STATE BUILDING IN POST-2001 AFGHANISTAN: THE LIBERALIZATION PARADOX

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Introduction

The post-Cold War international environment has become conspicuous for a changed appreciation of the concept of state sovereignty. Under the new concept of 'sovereignty as responsibility', the failure of a state to enforce its coercive authority over its territory, and inability, either to deliver services or protect the population from violence, was justified as a reason strong enough for international community to intervene for rebuilding the so-called failed states.[1] Somalia, Sudan, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Balkans, East Timor, Afghanistan and more than forty other states have experienced international intervention in the post-Cold War era; the rationale is state failure and the remedy is international intervention for state building. Such international interventions are followed by attempts at building and rebuilding of institutions of the fractured state. This interventionist state-building practice is guided by the Western notion of a centralized, bureaucratized Weberian state that exercises a monopoly of power over violence within its territory. Such conventional top down understanding of state building is, in turn, manifested in attempts at constructing security sector apparatuses, a centralized bureaucracy for tax collection, service provision, and political institutions based on liberal democratic lines, such as, a constitution, elections, a civil society and a liberal market economy.

The liberal re-construction of post-conflict states stem from conventional state-failure discourses, which identify state weakness and failure with lack of legitimacy of domestic political systems.[2] Such an understanding

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of state failure is carried into the state-building models. State building is hence theorized as strengthening of democratic forms of political participation and carried out in practice through bringing in Western democratic forms of governance practices, including constitutional guarantees of individual rights, elections, political parties, civil society and the like. Liberal political order is accompanied by reforms in the economic field. Since economic under-development is cited as another area of deficiency in failed states,[3] theoretically this limitation is argued to be a function of lack of liberal economic institutions. It is supposedly tackled through an orientation towards liberal market institutions, including free trade, macro-economic management, property rights, greater private sector role and a free market.

In the building of liberal political and economic order, paradoxes emerge because despite aiming for stability, Western democratic and market reforms may not blend well with the local cultural, traditional and economic norms and practices in intervened failed states. Especially problematic have been democratic legitimacy experiments in elections and participatory politics in post-intervened states. International state builders have found it hard to handle the paradoxes generated from rapid political and economic liberalization experiments in post-conflict settings. This paper attempts to bring out the various paradoxical practices in the liberal order and their resultant destabilizing and slowing impact on the state building efforts. The framework of this paper is designed around five sections. After introduction, Section two divulges into the paradoxes resulting from liberal state-building models in post conflict and intervened states. Section three focuses on liberalization paradoxes in post-2001 state building exercise in Afghanistan. Section four briefly attempts to address the issue of how to address the liberalization paradoxes in intervened conflict states. And the last section provides the conclusions.

State building as building of a liberal order: The liberalization paradoxes

State building is theoretically understood as the building of a liberal political and economic order, exemplified by the following explanations:

State Building as Liberal Political and Economic Order

Dobbins	Nation building[4] (state building) is the use of armed forces in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin a transition to democracy.[5]
Paris and Sisk	State building is the construction of legitimate, effective governmental institutions.[6]
Brinkerhoff	Stabilization and Reconstruction (state building) S&R missions in post-intervened settings prioritize governance by focusing on 'democratization and elections, legislative development, formal government structures, civil society participation, combating corruption and reforming central

	institutional architecture of the state'.[7]
OECD	State building is an 'endogenous process to enhance the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state, driven by state society relations'.[8]
Fritz and Menocal	State building priorities include constitution making, elections, centre-periphery relations, security, legal framework and administrative governance including the creation of civil service and public financial management.[9]

Liberalism in post-conflict societies is profoundly pronounced in the construction of a democratic and legitimate political order. The ideals of democratic legitimacy owe their renewed resurgence to the fall of socialism. In the period immediately following the end of Cold War, democracy was emphasized as the new panacea for Third World political deficiencies. Literature produced by the donor agencies (engaged in post-conflict reconstruction) in particular, are mindful of the significance of building legitimate state institutions. This literature underscores the importance of effective engagement in post-conflict settings, through aiding legitimate and democratic state-building process.[10] The state's ability to manage state-society expectations and state-building process, it is argued, is influenced by the degree of legitimacy it has in the eyes of its population. State building is, therefore, declared as the virtuous circle of legitimacy, projected as both the means as well as an end for successful state building.[11] Constitution making, elections, democratic participation of individuals and groups in political settlement and promotion of civil society, independent media and free market are some of the tools for experimenting with liberal governance in post-conflict societies. The discussion below argues that the pursuit of rapid political and economic liberalization strategies in conventional state-building model has proved to be paradoxical, and has generated many dilemmas, thereby impeding the attainment of state building goals.

