Omar Joya[1]
University of Bordeaux
France

Lutfi Rahimi[2]
Biruni Institute
United Kingdom

Original scientific paper
https://doi.org/10.54561/prj1701161j
Date received: August 5, 2022
Date accepted: November 12, 2022

A THEORY OF RELIGIOUS GRIEVANCE: UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN

Abstract

Grievances have been an important source of conflict throughout human history. In this paper, we attempt to explain the conflict in Afghanistan beyond the economic reasons – a premise that dominated the development discourse in the post-2001 period, yet had limited impact in terms of reducing violence and countering insurgency. We present a theory of 'religious grievance' in understanding the conflict in Afghanistan which shows how individuals resort to insurgency in response to their perceptions of discrimination, political exclusion, and perceptions of threat to religious sovereignty. The theory explains how and when religious grievance turns into political grievance to engender conflict in societies where a political interpretation of religion is dominant. The paper concludes with a discussion of how radicalism can be contained by investing in and promoting alternative moderate discourses to delegitimize radical narratives that have been used as a conflict mobilization strategy.

Keywords: political economy of radicalism, religious grievance, radicalization, grievance-based theory of conflict, conflict in Afghanistan

Introduction

Resentments and grievances have fueled armed rebellions, protests and revolts throughout human history. Long before our modern times, Sa'adi Shirazi, a Persian poet and prose writer of the 13th century, observed in his *Mirror of Prince* treatise that "the accumulated grievances of the helpless wound more severely than the elbow of champions"[3]. As human societies expanded and social, economic and political relations became more complex, the sources of grievances also widened. In today's societies, grievances may arise from economic, ethnic, religious, or political reasons. For instance, lower income and poverty, marginalization of ethnic mi-

1 Omar Joya is a Researcher at University of Bordeaux. Contact E-mail: omar.joya@u-bordeaux.fr

2 Lutfi Rahimi is Head of Research at the Biruni Institute, and Assistant Professor of Economics at American University of Afghanistan. Contact E-mail: lutfira@biruni.af

3 Alireza Shomali and Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "On Sadi's Treatise on Advice to the Kings", in: *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft,* Mehrzad Bourojerdi (ed.), Syracuse University Press, 2013, pp. 45-81.

norities by dominant groups, religious discrimination, or exclusion from the political process may all lead to individual- or group-level grievances.

Since the 1960s, grievances have been a focus of research in various social science disciplines. Political scientists and sociologists looked at grievances to explain why people engage in protest and rebellion[4]. Economists, albeit very lately, investigated how economic deprivation or income inequality may lead to political instability and conflict[5] but the political economy literature failed to reach a consensus due to inconclusive empirical results.[6] The latter category of studies found strong evidence for 'greed' (i.e., aspirations to capture economic resources) – rather than grievance – to explain insurgency and conflict.

Subsequent studies in the empirical literature shifted attention to 'horizontal' inequality (i.e., inequality between 'groups') as opposed to 'vertical' inequality (which is between individuals). There is now emerging evidence for grievance-based theories of conflict which rely on horizontal inequalities[7]. In this category of research, ethnic fractionalization and social divisiveness are seen as horizontal inequalities that lead to grievances. Meanwhile, a number of studies in the past two decades have focused on politico-ideological violence, and more specifically on religious radicalization. Some studies view religious radicalization as a social process in which religion - as an 'identity' - plays an important role in explaining why individuals resort to violence.[8] Others define radicalization from a grievance-based perspective, such that perceptions of religious discrimination and political exclusion lead religious groups to adopt violent behaviour.[9]

However, within the context of grievance-based explanation of religious rad-

4 James C. Davies, Toward a theory of revolution, *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 27, No. 1, 1962, pp. 5-19; Ted R. Gurr, *Why men rebel*, Routledge, 2015; Edward N. Muller, Income inequality, regime repressiveness, and political violence, *American sociological review*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 1985, pp. 47-61.

5 Herschell I. Grossman, A general equilibrium model of insurrections, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 81, No. 4, 1991, pp. 912-921; Jack Hirshleifer, The dark side of the force: Western Economic Association International 1993 presidential address, *Economic Inquiry,* Vol. 32, No.1, 1994; Alberto Alesina and Roberto Perotti, Income distribution, political instability, and investment, *European Economic Review,* Vol. 40, No. 6, 1996, pp. 1203-1228.

6 Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and grievance in civil war", Policy Research Working Paper 2355, The World Bank, Washington DC, 2000; James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war, *American Political Science review,* Vol. 97, No. 1, 2003, pp. 75-90.

7 Patrick M. Regan and Daniel Norton, Greed, grievance, and mobilization in civil wars, *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 49, No. 3, 2005, pp. 319-336; Gudrun Østby, Polarization, horizontal inequalities and violent civil conflict, *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 45, No. 2, 2008, pp. 143-162; Frances Stewart, *Horizontal inequalities and conflict: Understanding group violence in multiethnic societies*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016; Halvard Buhaug, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, Square pegs in round holes: Inequalities, grievances, and civil war, *International Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 58, No. 2, 2014, pp. 418-431; Vally Koubi and Tobias Böhmelt, Grievances, economic wealth, and civil conflict, *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 51, No.1, 2014, pp. 19-33; Raouf Boucekkine, Rodolphe Desbordes, and Paolo Melindi-Ghidi, "Social Divisiveness and Conflicts: Grievances Matter!", Working Paper 2019-06, Aix-Marseille School of Economics.

8 Allan Harriet, Andrew Glazzard, Sasha Tumu Jesperson, and Emily Sneha Reddy Winterbotham, "Drivers of violent extremism: Hypotheses and literature review", Royal United Services Institute-London, 2015.

