UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, LAW, AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Master's degree in

Human Rights and Multi-level Governance

Ascension and Decay of Liberal Peace: The case of Afghanistan

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Matriculation No. 1231654

A.Y. 2021/2022

Dedication

To my parents, and their endless source of love and support.

Contents

List of Acronyms

AIA   Afghanistan Interim Administration

ATA   Afghanistan Transitional Administration

CLJ   Constitutional Loya Jirga

ELJ   Emergency Loya Jirga

ISAF   International Security Assistance Force

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

UNAMA United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

UN   United Nations

PRT   Provincial Reconstruction Team

R2P   Responsibility to Protect

Abstract

This work aims to understand how the international community used the premise of liberal peace as a justification for international interventions, by looking at the case of Afghanistan. Looking at the evolution of liberal peacebuilding and how it has evolved over the past decades, Afghanistan has been chosen as a case study because it represents a shift towards less liberal approaches, reflecting the most recent changes and trends in world politics. The NATO and UN intervention have ended up damaging Afghanistan and Taliban has regained control over the territory. Thus, it can indicate the beginning of the decay of the liberal peace, a project that emerged among optimism and ambitious frameworks to promote peace, democratization and security but has dangerous unintended consequences for such fragile nations.

Keywords: peacebuilding, international security, liberal peace, Afghanistan, NATO

Introduction

This work aims to understand how the international community uses the premise of liberal peace as a justification for interventions, and how has that shifted over the last two decades. Looking at the evolution of liberal peacebuilding and how it has evolved over the past decades, Afghanistan has been chosen as a case study because it represents a crucial phase towards less liberal approaches, reflecting the most recent changes and trends in world politics. The NATO and UN intervention have ended up damaging Afghanistan and Taliban has regained control over the territory. Thus, it can indicate the beginning of the decay of the liberal peace, a project that emerged among optimism and ambitious frameworks to promote peace, democratization and security but has dangerous unintended consequences for such fragile nations.

NATO's operation in Afghanistan has mostly failed. Instead of achieving the expected outcomes, Afghanistan came out more damaged, with a re-takeover of Taliban into power. We can argue it was the ultimate stab in the back of the liberal peace project: has it been also a sign that liberal peace had to change? Would Afghanistan be the sign of the decay of liberal peace? Why?

Through this work we aim to shed light at the evolution and decay of Liberal Peace, how the West has used it as justification and how has it changed over time. Thinking of it as arc, Afghanistan denotes the beginning of the fall towards the latest tragedies in world politics: Syria and Ukraine.

The Liberal Peace has been a long-lasting project that has emerged as the ultimate problem-solver of all the issues in world politics by the end of the cold war. With the fall of communism in the end of the 1990s, liberalism had its heydays as the promise to bring peace and stabilization through its main pillars: democratization, market economy and rule of law.

However, it is important to regard liberal peacebuilding as well as an essentially political and hegemonical project, and most importantly, discuss the (unintended) consequences of its practical implementation. It is a project that, ultimately, reproduces a

model and replicates it regardless of the context of the host-states, in an attempt to bring homogeneity in world politics (Democratic states would not fight against each other, for example.)

We have focused extensively on Afghanistan due to several reasons.: it helps see and might even prove that security concerns for the Western world were the actual motivations for this specific intervention. Now that the years have passed and we are currently facing other challenges in world politics, and that the intervention in Afghanistan has had latest developments with even worse consequences, we can look at it from a broader perspective and look at it as the ultimate stab into the back of the international order sustained by the liberal peace.

Thus, this work will explore more practical aspects to understand how it was implemented in light of the liberal peacebuilding project. We will discuss how the case of Afghanistan indicates a shift in the evolution of liberal peacebuilding: it points towards less liberal approaches, reflecting changes in world politics, and it can also indicate the beginning of the decay of liberal peace itself.

Thinking about liberal peace must also mean thinking about its practical aspects and implications regarding its implementation through peacekeeping or peacebuilding operations. Above all, the consequences that arise from it, both because certain interests prevail over others, and because they generate marginalization and exclusion in a process that is a reflection of a power relationship.

The liberal peace is a hegemonic project, exporting an essentially Western model, composed of values and institutions, in order to standardize the world and address threats and underdevelopment, based on the belief in the existence of a "separate peace" among liberal-democratic states (Doyle, 2012; Richmond, 2011; Duffield, 2001; 2007). In more precise terms, peacebuilding operations reflect a distinct ideology that underpins the actions of a complex system of global governance responsible for conjugating the relations between the global North and South, which translate into an unequal and hierarchical relationship (Duffield, 2001). Liberal peace was chosen as the object of study for this work because,

insofar as it translates into a hierarchical relationship, and based on interests, in this case, of the global north, as it implies a series of exclusions and marginalizations once established through a peacebuilding operation. Thus, we are interested here in understanding how such discourse has been used through the West, how it changes, and ultimately what happens in practice.

Although the values that lie at the heart of liberal peacebuilding are rooted in the traditions of liberalism, and thus the importance of the freedom of the individual, the individual himself is often marginalized when it comes to the intervened state. To this end, one of our main discussions trying to understand this arc and its phases, is an issue how come an issue such as preventing humanitarian crimes, mass atrocities and gross human rights violations may have been left aside as a justification, especially if it has already been recognized as one of the funding bases of the "insurgent" movements in Afghanistan itself (Eg. the Taliban is known for its gross human rights violations).

The present work will be structured in the following way: The chapter one, which provides us with the literature review responsible for providing the theoretical basis. Thus, firstly, liberalism as an ideology and philosophical tradition will be discussed, what is the place of the individual along its trajectory, what the ideology promotes, what are its core values, its main exponents and origin. Secondly, the chapter will deal with liberalism as a school in International Relations and will seek to understand what the bases and legacies are left by Kant for such, what is its presence in the rhetoric - frequent among great leaders of Western powers, and finally, how it was consolidated as a paradigm. Third, we will discuss and conceptualize liberal peace itself, its criticisms what its relations are to the liberal paradigm and tradition itself, and what the definition is. Finally, this chapter also sheds light into a recent trend within political science: the new rise of populism and how it challenges world politics, essential to understand the turn in liberal peace that we aim to address.

In the second chapter, we will understand how peace operations evolved until it reached peacebuilding, which we understand as its crystallization. We will take a deep dive into peacebuilding and its roots, from peacekeeping, to more robust operations, and we will

also analyze the official UN documents that have tried to institutionalize and incorporate into its scope of operations.

We will address the importance of R2P in such evolution and at what point of our arc it stands. We will discuss its challenges and whether it is a norm or a doctrine, and what is its actual political impact in terms of international interventions. We will also discuss the relevance, legitimacy, and legal aspects behind international and humanitarian interventions in general.

We will also discuss the most recent trends within peacebuilding too: stabilization missions, the local turn and hybrid peacebuilding, their definitions, debates and recent criticisms.

The third chapter sets out to weave the argument with respect to liberal peace practice, by looking at Afghanistan as our empirical case study. We will discuss what changes have taken place as a result of 9/11 with regard to liberal peace practices, and how there has been a process of militarization of humanitarianism. Thus, its first task is to present a historical overview of the state in question, the particularities of its trajectory, and a discussion on the extent to which we are dealing with a de facto state. We will look at it through the institutional implementation of the NATO intervention, from the Bonn Agreement, to the constitutional development and election management. As per the Unintended consequences section, we will address the booming opium production in Afghanistan, with a brief analysis of the opium economy in Afghanistan based on shadow economies, and how it reflects the shifts in liberal peace that we have discussed in depth throughout this work.

Finally, with the last chapter, we will provide with the conclusions based on the theoretical and practical investigations regarding liberal peace, the central object of study of the research, while the final conclusions will serve to make synthetic comments regarding the complete research. We will address, for example, how the changes in international politics might have ultimately influenced the evolution and decay of liberal peace, based also in our theoritcal propositions on populism, as set out in our first chapter. We will also

draw comments and conclusions based in our detailed case study, and connect how the mismanagement of the constitution development and election management, reflecting light footprint aspirations from the United States' side, might have been responsible for undermining most of the peacebuilding and stabilization operation in Afghanistan.

Chapter 1. The Liberal Peace: Theoretical Aspects

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the theoretical foundation for the argument to be developed in this research.

We are living in an era in which many authors regard as a crisis of liberal democracy. The rise of populism challenges core liberal values such as pluralism, individual freedoms, and rule of law. Therefore, it is essential to set the theoretical grounds for our work by shedding light at the traditional concept of liberalism and its core pillars, origins and, influences on international politics.

Our object is the liberal peace, which finds its origins in liberalism itself. Even though UN peacekeeping operations have begun before the end of the Cold War, the latter represents a milestone in terms of major changes in the realm of international politics, and it is imperative to discuss it as a context to the rise of liberal peace and liberal peacebuilding. Moreover, even the notions of liberal peace and democratic peace predate the 1990s, however, their export beyond the West occurred mainly during this period (Richmond, 2012). More recent debates regard them as a continuation of a colonial process, a third stage after colonialism itself and trusteeship. We will discuss this in detail further in this work.

In terms of the importance of the Cold War, it is paramount to mention that the bipolar struggle was characterized by being essentially systemic, mostly dividing the world between two opposing ideological orientations. With its end, new conflicts and humanitarian disasters emerged during the 1990s, changing the focus of politics from state-centric to individual-centric. Authors observed that norms and concepts emerged based on this new configuration, aiming to protect the individual and avoid new humanitarian disasters, such as the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, in 1994 and 1995, respectively. In other words, the individual would increasingly become the referent object in relation to security issues during the 1990s, although not exclusively.

Moreover, this period was also important for the advent and spread of the liberal peace as a model for rebuilding conflict-affected societies. During the Cold War the UN went through a period of freezing because of bipolarity, which prevented many decisions from being made. The organization was also cautious about promoting any particular ideology or leaning towards one side or the other. However, this did not prevent it from taking part in certain projects or peace operations.

Although the notions of liberal peace and democratic peace predate the 1990s, their export beyond the West occurred mainly during this period, although some consider it to be a continuation of imperialism (Richmond, 2012).

One of the premises of liberal peace, especially from a tradition that relies on quantitative studies to prove the following claim, states that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other (Singer and Small, 1976; Russett, 1993; Bueno de Mesquita, 1999) - so that in order to build a peaceful global order, it would be necessary to spread and promote democracy and liberal values to the rest of the world, transforming non-democratic environments so that peace can exist (Doyle, 2012). Or, as Doyle (2012, p. 167) also puts it, through the core attributes that are essential to liberalism, namely domestic freedoms, political participation and trade cooperation, would lead to international peace too.

In the next sections, we will expand such definitions by looking into liberalism from an international relations theory perspective.

1.1 The Liberal Tradition: A brief panorama

Classical liberalism has its origins in the VIII Century, as proposed by John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, and Immanuel Kant, to name a few. The latter is of bigger importance when transporting this discussion to the international sphere.

The paradigm of liberalism, as we may call it, or interchangeably here, classical liberalism, dates back to the 18th century. The most classical authors and proponents of it were intellectuals such as John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill.

Immanuel Kant also deserves to be mentioned as being one of the authors with relevance to the International Relations discipline for being responsible to shedding a light to liberalism giving it an international perspective.

Their contributions to the classical political theory vary. In essence, for example, Locke can be regarded as the main theorist behind the core concepts of individualism and private property. The latter was understood by the author as something intended to provide comfort, support, and ultimately, well-being to the people.

Jeremy Bentham's (1823, p.12) contribution, on the other hand, was in terms of conceptualizing individual rights, for example, in his case women's rights, and he was one of the main names behind utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is a core concept for classical liberalism, and it was related to the trends behind actions that would increase of decrease the level of happiness of people or groups. The notion of utility was intimately connected with that of welfare, with the provision of comfort that would lead to happiness to the individuals, as a right.

Michael Doyle (2012) has written extensively about liberalism and International Politics and is one of the foremost authors to understand this path towards liberal peacebuilding. In one of his main works, he highlights the importance of Adam Smith to classical political theory as the theorist behind defining and conceptualizing market economy and free trade, other pillars of liberalism as we know it. Welfare would be an of outcome when individuals are able to pursue their own interests in a market without government regulations. For Adam Smith, individuals can engage in activities that are productive and that generate gains for them without government interference.

Based on the classical works of the authors cited above, what is understood, broadly speaking, by liberalism, can be translated into a set of principles and institutions, whose common features would be: the freedom of individuals, the right to private property, political participation, the equality of individuals, democratic representation, and a strong belief in institutions. Institutions, thus, would be created to protect the values listed previously, which essentially constitute the pillars of liberalism.

Thus, what can be observed is the core of the liberal paradigm is the importance of the individual. Its freedom must be guaranteed, and, once again, due to such concern to preserve it, institutions were originated, and, consequently, the individual rights were ultimately protected by law, and the conception of rule of law is also a consequence of such preoccupations (Doyle, 2012).

We may add as well Keohane's contribution to this debate. In an article where he revisits Institutional Liberalism, he highlights the contribution and importance of James Madison that has not been mentioned here yet (Keohane 2012). According to him, liberalism is more connected to republicanism and the idea that people should govern, and he also strongly believes, also much like expressed in Madison's works, in the importance of checks and balances within governments in order to prevent the rise of authoritarian leaders. The people should be in charge of government, but it must be done so through institutions.

Kant, also an author essential to understand liberalism, will be discussed in the next section, due to his contribution to liberalism by theorizing from an international perspective. With this section, we have aimed to briefly introduce the core concepts of liberalism by recovering them from the classics. We will now delve into an international perspective for liberalism, to be finally able to set the main core concepts behind liberal peacebuilding.

1.2 Liberalism in International Politics

The end of the Cold War marks the advent or victory of liberalism and liberal democracy. With that, the West had an opportunity to grow its influence across the globe and expand liberalism beyond the Western realm. In the beginning of the 1990s, world economy was also under a lot of change with this new world order, with many international organizations and regimes emerging and thriving.

In academia, this has also been the motive for theorization and debates, and liberalism has become one of the leading schools within the International Relations discipline. We will briefly look into the main concepts and theories in the present section.

Recovering what we were discussing regarding classical liberal traditions, Although Kant is does not belong to the discipline of International Relations per se, as he preceded it, his work is extremely valuable as he was one of the first intellectuals to propose a way to achieve peace through liberalism. One of Kant's most relevant works, The Perpetual Peace, could be considered as an alternative formula to autarchic nation-states and sovereignty (Doyle 2012). For Kant, international peace would be possible with the help of domestic freedoms, political participation, and commercial trade between states. Such values derive from the liberal tradition. The states in question would ideally be republicans, thus based on the legal equality of the individuals, a representative government and separation of powers. All individuals would be subject to the same laws, that would be protected by the state institutions and separation of powers.

The international peace notion presented by Kant did not involve the existence of a world government, but rather the possible and peaceful relations between republics that shared the same values. Kant believes in a notion of progress, that humanity tends to become more rational with time, and therefore approach the ideal of completely peaceful relations between each other, which he calls the perpetual peace (Kant, 2004).

What matters for us in this discussion is that this notion that will be recovered through the concept of democratic peace, or through the idea of the existence of a separate peace

among liberal states, in the words of Doyle (2012). By democratizing a country, peace would be disseminated, and it would then be possible to build a new world order guided by liberal values, freedom, democracy, and prosperity. Several Western foreign policies were based on this conception, and promoted freedom and democracy, which also included peacebuilding operations.

Liberalism re-gained attention and prominence with the Great Depression and the Great Wars and saw its greatest ascension and heydays with the end of the Cold War. Within the discipline of International Relations, the tradition is present in both the academic and political spheres and is constantly echoed through the rhetoric of Western leaders. Doyle (2012) points out that, in relation to other mainstream theories of International Relations, liberalism emerges, in principle, as a domestic theory, not international. The presence of the liberal paradigm in International Relations is highlighted through the belief that the experience of cooperation between states would foster cooperation between states in times of political turmoil. Free trade would promote peace by creating sense of mutual security. Thus, liberal states tend to create political alliances with other liberal states. At the same time, liberal states would not necessarily be peaceful in the face of other regimes, especially those of a non-democratic character, an argument which is also relevant for our work in terms of discussing international interventions. Therefore, in theory, liberal states would have succeeded in creating a zone of peace and cooperation, although they failed in their foreign policies towards non-liberal states.

Gathering from Doyle's work, our conclusion is that, for such states, the promotion of the liberal principles is supposedly a guiding principle behind policy making: namely, ensuring basic human needs, civil rights, democracy, expanding the scope and effectiveness of the market economy, all of which are values that would sustain a sense of well-being for society, in that all individuals would be gaining together, yet combine to constitute a system that is mainly healthy for Western powers -whose economies based on liberalism, or else neoliberalism, need the expansion of that system for the well-being of their own populations.

Other authors are also relevant to understand the paths of liberalism in International Politics and also deserve to be mentioned. Ruggie (1982, p. 381) is a relevant author for the

International Relations as he discusses the emergence of international regimes during the postwar period. He observes and theorizes upon the, at the time, recent trends in a newly globalized market and the construction of a liberal order in the Western world. In this new liberal world,

> In the organization of a liberal order, pride of place is given to market rationality. This is not to say that authority is absent from such an order. It is to say that authority relations are constructed in such a way as to give maximum scope to market forces rather than to constrain them. Specific regimes that serve such an order, in the areas of money and trade, for example, limit the discretion of states to intervene in the functioning of selfregulating currency and commodity markets. These may be termed "strong" regimes, because they restrain self-seeking states in a competitive international political system from meddling directly in domestic and international economic affairs in the name of their national interests .