Post-conflict societies are usually characterized by a lack of agreement on basic rules of political engagement and competition and strengthening of institutional capacity for service provision. Introduction of liberal democracy in such post-conflict settings may not complement the process of state building. Donor's brand of democratization, which encompasses active role for civil society and local media, promotion of women representation and guarantees of minority rights, may not blend in because of incompatibility with the shared local norms of conflict and post-conflict societies. Western donor's emphasis on the growth of civil society organizations, without corresponding development of essential qualities of moderation and accommodation, may act as a recipe for political instability in nascent democracies.[12] Introduction of factional democracy in a weak and divided country can spell disaster. Examples of Somalia (mid 1980s), Ethiopia (early 1990s), Sudan and Mozambique (1980s) show that a lack of agreement on basic rules to manage conflicts and weak economic safeguards to the elites, encouraged conflicts to manifest freely in the

wake of democratic reforms; political parties deliberately promoted ethnic and religious identities whereas the elites established monopolistic positions.[13]

Recent literature highlights the disruptive impact of transition to democratic legitimacy.[14] Nascent democracies may prove more indulgent in neo-patrimonial and clientelist practices, nullifying the arguments of democratic regimes being more accountable and responsible in running state affairs.[15] Cambodia's example serves to illustrate that democratization reforms and electoral competition in societies dominated by factional politics, there is likely to develop distrust between coalition partners, which may exacerbate violence, produce intimidation and suppression of political opponents.[16] And Angola's case suggests that holding elections before consolidating parties and disarming groups may give a setback to the democratization process, and a push the society into war and violence.[17] Reservation is also expressed on promoting democracy in poor, ethnically divided and religious societies, which are characterized by lack of effective state structures and absence of a tradition of political accountability or local self rule.[18] Similar findings are also suggested by Enterline and Grieg's study on 'imposed democracies' in intervened states. Their study suggests imposed democracies to have a high co-relation to failure, especially in the first ten years of democracy's inception. This was most likely in those post-conflict states that were ethnically heterogeneous and had very low GDP levels (domestic environment). Both positively co-related with the failure of weak democracies in intervened states.[19]

Democratic legitimacy's main thrust in post-conflict situations is holding of free, fair and transparent elections for the purpose of installing a government that is representative of wider sections of population. Elections in post-conflict settings have generated their own set of controversies; especially contentious has been the issue of timing of elections. External state builders have found it problematic to balance the decision between holding elections at the earliest after restoration of minimal order, or afterwards, when objectives of stability and disarmament are achieved. There have been attempts by external state builders to devise electoral rules in conflict settings to achieve desirable results through a process of 'electoral engineering.'[20] It has included measures, such as, increased financial assistance to moderates for increasing their chance of winning elections (1998 Bosnian elections), devising rules that bar warlords from running for elections (parliamentary elections in Afghanistan) and requiring candidates to seek multi-ethnic votes for success. These engineering attempts by external actors have raised doubts over the legitimacy of elected candidates as genuine representatives of the locals. Engineering of votes has also failed to check the issue of ethnic votes going to ethnic leaders, who at times (as Bosnian case suggests) may be involved in war crimes. In such cases, given the history of repression and conflict among ethnicities, as in the Balkans, candidates may feel difficulty in appealing to multi-ethnic votes. And moderate candidates adopting multi-ethnic vote appeal may be dubbed anti-nationalists by their respective groups. In the 2010 presidential elections in Bosnia, the Serb presidential candidate was largely seen as anti-Serb by his fellow Serbian population for the concessions he promised to secure Muslim votes.[21]

Liberalization for the sake of promoting peace building and an all-inclusive political process may carry strains in conflict states. Efforts for peace making may collide with those necessary for creating effective statehoods. For example, political deals for ending conflicts may undermine requirements of justice and peace by giving concessions to leaders responsible for civil war and human sufferings. Brokered deals with elites through allocation of economic rents may stabilize the political system briefly, but undermine economic viability of the state in the longer term. Peace deals may grant special concession to particular powerful groups, in terms of the exclusion of more marginalized groups. And conversely, the threat of prosecution, for example, by the International Criminal Court (ICC), may discourage the militant leadership from negotiating peace.[22] Furthermore, as Afghanistan's case suggests, local warlords may be deliberately strengthened by external actors for the sake of cooperation in counter-terrorism objectives, leaving the central government with little choice but to co-opt them in important positions in the government.[23] The state builder's reliance on warlords for counter-insurgency is highly criticized by scholars, who express reservations regarding their submission to centralized state authority.[24]

The pursuit of liberal economic order in intervened states also produces paradoxes and limitations. The neo-liberal economic theory argues in favour of curtailing state's intrusive role in the economy. It is argued by the neo-liberals that markets are more efficient in resource allocation, therefore, intervention by the state in the natural working of markets generated negative effects on growth rates.[25] Intrusive management of economy by the state provided opportunities for officials and entrepreneurs to engage in corruption and rent seeking.[26] The neoliberal market consensus,[27] in short, argued that the state was supposed to act as a manager of a market economy, having responsibility for legal order, stable property rights, infrastructure and social services, provision and promotion of democratic accountability, and civil society participation. Therefore, polities needed to be based on market economy, democracy and institutional reforms of rightsizing bureaucracy in order to reduce incentives for corruption and rent seeking. Neo-liberal theory influenced an ideological re-orientation in the UN and donor agencies, which stressed strategies for promoting liberal market and democratic practices as a remedy to conflicts in the developing countries.

