in the modern economy. More specifically, it is about business enterprises, initiatives, organizing production, handling operative aspects and taking risks involved in running the enterprises for women in the traditional Afghan society being an entrepreneur can be challenging, because this role is new. For decades, Afghan women were excluded from the world of business. But they have dealt with all these problems and eventually could overcome the difficulties. Since the collapse of the Taliban government in 2001, the new government of Afghanistan and international organizations have helped women to enter this sector and play their own roles. Afghan women have actively used these new opportunities as best as they could, and many have been successful. During the past 20 years, many female entrepreneurs have opened micro-businesses all around the country, and in this way, they have improved their personal economy besides assisting many other women to find jobs and work for themselves. Female entrepreneurs are women who organize and manage an enterprise, especially a business. The number of female entrepreneurs has steadily increased in Afghanistan during those 20 years. During the Taliban regime in 1996-2001 and before, most women were busy with farming, agriculture, and livestock. This way, they had an income, but it was not serving their needs, because their products were seasonal. After the Republic Government of Afghanistan was established, gradually, many women were exporting different commodities even outside the country. Women artisans in rural areas have sold their products in cities, and they have presented themselves as business owners and economic actors on regional and international platforms (Wafeq 2022).

Afghan women entrepreneurs started their businesses in packaging dried fruits, cultivation of Safran, handicrafts, carpet weaving, jewelry production, farming, hair salon, beauty salon, bakeries, Afghani clothes shops, and others. Through these types of businesses, they have improved their own economy, facilitated the economy of the country, and created many job opportunities for 130000 of Afghan women too. Before the fall of the country to the Taliban on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021, the female entrepreneurs invested around 90 million USD. Despite the challenging cultural and security problems, they played a great role in the economy of Afghanistan (Manizha Wafeq, 2022)

Some of the successful entrepreneur's women in Afghanistan are Nahid Hamidi who had a jewelry stone shop, Benazir Yakta who had a business in packaging and exporting dried fruits to other countries, Nazia Haidary had a handicraft business and was producing clothes and hats. Zahra Jafari had the idea to open an advertising company to give public notice of the products of other entrepreneurs through producing short films



and shows. Sona Mahmoudi had a business exporting dried fruits to south and central Asian countries. She had one Safran farm in Herat and one almond farm in Mazari Sharif where hundreds of women were working (Sediqi 2022).

Roya Mahboob, an Afghan female entrepreneur who was selected by Time Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2013, is the founder and chief executive officer of the Afghan computer company Citadel, and the CEO of Digital Citizen Fund. She chose the path of assisting Afghan girls and women in education and employment in the field of computer and technology. In the last 20 years after the first Taliban regime, a large number of Afghan women have gained access to education and employment with the support of Ms. Mahboob. She is also the founder of the robotics team in Herat. After six months, Afghanistan was able to win the first position among the strongest teams in different countries in the European robotics competition in Estonia and the second place in the international robotics compilation in Forest Global in the United States (Global Female Leaders 2022).

Afghan women made significant progress during these years under the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. They have proved their abilities by establishing businesses and creating investments that added to the economy of the country. But tragically after 20 years, again Afghanistan had gone under the control of the cruellest regime “The Taliban”, and Afghan women are experiencing the same history as they did in the past. And they experience again the horrific events they experienced 20 years ago. With the rise of the Taliban, women in many areas have quit their jobs or outsourced their work to a man. Women entrepreneurs said that they invested hundreds of thousands of Afghans in the previous government. Those investors were forced to shut down their businesses due to the lack of Taliban Government support. And now they have lost everything they had and they are not allowed to continue their businesses anymore in Afghanistan (Tanno 2022).

Taliban do not allow women to be present in the community or to be active outside the home, and they believe that women are only meant to stay at home, do housework, and listen to what their men tell them. The Taliban claim that it is stated in the Islamic religion and by Allah that women are not capable of performing the same tasks as men. In reality, such things do not exist in Islam or its holy book, the Quran. The issue of women in Islam is exacerbated in part by the misbehavior of some Muslims, which has been misinterpreted as representing Islamic teachings. However, in Islam and the Holy Quran, this is not the case, and the position of women from spiritual, economic, social and political standpoints has been discussed (Quran 4:1, 7:189, 42:11).

According to the Quran, men and women have the same spirit and there is no spiritual superiority between men and women. Furthermore, the Quran makes it clear that all human beings have what you might call humanity (Quran 4:1, 7:189, 42:11). Furthermore, no restriction or law exist in Islam states that women cannot work or have the same profession as men and that their place is in the home. Women nurses, teachers, and physicians are required in an Islamic society (Islam’s women 2023).