Keohane (2012, p. 126), on the other hand, sees liberalism in International Relations as a "*It is a more general doctrine that provides a justification not for the welfare state but for international institutions as foundations of social progress*". Also, for Keohane (2012), institutions are paramount to foster cooperation by ensuring transactions and interests are protected and enhanced. Institutions would help create a better and easier life, mirroring the core principles of classic liberalism.

In the next section, we will discuss the theoretical foundations behind liberal peacebuilding: conceptions, main debates, and criticism.

1.3 Liberal Peacebuilding: Definitions and Debates

The end of the Cold War signified a milestone in terms of major changes in the realm of international politics. The bipolar struggle was characterized by being essentially systemic, dividing the world into two opposing ideological orientations. With its end, new conflicts and humanitarian disasters emerged during the 1990s, changing the focus of politics from state-centric to individual-centric. Norms and concepts emerged based on this new configuration, aiming to protect the individual and avoid new humanitarian disasters, such as the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, in 1994 and 1995, respectively.

Moreover, this period was also important for the advent and spread of the liberal peace as a model for rebuilding conflict-affected societies. During the Cold War the UN went through a frozen period because of bipolarity, which prevented many decisions from being made. The organization was also cautious about promoting a certain ideology, or one that leaned in favor of one of the sides in question. However, this did not prevent it from taking part in certain projects or peace operations.

Although the notions of liberal peace and democratic peace predate the 1990s, their export beyond the West occurred mainly during this period, although some see it as a continuation of colonialism (Richmond, 2012).

One of the premises of liberal peace, especially from a tradition that relies on quantitative studies to prove the following statement, establishes that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other (Singer and Small, 1976; Russett, 1993; Bueno de Mesquita, 1999) - so that, in order to build a peaceful global order, it would be necessary to disseminate and promote democracy and liberal values to the rest of the world, transforming non-democratic environments so that there is peace (Doyle, 2012), as discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

As for peace operations and conflict resolution, even though they also existed before the mentioned period, peacebuilding per se reflects these changes and transformations that the world went through with the end of bipolarity.

Peacebuilding reveals this search for a model that is based on the implementation of institutions, participatory democracy and elections, market economies, and the rule of law under the Westphalian model, based on the values expressed in liberal discourses, which aim at individual freedom and a more just society. Or, as suggested by the Agenda for Peace report, "(...)action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

What matters to us in this paper is to try to understand the internal shifts within the liberal peacebuilding project spanning from 1990s to the current decade, and ultimately, how did the international community use the premise of liberal peace as a justification for international interventions. In our case, we will explore it in Afghanistan specifically. Even though peace operations are no longer exclusive UN endeavors, they involve a wide range of other actors and have become more complex throughout the decades.

Over the next pages, we will discuss the main definitions for liberal peace, the project behind such endeavors, and we will also briefly present some of the main criticisms.

1.3.1 Liberal Peace: Definitions

One of the main bases of the liberal peace, would be the export of the traditional liberal model. This model would be based on the centrality of the individual, its freedom and well-being, free trade and market economy, political participation, and democratic representation, and, finally, the belief in institutions. Liberal peace is notable for being frequently present in the rhetoric of world politics, as presented by Doyle (2012), in his introduction to *Liberal Peace: Selected Essays*, where he lists some discourses former US presidents, for example, by George W. Bush, where he makes it clear that the promotion of

freedom, internationally, via peace operations, is intimately connected with the notion of peace.

Paragraph n. 81 of the Agenda for Peace (United Nations, 1992) report also attests to the presence of liberal, democratic peace in political discourse:

> . The social stability needed for productive growth is nurtured by conditions in which people can readily express their will. For this, strong domestic institutions of participation are essential. Promoting such institutions means promoting the empowerment of the unorganized, the poor, the marginalized. To this end, the focus of the United Nations should be on the "field", the locations where economic, social and political decisions take effect.

Broadly speaking, the model is based on the export of democracy and the core of liberal values, namely freedom of the individual, his well-being, free trade and market economy, political participation and democratic representation, and belief in institutions, and underpins the system of global governance composed of various international organizations, which includes, for example, the UN itself, and the international financial institutions (IFIs). Doyle (2012) bases his notion of liberal peace on Kant's thought, from what was believed to be the separate peace among liberal states. While his understanding of liberalism boils down to a set of values and institutions that would present common features, among the most important, individual freedom, political participation, equality, and equal opportunities for all, in the international sphere, what he calls international liberalism would then be guided by being a doctrine that promotes mainly such institutions and core principles beyond the Western borders.

In this way, his notion of a liberal peace, beyond the existence of a separate peace among liberal states, also extends to the promotion of these values from the core of liberal traditions to other states around the world - which would consequently lead to an extension of the separate peace as it had been defined by Kant. Kant himself would have said, for example, that liberal countries could enter into some conflict if there was a popular desire to do so, apart from conflicts with other political systems (Kant, 2004; Doyle, 2012). They

could only be states that have the possibility for consensus and are able to recognize the trustworthiness of other republics - and that understand the risk of other political systems being more aggressive, especially autocratic regimes. Liberal democracies also understand the importance of cooperation among themselves and how they can obtain mutual benefits through it, which as Doyle (2012) raises, is at a very high level. The progress that would have occurred from Kant's time to today, especially in relation to political participation, establishes one of the moral foundations of the liberal peace. Doyle (2012, p. 167) summarizes that "[t]he key to the liberal argument is the claim that by establishing domestic liberty, political participation, and Market Exchange one can have the international payoff of peace as well." Promoting democracy and increasing the democratic zone-separate peace eventually became key pieces in the rhetoric as well.

Another author relevant to the democratic peace theory, Bruce Russett (1993), speculates about Kant's thought on the democratic peace, and conducts research in order to prove more rigorously the fact that democracies have never been in conflict with each other. The author concludes that in theory, the more democratic states we have in the international system, the fewer conflicts there would be.

Russett (1993), when commenting on Woodrow Wilson's importance in this debate, sees a clear influence of Kant in his Fourteen Points, by his belief in progressiveness in politics, and the ideas present in his text guided by cosmopolitanism and peaceful union. Cosmopolitan laws, for example, would incorporate the ideas of free and international trade (Russett, 1993, p. 4). His study was quite rigorous, methodologically, and several items were evaluated to ascertain the validity of the democratic peace theory. He compared, also through time, such as how the relationship between democracies was before the great wars, in the interwar period, and after. For example, the author raised that wars or clashes occur mostly due to conflict of interests. One of the main reasons would be about borders. Thus, Russett (1993) found that, for example, between the 1920s and 1930s, in fact few democracies had borders between each other, so for this reason they would not clash. However, when looking at the decades that followed, it struck him that even though the number of democracies increased and they had borders between each other, they still did not come into conflict. This

phenomenon of democratic expansion and peace among them was consolidated during the 1980s, and by 1990 it was an essential part of the rhetoric of American leaders, for example.

Furthermore, Russett (1993), with his work, establishes the following propositions about the democratic peace. The first one concerns the fact that the very political system of democracies restricts the possibility of entering conflict with other democracies. However, it turns out that, it does not necessarily mean that democracies are entirely peaceful, as they come into conflict with other political systems. He also compares that: "democracies are less likely to use lethal violence toward other democracies than toward autocratically governed states or than autocratically governed states are toward each other (Russett, 1993, p. 11)". Another proposition would be that the attributes of the democratic political system do indeed result in peace, and that according to his research, which even involved quantitative methods, it is pointed out that in fact there has been no direct conflict between democracies in contemporary times.

1.3.2 Critical Definitions and Debates for the Liberal Peace

Beyond a definition of liberal peace that is based on the relationship between liberal states, and the existence of a peaceful community among them, what will serve as a basis for the present research draws on the critics of this model, who believe in the existence of a hegemonic political project that aims at reinforcing the already existing power structures. Moreover, the exportation of such a model, and through this governance network, was only possible and only had its advent as of the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and its subsequent changes, especially in the characteristics of the conflicts that would emerge after bipolarity.

Within the International Relations discipline and Political Science, some authors from critical theory schools have written extensively debating about the concept of liberal peace and its actual impacts.

Mark Duffield (2001), one of the most influential authors in the field, builds his argument and definition of the liberal peace based on the existence of a political complex articulating a governance project in which the global South and its development represent constant threats to post-Cold War international security.

It is thus a radical political project, which aims to transform societies perceived as dysfunctional into stable societies. What is argued is that liberal peace is, then, the project, to be implemented across this complex system, on the borders between North and South and their instabilities, through conflict resolution, reconstruction of societies, and establishment of functioning market economies so that conflicts and their recurrences are avoided in the future. We can observe, therefore, that in Duffield (2001), regarding his view of liberal peace as a radical project, that liberal values such as those mentioned above overlap with others, for example, we see how the individual, in fact, is not central to this project. Furthermore, within his literature, it is not enough to define liberal peace solely based on the actions undertaken by international organizations, but it must also be understood by incorporating notions of humanitarianism that aim on conflict resolution, on reconstruction, on fostering the civil society, among promoting rule of law as well, among others *(Duffield, 2001, p. 11)*.

In other words, liberal peace incorporates in its project most of the items in the scope of traditional liberal values, and it sets out to implement them through peacebuilding. Furthermore, it is worth adding that a new relationship with humanitarianism has emerged. Humanitarianism acquires new functions in the post-Cold War period due to all the changes that this period brought about. Thus, the change in the scope of humanitarianism in the 1990s is a direct reflection of the change in the focus on what is considered a threat to international security, that is, the securitization of the South. The discourse, and consequently the practice, that underdevelopment is what brings instability, and therefore insecurity, comes into surface; underdevelopment becomes a potential threat to security, something that must be dealt with, avoided, so that conflicts do not occur. It is from then on, that the articulation between security and development emerges, especially because wars no longer occur between states, and because there has been an eruption of civil conflicts after the end of bipolarity. Another relevant point raised by Duffield (2001), concerns the non-territorial

character of the liberal peace. It is based on relationships that occur through the complex networks of international governance, which, together with this new humanitarianism, are characterized by a variety of different actors involved.

Oliver Richmond (2005) proposes liberal peace as an institutionalization of norms that make up a political framework for peace. The policy of exporting democracy as the standard for avoiding conflict was universalized as a strategy to put an end to wars. In other words, the two liberal values that come through most clearly for the author would be the belief in institutions, especially international ones, and democratic representation.

Roland Paris (2004), in turn, proposes the bases for a liberal peace going back to Woodrow Wilson's speech: for him, liberalism, as a remedy to conflict, would not be something as recent as the 1990s. Wilson already said that, for peace to endure, stability must be guaranteed, which would imply, therefore, securing the rights of individuals and promoting democracy for new and small nations, as well as self-determination. In other words, for Woodrow Wilson, the centrality of the individual was essential.

In other words, the two liberal values that most clearly shine through for the author are the belief in institutions, especially international ones, and democratic representation. Despite the conflicts, within this context, they would be seen as dysfunctional, and that can be modified through the adoption of approaches mobilized as socially, politically, and economically correct. However, such a strategy is put into practice through the hegemony of the most powerful states, and is solidified as a form of global governance (Richmond, 2012; Duffield, 2001). The project in question becomes visible in practice with the expansion of the UN agenda, and, as a consequence, the broadening of the scope of peace operations (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). Bellamy and Williams (2011, p. 24) state that peace operations are liberal peace-oriented as they seek to create a stable peace by promoting the principles of the project. They point out that this is most visible in peacebuilding operations in their attempts to implement peace within a state, which occurs through democracy and the market economy.

In the next section, we will discuss the current definitions and debates surrounding the idea of populism, which will be relevant for us when discussing the shifts and evolution in liberal peacebuilding.

1.4 Defining Populism and its Challenges in Politics

Populism is a political concept that has been generating a lot of recent debate due to the latest contemporary trends in international politics . Following the rise of the so-called populist leaders and parties during the last couple of decades, literature has been exploring the real meaning, or rather, seeking to define more precisely in order to understand and explain current phenomena that is affecting politics in a global scale. The importance of discussing populism is that it brings up tensions and paradoxes in our current liberal democratic model, the same one that is being exported through peacebuilding. Populism is challenging many of the core liberal assumptions and generating debate and discussion about the nature and essence of liberal democracy itself. It is exposing the cracks and tensions, and because of such reasons, exploring it will contribute to our understanding of the decay of liberal peacebuilding in the next chapters of this work.

For the purpose of this work, we aim to show how populism and such changes in world politics have had an impact in the course of the evolution of liberal peacebuilding. Many authors agree that the recent rise of populism is a threat to liberal democracy, as it endangers core values of liberalism, such as pluralism and even rule of law . Moreover, many authors also agree, as we will see in detail, that one of the essences of populism is a tension between "us" and "them". We could argue that there is almost a consensus among authors in that sense, although there are disagreements in terms of what populism really is (a dimension, an ideology, among other propositions). In that sense, it is paramount that we present briefly the most relevant debates to arrive to a common definition for this concept that will be used throughout this work.

If we look broadly at the tensions and crisis within liberal democracy nowadays, Chantal Mouffe (2005) has published a valuable work discussing the politics of antagonisms in contemporary liberal democracies. Mouffe questions our period, especially to what concerns the post-Cold war order, and she argues whether the "free world" has succeeded with the end of bipolarity.

She puts into question some of the current aspects of liberalism and argues whether the liberal democracy tries to deny some phenomena that are inherent to humanity and to the political. By recovering the theories laid down by Carl Schmitt on friend/enemy, she develops it into arguing that the friend/enemy antagonism comes from the we/they space, which is where the political happens (Mouffe, 2005). It is in this gap that political identities are formed as well.

She discusses mainly such face of the political, that is, this possibility that lies in the ambiguous relationship between we/they that might be the space where antagonisms can emerge (Mouffe, 2005), which for us is important to understand the emergence of populism as a challenge to liberal democracy. Populism emerges precisely in this space and appropriates of the logic of the existence of a "we'' as opposed to "them", the latter being the elites and the establishment.

The biggest challenge for the current liberal democratic model would be keeping such opposition, or as she puts it, antagonisms, at bay (Mouffe, 2005). That is, by the use of institutions to have antagonists as adversaries and competitors instead of enemies. Populists will take advantage of these divisions and establish their identities by defining who are their enemies, for instance. Populism is a movement that comes from the inherent necessity of the humans to identity themselves with groups, which is something that will never disappear. Collective identification is a constitutive feature of the existence of the human beings, according to her (Mouffe, 2005).

One of the most influential thinkers in Political Science and Sociology, Ernesto Laclau (2005), has written extensively attempting to gather several different definitions for populism, with the goal of creating a solid and precise definition of this phenomenon. By

exposing the current debates, he argues that most of the available definitions are still vague and do not yet grasp the essence of what this movement really is. He claims that current literature often lists several relevant features of it but fail to arrive at a precise definition.

In fact, Laclau concurs that most of the authors recognize that populism often denies the existence of left and right. Contrary to most of the literature, he argues that populism can be considered a dimension and not an ideology. By identifying it as a dimension, populism can cut across many ideological and social differences, and what is more, it is often played out in the land of discourse.

One of the most important elements of populism as a political dimension and that differs it from other notions, is the fact that often it is a result of unfulfilled demands that have not been satisfied by the government. An accumulation of requests may lead to the formation of splits within the society. The articulation of it can create movements within the political dimension. Once again, like we have seen with Mouffe (2005), populism takes advantages of such gaps. With unfulfilled requests, society becomes divided, and an antagonistic frontier shows up, between a society that is unhappy with the lack of delivery, and a government that is clearly unresponsive.

Caiani and Graziano (2022) discuss the emergence of populism in the rent decades, with a special focus in Europe, arguably one of the main stages of this phenomenon. According to them, the number of populist parties since 2000 has grown considerably in Europe. It amounted to around 10 countries with exponential increases in such type of parties.

Abts and Rummens (2007) conceptualize populism as an ideology, unlike Laclau. For them, populism is a more 'simple' ideology than that of socialism, for instance, as they identify it as "thin-centered": it is possible to combine it with other ideologies. The authors understand it also as "(…) a thin-centered ideology which advocates the sovereign rule of the people as a homogeneous body. (Abts and Rummens, 2007, p.409)". It is, thus, an ideology that would not be as refined as the traditional ones, as it is attached to narrow and simple political concepts.

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Both Caiani and Graziano (2022) and Abt and Rummens (2007) agree that some authors discuss that there might also be some ambiguity in the relationship between democracy and populism. For instance, some authors might even say that it creates interest in people that before were not interested in politics, or others might regard it as a possibility of amending certain broken aspects and promises of the liberal democratic representative system. The latter emphasize the fact that populists themselves hardly part ways from democracy within their discourse. They actually embrace democracy in their rhetoric, by advocating its importance as being the government and ruling of people.

Another key feature of populism, present in many works and mentioned by Abts and Rummens (2007) is their simplistic characteristic: "Populists offer simplistic solutions to complex political problems in a very direct language, appealing to the common sense of the people and denouncing the intellectualism of the established elites (Abts and Rummens, 2007, p. 407)". Often populists will emphasize the we/they separation, by always establishing a common enemy, often the establishment and their privileges.

The authors also add, similarly to what has been posed by Laclau (2005), that resentments within democracy give space for the rise of populism. It gives voice to the 'unheard', and often even promises a democracy which would be more fair and more in line with the desires of the society (Abts and Rummens, 2007). Finally, they also claim that "in the populist logic the locus of power is occupied and closed by a substantial image of the people as a homogeneous body (Abts and Rumments, 2007, p. 411).

Much like Mouffe (2005) they also recover the conception of friends and enemies from Carl Schmitt to apply to our current reality with liberal democracy. The populist logic implies that the people are a homogeneous group vis-à-vis the elites and establishment, and through a degenerated view of democracy, they should take over power, as the elites does not represent the actually will of the people. Within right-wing populism, it is such idea of a homogeneous society that gives space for xenophobia. They tend to exclude what they deem as not part of such society.