These principles of liberal governance were exported to developing countries, while International Financial Institutions (International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) promoted the ideology under its loan conditionality in relation to its Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Based on the above assumptions, free market economy demands the restructuring of an economy by removing state subsidies and curtailing extra governmental expenditures, usually through cuts in public welfare systems. The liberalization experiment, by limiting state functions in the absence of strong regulatory institutions for overseeing the working of financial bodies and by demoting state's institutional capacity through its free markets system, increased poverty and led to a decline in living standards for many African and Asian countries. It also failed to carry

any impact on the conflict states intervened by the UN under the Liberal Peace Thesis.[28] In post-conflict states, such reforms hit low-income groups badly and created a legitimacy deficit for the state-building process. Reduction in tariffs or export duties as an instrument of enhancing free trade, (another structural reform of the IMF), narrows the revenue base of the government. Privatization of public enterprises, without defining property rights enforcement and regulatory frameworks such as monopoly laws, creates further problems.[29] A recent research suggests a rise in income inequalities in free market transitions.[30] Such economic transitions may end up benefiting some groups at the expense of others. Scholars, therefore, argue that such economic growth will seldom help stabilize a political system, unless the benefits of economic revival are shared across all social constituencies.[31]

To sum up, this section argued that the emphasis on liberal political and economic reforms in post-intervention state-building model generates several paradoxes and inhibits the achievement of state-building goals. The liberal variant of state building is Weberian and western-inspired, and its imposition in failed and conflict settings generates a set of paradoxes and dilemmas. The findings of the paper suggests that such paradoxes inhibit the performance of state building interventions and complicates the attainment of state-building goals. State-building practice, as the building of a liberal political and economic order creates its own set of paradoxes. These paradoxes are generated as electoral experiments are conducted. Issues in relation to the timing, sequencing and conduct of elections have complicated the state-building exercises. Dilemmas are also generated as a result of the introduction of political and civil liberties in a divided society, where democratic culture is factional and, where viable state structures are hardly functioning. Civil society growth in the absence of moderation and accommodating political culture results in instability. And democratic political settlement involving the inclusive participation of conflict parties creates tensions between peace-building and state-building requirements. Economic liberalization experiment affects state's effectiveness by reducing its income generation under the free trade policy. Reduction of state subsidies under IMF's restructuring programmes hurts the economic position of low-income groups and reduces the legitimacy of state-building processes. In short, the liberal variant of state building as the construction of a liberal political and economic order generates paradoxes that negatively affect the attainment of state-building goals. The following section attempts to investigate liberal paradoxes in the democratic practice of elections in post-2001 Afghan state building process.[32]

Liberalization paradoxes in post-2001 Afghan state building: The experiment with democratic elections

The post-2001 state building process in Afghanistan began with a promise of introducing a democratic representative system in the country. In order to lay the foundations for a liberal democratic system, the Bonn Agreement provided timelines for a new constitution as well as elections to legitimize a new post-intervention political setup.[33] Since then, democratic

experiment has been conducted multiple times for electing the president as well as members of national and provincial assemblies.[34] These experiments in democratic transition have highlighted the tensions associated with the liberalization of a political system in post-conflict settings. Rapid liberal exercises have created a set of dilemmas that have been particularly difficult for international state builders to handle. The following paragraphs discuss the dilemmas that have complicated the democratic legitimacy experiment in Afghanistan.

The fundamental issue in Afghan experience with democratic elections has been a shortage of population data as well as clear demarcation of electoral boundaries. For a successful electoral assessment of population, it is important to have a population census first and electoral demarcation of boundaries to create clear constituencies. The last known population census in Afghanistan had taken place in 1979; since then, no national based census of population has taken place. Lack of population census is complimented by still vaguely defined electoral boundaries especially at the district level.[35] These issues have made constituency determination problematic.

The lack of census and demarcation issues notwithstanding, a very complex system of Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) was adopted for election of Wolesi Jirga (lower house of Afghan Parliament). Scholars termed this system too complicated to fill the 249-member Wolesi Jirga (181 seats for open contestation by men and women and 68 reserved for women). It was because voters were perplexed about choosing thousands of candidates vying for multiple seats in five separate balloting.[36] SNTV is also discouraging the growth of a healthy political party culture. In SNTV, majority seats do not go to a party winning the largest number of votes, but the number of seats depends on individual candidate's performance within his party. Therefore, individuals win votes for parties, not the other way around.[37] As a result, although more than 50 political parties registered for the first parliamentary elections,[38] the adoption of SNTV meant political parties were banned from contesting elections and individual candidates were discouraged from running on party tickets.

At the provincial level too, the use of SNTV was criticized for favouring candidates who secure solid voter bloc in a single area, rather than getting votes in multiple areas, which resulted in assemblies that represented only a few communities to the detriment of others.[39] This system, it is argued, promotes a culture of corruption and vote buying by encouraging candidates who win on the basis of fewer votes.[40] Rubin criticized SNTV for creating an unrepresentative parliament of local leaders, with no incentive to cooperate with one another or the government, and for discouraging the growth of a genuine political culture.[41] It is rightly emphasized that political parties flourish and strengthen their organizational coherence only when candidates are allowed to contest on party tickets and campaign as well as when they share public information from their respective party's platform.[42]

An electoral trend that the different presidential and parliamentary elections has demonstrated is the corresponding receding number of voter turn-out for each of the subsequent elections in post-2004 period. In 2004, when the

first elections for the President's office were held, there was a relatively higher voter turn-out of 70%.[43] In the second presidential elections (2009), the voter turn-out was 49.8%, which was much lower than the 2004 Presidential elections. Regional variations in voter turn-out were also witnessed. For example, the turn-out in the North was higher (60%) than the South (30%).[44] Voter turn-out in the April 2014 Presidential elections has been modest; around 6.3 million voters out of a total of 12 million turned out to vote.[45] This is higher than the 2009 elections, but much lower than the 2004 one. In legislative elections of September 2005, a modest 6.4 million voters turned out to vote for approximately 6,000 candidates fighting over 249 parliamentary (Wolesi Jirga) and 217 provincial council (Da Vilayat Shura) positions.[46] The voter turn-out for the 2010 parliamentary elections was also lesser and amounted to just 3-4 million.[47] Other accounts cite only 33% of the registered voters elected 249 members from a list of 2,577 candidates in the 2010 elections.[48]