However, gender inequality is genetically attributed to religion, even though the causes are entirely non-religious. It stems from political, economic, social, and cultural factors, as gender equality is part of Islam's religious jurisprudence and fundamental teachings. There are numerous Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions (al-Qur'an, 4:1), that advocate for gender equality, demonstrating unequivocally that gender inequality is not based on faith (Tahir-ul-Qadri M. 2011).

Living and being a woman under the Taliban's Theocratic Regime, on the other hand, is extremely difficult. Many negative comments have been made about the racial policy of segregation toward women. The Taliban's Islamization program was centered on the role of women and girls. Their policy is justified by religious law, as well as an allegedly traditional perception of Afghan society. When they first arrived in Kabul, they prohibited girls from attending school and denied them the right to study and attend university. According to Taliban ideals, a school is a place that will turn girls into prostitutes. They, too, have argued that girls' education is not permitted or supported by Islam or the Quran which in reality such a thing does not exist. Women are permitted to be present outside under some conditions: they can make a public appearance while escorted by a male relative (brother, father, husband) and they must wear a suitable attire known as a burqa. The logic behind wearing this burqa is that women's bodies are private and must be protected, and they present themselves as Islamic modernizers and protectors of the privatization of the female body in the country. Their ideology forbade women from working, forcing them to leave or quit their jobs.

Right now, women's living conditions have deteriorated significantly, and the Taliban has imposed numerous restrictions on them, including the prohibition on women from walking freely in the streets without a burqa, laughing freely, going to beauty salons, working, attending social events, and many others (Kallini 2021)

## **5. THE ESCAPE OF THE EDUCATED GENERATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN**

After the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, despite all the challenges and uncertainties in the country, there were many good educational opportunities for youth and children, including girls. They took advantage of every little opportunity for their studies and achieved good results. Many of them got scholarships and studied at the best universities around the world. These people were more familiar with the world of technology. They worked in high positions in Afghanistan and created a better system in the country. Unfortunately, most of them fled after the fall of the country under the rule of the Taliban, which led to the collapse of the system. It is not just technology that is affected, but the whole system, which means education, economy, industry, business ... etc. In general, the escape of Afghanistan's educated generation has an immediate and delayed impact on the future of the country. The immediate impact was the closure of



many organizations, businesses, institutes, and government offices, resulting in unemployment and poverty. The later impact will be even more dangerous. As the majority of educated people who held key positions in government offices, universities, institutes and companies have left the country their positions are now empty or have been replaced by uneducated Taliban.

This has a direct impact on the quality of public administration. Many well-educated professors have left the country and there are no people at their level to replace them. This automatically affects the quality of education, and students may also not be interested in continuing their studies. This will lead to a further increase in the number of illiterates, which has been decreasing over the last 21 years to some 50%. Recently there has been an impressive upsurge in the establishment of various businesses operating at national and international levels, and now the owners of these businesses have fled and the properties have either been stolen or taken by the Taliban. There were many vulnerable people, both men and women, who made their living through these companies and now are struggling with hunger.

Western governments emphasize that humanitarian aid does not go to the Taliban government, which is not recognized by the international community, but rather to aid organizations on the ground.

With the UN warning that 97 per cent of Afghanistan's population is at risk of falling below the poverty line, the Taliban appears to be attempting to shift economic responsibility to the international community. Because of the brain drain, Afghanistan's new administrators have very little human potential to drive economic growth.

Overall, marginalized groups will remain on the margins and their voice will not be heard anywhere because the youth who had the enthusiasm of helping them are not with them anymore. The sources and relationships to facilities such as NGOs are no longer available for the communities in need. Women and children lost their voices due to the flight of the activists. They lost the opportunity of getting an education and freedom. Families lost their sources of income and are losing their lives because of hunger. The education system, infrastructure system, business system, and even lifestyle go toward the worst situation.

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As a matter of fact, after the re-take of the Afghan government by the Taliban in August 2021, women are back at the square once again as far as their basic rights and particularly their right to education and work are concerned. The Taliban have not changed either their fundamentalist ideology or the governing rules and regulations derived from this, perhaps with the exception of executions of women in public. They have betrayed women and girls by largely banning them from public and working life again. The Taliban regime follows an extremely fundamentalist interpretation of Islam,



which even many Muslim scholars have difficulty associating with true Islam. Women have worked hard to catch up with the educational level of men and achieved a lot in terms of entrepreneurship during the last 20 years. They have played a significant role in the country, socially, politically and economically. But with the arrival of the Taliban for the second time, Afghan society has lost its achievements altogether, allowing their government to restrain women in their households which has resulted in the increase of gender-based issues. As Afghan women have shown during the past 20 years, they are able to contribute to the reconstruction and development of their war-torn country. However, the utilization of this immense resource lies in the hands of men, Taliban and other.