Finally, Mudde (2004) another important author in terms of defining populism, also sees it as an ideology:

> I define populism as an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ' the pure people ' versus ' the corrupt elite , and which argues that politics should be an expres- sion of the volonté générale (general will) of the people (Mudde, 2004, p. 534)

Mudde (2004) discusses as well in detail about the importance of what is called a heartland: by that, it would be an imaginary community, with a homogeneous community living in. It would be a place with an unified group of people. The populists would aim at this imaginary community, and that is reflected in their rhetoric and discourses.

With this section, we have tried to gather the commonalities among the leading authors that are the main names behind the debates to reach a more precise definition of populism. For the purpose of this work, we will use it as Laclau (2005) poses it, as a dimension of the political, and blend it with the ideas of the other authors, as a political dimension that is characterized by the antagonism present between the ideas of 'us' and 'them', that emerge among unsatisfied groups in our society.

Chapter 3 - the Decay of Liberal Peacebuilding: Definitions and Debates

3.1 Introduction: Are we heading towards an illiberal era?

The previous chapter has set the theoretical background necessary to deep dive in the peace operations. We have discussed the trajectory from liberalism and its classical foundation towards the liberal peace, which is the political project behind the peace operations. We will now investigate the evolution from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and aim to understand further the definitions for such endeavors, as well as explore relevant practical and theoretical aspects, and their implementations. It is paramount to explore such definitions and evolutions as we want to understand why was the turn in liberal peace so damaging for cases such as Afghanistan. We want to understand why was this a sign that the peacebuilding approach had to change, and consequently, how it led to the so-called hybrid approaches. Thus, we will further apply it to Afghanistan in the next chapter, and deep dive into why Afghanistan is the beginning of the decay of liberal peace. Finally, through this chapter we will also try to understand and investigate the actual reasons and justifications behind the international interventions.

In general, defining peace operations often reflects the convictions of the people and institutions behind such formulations (Bellamy & Williams, 2011). There is extensive literature discussing the evolution of such practices and attempts to classify and define them. The first sections of this chapter aim to build a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, panorama of the evolution of liberal peacebuilding based on the most up-to-date and relevant literature available today, highlighting aspects that contribute to our discussion considering the aims

of this study. Many authors concur that peacekeeping and its evolution to more robust operations can be regarded as mere continuation of colonialism and trusteeship.

In this chapter, we will first briefly discuss the concept and theoretical definitions for peace operations – from peacekeeping and its further evolution, if we can put it this way, to peacebuilding. The second part will provide a panorama of such evolution, first understanding the first peacekeeping operations and how they were structured, towards peacebuilding and stabilization missions.

The final part will bring the latest updates to such debates; what has changed over the last decade, what has been discussed, and if we can still talk about liberal peacebuilding in the 2020s. This discussion will set the necessary ground to analyze the situation in Afghanistan.

3.2 The Evolution of Peacekeeping to Peace Operations

First, it is essential for this work to discuss peace operations as they represent an attempt to implement liberal peace in societies that have just gone through a conflict, especially in their last generations. In search of a definition for peace operations, it should be noted that there is no consensus, neither among authors nor among international organizations. There are, however, common points that allow a general definition to be formulated. However, among what is already available in the literature, they reflect the convictions of those who formulated them (Bellamy & Williams, 2011).

For the authors Bellamy and Williams (2011), they argue that the UN Charter does not contain explicitly terms peacekeeping or peace operations. However, it was only in 1992, in the report Agenda for Peace, that the then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was concerned with establishing definitions and concepts for peace operations (UN, 1992, paragraph 20). In Understanding Peacekeeping, the definition presented by the authors is that peace operations are "(...) one general type of activity that can be used to prevent, limit

and manage violent conflict as well as rebuild its aftermath (Bellamy & Williams, 2011, p. 18)." In other words, it is a generic definition that covers the common aspects of all of them.

For Michael Pugh (2004), another relevant author in this field, the conceptualization of peace operations is often narrow and aimed at problem solving. Operations would be purely administrative instruments or tools, allocated to medicate dysfunctionalities of the global order, under the foundations of a liberal imperialism framework.

Critical theory in International Relations, when trying to conceptualize such operations, on the other hand, often aims to expose the injustices that emerge from ideologies taken as granted. It analyzes the potential for structural transformation and emancipation, rather than reinforcing the imperatives that have determined the spelling of what has already been written.

When commenting on Mark Duffield's work, Pugh (2004) draws upon the analysis that peripheral areas no longer correspond to a Westphalian order, operating through networks of "shadow" economies. Pugh's (2004) central argument, however, is that the vision of peacekeeping in global governance is not neutral, as it is meant to be a response to certain issues in the current order as a problem-solving tool to adjust them. The order is not questioned and is accepted as the reality, which reinforces hegemonic values and structures.

3.2.1 Peacekeeping Operations: The origins

To trace the evolution of peace operations, we need to recover their antecedents Pugh (2004) and Bellamy and Williams (2011) refer to the period which date back to attempts to manage the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In 1913, there was the creation of Albania and the absorption of Kosovo into Serbia. For the latter, 2000 soldiers were sent from an international administration force, in the shape of a multinational mission of a humanitarian character (Pugh, 2004).

Moreover, the interwar period, on the other hand, and the immediate post-World War II period, were marked by instances of multinational governance and ad hoc forces, mainly

for monitoring and supervising transition cases (for example in the case of Schleswig-Holstein in 1920 and Greece in 1947-51).

For Diehl (2008), in turn, the beginning of such an evolutionary process almost coincides with the history of collective security institutions. The first international peace observation force would have been in Saar. As he explains, the League of Nation's action in the Saar, which is a region between France and Germany, was on an extraordinary initiative. This portion of land was to be administered internationally for a certain period right after the WWI, and after the end of this time, a plebiscite would be held to decide the future of this territory.

The troops sent were of British, Italian, and other European nationalities; the innovation in it was the way it was conducted, by the League of Nations and by providing a commander that had been chosen specifically for the mission. Force was to be used to a minimum, and they were to patrol the territory and ensure that they would respond only in the event of an emergency. Although the League of Nations failed, the mission was successful. This observation mission prototype would inaugurate the guidelines that would later serve as the basis for the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

With the objective of avoiding another failure in the founding of the UN, the Security Council and its veto system were instituted. They were believed to be the best way to avoid new major wars. However, with the advent of the Cold War, this instrument was frozen for many years. Thus, the first major collective action was only aimed at the Korean War, which took place in 1953 (Diehl, 2008). Arguably, the first peace operation, however, was in Greece, right after the end of World War II. Posts were set up on the Greek borders with Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, and troops oversaw inspections, and to ensure that rebel forces did not receive supplies (Diehl, 2008).

Among current discussions about peace operations, attempts to systematize and organize them under arbitrary criteria are common. Such systematizations are didactic in nature, although they have political inferences and implications. Therefore, a new taxonomy

is elaborated, one that is based on the role that each of the missions to be framed fulfill within world politics. To wit, they determine the following types of peace missions:

Traditional peacekeeping, which would be operations whose purpose is to create a space for the resolution of political disputes to be possible; *Transitional administration*, that is, operations in which there is support for the implementation of political resolutions previously agreed between the parties; *peace enforcement*, which involves enforcing the determinations of the United Nations Security Council; Finally, *peace support operations* are missions with a broader scope, which support the implementation of a liberal democracy and are multifaceted in that they combine civilian and military components in the assignment of tasks (Bellamy, 2004, p. 22).

Other authors, however, in search of a more didactic systematization, suggested the categorization of operations in generations, according to the different paradigms that each one would represent. After the creation of the UN, the first peace operation to be established was the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East. However, it was not until 1956, in the Suez dispute, that blue helmets were sent for the first time (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Pugh, 2004; Bellamy & Williams, 2011). Such early operations, often called traditional peacekeeping, were said to be neutral and would take place only after a ceasefire agreement. UN forces were not allowed to use force except under claims of self-defense (Bellamy & Williams, 2011; Pugh, 2004).

Peacekeeping operations would typically be sent under provisions of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, provided that there is consent from the state that will receive the mission, and that there is impartiality, and minimal use of force. Troops were sent to separate and contain the combatants after a ceasefire process, so that other possible acts that could trigger a conflict again would be inhibited. Prevention of violations of the ceasefire treaty is often also a component of them, and finally, they are responsible for creating conditions for the conflict to be resolved peacefully (Diehl, 2008; Bellamy & Williams, 2011). Furthermore, Diehl (2008) adds that Peacekeeping would be a new use for soldiers, in non-traditional roles, as they would be coordinated by international organizations, rather than national governments.

Finally, it is important to mention the typical apolitical character of peacekeeping operations. First, because, according to Roland Paris (2004), the operations had to respect the UN Charter's prohibition on domestic interventions. Moreover, they took place in the context of the Cold War, so the UN could not take sides and should remain neutral. There was no possibility of promoting a particular model of domestic governance for the states in question. There was also the concern, from both powers – United States and the Soviet Union - to maintain the integrity of their zones of influence and of their allies, as well as the fact that the host states themselves were not necessarily willing to receive missions whose scope was greater than what peacekeeping was intended for.

For Pugh (?? From the book I guess?), peacekeeping was a simple and modest beginning if compared to how the missions would evolve later. Created by lester Pearson, Canada's former prime minsiter, They consisted mostly of monitoring borders. He also understands them as a continuation of colonialism and trusteeships, as most of such missions were being carried out in former colonies. On his view, it was only during the 1940s and 1950s that these operations began to expand and gain shape into something closer to peacebuilding. Over the next couple of decades, there has been a significant institutional growth, with a growing number of countries sending troops. As of 1973, however, there was still a strict protocol and code to be followed, which is, such missions could only deployed if there was consent from all the parties involved in the dispute. Impartiality was also one of the main pillars of peacekeeping, and use of force was restricted only to cases of self defense.

Both Pugh and Richmond regard the United Nations as one of the organizations behind what they call an architecture of peace. Pugh specifically understands that the UN designs peace through this multitude of operations and their evolutiojns, through diplomacy, and development.

For the present work, the relevance of such missions is that they evolved into more complex peace operations, encompassing a much broader scope of functions (Diehl, 2008). Doyle & Sambanis (2006) consider them first generation missions.

In terms of a timeline, with the end of the Cold War, the Security Council, previously frozen by the incessant vetoes between the Soviet Union and the United States, started to act in a more dynamic way, and the member states started to cooperate more intensely, granting the UN a change in its direction. Peace operations became UN's flagship in the face of the eruption of new conflicts. The revival would come only during the 1980s.

In addition to an increase in the number of operations undertaken by the UN, Bellamy and Williams (2011, p. 93) argue that two other important transformations occurred: there was a normative change, in the sense that some actors believed that the scope of operations should be expanded so that the concept of sovereignty encompassed a greater concern for the individual, opening the possibility for action by the international community; and, finally, there was a change in the qualitative scope, which combined the traditional objectives of peacekeeping with humanitarian aid, reconstruction programs, transforming them into complex and extensive missions.

These changes were crystallized in the report entitled *An Agenda for Peace*, a cornerstone for peace operations, published in 1992, authored by Boutros-Boutros Ghali, then secretary-general of the United Nations. The guidelines revealed that the missions would no longer be only for monitoring, but would allow for more action by the UN itself in the field. The UN Department of Peace Operations (DPKO) was created soon after (Bellamy & Williams, 2011).

Thus, second generation operations would emerge based on this context. Also categorized as *multidimensional operations* by Doyle and Sambanis (2006), these would be missions whose mandates, of greater complexity, would include, after the end of civil wars, the implementation of agreements that sought to build the foundations of a self-sustaining peace. This would involve the organization of elections, disarmament processes, humanitarian aid, refugee assistance, the stimulation of social and economic cooperation between the parties, confidence building between them, and the development of capacities and infrastructure. The consent of the parties was still one of the pillars of such missions. Some examples would be the missions in El Salvador, Mozambique, and Cambodia (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006).

The third generation of peace operations, on the other hand, differs from peacebuilding or peacekeeping operations, peace enforcement, a term derived from the *Agenda for Peace*, would be characterized by the use of force authorized under Chapter VII, whereas peacekeeping missions would occurr under Chapter VI. They were ultimately aimed at protecting the individual in situations of humanitarian emergency - that is, a value central to liberalism, as has been shown, and which here begins to shine through in the rhetoric of peace operations. Their mandates also foresaw the execution of ceasefire processes (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). Such missions, as discussed by Diehl (2008), typically involve the use of military capabilities, which brings them closer to conventional military operations. Another difference is that such missions do not necessarily involve the consent of the parties. They are more coercive in nature than the others, since it is through the use of force that peace is implemented in these cases. Impositions are made for the protection of civilians, such as humanitarian corridors. The model of such missions is based on what happened especially in Bosnia (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006)

Bellamy and Williams (2011) spend part of their work describing how many of these missions failed, which eventually led to a period of retraction by the UN until the late 1990. It was only with the intervention in Kosovo that the organization established new bases for its operations. The main failures, according to the authors, were Rwanda (1994), Srebrenica (1995), and Somalia (1992).

In 2000, the Brahimi Report was released, which set out to provide a review of peace operations based on lessons learned from such aforementioned mistakes (Bellamy & Williams, 2010; UN, 2000). The report opens with an acknowledgement of the failures, recalling what the UN's mission is and on what principle it was founded: "*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war* (UN, 2000, §1)"; it also acknowledges the institutional failures, and also warns for a new wave of demand for peace operations. Finally, the panel responsible for drafting the document also had the task of identifying the weaknesses of the operations, so that they could then make recommendations through the final document (Bellamy & Williams, 2011).

Among the established premises on which the recommendations are based we can name are: greater commitment and responsibility on the part of member states for maintaining security and peace, that there be more focus on conflict prevention, that there be greater effort and speed in gathering and accessing information for decision-making processes, for example, to identify whether or not genocide is occurring, adherence to human rights and humanitarian law, greater integration in peace processes and operations, more institutional planning, and, one of the most important elements, that responses be more efficient, to avoid occasions such as Rwanda (UN, 2000, §6).

In 2008, the UN publishes a new report proposing a new doctrine to guide future peace operations, entitled the *Capstone Doctrine*. As stated in the document itself, the aim was to incorporate the experiences of six decades of peace operations in order to produce guidelines, guidelines, manuals, training materials, and standardization of procedures to provide a consistent framework for the operation of the DPKO - United Nations Department of Peace Operations, a definitive definition and standardization for missions, especially peacekeeping missions (UN, 2008).

One of its main points was to restore the three basic principles of peacekeeping: consent, impartiality, and non-use of force, except for mandates issued on account of self-defense. However, it advocates sending more robust peacekeeping operations in cases of need of civilian protection. Also based on acquired experiences, the doctrine raises success factors that must be taken to heart: legitimacy, credibility, and local ownership, although the latter is the most challenging for the organization. In other words, the report sets out to provide a normative framework for upcoming missions and was conceived as part of reforms in the department to develop a clearer and more standardized doctrine.

Finally, the peacebuilding generation, or the fourth generation of peace operations, also emerges based on the Agenda for Peace report. Peacebuilding was envisioned as an action to identify and support structures that would tend to consolidate peace. The conception of conflict, in this case, would be understood as one based on structural violence and social resentment as its main causes. Development and political liberties would remedy insecurity.

Later, with the publication of the Brahimi Report in 2000, in view of the continuous failures of the institution, the UN established new bases for the effectiveness of peacebuilding missions. It sets out the goals and roles, and somewhat suggests an institutional model to be implemented from then on. For instance, the report claims that it can only be effective if local parties are fully engaged in the operation, in a multidimensional scope. The report also shows concern with establishing credibility once a new mission is launched, and makes propositions on how it should happen. Moreover, another recommendation is that agendas and international organizations should be in synchronized to avoid overlaps, diosrganization and even conflicts.

In order to understand, however, in a more detailed way about the emergence of this conception of peacebuilding, authors agree that the end of the Cold War implied an expansion of the UN member states' agenda: "a near revolution in the relation between what is in the legitimate realm of state sovereignty and what is subject to legitimate international intervention (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006, p. 1)." Opportunities were created for the "mediation" of places that would have been stages of conflict during the Cold War, while civil wars in several countries broke out as a consequence of the end of bipolarity. It was the eruption of a new world disorder. These civil wars were the result of ethnic tensions and rivalries, which authors such as Duffield (2001) and Kaldor (2001) have characterized as "*new wars*". In Duffield's (2001) view, new wars are non-territorial conflicts whose functioning takes advantage of complex networks that operate between and across states.

The new wars would also be characterized by the dilution of borders and territories, and by the social transformation they promote through the introduction of new forms of authority and alternative zones of regulation. They would be a reflection of typical globalization-derived processes, such as the integration of markets and local and global flows. He argues that underdevelopment, in the post-Cold War context, is rearticulated in such a way as to be understood as a threat or danger to international security. The governance project based on the liberal peace, and expressed through peacebuilding operations would thus be a response to it, or, in other words, a way to bring development to ensure security, and to remedy dysfunctionalities arising from the South and its instabilities.

Mary Kaldor (2001) believes that the new wars are an outcome of a power vacuum left by the Cold War, but also in the context of the globalization process. She claims that they reflect a movement towards the disintegration of the state, in the shape of the erosion of the monopoly on the use of violence. The new wars would reveal the decline of the economy in southern countries, the increase in violence, and ultimately, the decline in political legitimacy.