It is pertinent to discuss the issue of receding voter turn-out in each of the subsequent elections in post-2001 Afghanistan. An analysis of the electoral literature reveals several issues. First, the process of voter registration for presidential and parliamentary elections suffered from allegations of irregularities. In the presidential elections, both at the national and sub-national levels, there were reports of either under-registration or over-registration of voters. For example, out of the 9.8 million eligible national voters in the 2009 Presidential elections, only 9 million were registered nationally. In the same elections, some provinces reported around 140% over-registration of voters.[49] Irregularities in voter registration procedures delegitimized the process of elections at its very root. Such irregularities were not only witnessed in pre-election registration process, but also in the post-election period. The Presidential elections of 2009 especially carried allegations of widespread frauds in votes. One account (EU Election monitors) cited that one-third of the votes casted in favour of Hamid Karzai were suspected of being fraudulent in nature.[50] Second, in the case of parliamentary elections, the Electoral Law of 2010, which devised rules for the new parliamentary elections, was passed quite late by the President's office. This late passage of 2010 Electoral Law not only raised questions on the President's non-consultation with the parliament, but also that of giving limited time for implementation of new procedures and regulations. Therefore, less than 3,000 candidates competed for 249 Wolesi Jirga seats, which are divided proportionally among the 34 provinces.[51]

Third, security issues have marred each of the Afghan presidential as well as parliamentary elections and hampered electoral preparation by the Election Commission of Afghanistan (ECA). One of the manifestations of lack of security and violence was reflected in fewer numbers of polling stations available in the 2010 parliamentary elections as compared to the 2005 one. The figure was 6,300 for the 2005 elections, which came down to 5,900 in the 2010 elections.[52] Fourth, the election campaign for parliamentary elections (2010) was riddled with violence and intimidation of voters and candidates. Three candidates, thirteen workers and two election officials were reportedly killed in these campaigns.[53] And lastly, there is not only a corresponding decline in the

total number of votes cast in each elections, but also a decline in the total number of female votes cast and female candidates that ran for parliamentary elections. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, for example, only 16% of the candidates were female.[54] This figure reflects gender bias in these elections, not only in relation to female candidates running for elections, but also in relation to their low turn-out on the actual day of the election.

The post-election scenario is also discouraging in that a large number of votes have been cancelled as a result of voting irregularities. It happened in the case of 2010 parliamentary election results, which were scandalized due to voting irregularities. The Election Complaint Commission ECC (a temporary administrative adjudicatory body dealing with electoral complaints and formed 120 days before an election) received 5,856 complaints relating to polling and counting in the wake of the 2010 parliamentary elections. Resultantly, 1.3 million ballots were cancelled by the ECC. But the process of scrutiny of ballots was mostly adjudicated at provincial level with little oversight from ECC headquarters, raising questions over the legitimacy of such annulments.[55] The ECC also disqualified one in ten of the winning candidates.[56]

Another factor, which has served to delegitimize the process of elections in Afghanistan, is the issue of warlords getting elected into the Parliament in large numbers. Interestingly, among the candidates winning seats in the 2005 parliamentary elections, 90 were militia commanders and their close associates. This suggests, in turn, that these leaders were able to get their positions legitimized for influencing the state-building priorities in Afghanistan through elections.[57] Many among these found their way to the Parliament in the 2010 elections too. Another retrogressive impact of election related dilemmas is that elections have also, in the more recent examples in Afghanistan, produced divided votes. This happened in the very current Presidential elections of April 2014, where none of the eight candidates running for President's office could secure a majority vote. Resultantly, the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) announced a new run-off for June 2014 between the two top candidates,[58] Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani. Such delays and uncertainties create doubts in the minds of ordinary Afghan citizens about the utility and legitimacy of the entire democratic election process.

Why do these dilemmas arise in the conduct of democratic exercise of elections in post-conflict societies, such as Afghanistan? One shade of opinion finds the absence of political culture in Afghanistan responsible for electoral problems, such as fraud and irregularities. Such deficiencies, it is emphasized, are hard to remove through technical reforms. It is also argued that deficiencies in legal framework, weak electoral management bodies, ineffective checks and balances system and undeveloped political parties affected the credibility of elections in Afghanistan.[59] Such an argument about technical reforms not working in the absence of a political culture is negated by the emphasis on legal and administrative reforms that the viewpoint recommends. This conundrum stands as an example of a complex liberalization dilemma. Historically, there may be a lack of democratic traditions in Afghanistan, but on a technical front

too, there are several problems that can be addressed through appropriate institutional and legal mechanisms.