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OCCHIALÌ – RIVISTA SUL MEDITERRANEO ISLAMICO (N.10/2022)

**SEZIONE/SECTION**  
*RECENSIONI/*  
*BOOK REVIEWS*



RECENSIONE

**Istituto Andrea Wolf, *Jin Jiyan Azadî. La rivoluzione delle donne in Kurdistan*, Tamu Edizioni, Napoli 2022, pp. 445.**

**(Original: *Mujer, Vida y Libertad. Desde el corazón del movimiento de las mujeres libres de Kurdistán*. Editorial Descontrol, 2020)**

**SARA MAZZEI**

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In molti ricorderanno le immagini delle combattenti curde in prima fila nella lotta contro Daesh, lo stato islamico che ha imperversato in Siria ed Iraq. La lotta contro Daesh era allora una delle priorità mondiali e molti media hanno parlato di loro come eroine di una battaglia di civiltà contro l'oscurantismo del fanatismo islamico. Quando i riflettori si sono spenti sulla vicenda, si sono spenti anche su queste donne, lasciando credere ai molti non esperti dell'argomento che si siano mobilitate unicamente per sconfiggere Daesh e che, terminata questa battaglia, siano tornate alla vita comune. Questo volume recentemente tradotto in italiano mira a ricordare ad un ampio pubblico che non è così e a spiegare chi sono in realtà queste combattenti, la storia da cui provengono, la loro ideologia, il loro modo di vivere e sentire.

In particolare il volume si occupa della questione di genere all'interno della più generale questione curda, che si intersecano in maniera inscindibile, essendo la questione femminile considerata alla base del rinnovamento sociale e politico che il movimento curdo auspica. Nonostante si tratti di un'opera a carattere dichiaratamente politico, in quanto emanazione di uno specifico movimento, quello per la liberazione del Kurdistan, scritta da sostenitori del movimento stesso, essa non è definibile unicamente come un'opera di propaganda. Nel volume ci si propone infatti una ricostruzione storica delle due questioni, curda e di genere, attraverso una analisi storica, filosofica e politica molto ampia sul matriarcato e sul patriarcato. Tale ricostruzione è stata effettuata dai ricercatori partendo dalla ricerca sul campo, dove hanno svolto numerose osservazioni partecipanti e interviste in profondità. Da queste fuoriesce l'apparato teorico e la ricostruzione storica delle fasi della storia dell'umanità che, secondo le intervistate,



hanno portato alla struttura di genere oggi esistente e alla peculiare situazione in cui vive la comunità curda. Tale narrazione è sorretta da spiegazioni basate su pochi ma precisi, consultabili e puntualmente specificati riferimenti bibliografici.

L’opera appare scritta per rivolgersi contemporaneamente a tre diversi tipi di lettore. Innanzitutto si rivolge ad un pubblico ampio e generico, per fare conoscere a tutti la realtà di queste donne combattenti al di là della mediatizzazione momentanea; in secondo luogo ad un lettore interessato politicamente a conoscere i dettagli del Movimento delle donne Curde ed infine ad un pubblico accademico, al quale si presenta come ricerca biennale effettuata sul campo tramite interviste qualitative e biografiche a protagoniste del Movimento tramite cui si è prodotto una ricostruzione storica, filosofica, sociologica e politologica. Il libro riporta infatti puntualmente le fonti orali da cui sono state raccolte le informazioni, sia nel caso delle abbondanti citazioni all’interno del testo che attraverso un capitoletto dedicato alla presentazione delle donne intervistate all’inizio del volume appena dopo la nota delle traduttrici, la nota del comitato italiano di Jineolojî (scienza delle donne in lingua curda), l’introduzione e il prologo. Alla biografia sulle intervistate segue un glossario contenente le parole in lingua curda considerate essenziali dalle autrici, parole che si preferisce mantenere in lingua originale per non perderne le sfumature di significato con traduzioni approssimative.

Successivamente a questa prima parte introduttiva di una ventina di pagine, l’opera si dipana in 14 capitoli, a cui segue una biografia delle martiri per la libertà e la bibliografia. I primi 5 capitoli hanno un carattere storico, proponendo una narrazione che unisce e lega insieme tutti i pezzi di storia che sono stati narrati dalla intervistate, con continue citazioni. In generale tutto il libro offre un mix di teoria e narrazione, che nei successivi nove capitoli si focalizza maggiormente sulle diverse teorie e pratiche del movimento, acquisendo un taglio maggiormente politico in cui è comunque mantenuta la narrazione storica. Gli ultimi 4 capitoli riguardano le teorie e le pratiche poste in essere nel movimento nel 21° secolo.