Against this background, what we see is that there has been a growth in both the demand and supply of multilateral conflict resolution missions during the 1990s (Paris, 2004; Bellamy and Williams, 2011). In addition, changes in the character of peace operations, noted throughout this section, and which are reflected and crystallized in peacebuilding, the immediate response to such instabilities and threats. In this way, unlike peacekeeping or the other categories of missions presented above, it represents an attempt to:

> (...) after a peace has been negotiated or imposed, to address the sources of presente hostility and build local capacities for conflict resolution. The aim is to build the social, economic, and political institutions and attitudes that will prevent the inevitable conflicts that every society generates from turning into violent conflicts (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006, p. 23)

Peacebuilding, therefore, requires the provision of temporary security, the building of new institutions capable of resolving future conflicts through peace, an economy capable of providing jobs for former soldiers as civilians, and possibilities for progress for future generations (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). Paris (2004) understands peacebuilding as missions that would provide technical assistance to local actors in war-torn places. Such assistance would be responsible for preventing the recurrence of violence, and for establishing peace and stability. However, such assistance is not only technical, as it promotes a model of political and economic organization based on liberal market democracy. For a more complete and normative definition, he also suggests a formula for the model: From a critical

perspective, Pugh (2009, p. 2), states that peacebuilding involves a series of practices that are intrusive on local society, which typically aim to ensure long-term stability after the end of a conflict.

3.2.2 The Evolution of the Peacebuilding Operations: The Emergence of the Stabilization Missions

Although this is contested, post-9/11 peacebuilding operations are characterized as having, as their primary goal, stabilization. They would represent a shift from the political focus, which was characteristic of earlier operations. The concern with the threat to national security was prioritized in face of the other traditional liberal pillars of the liberal peace project.

Therefore, with that in mind, we understand that the humanitarian component would be secondary and strategic, and not the objective per se. According to Gordon (2010), the roots of stabilization missions is that these operations rely on the discourse of fragile states, which gained new strength in this era. They are also guided by the integration between military, political and development, and by the search for promoting relatively inclusive political processes, empowering the state to provide the minimum security necessary, and promoting improvements in basic infrastructure (Gordon, 2010).

Despite NATO's vision of peacebuilding, which has operationalized missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq in the first place, mainly the last two correspond to stabilization missions, as described in the previous paragraph.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created as a collective defense institution and military alliance in 1949 out of the North Atlantic Treaty. As an outgrowth of Cold War disputes, at first NATO's primary function was not to conduct peacebuilding missions, but rather, defense.

As explained by Paris and Gheciu (2011, p. 7), such transformation as to the function of the organization occurred with the end of the Cold War, at a stage when there was a strong

need to redefine itself, because without the bipolar dispute, it would have lost its relevance and purpose. Thus, the phase that followed the bipolar conflict was one of intense changes and activities, so that it would be an opportunity for NATO to redesign and readjust itself to the new international political scenario. In this way, the authors argue that the organization would have to become a much more complex institution than its original idea, and it would have to be able to fulfill new functions that would no longer be solely linked to the defense of its members.

Therefore, with the conflict that erupted in Kosovo, NATO found an opportunity to incorporate a new function into its institutional scope, which would be peacebuilding itself. In the case of Kosovo, the organization succeeded and could gain recognition as an actor able to conduct this type of mission with expertise, according to Paris and Gheciu (2009). After Kosovo, NATO became involved in the stabilization missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

NATO's peacebuilding missions are characterized by a combination of counter-insurgency methods, by an objective of stability, two elements that were quite evident in the last two conflicts, and by a strong militarization of humanitarian aid. However, it is still concerned with transmitting liberal values, especially democracy, which is frequent in the rhetoric of the rulers and leaders behind the organization's members.

Most of the definitions of peacebuilding for the authors presented so far, point to the existence of a political project that underlies the objectives, mechanisms, structures, and practices of such a category of operation. The end of the Cold War and the advent of liberalism also implied a substantial political change in relation to conflict resolution. Peacebuilding represents the consecration of a liberal peace model that still endures. It is from this dominant vision of conflict resolution and peace operations that a large literature emerges that is dedicated to the critique of the Liberal Peace and its application

Based on much of what has been exposed here so far, we will argue that we can regard the evolution of peacebuilding as an arc: it begins with simple missions with peacekeeping, they reach complexity through peacebuiding, and enter a process of decay until what authors now call hybrid or local turn.

John Karlsrud (2019) proposes a timeline to assess the evolution form liberal peacebuilding to stabilization and counterterrorism missions. He argues that this timeline would begin at the end of the cold war and shift towards counterterrorism and stabilization both through practice and discourse, and the ambitions visibly slow down throughout this process. Previously, he claimed that the United Nations Security Council used to approve robust mandates that with time became less and less complex. Kalsrud mentions an interesting example of this shift rhetorically: he brings up a quote by US former president Donald Trump, in which he explicitly says that the United States were in Afghanistan to kill terrorists and that they were not there with the goal of nation-building.

Regarding the shift from peacebuilding to stabilization, two key trends explain the change of emphasis, according to the author. One would be the difficulty with adapting to local politics and dynamics while implementing the so-called liberal peace. The other would be a resistance from the host nations.

Peacebuilding and liberal peace would have been conceptualized between the 1990s and 2000s, and it was born out with a heavy humanitarian component as one of the main drivers of the discourse behind it. It has gradually changed throughout these years, in the sense that on one hand emerged as a more ambitious humanitarian project, and with time the speeches slowly shifted towards security concerns.

Such changes in discourse and rhetoric are evident, for example, as peacebuilding at some point starts to be addresses as a "fight against violent extremism". An important point raised by the Kalsrud the importance of understanding who is behind those missions and who is funding them, which potentially points out to the actual motivations behind them as well. One of the most notable shifts in discourses produced by the actors involved in such operations would have been in 2016, according to the author: "when the OECD agreed that funding that has been contributed to the prevention of violent extremism – a very wide category – should become reportable as overseas development assistance (ODA) (Kalrsud, 2009, p 5)".

The author also questions whether such shifts derive from changes happening within politics and a possible end of the liberal values hegemony.

Looking at the US and NATO missions, on the other hand, we can see the emergence of a military doctrine that places counterterrorism in the very center of its objectives and of the international political and security agenda, onboarding several different actors.

He describes the EU involvement in it as well:

> The European Union (EU) has integrated its counterterrorism activities within the broader remit of the Instrument for Stability and Peace, and funding for counterterrorism activities has increased significantly from an average of EUR 4 million per year in the 2007–2013 period to EUR 18 million per year in the following period, 2014–2020 (Kalrsud, 2009, p.5)

Among the latest contributions of Oliver Richmond, one of the most notable critical authors concerned about debating liberal peacebuilding, is the genealogy of what he calls the International Peace Architecture, which is what he calls the specific international system for peace. From a critical point of view, he explores the implications of such evolution, and puts into question the traditional core concepts of political science, such as nation-state, sovereignty, and international law. The International Peace Architecture, for him, is an overlap "*of concepts, methods, and theories that are ontologically framed by Western assumptions inherent in thinking about war and peace in several stages*" (Richmond, 2021, p 382)

In terms of the stages that he refers to, they also overlap between them, although he draws his conceptualization chronologically. The first stage would be arguably the birth of the international institutional arrangements, the European balance of power; whereas the second would be emergence of the Westphalian system of sovereign states itself but that attempts to deal with nationalism, and later, the clashes that happened following decolonization processes, through liberal peace and what he calls a "liberal cosmopolitan postwar architecture". The third stage would be a Marxist approach, which aims to promote versions of peace that challenge the liberal and realist ones; and then liberal peacebuilding

itself, including its variations. His interesting addition, however, and the most relevant for our present discussion, is his 5th stage, which would be what he calls neoliberal state building, which focus mostly on state security. And finally, the last stage would be the new dynamics of the international relations that are mainly digital and enables further agency to the civil society.

When he develops the shift to the 5th stage, Richmond highlights that the subtle changes in the discourse towards the stabilization missions was not by accident:

> The 2000s saw the rise of an authoritarian and neoliberal peace in stage five of the IPA. It was focused on statebuilding, regional security, supported by global capital, in the hope that 'stabilisation' would buttress the development of legitimate authority in conflict-affected environments like Afghanistan and Iraq[1];

Richmond places the conflict Syria at the very end of this stage. Thus, the changes towards stage five are a reflection, and result of an overlap of growing neoliberal trends in world politics, a process of militarization and the fading of human rights and social justice, which in turn undermined the peace processes as well that have been ongoing through global governance during this period.

Ronald Hatto wrote an article in 2014 also attempting to create a peacebuilding timeline. He discusses mainly how the role of the United Nations evolves and changes throughout time, and how the peace operations have become a protagonist among the major international institutions.

Moreover, Hatto (2014) agrees with many authors and sees the Suez crisis as the inaugurating, or rather, formalization of the early peacekeeping operations. He argues how the tasks have evolved since then, but that peacekeeping remains one component of operations, even if they have turned into more complex endeavors. He calls their evolved version as multinational peace operation and defines them as operations that entail:

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[1] Richmond, 2021, p 382

humanitarian assistance, election supervision, repatriation of refugees, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and finally, the restoration of rule of law and human rights. Ultimately, multinational operations also aim to offer support for the creation of a foundation for a legitimate and effective governmental institution in post-conflict situations. Also, according to him, since the Suez crisis, they have been one of the primal choices to contain and somehow regulate conflicts internationally speaking.

Not only the United Nations took part in them, but also there is extensive support of NGOs, regional organizations, and the international donors. In terms of arriving at a more precise definition, the author agrees with the other ones presented here that it was not until the Agenda for Peace in 1992, that the United Nations have established an official and documented definition for peacebuilding and peace operations. In this sense, they used to be rather improvised operations, as they were not even part of the Charter.

3.2.3 The Responsability to Protect and Humanitarian Inverventions: Legitimacy and Norms

Arguably one of the most pivotal phases of the arc of evolution and decay of peacebuilding is the Responsibility to Protect. Conveyed and endorsed by the United Nations in 2005, the doctrine was proposed as a preventive model of humanitarian intervention, prioritizes peaceful over coercive methods, it leaves open the possibility of preventive humanitarian intervention, or military force by outside parties to avert mass atrocities, should all other methods fail. The intervention in Libya in 2011 has been the first one that has been coined under the R2P Doctrine (Paris, 2014). As outlined by the UN Secretary General in the "Implementing the Responsability to Protect Report'', from 2009, "each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populationsfrom genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity[2]". Its strategy and implementation, however, have been developed throughout the years and it has raised several controversies in its application.

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[2] UN Secretary-General, Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Report of the Secretary General, UN Doc A/63/677, 12 January 2009

Ramesh Thakur (2015), one of the main scholars and policy makers behind the emergence of R2P, defends that R2P is important "In the vacuum of responsibility for the safety of themarginalised, stigmatised and dehumanised out-groupsubject to mass atrocities, R2P provides an entry pointfor the international community to step in and take upthe moral and military slack[3]".

Roland Paris (2014, p. 570), on the other hand, questions: "How, exactly, was the use of military force expected to prevent mass atrocities and to uphold the principles of R2P? This question has not been answered in depth; indeed, it has rarely been posed". Such question exposes the paradox that lies behind R2P and that has lighted up debates in academia.

Other debatable points surrounding this concept is whether it is an (established, by now) international norm or not, as raised by Thakur himself:

> The concept initiated a debate in both policy and academic circles on the precise status of R2P: does it haveany legal force; should we describe it as a principle; hasit attained the status of a global norm? Regardless ofwhether it is a norm or not, there is general agreementthat a normative shift has taken place from nonintervention, the dominant global norm in 1990 that shieldedsovereign states from external intervention, to theresponsibility to protect that seeks to qualify the norm ofnonintervention in significant respects, albeit under nar-row circumstances and tight procedural safeguards (Evans, 2008). Despite continuing controversy over imple-mentation and contention regarding its normative status,R2P is no longer seriously contested in the policy community as principle. Its implementation to prevent or haltatrocities however requires a transition from R2P as global norm to its adoption as national policy by key stateactors, and as international policy by the UN community collective[4].

Paris (2014) defends that the emergence of R2P has exposed sevel tensions and its application in cases such as Libya evidenced its structural problems. Many authors also agree that the doctrine was doomed from the beginning, and its contestation would be

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[3] Ibid, 2015, p 190
[4] Ibid, p. 191

inevitable throughout the years, specially because its debatable whether it is a norm or just a doctrine. For Paris, he understands them as military operations with the justification of being altruistic, which points to a paradox if it is meant to be a humanitarian intervention. He also questions the motives and interests behind the states that apply and defend such concept. Would there actually be an legal obligation to the international community to prevent conflicts from happening? Is R2P the ultimate tool that reflects such obligation? Moreover, it is questioned as well whether the doctrine made it clear that there was an embedded duty to reconstruction after the intervention.

Adding up to what Paris raises up about the relevance of R2P as an emerging norm is that, at the same time that it comes tied to the use of a military intervention to prevent a further humanitarian catastrophe, he develops:

> On the other hand, R2P simultaneously symbolizes something larger than the 2005 agreement: it is the embodiment of the pledge to 'never again' allow genocide to occur, a commitment born out of the experience of the Holocaust. This symbolism has arguably given R2P much of its 'moral authority' in international affairs. But here is the tension: 'never again' is a categorical imperative, not subject to caveats or conditions. This makes R2P a hybrid. It is both an unreserved moral duty to prevent mass atrocities and a pragmatic framework that seeks to balance this duty with other imperatives and procedural considerations[5].

Paris wrote this article in 2014, and nowadays we have a clear example of Ukraine: Is R2P being applied? Where is the relevance of it, once again? What has been the effectiveness of it in situations where it has been applied? Have conflicts been prevented? And ultimately, whose responsibility it to prevent what is happening there?

In terms of how R2P would be expected to be applied, the UN outlines, in 2009, the three pillars that are the core components of R2P:

- Pillar One: The protection responsibilities of the State
- Pillar Two: International assistance and capacity-building

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[5] Paris, 2014, 579

- Pillar Three: Timely and decisive response[6]

The first would be the commitment that each State has to its own population, which is to protect them "from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and from their incitement"[7]. Whereas the second pillar is the shared responsibility that the international community should have facing the same crimes against humanity: "Prevention, building on pillars one and two, is a key ingredient for a successful strategy for the responsibility to protect"[8].

According to Barber (2022), they are not necessarily expected to be implemented in sequence, but the third pillar requires special and timely attention by policy makers and ultimately, application in cases of humanitarian crimes.

With the evolution of R2P throughout the years, Thakur proposes an arc when reviewing his own policy making, which has seven stages, that goes from policy setting to policy paralysis and finally, emerging policy parameters. From when humanitarian intervention was created mainly by the West, and embodied by the UN, and how it challenges sovereignty, which has for long been the core of international law, or as Thankur mentions himself "the bedrock organising principle of modern international society[9]". According to him, the first interventions could have began as early as in the 19th century, and despite them being constant breaches to the nonintervention law, Western countries behind it often find legitimacy through justifications that in the future would be crystalized in interpretations of the UN charter. The controversy, however, lies in the fact whether they have indeed had the expected outcome, or if they have only made things worse. Humanitarian Intervention per se came to surface as a justification from itnervening states to protect victims from humanitariam catastrophes and crimes; if not to prevent them to becoming even more damaging.

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[6] UN Secretary-General, Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Report of the Secretary General, UN Doc A/63/677, 12 January 2009
[7] Ibid, p.9
[8] Ibid, p 10
[9] Thakur, 2015, p. 193

Thus, for Thakur, mass atrocity crimes challenge the cornerstone of the international norms – which would be noninternvention; and this would be the second stage of his arc. When tracing a panorama of the history of inteventions, mass crimes against humanity have generated debates within policy making and academia, and new norms have been emerging ever since, for example, the Holocaust. Two cases in the 20th century are remarkable in that sense, where the legitimacy and need for humanitarian interventions have been brought back to the center stage of political debate: Rwanda, in 1994, and Kosovo in 1999. On one hand, Rwanda has had a tragic outcome, and the delay in international action has led to a disaster. However, in the case of Kosovo, the West promptly acted as the consequences were spilling over through its borders, and acted unulaterally through NATO, without an UN authorization (later considered legitimate)[10]. This raises new questions and exposes a clear selectivity in terms of action and justifications behind the so called humanitarian interventions.

The third stage for Thakur would thus be the policy innovation, when facing a dilemma, such as Kosovo and Rwanda, the international community has to decide upon acting in face of humanitarian atrocities but at the same time complying with international norms, which is when R2P emerges. A policy paralysis, in turn, would be the lack of action for instance in the case of Syria: every attempt at the UN for any action our authorisation to stop Bashir Assad's assaults were constantly vetoed and held back by China and Russia. Finally, Thakur concludes that the success of an emerging norm relies primarily "on mutually respectful conversationbetween the leading powers from the global North and South"[11]. The articulation between actors through global governance is paramount to achieve solutions to prevent crimes against humanity to happen.

In the case of Ukraine specifically, there are supposedly more complex elements at stake that are preventing the West from acting: the fear of the eruption of a nuclear war is key here. Moreover, wouldn't R2P be about a state committing mass atrocities towards its own population? Thus, in the case of Ukraine, would it not be more appropriate to raise

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[10] Ibid , 2015, 195
[11] Ibid 198

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another doctrine or justification, in this sense? Regardless, based on the typical previous justifications for humanitarian interventions in the past, the international community has not yet moved beyond sanctions and diplomatic measures to attempt to stop Russian attacks in Ukrainian territory. We could be facing, therefore, a new phase of the international intervention and liberal peacebuilding spectrum.

In the next section, we will focus on the latest debates in academia and policy in terms of peacebuilding: Is there a local turn? Is there a possibility for the so-called hybrid peace?

3.2.4 Hybrid Peace and the Local Turn in Peacebuilding

The latest phase according to most of the authors we have explored so far is what is being called either hybrid peace or the local turn in Peacebuilding. There are many debates among them regarding the actual meaning of such terms, or whether they are appropriate or not to classify the current phase such operations are at.