Coburn and Larson, on the other hand, expound upon another aspect. They stress that the rulers deliberately keep the electoral process ambiguous for manipulating it in their favour. Such ambiguity is manifested in several forms, including: lack of clarity over electoral procedure and timing; poor adherence to electoral rules in counting procedures; delays in final results; the Electoral Complaints Commission's inconsistent method of dealing with electoral complaints; MPs' disguise of political allegiance so that they have bargaining space with the presidency; local leader's involvement in arranging for votes; and provincial governors latent support to insurgents in some constituencies to prevent opponents from being elected.[60] The result is that instead of clear winners and losers, elections produce violent and secret political negotiation and bargaining process, which creates a legitimacy crisis for the state and its political institutions.[61] This is the paradoxical aspect of liberalization in Afghanistan. Elections are held to secure greater legitimacy for the incumbent regime and political system. But the manner in which elections are held, with their concurrent dilemmas, end up delegitimizing the entire state-building process. Enterline and Greig, therefore, paint a bleak democratic future for Afghanistan on account of not only the structural weaknesses in its economy, such as low per capita GDP of just $800, but also its unfavourable political and social milieu, including a high level of ethnic heterogeneity.[62] The issues of poverty and underdevelopment may positively co-relate with the choices voters make in the elections, in terms of voting for money or for obliging their patrons as clients. However, the issue of ethnic heterogeneity may have a poor co-relation with election dilemmas. This is because almost all the new states, which attained independence in the wake of end of Second World War, are beset with the problem of multiple ethnicities residing within single boundaries. However, ethnic heterogeneity has seldom served the cause of conflict and disputed votes in few of these states. In the case of Afghanistan, ethnic differences alone have never been the precursors to war,[63] although these identities did get politicized in the wake of the civil war of 1990s primarily because of a regional actor's support to varied factions.[64]

Schetter, explores another argument in the debate on liberalization dilemmas. He blames democracy as a system to be responsible for politicizing ethnic identities by making boundaries and character of the people significant. Since the struggle for power is perceived, he argues, as a conflict between ethnic and religious groups, leaders portray themselves as representative of their people to get maximum share of power in the central government.[65] These assertions explaining the reasons for the failures of liberalization experiment in Afghanistan are relevant if seen in the light of such experiments in other post-conflict societies. In the various examples of post-conflict state building, elections could not produce stable governments. However, despite such problems, the electoral experiment is repeated every few years to meet an important conditionality in aid provision, i.e. the restoration of a legitimately

elected government. Electoral process becomes more of a procedure rather than the spirit of a true democratic system.

The history of state formation in Europe shows that stability is prior to democracy. It is highly undesirable to expect the Third World, especially post-conflict societies to achieve the opposite, i.e. democracy before stability. Afghanistan too is treated as one of the many state failure cases, where the prescribed formula for success is building state institutions in tandem with addressing its legitimacy deficit through democratization reforms. What is conveniently forgotten is that with a low literacy ratio and political consciousness, a barely functional economy and a history of monarchical government setups, the socio-economic, political and historical conditions in Afghanistan are hardly suitable for liberal orientation's success. It is for this reason that the initial euphoria in Afghanistan for democratic participation and elections is on demise; and after more than a decade in democratic experimentation, each new elections (presidential and parliamentary) witness a decline in people's participation and a corresponding rise in electoral violence, intimidation and contested results.

How to manage liberalization strains?

Notwithstanding the difficulties of ensuring reasonable cooperation among groups with a history of ethnic animosity and war, Call argues for ensuring local ownership and participation of the main political parties and social groups before the process of deciding on the timing, sequence and conduct of elections.[66] Others prefer what Paris names, 'institutionalization before liberalization model,' to counter liberalization dilemmas. This model suggests measures including: delaying elections until moderate parties are formed; judicial mechanism to decide election disputes; electoral rules that reward moderation; responsible civil society associations; economic reforms and effective governmental structures.[67] Rotberg also emphasizes establishing security and legal structures, disbanding and disarming militias and rejuvenating the economy before considering democratic elections in post-conflict settings.[68] Dziedzic, in a similar vein, proposes moderating political conflict through a number of initial steps before undertaking the exercise of elections. These include, humanitarian relief, demobilization of former combatants, political settlement, rule of law by developing institutional capacity of security agencies, and establishing a fiscally sustainable state based on the promotion of free market enterprise.[69]

Rondinelli and Montgomery also stress upon security and settlement of conflict, including efficient service provision, rule of law and national-based political parties to precede the introduction of democratic reforms. They also suggest regional consensus building, local ownership of the state-building process, control over grey, black economies, and investment in social sector, including poverty reduction.[70] The merits of such steps aside, it is essential to remember that state building does not proceed in a linear fashion and, therefore, no time limit may be sufficient for creating functioning institutions before liberalization is experimented. On a negative note, donor support may falter

(because of no time limits involved) before such stabilization is achieved. And when elections are unnecessarily delayed for achieving stability, the whole legitimacy of intervention may be called into question by the locals. The legitimacy of the premise of intervention is restoration of self-government to locals and, therefore, delayed elections work against securing local support to prolonged reforms. Elections need not be unnecessarily delayed, however, such decision should be context specific and undertaken with reasonable preparation for holding free and fair elections. In the light of these reservations, balancing different priorities and gradual implementation of political and economic reforms may be a better option.

State and peace-building need domestic ownership and local support and this process should not be rushed, in terms of holding elections or drafting constitutions to suit donor agendas over and above the domestic needs. It is important to make the political process inclusive and participatory of major stakeholders. These stakeholders would participate, only when they genuinely believe that the process is legitimate and that they would be better off working and participating in the system rather than staying outside it. Renegade factions and their leaders may be involved in power-sharing arrangements through deliberations and consultations. On the part of interveners, such deliberation may require more time, patience and consistent monitoring of the state-building process and its subsequent growth.