Il primo capitolo, “Illuminando la vita attraverso la storia”, offre una sintesi generale di ciò che potremmo definire la filosofia della storia del movimento per la liberazione del Kurdistan, con riflessioni sul concetto di tempo lineare e circolare, sulla storia e sul modo di tramandarla. In questo e nel secondo capitolo il discorso è molto ampio e teorico, abbracciando la storia dell’umanità nel suo insieme. Gli argomenti trattati sono la preistoria, il neolitico, la mitologia legata alla dea madre, le prime civiltà a sviluppare la scrittura e le prime divinità maschili, tramite cui le realtà venne ordinata in modo nuovo e gerarchico. I contenuti di questa prima parte meriterebbero un maggiore approfondimento non essendo attualmente sufficientemente supportati da evidenze scientifiche, cosa di cui gli autori appaiono consapevoli e che esplicano anche al lettore, utilizzando il condizionale in molte frasi e auspicando che tali temi vengano approfonditi, confermati o smentiti.



Nel secondo capitolo, “La società naturale”, si attraversa tutta la storia dell’umanità, passando per la comparsa e diffusione delle grandi religioni monoteiste e la caccia alle streghe, fino a giungere all’età contemporanea. Le diverse culture e religioni egemoni nei diversi periodi, come la filosofia greca, il cristianesimo, l’Islam, vengono trattate oggettivamente e con equidistanza in relazione alla posizione della donna al loro interno e non si evidenzia alcuna preferenza o pregiudizio negativo verso una in particolare di esse.

Nel terzo capitolo, “Condizione e resistenza delle donne in Kurdistan fino al 1976”, si passa dal generale al particolare, analizzando i passaggi storici affrontati nel precedente capitolo nel particolare del territorio della cosiddetta “mezzaluna fertile”, terra dei curdi. Il quarto capitolo è dedicato alla storia del leader del movimento, Abdullah Öcalan, mentre il quinto alla storia della resistenza nelle prigioni turche durante il forte periodo di repressione degli anni ’90.

I seguenti 5 capitoli ricostruiscono le teorie e i paradigmi ideologici fondamentali del movimento delle donne, ricostruiti sempre tramite le interviste. Si inizia da “l’autodifesa e la teoria della rosa”, passando alla “teoria della separazione”, proseguendo con “Ideologia della liberazione della donna” e “Il partito delle donne” per arrivare all’ultima teorizzazione sul genere che guarda anche alla mascolinità, in special modo nel contesto del Medio Oriente, denominata “uccidere il maschio dominante e trasformare l’uomo”.

L’undicesimo capitolo, denominato “Cambio di paradigma: il Confederalismo democratico”, narra la storia materiale e l’evoluzione concettuale che hanno portato il movimento ad abbandonare l’idea nazionalista di un Kurdistan socialista e ad abbracciare l’idea del confederalismo democratico che punta ad organizzare diversi popoli, etnie, religioni e lingue in maniera democratica al di là dei confini nazionali. In tale capitolo si narra della delusione verso le realizzazioni storiche del socialismo in altri paesi, dell’abbandono di un ideale nazionalista considerato errato e di come l’ottica di genere e il contributo delle donne sia stata fondamentale in questo cambio di paradigma. Il 12esimo capitolo, “vita libera insieme” si occupa di descrivere la possibilità di rapporti equalitari tra donne e uomini. Il 13esimo capitolo narra della nascita della Jineolojî, la scienza delle donne, e ne spiega le fondamenta teoriche, gli obiettivi e i metodi, nell’ottica di una scienza sociale volta a creare dei cambiamenti positivi per le donne di tutto il mondo. L’ultimo capitolo, “la rivoluzione delle donne”, riunisce tutti i numerosi elementi presentati nel libro, spiegando cosa si intende con il termine rivoluzione e perché la rivoluzione delle donne è essenzialmente sociale e pacifica, in contrapposizione alle molte rivoluzioni maschili e violente che hanno infine perso il loro afflato rivoluzionario una volta giunte al potere.

Il libro nel suo insieme dà molti spunti di riflessione, per la maggior parte riguardanti il campo della politica, in particolar modo la questione di genere, ma anche il nazionalismo, la democrazia, l’ecologia e molti altri. Essi si intrecciano a dettagli storici poco conosciuti sulla storia dei popoli medio orientali, tenuti insieme da una coerente e



OCCHIALÌ – RIVISTA SUL MEDITERRANEO ISLAMICO (N.10/2022)

generale filosofia delle storia, così come con interessanti spiegazioni terminologiche sulle diverse etimologie delle parole in diverse lingue. La lettura è scorrevole ma comunque impegnativa, e nella parte centrale a volte i concetti appaiono ripetitivi e ridondanti, rendendo il testo molto lungo. Nell'ottica di volersi potenzialmente presentare anche ad un pubblico non specialista o accademico, gli autori avrebbero potuto evitare queste ripetizioni e optare per una descrizione o narrazione più sintetica in alcuni punti, rendendo così il testo più snello e di più facile lettura.

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