MacGinty And Richmond (2013) are among one the authors that coined this term within International Relations. From a critical perspective, they aim to understand peace as an outcome that should be "hybrid, multiple, and often agonistic", and also to propose a methodology for it. Their analysis is profound in the sense that they understand that there are different notions of peace, that are not shared between the different agents at play in a conflict or post-conflict situation – there are underlying tensions between the different structures and agents. They claim that we should look closer to what happens locally, to the local agents, and to the local itself. The North often misunderstands it, and if it is not a liberal state per se, it is seen as not valid and disregarded. Ultimately, as a situation that must be remediated with liberal solutions. Peacemaking is still deeply entrenched in colonialism, and the authors believe that it must go through a decolonization process.

Other authors such as Hameiri and Jones, who are critical of the local turn and hybridity propositions, argue, instead, that peacebuilding at some point is delivered as what

is state building. By that, they mean a "broad range of programmes and projects defined to build or strengthen the capacity of institutions, organizations and agencies (…) to effectively perform the functions associated with modern statehood (Hameiri 2010)". Peacebuilding and statebuilding can, however, be combined as well, which happens often. When defining hybridity, the authors understand it as a mixing of international, liberal, local and non-liberal agendas, ideas and institutions that overlap also with several different authorities, over a same territory.

The authors are critical of the established conception of hybridity for most scholars in the International Relations field, and they propose an alternative framework in order to explain the outcomes of the combination of peacebuilding and statebuilding, the latest trend within peace operations. They understand such outcomes as the result of the attempts and struggles not only for power itself, but also as a result of it, and of resources between political and social coalitions.

Hybridity does not address the outcomes from the struggles between the overlapping actors and structures, which can be either partnerships or conflicts between them. The struggles are between the contestants for power in such contests, which must be observed and questioned, and the authors also claim that it is important to observe the projects that happen within peacebuilding itself. By that they mean what are the different agendas from the different and overlapping political groups who have different interests. They also propose that it is paramount to analyze how do the partnerships, coalitions and alliances play out in this field among a multiplicity of different and overlapping dynamics and interests. Therefore, in comparison to MacGinty and Richmond's view, they prefer taking into account the dynamics and overlapping powers.

De Carvalho and Kok (2016) also shed light to the local turn and latest shifts within peacebuilding. They recover its origins by describing Boutros-Ghali and his emphasis on peacebuilding as a tool of sustaining peace in post-conflict situations. It was the former who defined such operations as actions to give support to pre-existing structures, enabling them to strengthen and ensure peace and avoid a conflict to erupt again. Peacebuilding operations

would also be part of a multilayered and integrated process that is based on guided actions part of a wider, strategically designed plan, pivotal to address conflicts and their endings.

Also, for De Carvalho and Kok, the scope of peacebuilding missions has evolved throughout time, as we have been discussing in the present work. Initially, they were restricted to a set of tasks to be applied once conflicts were over (Eg. succeeding a peacekeeping operation); but with time they have developed into more ambitious endeavors and mirroring what we call liberal peace. It is important, however, to shed light on the fact that such evolutions and shifts have never been entirely chronological, yet they often overlap. We cannot address this evolution linearly, but we do so in order to conceptualize and understand them better. We have, however, the duty to challenge our own conceptualizations and theories often. For instance, De Carvalho and Kok add that peacebuilding operations have evolved and gone beyond a simple operation to sustain peace: they have also grown to even attempt to prevent conflicts.

We have already discussed the Agenda for Peace, but the authors De Carvalho and Kok (2016) point out at its importance as they believe it was responsible for enabling the UN to create an entire peace architecture after its release. It had proposed a framework itself, which was not set in stone and developed in different many different paths after it has first been published. The authors, however, argue that so far, there has not been many successful endeavors and that the international community "has not yet identified how to do it well; nor does it yet seem able to pinpoint what exactly constitutes successful peacebuilding. The field still seems hamstrung by its inability to effectively plan and execute, measure and use results, generate institutional learning, and identify better ways of engaging in highly complex environments[12]".

Afghanistan and Iraq have become symbols of peacebuilding operations that have become largely militarized: despite their institution building and democratization ambitions, the reality is that the counterterrorism character behind them turned both missions into a

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[12] De Carvalho and Kok, 2016

"coercive form of liberal peace"[13]. The outcome for both was far from the delivery of actual peace and successful institution building.

Moe and Stepputat suggest that enough criticism to such outcomes have been made, both from policy makers to academia. In terms of conceptualizing this new approach, which is mainly militarized, the authors suggest it to be a sort of "pragmatic peacebuilding", or in other words, the convergence of counter-insurgent warfare and peacebuilding; and the turn to pragmatic interventionism"[14]. They emphasize the importance of discussing this turn and shedding light upon the most recent trends as the latest stabilization missions, often also referred to as "light footprint" missions, had reduced institutionalized settings if compared to a full-blown peacebuilding operation.

For these authors, hybridity translates into situations in which authority is shared between the state and different actors: even sovereignty and legitimacy are shared. They claim that the state in itself is a "negotiated hybrid", or, in other words, an overlap of a plethora of sources of authority. They criticize however, the broad adoption of the term "local term" in peacebuilding, as it might be misleading in the sense that it does not translate accurately who are all the actors sources of power and authority involved in this process. Moreover, what is regarded as the resistance for MacGinty and Richmond, they alert that in reality, the local resistance might as well be the resistance of national elites. Thus there is more than merely looking at the local, as there are different layers within it that have to be taken into account as well.

What Finn Stepputat proposes as "pragmatic peace", thus, is

> (…)an umbrella term to denote recent trends in peacebuilding approaches that contrast with the prevailing policy focus of the 2000s on building central state institutions and promoting universal values and practices of liberal democracy and the rule of law. On one level, the 'pragmatism' refers to the decreasing appetite for the expensive, hard-security interventions and full-scale statebuilding enterprises that had limited success in Iraq and Afghanistan. In other words, pragmatic peace

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[13] Louise Wiuff Moe, Finn Stepputat, Introduction: Peacebuilding in an era of pragmatism, International Affairs, Volume 94, Issue 2, March 2018, Pages 293–299

[14] Moe and Stepputat, Peacebuilding in an era of pragmatism, 294

looks for what is possible in the shorter term and takes a step back from the high ambitions of the liberal peace[15].

He challenges the use of local turn and hybrid peace, as they deem such concepts still as vague and enigmatic. Even the turn local is not precise and often romanticized, instead of having a more in-depth analysis of the layers and tensions within it.

Finally, David Chandler also attempts to conceptualize the latest stage of peacebuilding and international interventions[16]. Whereas humanitarian interventions challenged sovereignty completely, in the 1990s they have become a constant. He reflects on the paths of interventions until the 9/11, and what were the changes in terms of policy responses to conflicts.   Interventions become responses to crisis or to exceptions; militarized; and with simplistic views of the local context. Moreover, he also adds that: "One of the central shifts in understanding conflict as something that needs to be 'coped with' and 'managed' rather than something that can be 'solved' or 'prevented' is the view that state-level interventions are of limited use".[17]

Peace treaties are often rather symbolic than practical and typically do not reflect what the agreement is or should be between the parties involved in the conflict. Actual politics are not being taken into consideration, and Western models are expected to function in such societies, regardless of if the host countries have completely different agendas.

If we go back to the arc of the evolution and subsequent decay of peacebuilding, one of the ends has a very notable humanitarian component, where human rights and social justice, for instance, are still protagonists at least in terms of discourse. Peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions are supposedly tools to prevent more victims from mass atrocity crimes and human rights violations; peacebuilding comes with the promise of

[15] Finn Stepputat, Pragmatic peace in emerging governscapes, International Affairs, Volume 94, Issue 2, March 2018, page 405, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix233

[16] David Chandler (2015) Reconceptualizing International Intervention: Statebuilding, 'Organic Processes' and the Limits of Causal Knowledge, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 9:1, 70-88, DOI: 10.1080/17502977.2015.1015247

[17] David Chandler, Reconceptualizing International Intervention, 70.

rescuing the peoples and a nation from the shatters of war, enabling them to recreate a liberal democratic state that would guarantee their peace and freedom.

Our arc has its heydays with for instance NATO's intervention in Kosovo, we testify the emergence of promising norms such as R2P, but its lack of implementation for instance in Syria denotes a downfall. In terms of peacebuilding operations, Iraq and Afghanistan come with different operationalizations than the usual, following 'light footprint' approaches, counter terrorism and stabilization embedded in its natures. The humanitarian component is no longer the priority and the ultimate goal; the concern now is security – but for the West.

We will observe it in detail in our next chapter, our case study in Afghanistan, how this shift has happened in practice.

4. Case Study: Afghanistan, Stabilization Missions, and the Decay of Liberal Peacebuilding

4.1 Introduction:

The September 11, 2001, attacks in New York, attributed to al-Qaeda, revealed this isolated country embedded between mountains in Central Asia as one of the most unstable regions in the world, and brought it back to the center of the international political stage.

The present chapter is intended to provide a case study that illustrates the problems presented during this work. Building on the argumentation that was developed in the previous chapter, here we will observe in which situation it applies. In this case, the mission of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan under the context of the War on Terror from 2001 towards its end complete withdrawal in the 2020s. Afghanistan was chosen because it was considered emblematic for understanding the real concerns behind the liberal peace project. The conflict also represents a turn, or perhaps an imbalance, within this project: it might indicate a shift towards less liberal approaches, which in turn reflects the trends in world politics. The result was that the join NATO and UN intervention damaged Afghanistan and enable Taliban to regain control over its territory. It is necessary, in this sense, to recover the origins of the Afghan state in order to understand the nature of the conflict and what is also behind the emergence of the Taliban movement and its political strength.

We will discuss briefly throughout this chapter that its formation as a modern nation-state was marked by tortuous interactions with the international system, which took place through interventions by its neighbors and hegemonic powers, which always ended in failure, mainly due to the remarkable resistance of the Afghan people. In other words, the country's origin goes back to the creation of a buffer state between the Russian and British empires, which would later become a space of dispute during the Cold War (Rubin, 2007).

However, these were not the only difficulties suffered by Afghanistan throughout its short History. As mentioned above, Afghanistan was a creation: its borders were drawn according to British and Russian interests, therefore, imposed, and artificial (Rubin, 2007). Thus, it has not had an organic state formation, which is reflected in its intrinsic heterogeneities. As a result of this imposition process, Afghanistan has always suffered to establish itself as a nation-state along Western lines, and from 1919 until today it has struggled to extract income and resources from its own territory.

One of Afghanistan's most violent phases occurred after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country, leaving it in the midst of a power vacuum, without a proper and legitimate state, a devastated economy, and several armed groups scattered throughout the country. It was then that Afghanistan sank into a long civil war, which would later allow the Taliban to quickly emerge and evolve (Rubin, 2007). During this period Afghanistan remained on the margins of the international system and was often labeled as a failed state. This section intends, although not exhaustively, to trace a historical panorama of the country with its process of state formation as a guide to understand why it emerged as a threat to international security, and consequently, for being chosen to host an international intervention. We will also discuss the nature of this specific intervention, how and when it took place, its particularities and whether it reflects or not the liberal peace project.

4.2 A Panorama of the Origins of the Afghan State

The evolutionary process of the formation of the Afghan state has been quite particular, as we have briefly discussed above. We will examine how it is difficult to fit it under a Weberian (and, if not, a liberal) definition of a nation-state, and how it was built on weak foundations, as it was a forced attempt to create a state where several distinct tribes and ethnicities would live together. Therefore, we conclude that understanding Afghanistan's complex past is indispensable to understanding the current conflict, specially to explain the difficulties in implementing or rebuilding the state and its institutions.

First, Hyman (2002) characterizes the process as tortuous, as it was marked by attempts to unify different ethnicities, language groups, and tribes with different historical roots that were forced to live together under one centralized government. The ethnic composition of Afghanistan was, and to some extent still is, made up of Pashtun tribes, which accounted for more than 50% of the population, and Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and Turkmen, although to a lesser extent compared to the former. According to another author, Goodson (1998, p. 270), these groups, especially the Pashtuns, were organized in "a social system that emphasized loyalty to the social group, rather than a higher-order abstraction like the state." In short, Afghan society was rooted in a tribal structure, in which groups of different ethnic origins were dispersed throughout the rugged territory, and therefore with difficult accessibility. They obeyed strictly local powers, which reflected the rivalries between their tribal leaders. This structure, in addition to the difficult geography of the region, contributed as one of the obstacles to the forced implementation of an already weakened and not very centralized nation-state.

If we observe the Afghan geography and its implications in its history and developments, Rubin (2007) highlights the difficulties it poses both by isolating certain regions and by the lack of vast fertile fields. It is a territory mainly characterized by its majority being occupied by broad mountain ranges, deserts, and a few fertile valleys and rivers. The author points out that this configuration implies that, in fact, the different

societies hardly cohabited the same regions. Each lived at in determined regions, but isolated from each other. – In this regard, Afghanistan would only become a unified state if there was outside interference. Rubin (2007) argues that they were only blended into a single society because they have been incorporated into a unified state, which otherwise would hardly have happened organically.

Based on what we have discussed so far, what Rubin (1988) brings to light throughout his work is whether the Afghan state could be framed under the definition of a modern, sovereign nation state - or even the Western model. His study on the formation of the Afghan state is introduced through a detailed discussion that ranges from the notion of the formation of a territorial and sovereign nation-state, based on modern political science authors, to build his argument that the supposed Afghan state is, in reality, 'fragmented' from a Western perspective (Rubin, 2007). His argument highlights the traditional character of Afghan society, constituted from tribes, and demonstrates through literature that feudal Europe was not organized in this way: by quoting Tilly, Rubin (2007) describes that they were formed from disputes and wars between cities, and that they were not between tribes.

Tilly's work, of paramount importance for political science and for understanding the processes of modern state formation, focuses on the combination between the effects of capital and coercion and how they generated different types of states, and the importance of the impacts of war for this process. When the means of accumulation and the concentration of coercion grow together, they become states. The importance of wars in this process is mainly that their preparation involve extraction, by means of generating an infrastructure of taxation and supply. The administration of is built in such a way that it requires maintenance.

It was easier to maintain, manage, and raise army when capital was already concentrated. Tilly therefore focuses on focusing his analysis on the organization of coercion and preparation for war, and documents that state structure is a product of the efforts of sovereigns or rulers to acquire resources for war.

The author Barnett Rubin (2007) walks this path throughout his argument and points out that while he calls Afghanistan a nation-state, it will not necessarily correspond to this

narrow definition that has been developed since Weber. But it will serve the function of highlighting that Afghanistan's incorporation into the modern international system was artificial, and to attest that its origin in no way resembles Western processes. This, according to him, may have been one of the reasons responsible for the conflicts that have plagued this nation. He also points to the trend that Afghanistan has followed throughout its history of inability to generate capital and extract resources.

Despite the historical process itself, modern Afghanistan was the scene of disputes between the British Empire and the Russian Empire during the transition between the 19th and 20th century, which have also became known as the Great Game between the two powers. As a territory located between the margins of the two empires, Afghanistan was imposed the Western model of the nation-state when both empires tried to enter its borders. Afghanistan was given the status of a "buffer state", and from then on, it would be at the mercy of mainly the British will (Rubin, 1988). This was the first attempt to incorporate Afghanistan into the international system.

As we have emphasized multiple times throughout this chapter, Afghanistan consists of scattered and isolated tribes and ethnic groups amid the mountainous territory - but had not been incorporated into any of the empires that surrounded it before, such as the Hindu and Persian empires, and later, the Russian and British ones. The closest that existed to some homogeneous configuration was a confederation of Pashtun tribes, that expanded and moved around the region in search of resources and fertile land (Rubin, 1988).

Two wars took place between the British Empire and then Afghanistan. The first was a disaster for the British. However, the second war, which brought King Amir Abdur Raman Khan to the throne, gave the British the right to control Afghan foreign policy. The agreement signed at the end of the conflict also officially established the controversial border between Afghanistan and India. The Durand Line divided the Pashtuns of Afghanistan from the Pashtuns of India, a region that would later become Pakistan (Rubin, 1988). From then on, the Afghan king was faced with the great challenge of centralizing the Afghan state and uniting the different ethnicities and tribes that inhabited the region under the newly created borders. The quest to legitimize his own power was violent because he was a Pashtun

himself, he needed recognition from other peoples. For some authors, it was practically a Pashtun colonizing process (Shahrani, 2002), and arguably almost entirely funded by the British.

Habibullah, the successor of such an Afghan king, was responsible for initiating the modernization of the fledgling state along Western lines. During this new phase, a class of intellectuals emerged for the first time in modern Afghan history. They had the chance to study abroad and import their acquired knowledge about the functioning of a modern European state. However, Habibullah would not give up cutting ties with the British, which created great discomfort in front of this new political class. This later led to his assassination in 1919, and his son, Amanullah, takes over (Rubin, 1988). Thus, it is not until that year that Afghanistan gains complete independence from the British Empire, at the request of Amanullah, who was already involved in the pro-independence political movement even before his father's death. The request, however, was at first denied and there was a brief conflict (Rubin, 1988).

From the year of 1919, Afghanistan began to develop its own diplomatic relations with other countries. Thus, with the development of its own foreign policy, new ties were created with other countries in Europe. The fruits of this generated schools, universities, trade expansion, and financial aid since they no longer had British support (Hyman, 2002). Furthermore, Amanullah implemented liberal reforms, such as instituting private property, abolishing slave labor, imposed a common currency, and initiated tax collection, to bring Afghanistan into the capitalist system. Finally, the king created a constitution that guaranteed the population basic citizenship rights and defined them as Afghans for the first time (Rubin, 1988).