In order to manage the liberalization strains in economic reforms, capacity building in public finance management institutions should be attempted at the earliest. This will help stabilize the economy, besides gaining legitimacy for the entire state-building enterprise. Absence of centralized financial institutions and banks, presence of informal grey and black economy, and bypassing of government agencies for aid disbursement are some limitations of improving capacity of financial institutions in post-intervened states. It is important to understand that technical solutions may not be enough to help build the tax base of the state. For taxation reforms to succeed there is a need to build a tax morale among the elites of a society. Phillips calls this a fiscal social contract and argues that such a contract can be built through varied steps. These include, targeting political attitudes (of the elites) towards paying taxes, ensuring accountability and transparency in public revenue spending, creating perceptions of equitable treatment by the revenue authority, effective public spending of taxes, commitment of political leadership to shared prosperity, official recognition of social and economic institutions (property rights) and state builder's understanding of the historical political context of taxation.**(71)** While these measures are highly desirable, it is also imperative to understand that economic growth is a highly desirable aspect of state building, yet post conflict governments, which are just emerging from war, may face extraordinary problems in developing their domestic revenue base. Again, the approach must be step-by-step stimulation of growth and infrastructure provision.

To sum up, neo-liberal political and economic state-building models are inspired from contemporary discourses on failed states, wherein these are portrayed as deficient in liberal features of democratic governance and economic

system. Liberal models — when practiced in a contextual environment different from the western societies — lead to what some scholars term mixed or hybrid systems.[72] Such hybrid systems carry the leftover features from previous models, creating a dichotomy between the old system leftovers and the dictates of the new system, thereby affecting adversely the state building performance. There develops a non-alignment between liberal state-building strategies and the history as well as context and practice of state building in intervened states. The original character of state-building model undergoes change. Liberal becomes hybrid/mixed, democracy becomes procedural, and market economy functions on the foundations of black and grey economy, corruption, and market distortions.

Conclusions

Liberal paradoxes are generated from an international state-building understanding that considers liberal democratic practices and free market reforms as a panacea for failed state's political and economic problems. Liberal political and economic strategies aim at stability and growth, but instead, exacerbate instability and produce economic upheavals. The most contentious issues have come out from the timing and sequencing of holding elections in post-conflict settings. In the absence of functioning service-providing institutions and of agreement on rules to manage conflict, elections in such settings become more of a procedural exercise, riddled with factional competition, fraud and irregularities. It is not uncommon for donor's brand of liberalization to fail in blending with the traditional concepts of legitimacy and the shared social norms of a society. In particular, emphasis on civil society growth without a culture of moderation and accommodation highlights rather than suppresses political conflicts. Pursuit of free market economic measures, such as the restructuring of economy though subsidy cuts on welfare services hurts public interests and creates legitimacy deficit for the state. Free trade policies diminish state's revenues from export duties, precisely around the time when finances are direly needed to initiate state building reforms. Free market economy transitions are said to worsen income inequalities among groups and classes in the society. These paradoxes associated with liberal model end up adversely impacting the state-building process in post-intervened states.

The debate on the paradoxes of liberalization is explored by indulging in Afghan experience with elections in post-2001 period. Elections in Afghanistan began with much fanfare, but the varied issues in the holding of free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections marred the process, and in turn compounded the problematic experiment of elections in Afghanistan. Liberalization paradoxes are generated when the need for quick democratic transition goals obfuscates the necessary electoral preparation in post-conflict societies like Afghanistan. Electoral dilemmas in Afghanistan consist of vague demarcated boundaries, lack of population census, adoption of a complicated SNTV system, late passage of electoral law, inadequate security and denial of electoral participation to candidates to run on party tickets, all in tandem discourage the growth of party culture. These dilemmas are generating electoral

paradoxes, including, irregularities in voter registration, low voter turn-out, and voting processes riddled with violence and bloodshed. Resultantly, elections become a farce, and instead of legitimizing regimes, they serve to destabilize and delegitimize it.

Notes and References

1. As the Cold War period came to an end, several studies denounced the traditional concept of sovereignty for its failure to secure peace and called for a more responsible version of the concept centred on human security and welfare. See, for example, Michael S. Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace Process, 1996); Francis M. Deng, Donald Rothchild, I. William Zartman, Sadikiel Kimaro and Terrence Lyons, *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Press, 1996); ICISS, "The Responsibility to Protect," (Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, Ottawa, International Development Research Centre, 2001); United Nations, "A More Secured World: Our Shared Responsibility," (Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 2004); and Stephen D. Krasner, "Governance Failures and Alternatives to Sovereignty," (Centre on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law CDDRL Working Paper No. 1, 2 November 2004), accessed 1 February 2010, <http://cddrl.stanford.edu>.

2. A number of scholars as well as donor literature identify state failure or fragility to stem from a 'democratic deficit of the political system' or 'lack of legitimacy of political institutions.' See for example, Francis Fukuyama, *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2004), 130; Robert H. Dorff, "Responding to the Failed State: The Need for Strategy," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 10, No. 3 (Winter 1999): pp. 62-81; Stuart E. Eizenstat, John Edward Porter and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Rebuilding Weak States," *Foreign Affairs* 84, No. 1 (January-February 2005): p. 136; and David Carment, "Assessing State Failure: Implications for Theory and Policy," *Third World Quarterly,* 24, No. 3 (2003), pp. 407-27. The donor literature which relates state fragility to lack of legitimacy include: USAID, "Fragile States Strategy," US Agency for International Development, January 2005, accessed 6 February 2007, <http://www4.carleton.ca/cifp/app/serve.php/1326.pdf>; Magui M. Torres and Michael Anderson, "Fragile States: Defining Difficult Environments for Poverty Reduction" (PRDE Working Paper 1, UK Department for International Development August 2004), pp. 5-27; Diana Cammack, Dina Mcleod, Alina Rocha Menocal and Karin Christiansen, "Donors and the Fragile States Agenda: A Survey of Current Thinking and Practice" (Report submitted to the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Policy and Public Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, London, March 2006), pp. 12-16; World Bank, "Fragile States Report and LICUS Update" (2005) and (2006), p. 4, accessed 16 September 2007, <www.worldbank.org>IndependentEvaluation> LICUS; and World Bank, "World Bank Group Work In Low-Income Countries Under Stress: A Task Force Report," (September 2002), pp. 3-4, accessed 16 September 2007, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLICUS/Re>.

3. See the above reference for an understanding of failed states as lacking in liberal economic institutions.

4. The term 'nation building' has been used by American scholars and leaders to refer to US state-building interventions, historically in cases of Germany and Japan and currently for Iraq and Afghanistan. Nation building is the process (by elites) of building a sense of common identity among diverse inhabitants by overcoming ethnic, linguistic, cultural and other differences. State building focuses on political institutions and processes; nation building addresses issues of identity. The two are complimentary because viable political institutions and processes help strengthen national identity. Fukuyama and Call and Cousen criticize its use to describe state-building interventions in conflict societies at the end of Second World War, especially Germany and Japan, which had developed strong identities prior to their invasions. For more recent state-building attempts, the use of nation building term makes it difficult to assess international community's role in state building as distinct from nation building. See Fukuyama, "Nation-Building and the Failure of Institutional Memory," in *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, edited by Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore, M.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 3-4; and Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, "Ending Wars and Building Peace: International Responses to War-Torn Societies," *International Studies Perspectives* 9 (2008): p. 4.

5. James Dobbins, "Learning the Lessons of Iraq," in *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, edited by Francis Fukuyama, p. 218.

6. Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk. "Managing Contradictions: The Inherent Dilemmas of Postwar State building." Research Partnership on Postwar State building, International Peace Academy, 2008, 1, accessed 10 January 2010, <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~rparis/IPA.pdf>.

7. Derick W. Brinkerhoff, "State Fragility and Governance: Conflict Mitigation and Subnational Perspectives," *Development Policy Review* 29, No. 2 (2011): p. 131.

8. OECD/DAC Discussion paper, "Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resilience" (August 2008), 14, accessed 29 May 2010, <www.oecd.org/dac/fragilestates>.

9. Verena Fritz and Alina Rocha Menocal. "Understanding State-Building from a Political Economy Perspective." Report for DFID's Effective and Fragile State's Team, ODI, September 2007, pp. 27-28, accessed 12 March 2011, <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/1979.pdf>.

10. The OECD/DAC, emphasize on international engagement to strengthen legitimacy and accountability in states, by addressing issues of democratic governance, human rights, civil society engagement and poverty reduction. See OECD/DAC, "Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations," (3 April 2010), accessed 25 April 2010, <http://www.google.com.pk/url>.

11. OECD, "State Building in Situations of Fragility: Initial findings" (August 2008), accessed 28 December 2010, <www.oecd.org/dac/fragilestates>.

12. Liberalization experiment in Rwanda led to a proliferation of civil society and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In 1990, one farmer's organization represented 35 households and one NGO, 3,500 households. However, quick liberalization experiment led to the growth of a highly independent and polarized media, which contributed much in

inciting ethnic hatred among the locals. See Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge, 2004), p. 161.

13.   Marina Ottaway, "Democratization in Collapsed State," in *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, edited by William Zartman (Boulder, C.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), p. 235-49.

14.   Alina R. Menocal, "State Building for Peace: A New Paradigm for International Engagement in Post-Conflict Fragile States?" European University Institute, EUI Working Papers, March 2010, <http://ddrn.dk/papers_and_reports-thematic-news-administration-democracy-human-rights-papers-and-reports.html>; Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict,* pp. 160-170; Ottaway, "Democratization in Collapsed State," pp. 235-49.

15.   Menocal, "State Building…" ref 14, pp. 12-13.

16.   This happened in 1988 in the first elections after the UN withdrawal; unhealthy political competition and suppression of political opposition became a prelude to a military coup by Hun Sen's party in July 1997, who then managed to win elections through control over state resources and machinery. See Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, pp. 79-90.

17.   Ottaway, "Democratization…," op.cit., ref 13.

18.   Ignatieff argues democratic models to be unsuitable for countries like Afghanistan on account of its incompatibility with religion (Islam) that serves as the basis for politics there. See Michael Ignatieff, "Intervention and State Failure." *Dissent* (Winter 2002): pp. 68-72.

19.   They use the term 'imposed democracy' to describe democratic governments installed and promoted by a foreign power. See Andrew J. Enterline and J. Michael Greig, "Against All Odds? The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2008), pp. 321-47.

20.   Electoral engineering was supposed to avoid replication of post-socialist 1990 elections in Yugoslavia, where building of electoral support on communal hatred by the candidates had made the elections violent , precipitating disintegration of the Yugoslav federation. See Marina Ottaway, *Democratization and Ethnic Nationalism: African and Eastern European Experiences* (Washington Dc.: Overseas Development Council, 1995).