However, his move away from Islam and toward the West generated great dissatisfaction among the population, so that his attempts at reform failed. Amid so many ethnic and tribal groups, Islam was the only element that would bring cohesion to Afghan society. In 1929, the king abdicated, and a new phase began. The dynasty that would come to rule the country would bring a long period of stability, which would extend until the Soviet occupation (Rubin, 2002). According to Burke (2007), this dynasty, whose family name was

Musahiban, emphasized the importance of Islam in politics, as they knew that religion was the only one that would guarantee support and national unity among the population. During the first years of power, through religion, it was possible to articulate the relations between traditional Afghan society and the government, reducing the underlying tensions between them. In addition, the educational system grew at full speed and numbers of students enrolled in school soared through the 1960s (Rubin, 2002; Burke, 2007).

Between 1946 and 1952 there was an attempt by the Musahiban to establish a particular kind of democracy, and a parliament was elected. This was an opportunity for an opposition to flourish, which had been growing mainly from student movements. However, the rulers intended to continue with reformist attitudes and began to contain such movements with repression and violence. This generated even more dissatisfaction in the population, which began to demand greater freedom of expression (Rubin, 1988). In 1963, a new king from this same family took power, and tried to articulate the different instances of society to formulate a new constitution. This new king called for a general assembly. However, although there was parliamentary democracy and some openness, there was never a process of legalization of political parties, which later would generate consequences (Rubin, 2002).

As the agrarian and religious elites dominated parliament, clandestine parties started to emerge, and they were typically led by intellectuals. They were inspired both by socialist and communist ideologies, which were gaining ground in the country after the rapprochement with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and by political Islam, which would culminate in a political division among these new movements. This class of intellectuals were mostly graduates from the Kabul University (Rubin, 2002).

The main organization more closely aligned with communism was the Afghan Democratic Party (PDPA), which was connected to Moscow. However, this organization was split into two factions: Parcham and Khalq (Rubin, 2002). This organization received full support from the Soviet Union, which provided financial aid and political protection. Furthermore, the factions had wide support from the army, which allowed them to rise to power after the coup against the royal family in 1978. On the other hand, the parties linked to political Islamism had as members future leaders of the insurgency against the Soviet

Union, such as Ahmad Shah Masood (who would later become the leader of the Northern Alliance) and Burhanuddin Rabbani, and the Hizb-i Islami, the Islamists (Rashid, 2008).

Several episodes and attempts culminated in a military coup in 1978 led by Marxist-inspired army officers and brought the PDPA to control the country, such as a first coup in 1973 (Rashid, 2008). However, as Rubin (1989) explains, the Afghan population was quickly dissatisfied with the brutality with which the new communist government was imposed, and towards the radicalism of the party leaders. Moreover, the two factions, Parcham and Khalq, were vying for leadership. The Soviet Union thus saw the situation as a threat, and in order to stabilize and maintain communism in Afghanistan, it invaded the country in 1979. The result was not exactly what was expected, and instead spread revolt including to regions that had not been affected by the turmoil (Rubin, 1989). Afghanistan was therefore brought to the center of the Cold War stage (Rashid, 2009), as the conflict also attracted immediate attention from the United States.

4.2.1 The Soviet Occupation in Afghanistan and its Political Consequences

The succession of coups and the internal divisions that existed within the PDPA party created an unstable situation that caught the attention of the Soviet Union, which feared a probable collapse of the communist party newly coming to power. As previously discussed, during the 1960s and 1970s in the country educational system evolved and political parties developed. Kabul University had been the common cradle for the leaders and founders of both parties, so the members were either students or professors. In the case of the parties following political Islamism3, they were characterized by opposition to Western models of development and statehood, and allegations of Western imperialism (Rubin, 2002).

In 1973, after the first coup d'état attempted by the communists, the Islamist leaders fled to Pakistan to avoid repression by the new government that had been established. The Pakistani government, concerned about the possible rise of any Pashtun tribal nationalist

movement, i.e. a possible reorganization on tribal principles, and fearing the outbreak of a conflict, promptly offered refuge to these leaders, who were mostly of Pashtun origin, although certain leaders were from other ethnic groups (Rubin, 2002). In 1978, a new coup by the communists occurred in Afghanistan, and the Islamist leaders who took refuge in Pakistan formed an alliance whose bases were to be set up in the city of Peshawar. This alliance included seven Islamic parties, four of which were fundamentalist, as described by Burke (2007). The Pakistani government provided financial and military support to all parties. While in exile, these different groups planned ways to take power in Afghanistan, although without any support or joint mobilization of the population, since they were distant from the Afghan political scene (Rubin, 2002).

The Soviet invasion in 1979, however, generated a new objective for the parties: "From heading small and largely ineffectual groups, they now acquired supporters, funds and weaponry." (Ewans, 2005, p. 111). In other words, it had also become a very good deal for the factions. Their role would be to provide international assistance and diplomatic representation for the resistance that was emerging on Afghan soil. In addition, they would act as intermediaries between Pakistan's Intelligence Service (ISI), which was responsible for centralizing the dispatches coming in from the United States and Saudi Arabia.

The Afghan state institution disintegrated between 1978 and 1979, which happened in the shape of two coups d'état. The rural areas, which traditionally had little state presence, were left on the margins of any government action. In this way, the society that inhabited these areas resorted to small local leaders. The latter, in turn, allied themselves with a network of young people who started a strong movement of resistance to the communist parties and the Soviets. The number of adherents grew rapidly, and spread to several Afghan rural areas, which erupted into armed conflict against the Red Army from the time of the occupation (Rubin, 2002).

Thus, the insurgency movement that flourished throughout Afghanistan was dispersed and there was almost no centralization. They were composed of small groups of men and a leader, and represented many different levels of society (Rais, 2008). Some were associated with parties in Peshawar, while others were limited to the specific struggles of

their own regions. As the mobilization of these groups intensified and took on guerrilla dimensions, the insurgents, or mujahedin, needed resources and weapons to sustain themselves. Thus, they looked for those who could easily obtain them, and, for this purpose, they went to Pakistan, where many also sought refuge. The intensifying pressure from the Soviet army forced local insurgents to seek help from leaders who were in exile in Pakistan (Rubin, 2002).

Pakistan, in turn, in view of the intense flow of Afghans into refugee camps on its territory, took this as an opportunity and began to grant Islamist parties access to these camps so that they could recruit and train Afghans who were willing to fight against the Soviets (Burke, 2007). As pointed out by Burke (2007), there was a desire for a pro-Pakistan group to win the conflict, and subsequently take Kabul, which would be of interest to Pakistan. Thus, they began to offer support to the mujahedin conflict. Moreover, Rupert (1989) adds that the influx of mujahedin on Pakistani soil were perceived as a major threat to the security and stability of the region, as they also offered the risk of suffering possible Soviet retaliation. Therefore, the Pakistani army closely monitored all activities of the insurgent groups.

The groups directly linked to the Islamists were trained in Pakistan, while the local and tribal groups were still structured in terms of their loyalty to their local leader. The latter provided mostly food for the members, as they barely had the structure to offer at least training to their own soldiers (Rubin, 2002).

The fighting grew mostly intensively in the rural areas, which led to a loss of state control over these areas. As a result, the mujahideen consolidated their power in these areas, which made the Soviet invasion less and less advantageous and closer to failure, especially as the aid provided by the United States became increasingly more significant.

The United States got involved in the conflict between the Afghan mujahideen and the Red Army from its inception in 1979, until the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989. The conflict, according to Hartman (2002), resulted in more than 1 million deaths, and almost a quarter of the Afghan population took refuge in Pakistan by the end of 1989. The author

describes that as early as 1979, CIA agents were already meeting secretly with mujahedin leaders. President Carter was the one who initiated aid with medical equipment and medicine, and who then also later approved military aid. Pakistan was almost an instrument used by the CIA. The latter was in charge of coordinating American actions in Afghanistan, as the key to reaching the mujahedin to provide aid, along with the Pakistani agency's own intelligence (ISI). The amounts of money sent by the US always were matched by the sums sent by Saudi Arabia, which allied itself with both the Americans and Pakistan, aiming to support the Islamist groups and viewing the conflict as a jihad. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, in turn, through the seven parties in Peshawar, sent the weapons and other supplies to the Afghans (Burke, 2007).

According to Thier (2006), the war in Afghanistan was too costly for the Soviet Union, which was in economic and political crisis during the 1980s. The troops were finally withdrawn in 1989. The negotiations for withdrawal began in 1985 and crystallized in the Geneva Agreement of 1988, which was guided by the principle of non-intervention. The agreement, however, did not refer only to Soviet troops, but also called for an end to U.S. aid to the mujahedin (Thier, 2006).

The Afghan resistance after the Soviet invasion soon escalated into an armed conflict, which occurred in a decentralized and fragmented manner. Aid from the United States and other countries in the Islamic community contributed to the perpetuation of instability in Afghanistan, even after the withdrawal of Soviet Union troops, as they provided significant amounts of armaments. This helped to foster the flow of weapons that already existed between the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan, which in turn were distributed among the mujahedin and the population (Rubin, 2002). Moreover, they fueled the rivalries between the Afghan parties settled in Pakistan, which were disputing for power in Afghanistan after the fall of the Soviet Union. Another major problem arose during the Soviet invasion that continues to threaten the security of the region to this day: opium production, stimulated by the mujahedin seeking more resources to sustain themselves in the war.

The mujahideen's lack of preparation and planning for taking over a new government in Afghanistan led to a new civil war in which they started to fight each other and fight over

territory. Afghanistan disintegrated, and within its territory, smaller ones existed that were practically independent of each other. Some of them functioned as autonomous entities, often with their own government and media (Rubin, 2002).

The outcome is that Kabul was left at a drastic situation, devastated after more than a decade of conflict, which competing groups for power, militia, and radicalism, and it became the stage of more conflicts. At this point, international assistance was gone, and it had turned into a dispute for who would rule the capital itself. The country was left with barely any infra-structure left, in a total vacuum of power.

Thier (2006) explains that at this time, the international community was more concerned with what was happening in Eastern Europe, especially Yugoslavia, marginalizing Afghanistan from politics and humanitarian aid.

The successive disputes for the leadership of Afghanistan led to the rise of the Taliban, which, after a series of small conflicts, occupied most of the territory and legitimized itself as a power.

4.2.3 The Rise of the Taliban into Power

In the context of the civil war raging in Afghanistan, the situation in Candahar in southern Afghanistan was particularly critical compared to the other provinces, which were already relatively stabilized under autonomous leadership.

While still under Soviet occupation, the mujahideen who comprised the resistance in the region consisted of a tribal network of Pashtuns who traditionally inhabited Candahar. Clan chiefs, tribal chiefs, as well as religious leaders created parties, one of which, the Harakat, allied with the seven parties that were refugees in Peshawar, Pakistan. The party was responsible for establishing and operating the madrassas that were located in the refugee camps on the border between the two countries, in the vicinity between Candahar and Quetta.

In these schools, Islamic fundamentalist traditions were taught. Some were maintained by Saudi Wahhabists. However, as Rashid (1999) reports, these schools also preached deobandism, which would later influence the Taliban. This interpretation would be a branch of Sunni Islam, which within the context of British India, rose due to its mission to regenerate Islam in the face of colonization, to rescue the traditions of a Muslim society.

Since there was no centralized leadership in Candahar, it was marginalized and became a chaotic region (Rais, 2009). The city and its surroundings were taken over by drug producers and dealers, mafias, and the population suffered from violence. Women especially were recurrent victims of rape. Afghan refugees who were near the border, although they tried to return, were frightened by the situation and moved back, or even returned to the camps (Rashid, 2010).

It was precisely in the context of this frequent flow between Quetta and Candahar that a group of young Pashtun students from the madrassas, observing the chaotic situation in their hometown, started a mobilization, and allied themselves with former mujahideen, in order to try to restore peace and order in the region. Mohammad Omar, a teacher in a small madrassa and former mujahideen fighter, began to lead the movement, gaining new followers with frightening speed - given the fear that the inhabitants had about the growing violence. Thus, the Taliban students were born and quickly ascended. Rais (2009) states that the Taliban's great proposal was to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the state.

Their expansion was promoted especially through messages that they would bring back peace, justice, and security, and were therefore extremely attractive to the population. The movement, according to Rashid (2010) also set out to enforce Islamic law (sharia), and defend the integrity of Islam in Afghanistan. Some authors such as Burke (2006) and Rais (2009) add that the Taliban also had strong Pashtun nationalist appeal, whose conceptions of order and justice were references to the ethnic group's strict code of ethics: the Pashtunwali. This made Taliban acquire credibility among the tribes, which, as discussed by Roy (1997), facilitated its expansion into the territories traditionally occupied by Pashtuns ('Pashtun belt'), mostly located in southern Afghanistan, also galvanizing a sense of

resentment towards the treatment that had been meted out to Pashtuns in the new post-Soviet Afghan configuration.

Despite the Taliban and Al Qaeda relationship, there are a number of controversies. What is reported about bin Laden in Burke's work (2007) is that he was a young Saudi volunteer from a millionaire family, who sent huge amounts of money for jihad between the mujahideen and the Red Army. Bin Laden arrived in Pakistan around 1980, and in his early years, he resided in Peshawar and cared for wounded fighters. Only years later would he have moved to the battlefield. After leaving the Soviet Union, bin Laden had formed a jihadist group - al Qaeda - that aimed to combat Western influences on Islam. It was during the Gulf War, when Saudi Arabia allowed the U.S. to deploy its army and air force on its territory, that bin Laden began to speak out against the United States.

In 1991, bin Laden sought refuge in Sudan, but was expelled by his own government, until in 1996, he returns to Afghanistan and becomes close to Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban. In 1998, two U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania are attacked and attributed to Al Qaeda. Thus, bin Laden, who was already speaking out strongly against the United States, attracts international attention and is retaliated against by the United States bombing suspected al-Qaida bases in Afghanistan; Washington then begins to pressure the Taliban to hand over bin Laden. The Taliban realized that the risk of keeping bin Laden at their expense would be extremely advantageous: the terrorist had become a bargaining chip for any kind of negotiation with the United States (Rashid, 2010; Thier, 2006).

Until, on September 11, 2001, the twin towers in New York City are hit by airplanes, an attack soon attributed to Al Qaeda and bin Laden. Thier (2006) briefly relates the background and controversies, by describing the assassination of Ahmad Shah Masood, one of the Taliban's chief opponent, by Al Qaeda operatives. It is not yet proven if the timing of such events have been a coincidence or not, neither whether it has triggered a very fast response towards Al Qaeda.

The result of these attacks was so spectacularly devastating, however, that the force, fury and rapidity of the reprisals were likely not anticipated, at least not by the Taliban: The United States officially commenced Operation Enduring Freedom on October 7, 2001, only twenty-six days later (Thier, 2006, p. 476).

The effects of the United States' entry into Afghanistan will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

4.3 Liberal Peace and the intentions behind NATO's operations in Afghanistan

In the next sections we aim to discuss the implementation of NATO's operations in Afghanistan after 9/11, in light of what we have discussed in the previous chapter about peace operations. By delving into how it has been operationalized, we can argue that, if peacebuilding can be seen through an arc, Afghanistan is the point of it that can be the birth of its decay. We will look at two specific components of such: the constitutional development and election management, and its consequences. We will also briefly comment on the opium boom that happened as an unintended consequence of such operations as well.

It is debatable whether the mission succeeds in providing welfare (one of the main elements of liberalism and liberal peace) for the Afghan population, or whether it fails. The primary goal of the United States and NATO would have been, essentially, Western security, which translated into the rhetoric of the War on Terror. Disrupting Al Qaeda and the Taliban were ultimately for the good of the United States, not for the good of the Afghan population.

Rubin (2007) describes the gaps left by the NATO mission over the years of occupation. Poverty, unemployment, the lack of infrastructure, and violence, after so many years of conflicts, have created an even worse scenario for the eruption of more disputes between factions and warlors. Moreover, the author adds that several parts of the country still suffer from recurring energy shortages, even in Kabul, and one sees no prospects for projects concerned with developing the energy sector (Rubin, 2007).

4.3.1The Initial Institutional Set Up for the NATO Intervention in Afghanistan

In this section, we will cover some parts of the NATO intervention institutional set up to build up our argument. As we have discussed in depth in the previous sections and chapters, Afghanistan is an example of a light footprint mission, from its very inception:

> The initial American strategy for Afghanistan was based on a "light footprint," with limited American-led coalition forces or international peacekeepers, no formal Afghan military, and numerous warlord-led militia factions providing a patchwork of security in the countryside. Inevitably, in violation of the most fundamental rule of nation-building—"Security First"—a security gap developed that was exploited by warlords and criminals, as well as remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda (Goodson, 2005, p. 89).

Unfortunately, as part of the United States' light footprint strategy, many factions and warlords have been engaged in the peacebuilding process as a way to avoid the use of US military troops. The political outcomes are summed up to the disastrous and to the unintended consequences of the overall operation. This has brought more weapons and arms to an already fragmented and highly violent country and has created more destabilization and power imbalances between the diverse groups and ethnicities in Afghanistan. They were empowered through more military resources, instead of empowering them through fair and through logical representation since the ELJ and the CLJ.

The Operation Enduring Freedom was deployed on October 7, 2001 and was the first military campaign in Afghanistan in response to the attacks. It was initiated by the United States, which sent its air forces to bomb strategic Taliban and al-Qaida targets, such as military and air bases and training camps. The operation then formed a partnership with the Northern Alliance, to whom it provided funding, weapons, and telecommunication equipment (Thier, 2006). Thus, according to Felbab Brown (2009), at first the goal of the mission was simply to remove Al Qaeda from the scene and to establish a new government in Afghanistan. As Jonathan Goodhand (2008) adds, the priorities of the mission were essentially to combat terrorism, which was ingrained in the rhetoric of the War on Terror.

Within five weeks, the Taliban was defeated by the Northern Alliance and aerial bombing by American forces. However, the entire Taliban leadership as well as Al Qaeda fled during this period, making the operation a major failure. The vast majority took refuge in the porous borders with Pakistan, or in mountain ranges, as was the case of Bin Laden himself. Alexander Thier (2006), regarding the failure of the operations, argues that this is to be blamed on the fact that they took place mostly via air, not ground attacks.

In December 2001, the Bonn agreement was signed. The agreement laid the new groundwork for a new political system in Afghanistan, as well as all decisions regarding the entry of international forces into the country in the context of the War on Terror. It was endorsed by the Security Council and suggested ambitious processes, among them, pacification and reconstruction, plus a transition process via an interim government.

In November 2002, the United States launched the PRTs in Afghanistan: Provincial Reconstruction Teams. According to Jacobson (2005), this project was designed to prepare the transition between combat and reconstruction - focused on stabilization, through compact civil military teams, to build and provide security, ensure the legitimacy of the newly stated government, enforcing the Security Sector Reform, and giving support to postwar reconstruction. When a report of principles to be used in PRTs was published in 2003, it established three core areas of activity for the teams, which would be reconstruction, security, and support for the Afghan national government. Below the reader can visualize how the Afghan territory has been distributed in PRTs for the actors involved in the reconstruction.[18]

In general, the PRT teams are mostly military (though they also include civilians), reflecting what was described in chapter three on the militarization of humanitarianism in stabilization operations. The Afghan government was also involved in coordinating the PRTs' activities.

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[18] Available at: https://reliefweb.int/map/afghanistan/afghanistan-isaf-regional-commands-prt-locations-3-jun-2008

Despite the militarization of humanitarianism, a characteristic phenomenon of both the occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq, Jacobson (2005) still highlights that although the missions are composed of both civilians and military personnel, they are conveyed as classical "winning hearts and minds" campaigns.

In other words, the way in which PRTs have been designed reflects the "hearts and minds" mentality behind such stabilization missions, in which the humanitarian component is subordinated behind stabilization and security intentions, ultimately concerned with the West (or the interveners behind such operation), rather than the Afghans themselves. This turn of events, which in turn also indicates a change of scope, characteristic of the post-9/11 period, in which the humanitarian component is subordinated and deprioritized.

Figure 1 - Map of distribution of the PRTs

UNAMA was the mission sent by the UN to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the agreement signed in Bonn. Its goal was to integrate all UN elements present in Afghanistan into a single mission and administrate the reconstruction (Thier, 2006). Moreover, early in its establishment, it had been agreed that it was the UN's role to oversee the political and assistance parts of the overall intervention in Afghanistan (Brandt,

2005). The final establishment of it did not happen until the end of March 2002, and most of the authors recognize the difficulties that there have been in terms of fully implementing the mission and all its pillars.

ISAF, in turn, was set up as a multinational force, as previously established in the Bonn agreement in December 2001. As pointed out by Thier (2006), ISAF was the only mission sent to Afghanistan with an explicit peacekeeping and security mandate. ISAF's mandate allowed for all necessary forces to be used to fulfill it. In 2003, NATO took over the control of the operation with the objective of expanding it, making Afghanistan a new priority for the organization, according to Thier (2006). The first officially NATO-coordinated PRT in Afghanistan was established in 2003 by Germany in Kunduz.

Another important institutional set up is the Afghanistan Interim Authority (AIA), also as laid down by the Bonn Agreement, and the Emergency Loya Jirga (ELJ) with it. Both institutions were designed at the time preceding the establishment of the Afghanistan Transitional Authority (ATA) and the transitional administration that would rule Afghanistan before its first elections. We will discuss the latter institutions in detail in our next section, covering the constitutional development in Afghanistan, and further, the election management.

4.3.2 Constitutional Development in Afghanistan Post 9/11

Following the establishment of the Emergency Loya Jirga (ELJ), the agreement was that the Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) would be held after 18 months once the Transitional Authority had been set up. The elections, on the other hand, would be organized two years after the ELJ itself (Brandt, 2005; Thier et al, 2003).

The ELJ was held in June 2002. It had three main objectives: to assign a head of state, define the institutional scope of the ATA, and decide on the personnel that would work in it. According to the Thier et al (2003, p. 15),

> It was a mixed experience. The selection of delegates included a nationwide campaign of local nominations and secret balloting. This process came under significant pressure from local powerholders, frequently involving intimidation, the exclusion of women and, in some cases, violence. In the end, however, the 1,051 elected delegates to the Loya Jirga represented a diverse array across the political, religious and ethnic spectrums of Afghan society. This group was supplemented by approximately 550 appointed delegates. Many of these were also selected through equitable processes, such as elections of representatives from university faculties and refugee communities. The vast majority of female delegates were also selected. Many appointees, especially those added at the last minute, were representatives of military factions, who reduced the participatory potential of the loya jirga through intimidation.

Michelle Brandt (2005) describes closely how the constitution, in turn, was developed and the whole process surrounding it. Typically, the author describes that the constitution making in a post-conflict situation should require an independent body to draft the text, and thus to give room to other perspectives an idea, allow for enhanced public participations, have a distance of the on-going political agenda, and thus have a more neutral character overall. She deems that important to create further opportunities for consensus building. This was not, however, the case of Afghanistan. Another possibility, in turn, would be an elected body could embrace current debates, and being elected gives it automated legitimacy and "may also ensure that political elites feel ownership and implement the

constitution (Brandt, 2005, p.4)". Moreover, she adds that the complexity of making a constitution should be taken into account, and it requires a lot of external and technical assistance. It requires expertise from many fields, broad knowledge on the local politics, requires thinking and designing institutional reform and electoral procedures, budgets, rules of procedures, among other elements that are always part of the process.

Barnett Rubin, an influential scholar who specializes in Afghanistan and that has participated intensively through think thanks on policy making towards Afghanistan, has also published articles describing this path after 9.11: In 2004, the LJ was to approve a new constitution, that, according to him, was one of the last steps in terms of institution building in Afghanistan. The elections would be expectedly free and fair, with the aims of choosing a representative government to such a fragmented society. As planned in the Bonn agreements, the last steps would be precisely the drafting and subsequent approval of a new constitution, and elections.

Brandt and Thier describe the UN participation in this process. The organization provided technical assistance and was in charge of making sure the correct people and advisors were involved in the process. Basically, the UN typically offers expertise and advice throughout constitution making for the personnel involved, but the latter are the ones in charge of the final decisions.

Brandt also sheds light that the light footprint was also present during constitution-making: the idea was that little international effort and assistance would be provided or needed. The aim was to always have as much Afghan nationals working and involved in the process as possible. The timeframes, both for the constitution-making process and for the elections, were tight and highly criticized, as this could potentially have severe consequences to the peace process. Because of the limited timelines, the UN has not managed to act as expected either, whereas Brandt (2005) mentions it would have had a bigger impact if it had had more time. On the other hand, the level of political participation was remarkable, given the circumstances.

The Constitutional Loya Jirga was based on traditional Afghan models in order to confer more legitimacy to the creation of the new constitution. This was considered the approach that would enable the constitution to boast more legitimacy than other approaches, and attempted to be a representative council. The traditional loya jirga model had been adapted to serve as a constitutional-making body, and also in respect of the challenging security risks at stake in the country. One of the key concerns of establishing the new constitution was the urgent stabilization of Afghanistan (Brandt, 2005). The goal here was also to have consensus in order to make decisions, and unanimity was expected for such outcome. The delegates that composed the CLJ were requested to attend seminars to understand the rules of procedure of the new body, and it was paramount to understand that national unity was the ultimate goal, in order to pacify Afghanistan. The challenges were quite significant, as Afghanistan had been known for "gross human rights violations (including particularly inhuman treatment of women) as well as unaccountable and unstable government 80 Comparative constitutional law (illustrated by frequent conflagrations throughout the country as well as numerous unconstitutional changes in government)"(Al Ali, 2011, p. 81). The delegates were taught and immersed in consensus-building methodologies, according to Brandt (2005).

According to Zaid Al Ali (2011), there was significant involvement of the international community in the process. It was then strongly suggested that a presidential system would be the ideal solution to Afghanistan, which was even proposed by notable scholars such as Barnett Rubin himself, which will be addressed in the next section regarding election management.

4.3.4 Election Management in Afghanistan Post 9/11

Intimately connected to the constitution making process, election management would be the next step to establish the basic institutional design for the new Afghan state, and one of the final transitional steps as well for that purpose. The transition thus happened between 2001 and 2004, when the national elections would be then finally held.

The CLJ was a crucial moment to define the institutional design and electoral system of Afghanistan. As discussed in the previous section, international participation was considerable, with special attention to American influence in the process.

The presidential system was chosen:

> The final proposal that took shape in December 2003, however, provided for a powerful directly elected president who was solely responsible for appointing the prime minister as well as other key officials and who was not subject to a vote of no-confidence in the legislature, except for an impeachment process requiring an almost unattainable super-majority (Al Ali, 2011, p. 81).

Organizing elections, however, are not a simple task. They require years of organization and infra-structure. They require counting and registering voters, ensuring security (which in Afghanistan was an even bigger challenge), staff, IT, counting votes, and many other details (Thier et al, 2003; Brandt, 2005). The preparation is crucial, or it might spoil the entire peacebuilding process (Thier et al, 2003; Goodson, 2004; Berman et al, 2019). As Berman et al (2019) point out, typically the risk of calling elections sooner than after the correct planning and structuring might lead to the disruption of even more conflicts, because the elections might be subject to fraud due to the institutional fragility of a post-conflict environment. Moreover, the legitimacy of the government or of the state are often questioned, and the population might not trust the process, which may undermine the results of it.

The election day happened on October 9, 2004. Until then, Afghanistan was still being ruled by the ATA. In terms of numbers, Larry Goodson describes:

> The election worked, both procedurally and substantively. Nearly 5,000 polling centers (with 22,000 polling stations) in all 34 Afghan provinces, plus an additional 2,800 polling stations in Iran and Pakistan to serve the Afghan refugee populations there, handled over eight million Afghan voters, a 70% turnout rate. Despite significant security concerns motivated by Taliban threats to disrupt the elections, multiple attacks on

election workers and voters in the weeks prior to the polls, complaints of fraud and unfair advantage for Karzai (as well as his being favored by the U.S.), and some election day glitches, overall the elections were a remarkable success (Goodson, 2004, p. 94).

As expected, there have been attacks and threats, complaints of fraud, and the election of Karzai was questioned. It is also paramount to highlight, on another note, that it is implied by many authors that electing Karzai was favorable to the United States, as he had close links to government officials (Thier, 2006; Al Ali, 2011).

Bermat et al (2019) have run a thorough study in the Afghan elections in 2010, held to elect the lower house. This had been the second one already for the lower house (*Wolesi Jirga*), and the first having been in 2015.

They have conducted a survey to assess government legitimacy, and whether fraud was indeed being reduced through an experimental fraud reduction treatment. They also assessed whether the population regarded Afghanistan as an actual democracy, and who do they believe that provide services to them. Thus, it is an important study to understand how Afghans view their new governmental institutions.

The idea behind the survey was due to the elections happening during growing insurgencies and the US to expectedly begin withdrawing its troops from the country. Thus, it was a critical period, and the international community was closely watching it, highly concerned. They have conducted the research in polling centers that would meet certain security criteria, in regions that were relatively stable. The poll was conducted as follows:
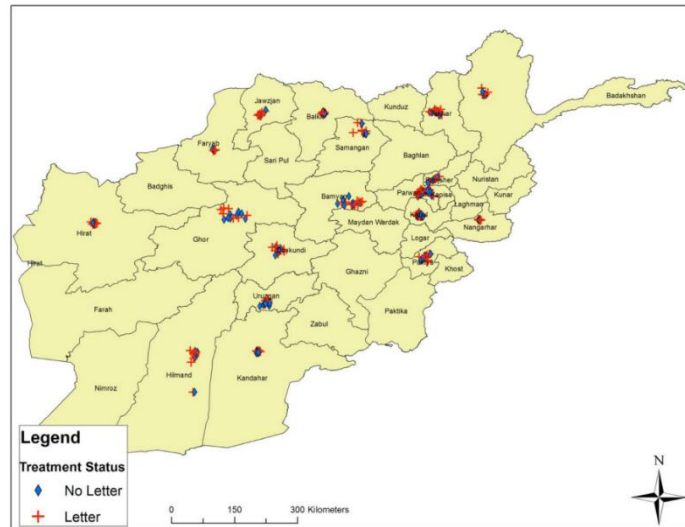
Figure 2- Experimental Sample

In a randomly chosen 238 of those polling centers,9 researchers delivered a notification letter to Polling Center Managers (PCMs) between 10 AM and 4 PM, during voting. Researchers then visited all 471 polling centers the following day to photograph the publicly posted election returns forms (which we term "photo quick count"). Letter delivery constituted the experimental treatment. The letter announced to PCMs that researchers would photograph election returns forms the following day (September 19) and that these photographs would be compared to results certified by the IEC. (Neither treatment nor control sites would be affected by measurement the day after the election, as polling staff were absent (Berman et al, 2019, p. 295).

For the purposes of the present work, what is relevant for us are the results of this survey:

The data depict a country with uneven support for government. About 67 percent of respondents view Afghanistan as a democracy, while only

82

18 percent prefer the police as their primary means of dispute adjudication. 20 percent of respondents believe that their Member of Parliament is responsible for providing services, while 93 percent respond that reporting an impending attack to the ANSF is important. Sixty-one percent believe voting will improve their future, 84 percent believe that paying taxes is somewhat or very important, and 53 percent would trust the Afghan government to determine the guilt of a friend (Berman et al, 2019, p. 301).

Thus, constitutional development and election management in post-conflict situations is extremely delicate and if gone wrong, might undermine an entire process. They are critical to generate legitimacy to the new government, and authors such as Kirsti Samuels (2006) emphasize that typically, it is hard to prevent and understand what the impact of the new constitution or new government will be both in the short and long terms. They are usually decisions that are made under critical security conditions, under the influence of international actors with specific, and even selfish, interests behind. In the case of Afghanistan, we have extensively discussed that not only a light footprint has been adopted, but also, most of the actions were a pure reflection of the United States' concerns with their own security. Thus, it is no surprise that they were behind the choice of the new president, as that would enable them to have more control of the security situation in Afghanistan. They would have a direct channel and would be able to politically manipulate the internal processes. However, this has led to several unintended consequences, mostly due to the fact that the humanitarian concerns have been mostly left aside. In the next section, we will have a quick look at one of the most concerning unintended questions of this intervention: the opium boom in Afghanistan.

4.4 Unintended Consequences in the NATO Intervention: The boom of the Opium Production

The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (222) estimates that the country is one of the largest producers of opium and heroin in the world. Moreover, as shown by research from the same body, the most significant growth in such productions came after the entry of the United States and NATO forces into the country, as can be seen in the figures reproduced below.

FIG. 1: Opium cultivation in Afghanistan
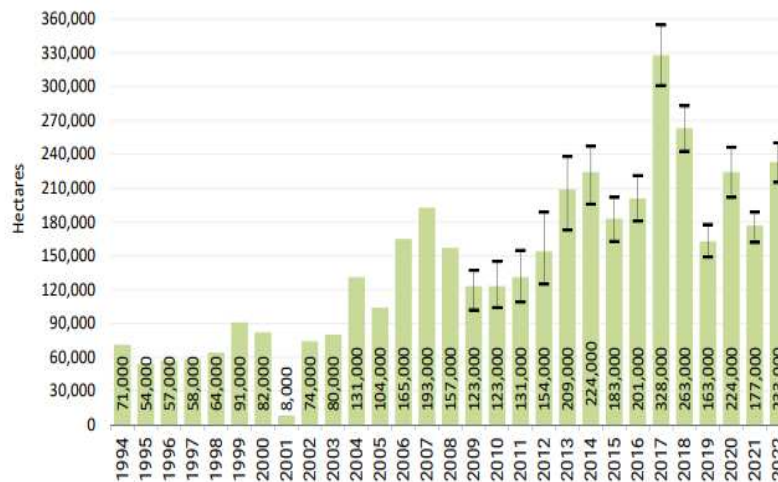
The UNODC (2022) also estimates that the total area that poppy cultivation for opium is of 233,000 hectares in 2022, an increase of 32% if compared to the previous year – in other words, since the latest takeover from the Taliban as well. In the UNODC (2022) survey it was also proven that most of the production, is still concentrated in the southern provinces of Afghanistan, as it has been traditionally.

Thus, what is understood from these statistics is that not only has a large part of the population adopted cultivation as a survival strategy, but this has also become an aggravating public health problem: the number of Afghan drug addicts has grown exponentially (UNODC, 2014).