21.   Mark Lowen, "Ethnic Rift Overshadow Bosnia Elections," BBC News Europe (1 October 2010), accessed 15 March 2012, <www.bbc.com/news>.

22.   DFID, "Building the State and Securing the Peace." Department for International development, Emerging Policy Paper (June 2009), p. 16, accessed 14 May 2012, <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/CON64.pdf>.

23.   The US engagement with selected elements of strongmen and militia leaders for counter insurgency purposes, bestowed upon these players new bargaining power vis-à-vis the state.

24.   See, for example, Dipali Mukhopadhay, "Warlords as Bureaucrats: The Afghan Experience." Washington DC, Carnegie Endowmwnt for International Peace, August 2009, pp. 1-21, accessed 11 February 2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/warlordsasbureaucrats.pdf>;   and Sarah Lister, "Changing the Rules? State building and Local Government

in Afghanistan." *Journal of Development Studies* 45, No.6 (July 2009): pp. 990-1009.

25. Bates, for example blamed the governments in Sub- Saharan Africa for failing agrarian reforms because of their intrusive role in fixing agricultural prices, monopoly over trade of agricultural goods and manipulation of exchange rate. See Robert Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies* (Berkeley CA.: California University Press, 1984).

26. Public Choice theory argues that state is not unitary, but a conglomeration of self interested individuals, who while acting as economic agents, maximize their interest by engaging in rent seeking and corrupt behaviour. See, Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith. *Economic Development* (Harlow, Essex: Pearson Edison Gate, 2008, 10th Edition), pp. 128-31.

27. The set of neo-liberal policies (in the early 1990s), came to be called as the 'liberal market consensus' and one of its formulators, Williamson, designated it as the 'Washington Consensus' in reference to Washington being the headquarters for International Financial Institutions. See Williamson quoted in Alina Rocha Menocal, "And if there was no state? Critical reflections on Bates, Polanyi and Evans on the role of the state in promoting development," *Third World Quarterly* 25, No. 4 (2004), p. 766.

28. The UN peace building missions were premised on liberal peace doctrine, which emphasized democracy and free market society's lesser vulnerability to war and conflict. For details on UN peace building missions reorientation on liberal theory, see Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, pp. 22-35.

29. Robinson observes that economic liberalization seeks to build legitimacy by pursuing policies that distance the state from the citizen. See Neil Robinson, "State Building and International Politics: The Emergence of a New Problem and Agenda," in *State-building: Theory and Practice*, edited by Aiden Hehir and Neil Robinson (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2007), p. 11.

30. Branko Milanovic, "Explaining the increase in Inequality during transition" (World Bank working paper, 1999), accessed 9 May 2009, <http://www.worldbank.org/research/transitional/pdf/employ2.pdf>; and Paris, *At War's End,* pp. 166-68.

31. Alan Whaites, "States in Development: Understanding State-building." A DFID Department for International Development Working Paper, 2008, p. 16, accessed 25 April 2010, <www.dfid.gov.uk>.

32. It does not attempt to address free market economy paradoxes in post-2001 Afghanistan.

33. United Nation, "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions," accessed 16 March 2012, <http://www.un.org/news/dh/latest/afghan/afghan-agree.htm>.

34. Parliamentary experiment with elections was held twice and presidential elections have been held thrice.

35. One reason why no elections have taken place at the district level despite its provision in the very Constitution of Afghanistan. The 2004 Constitution provides for directly elected provincial, district and village councils at the sub-national level. See "The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (ratified) 26 January 2004," pp.37-38, accessed 7 January 2010, <http://idlg.gov.af/eng/images/stories/pdf/the_constitution.pdf>.

36.   Larry P. Goodson, "Lessons of Nation Building in Afghanistan," in *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, edited by Francis Fukuyama, pp. 161-64.

37.   Vitalino Canas "Governance Challenges in Afghanistan: An Update," (NATO Parliamentary Assembly Special Report, October 2011), p.5, accessed 12 March 2012, <http://www.nato-pa.int>.

38.   Goodson, "Nation Building…," op.cit., ref 36, pp. 157.

39.   Michael Shurkin, "Subnational Government in Afghanistan," RAND National Defense Research Institute, Santa Monica CA., (2011), p. 8, accessed 15 February 2012, <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/ pubs/testimonies/ 2012/RAND_CT377.pdf>.

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41.   Barnett R. Rubin quoted in Thomas H. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition: the State of the State-building after the War," Central Asian Survey 25 (March-June 2006): p. 12.

42.   "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Parliamentary Elections: 18 September 2010," (OSCE/ODIHR Election Support Team Report, Warsaw, 26 November 2010), p. 15.

43.   Out of the 18 candidates vying for President's office, Hamid Karzai succeeded in the October 2004 elections, after receiving 55.4% of the total votes, 3 more times than any other candidate. See Goodson, "Nation Building in Afghanistan," p. 157.

44.   Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post Taliban…," op.cit., ref 41, p. 15.

45.   Hashmat Baktash and Shashank Bengali, "Run-off set for June 7 to settle Afghanistan presidential election," Los Angeles Times, accessed 10 May 2014, <www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-afghan>; and BBC News Asia, "Afghanistan election: Millions vote in presidential poll," (5 April 2014), accessed 10 May 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26903931>.

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52. See Coburn and Larson, "Undermining Representative Governance," op.cit., ref 46, p. 3,
53. "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Parliamentary Elections," p.3.
54. Ibid.
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