Area under opium cultivation and opium production in Afghanistan, 1994-2022
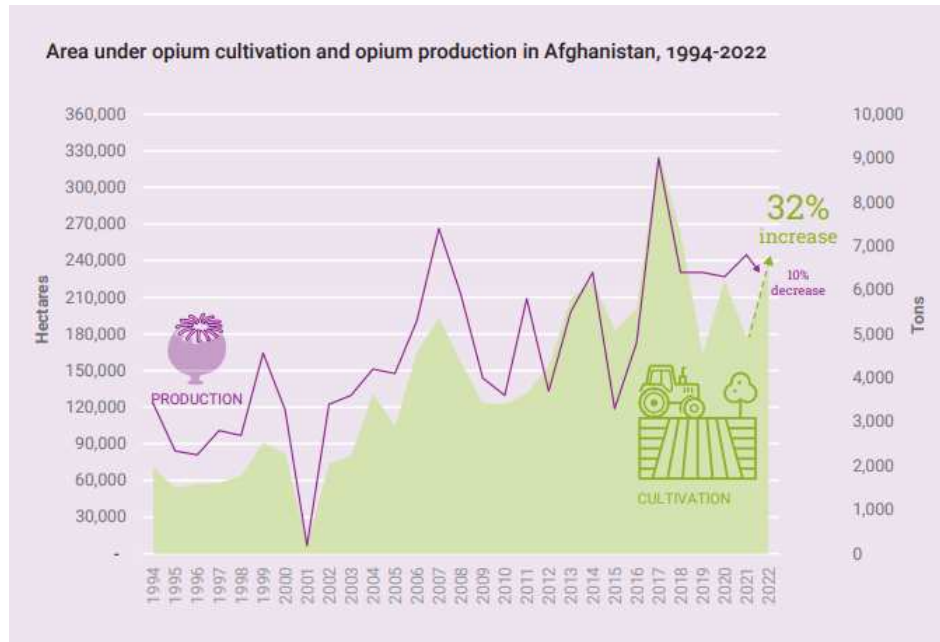
The considerable growth that occurred during the years of occupation demonstrate that the liberal peace did not allow welfare and development to be fully achieved, despite that being the promise behind liberal peacebuilding. Even if the development was aimed at Western (notably, United States' security), informal economies have flourished as liberal politics subjugate, exclude, and highlight the socioeconomic problems of the region, and reinforce differences, often creating new elites, in the place where the intervention is being made (Pugh, 2009), which is clear in the case of Afghanistan. It is no coincidence that drug production consolidated and established Afghanistan as the world's largest producer during this same period. For, behind the liberal peace, remains the belief that "economic systems

and economic behavior can be changed by external agency to achieve a particular developmental model, encompassing social policy, and that interventions can be nuanced to achieve this (Pugh, 2009, p. 79)." Now, as has been extensively discussed throughout this work, the structure of Afghan society is tribal and ethnic. Numerous attempts to include it in the capitalist system have failed, since neocolonialism.

Pugh (2009) understands that the well-being that the liberal peace ends up promoting, in practice, is based on increasing consumption: in the monetization of life, in the idea that life improves when something is acquired, or when there is an increase in purchasing power. This marginalizes the real conceptions of wellbeing for a particular country that is being intervened in. Does a tribal need an increase in purchasing power? Liberal peace, then, does not recognize or legitimize the transformations that shadow, or illicit, economies are promoting (Duffield, 2001; Pugh, 2009). As far as drugs are concerned, the global prohibition regime, which is part of a broad system of liberal global governance, is emblematic. What happened in Afghanistan was nothing new. With democratization, as part of the liberal peace project, there was a ban on drug production, which had previously been allowed by the Taliban.

Thus, not only has drug production become more profitable because it has been prohibited, but it has also become the best alternative for subsistence for a large part of society - which also translates into the search for well-being that liberal peace has not provided. This part of society is not limited to farmers, for example. Like any other shadow economy, it penetrates various spheres, both social and political. It involves members of the government, corruption schemes, and some authors even point to the involvement of American and allied soldiers. More than that, it has continued to be a resource base for the Taliban. In fact, drugs as a shadow economy in Afghanistan work through a very complex network.

Amidst such ambiguity behind the liberal peace rhetoric and practice, if the concern of the United States is indeed its own security, and hence the stabilization of Afghanistan, it should still have focused its attentions on the opium issue.

The scope of the mission included order and security under the aegis of a sovereign state. More than that, on several occasions the United States made clear how one of the major goals was to establish democracy in Afghanistan, as well as adherence to human rights (Rubin, 2006). The Afghan state had long been marginalizing its population, as we could see from the historical background provided in the previous sections. Nor when there was some period of stability. Thus, although, as we shall see, Bush recognized that the Afghan population was experiencing hardship and serious humanitarian problems, they were all subordinated to military operations.

Therefore, most of the NATO measures, ultimately, are taken in the name of security, which overrides any other value, as Vivienne Jabri (2006) reveals. Understanding this as part of liberal ideology, we see what is behind the liberal peace in fact, that is, what its real motivations are. In other orders, all the acts were justified on the basis of terrorism, which would allow the use of violence and control (Jabri, 2006; Duffield, 2001; 2007).

In other words, exclusions have already been created in the discourse of the war on terror, especially regarding the humanitarian aspects of the conflict. What we conclude from this is that already the name 'stabilization' implies that the liberal peace and its core assumptions have shifted: the humanitarian component has been deprioritized. Stabilization is to prevent new threats and new terrorist attacks - but to the United States and to its allied countries.

4.5 The Withdrawal

President Trump's initial overall decision on U.S. policy toward Afghanistan, back still in 2017, was to remain in the country, in a deeply militarized approach, and with a much clearer de-prioritization of other issues (such as political, humanitarian, and nation-building concerns) (Felbab Brown 2017). He had, at the time, chosen to even enlarge the military capacities of the troops. Trump thus went even further away from any humanitarian concern regarding their presence in Afghanistan. He symbolizes the ultimate stab in the entire US strategy in the country, prior to his own decision to withdraw completely.

As we have concluded throughout this work, and in agreement with many authors in the International Relations and Political science fields, the main objective behind US operations in Afghanistan have always been protecting the US from further terrorist attacks, and this has been the backbone of their strategy since then, hidden under the façade of liberal peacebuilding.

Thus, Trump's policies in Afghanistan have shifted, and in February 2020, Trump signed an agreement in which US troops would be withdrawn from Afghan soil by May 2021.

Laurel Miller (2021) on the other hand, analyzes Biden's approach to it. It was up to him to effectively remove the troops from Afghanistan. Moreover, he decided to remove Afghanistan from the sphere of US political interests as well, almost as it the core issue had been entirely tackled. In the most recent later years preceding the withdrawal, despite being highly militarized, it was barely institutionalized and resources that were allocated to local development were insufficient. She emphasizes that even after 20 years the development efforts had not been enough.

Also, Miller (2021) agrees and concludes that their troops were never there for pacification purposes. Risk has not been properly assessed, and if they have been, they have been left aside purposefully. By the time her article was published, it was still unsure whether the Taliban would manage to take over the Afghan territory again. We know that this is the

reality know, despite Biden affirming that he would continue his support through diplomatic and financial efforts. Political articulation was minimal, and the tragedy was set, from the moment NATO's operation has been launched in Afghanistan. United States' rhetoric strongly affirms their objectives have been achieved, but not only the outcome was even worse than before the intervention, but it is also questionable whether the United States can be sure about its security.

4.6 Concluding Remarks: The Liberal Peace and NATO Intervention: Rhetoric and Practice

We have discussed extensively in the previous chapters about the discourse and theoretical backgrounds behind liberal peace, from its inception and origins within the liberal traditions. We have also discussed in detail the development of such operations, from their very beginning, until its current state.

We have been able to observe, through the case study in Afghanistan, its application in detail, through setting up the institutional design from adopting specific security measures. We have also briefly discussed the attempts on promoting development and how they played out under the stabilization context. With the example of Afghanistan, we have empirically challenged the liberal peace ideals and their actual practice since the so-called War on Terror. What has changed? How did that happen? What are the new justifications behind international interventions and how they are legitimized? Whose security is in question nowadays? How relevant is the humanitarian component in current interventions? We will focus on answering the questions related to the object of study: the liberal peace.

Many critical authors, such as Mark Duffield (2001; 2007), shed light over the fact that one of the main focuses of global governance is to impose the project of liberal peace in the countries of the global south, underdeveloped, that present threats, so that such project ultimately aims at stability, consequently, security. The liberal peace would implement institutions, market economies, democracy, and conflict resolution so that conflicts would cease and there would be no recurrence

However, the project provoked quite different reactions and consequences than what was exposed through rhetoric and on the political agenda. Tschirgi (2003), for example, says that one of the main issues that emerged due to the liberal peace and what they refer to as the security-development nexus was that there was a widening of the gap between the political and security interests of (Northern/ Western) governments vis-à-vis the needs of Southern countries.

David Chandler (2007), in turn, sees this agenda as already subordinating the interests of the South, and that the intention to reduce poverty and create stability infers a desire to contain the instability of such regions from dissipating, implying that there is a securitization of the development agenda, with which Duffield (2001), agrees. Chandler (2007) also emphasizes on the fact that there is an extensive gap between the political rhetoric guided by liberal peace and their actual implementation in the field, in practice, and they are disconnected in many ways.

There is a desire to prioritize rhetoric over political accountability; NGOs are also expected to act more, and there is almost no connection between rhetoric and policy, so that the non-Western world is understood in a symbolic way (Chandler, 2007). This argument also points to the fact that the humanitarian component is no longer central, and not the focus of such missions any longer.

Based on our observations so far, we highlight, therefore, the existence of a large gap between rhetoric and practice, in which policy is developed in isolation and reticent about the real needs of what happens in the field. In the discourse, liberalism is still deeply concerned with the individual, and as in theory, the liberal peace project acts under considerable influence of the human security concept. In theory it also conducts its operations with a focus on the welfare, multifaceted security, and freedom of these populations.

Thus, liberal peace acting under the discursive force of human security could indicate that it is guided by a deepened conception of security, which entails the humanity, because it would not imply actions only focused on national security. However, what a deeper

analysis of liberalism shows is that, deep down, the state has never been left aside as an actual security concern. It is still considered, by the organization itself, as the sovereign entity, as the main actor. And, as liberalism preaches, the state is responsible for providing security to individuals, and only in this way can it have access to its freedom. However, the 9/11 attacks provoked a change in this aspect.

Looking at liberal peacebuilding as a timeline, towards the withdrawal of the United States form Afghanistan and the latest events in Ukraine, there is much room for scientific research and debate. We have been left in a vacuum. Liberal peacebuilding starts off at the end of the Cold War as ambitious, with humanitarian promises, and the international community deeply engaged in preventing mass atrocities from happening again. It gradually shifts to less institutionalized approaches, and the humanitarian justification becomes less and less relevant. The justifications shift towards a security concern – but a concern for the security of the intervening states, and not the intervened ones. One can discuss whether there has been resistance as well from the side of the host nations (2019), but beyond that, we can observe incoherent policies and a lack of understanding of local realities.

We can also refer to this arc that begins from the End of the Cold War also as a peacebuilding pendulum, in which policies can be either focused on human rights and humanitarian concerns, or the right opposite. The US counterterrorism and stabilization doctrine was also applied in Iraq, which very similar unfortunate outcomes.

The United Nations Security Council also has a deep influence in this timeline, as it is often in charge of approving mandates. They started as robust and shifted also towards as less institutionalized. Light footprint became a trend, and some regard it as a positive change as well.

5. Conclusions

The previous sections and chapters of this worked provided us with the theoretical framework for developing our core arguments. First, it was necessary to trace the origins of liberalism, the role of the individual in it, and the path that has been taken to the origin of peacebuilding operations. Such operations carry within them and seek to convey, especially through discourse, the values of the liberal tradition, which comprise, among others, the importance of the individual and its freedom (or, in other words, this can also be translated into a strong humanitarian component), which are reflected in a whole set of ideals and institutions.

We have also shed light into a new trend in international politics: the latest rise of populism. The links between populism and liberalism may help us understand the changes within liberal peacebuilding. Populism in its core challenges most of the core assumptions of liberalism and, by consequence, liberal democracy.

But it also exposes its cracks and tensions, and because of such reasons, which possibly explains its success around the world. The number supporters of right-wing populists are remarkable.

It challenges rule of law and pluralism, it questions the validity of human rights, by using very direct and simple language, often appealing to the masses. Trump is thus, a notable example of such a leader. When designing his strategy for Afghanistan, not only he increased militarized actions, but also, he decreased any initiative towards the promotion of development or towards the improvement of local governance. Moreover, he has also decided to remove the troops entirely, without a fair assessment of the risks involved in doing so. He signed a deal with the Taliban, and Biden, despite being a democrat, onboarded as the agreement was already in place.

Both emphasized how much the US intentions in Afghanistan had distanced from any humanitarian concern, despite the fact that Afghanistan, even under the hands of the

Taliban, has historically been the victim, or if not the stage, of gross human rights violations. This has been largely overlooked by the NATO and US intervention.

The intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, in the beginning of the 2000s, introduced the stabilization doctrines and defined another path for liberal peacebuilding. The concern with terrorism, and the introduction of counter terrorism as part of the scope of peacebuilding points towards a less liberal approach. Rule of law, the promotion of human rights and individual freedoms were far from being at the center stage of the Western agenda in Afghanistan. Has it been a way of attempting to back out? Given the latest situations in Syria and Ukraine, the West has opted by taking less responsibility. There has only been increased funding for counterterrorism and promotion of more militarized strategies. It is arguable whether the term stabilization applies for the host countries, in that regard.

Wrapping up, one of the main elements that was verified throughout this research is that there was a change, both rhetorical and practical, in peacebuilding operations after the 9/11 attacks. This change has even caused peacebuilding, as the ultimate representation of liberal peace and its operationalization, to go through changes and to distance itself from certain values considered central to liberalism, (if not the main one): the individual, its freedom and well-being. To the detriment of a concern with the security of the mandatory states, the individual to whom liberal peace would be taken was relegated to the margins. While other elements, such as market economy, free trade, political participation through democratic representation, and institutions continue to be implemented, the individual, and especially his well-being and freedom were the motives behind the other, more concrete values, were not taken into question. Liberalism, especially traditional liberalism, proposes that market economy and free trade, for example, be stimulated for the sake of the welfare that all individuals would have, because everyone would gain and would be able to consume freely.

Liberal Peace, as defined by its main critics, represents a hegemonic and ideological project whose traditions go back to the set of ideas that make up liberalism plus the Kantian legacy of Perpetual Peace (Richmond, 2005). The core of this tradition is based on the valorization of the individual and his rationality (Doyle, 2012).

However, when put into practice through the implementation of peacebuilding, the focus would be on protecting the national security of the United States and its allies. A model is promoted and promised to the host nations as something that will bring progress, development, but ultimately, through time, as we have observed, it becomes clear that the US and its allies and their specific concerns security overrides the needs of the local individual.

Goodhand and Sedra (2013) point out that peacebuilding used to be seen as an antidote to internal conflict. Both these authors and Duffield (2001) emphasize that it is a transformative strategy. The way of life of the recipient individual must be entirely modified and readjusted to the liberal molds. Thus, this agenda is operationalized both through the implementation of such technologies and through all the so-called liberal reforms that are proposed by global governance. Besides the rhetorical set of values, peacebuilding also employs structural changes in the local constitution, conducts reforms in various sectors of government (especially security), promotes rural development, and other economic reforms to make it fit for a market economy. In other words, it is a complete transformation in the structural bases of a government, which occurs in a radical and imposed manner (Duffield, 2001; Goodhand & Sedra, 2013). Despite the securitization process in these states, it is worth noting that it precedes the 9/11 attacks, but it is after this date that it gains strength and becomes discursively explicit. Peacebuilding and liberal peace used to have a much stronger rhetoric presence, accompanied by emerging norms such as R2P, specially after tragedies such as Srebrenica and Rwanda during the 1990s. The idea of preventing humanitarian atrocities gained appeal in the international community, and doctrines such as R2P quickly gained visibility. While the focus emerged as primarily to save lives, time has shown us that national security has slowly become more important to the mandatary nations.

In that sense, regarding conceptions of security and the changes that 9/11 brought about, while the 1990s saw an increasing shift of policies towards the individual, the attacks brought about a setback in this regard. There was a resumption of the strategic focus as the state and its national security. There was, for example, the creation of the Homeland Security Department in the United States, which attests to such a statement.

The operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, were essentially military, so that the initial objectives were limited to the war on terror. However, for lack of consistent exit strategies, the operations expanded, and other strategies began to be used to contain the proliferation of other terrorist threats. Thus, both operations proved to be rhetorical opportunities for the United States, which saw peacebuilding as a way to achieve the ultimate goal, and, for Bush, a way to win reelection, as posited by Goodhand and Sedra (2013). Again, these were measures taken in the name of security, not in the name of liberal values in the first place. The two authors also add that the post-9/11 liberal peace is based on a contractualist notion in which the state will provide security and public services. Richmond (2011) also sees the liberal peace as a contract, and points out that it is assimilated to a commercial contract, in which the United States and NATO, place themselves as managers. And, gaining acceptance of such a contract by the intervened state proves attractive to the West, which, in the role of manager, is able to exercise governmentality for total control of such unstable spaces (Richmond, 2011). Thus, the state created by the liberal peace, is a great paradox, as Rubin (2007) argues. First, because its formation is imposed and does not correspond to the processes that European states have gone through.

The shift within liberal peace, that we observed in our case study, especially with respect to the 2000s, has pushed it back from liberal ethics whose core is the importance of the individual. We also observe that while the discourse of the 1990s, under the influence of human security, placed the individual as its core, the 9/11 attacks led to a return to a traditional conception of security in which the state is once again the referent object, in which national security becomes a priority and measures that exceed the law are allowed in the name of protecting this space. On the other hand, a deconstruction of liberalism also reveals to us that security is indeed a priority, that the exception exists precisely for this purpose, and that it is the state that is ultimately responsible for ensuring security, which in turn will ensure the freedom of the individual. Thus, the centrality of the individual is questionable if we look at it from the perspective of security.

Another finding, despite the trajectory of Afghan state-building, is that we note a clear tendency on the part of the attempts to impose a state to marginalize the individual ever

since. In the specific case of Afghanistan, there was never any attempt at internal development, although there was tax collection, and a heavy reliance on external resources.

Thus, liberal peace proves to be a project in decay, that after 9/11, marginalizes the locals and any humanitarian concern, contrary to its ambitious promises during its inception. Instead, nowadays it implements the forces of a liberal model not so much concerned with the recipient individual and his freedom, but rather with inserting him into a pre-established Western model, which disguises itself as freedom in the midst of liberal discourse, which lost its breath and, even, legitimacy after the attacks in the World Trade Center.

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