9 David Keen, Greed and grievance in civil war, *International Affairs,* Vol. 88, No. 4, 2012, pp. 757-777; Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins, The radicalization puzzle: A theoretical synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* Vol. 38, No. 11, 2015, pp. 958-975; Bertjan Doosje, Fathali M. Moghaddam, Arie W. Kruglanski, Arjan De Wolf, Liesbeth Mann, and Allard R. Feddes, Terrorism, radicalization and de-radicalization, *Current Opinion in Psychology,* Vol. 11, 2016, pp.79-84; Ahmed Ajil, Politico-ideological violence: Zooming in on grievances, *European journal of criminology,* Vol 19, No. 2, 2022, pp. 304-321.

icalization, a coherent theory is still missing. Is radicalization uniquely driven by perceptions of religious discrimination and exclusion? Or, are there aspirational elements (e.g. pursuit of religious values or dominance) involved in religious radicalization? How do 'political' grievances' interact with religious radicalization? We propose a theory that could help us better understand these aspects. In the post-2011 Afghanistan, the dominant economic discourse which sought to explain social and political relations from an economic perspective, prevented the policy actors from getting a comprehensive understanding of the diverse causes of violence and ways of mitigating it. In most development narratives, policy decisions and institutional arrangements, the role of economic incentives and constraints was overemphasized. Strategies and programs manifested out of the 'reductionist' economic perspective brushed lightly over the soft power of the religious discourse that was used by radicals to legitimize their use of violence, and ignored the incentive power of the *resistance* narrative that was lurking in the background of religious radicalization.

To this effect, we present a theoretical framework to help us better understand the political economy of radicalism and religious grievances in societies where religion – as a meta-institution – dominates or is perceived to dominate other formal and informal institutions, such as in the case of Afghanistan. More importantly, we explain how religious grievances may interact with political grievances to engender instability and conflict. The theory explains that religious grievances in Afghanistan fundamentally manifested itself in two ways to promote popular support by the radical elements. First, the use and promotion of the perception that the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan undermined religious sovereignty. The lines between national and religious sovereignty is blurred in this debate. Second, the adoption of the narrative that religious views and Islamic movements faced political exclusion and discrimination.

We use this theory to understand the conflict in Afghanistan. We re-evaluate the premise and the raison d'être of the new development discourse by exploring the latent contextual assumption that persistence of war in Afghanistan was tied uniquely to economic outcomes. We then contribute to the debate by expanding the theoretical understanding of how religion plays a role in exacerbating both individual- and group-level grievances, and discuss how grievances triggered by perceptions of political exclusion lead individuals to resort to violence.

Our paper calls to reconsider the approaches for fighting radicalization and terrorism. Investing in and resurrecting alternative moderate religious discourses to counter radicals may go miles in mitigating violence. It will internally undermine and delegitimize the use of violence by the radicals who often use religious narratives to inflame grievances and build resistance narratives among the vulnerable individuals and groups.

In the following section, we re-assess the validity of the economic response argument for fighting violence and radicalization in Afghanistan, and highlight a few aspects of the Afghan conflict that have largely been ignored in the political econ-

omy literature. In section 3, we present a theory of religious grievance that can help us better understand radicalization and violence in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the last section, we discuss what implications such a theory may have for fighting violence and terrorism as well development practices.

Looking beyond the economic reasons for conflict

There is a consensus in the academic and empirical literature on the absence of any direct, monotonic relationship between poverty (and/or absence of economic opportunities) and conflict, although few studies have also shown that the relation between the two might be non-linear, meaning that deprivation leads to conflict only in countries that are below a certain level of income.[10] However, the policy discourse takes a slightly different perspective. It argues that the relationship between poverty and violence is a complex one, such that poverty is linked to other factors that lead to a rise in violence and radicalization.[11] As such, international development institutions continue to advocate for an economic development response to radicalization, extremism and terrorism.[12] In substance, such discourse is based on an opportunity cost theory which suggests that providing economic incentives and giving aid to fragile states prevent vulnerable individuals from joining insurgency. In other words, being employed and having a steady income makes an individual less likely to join an insurgency because of its high opportunity cost. This relates to the 'greed' perspective on the conflict[13] as elaborated in the Introduction.

Notwithstanding the importance of international development assistance which has supported democratic institutions and economic progress in many countries around the world, and continues to do so, as it was the case in Afghanistan (2001–2021), overstating however the role of aid in the *'War on Terror'* deviates the attention away from fighting radicalization in an effective manner[14] and promotes a 'reductionist' approach to fighting violent extremism[15]. Twenty years of fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, from 2001 to 2021, which was accompanied by about US$

10 Walter Enders and Gary A. Hoover, The nonlinear relationship between terrorism and poverty, *American Economic Review,* Vol. 102, No. 3, 2012, pp. 267-272; Walter Enders, Gary A. Hoover, and Todd Sandler, The changing nonlinear relationship between income and terrorism, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 60, No. 2, 2016, pp. 195-225.

11 Atle Mesoy, "Poverty and Radicalisation into violent extremism: a causal link", NOREF Expert Analysis, 2013, pp. 1-6; Jeremy Chevrier, "Exploring the connections between poverty, lack of economic opportunity, and violent extremism in Sub-Saharam Africa", USAID, Washington, DC, 2017.

12 Corinne Graff, "Poverty, Development, and Violent Expremism in Weak States", in: *Confronting poverty: weak States and US national security,* Susan E. Rice, Corinne Graff, and Carlos Pascual (eds.), Brookings Institution Press, 2010, p. 42; "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice", USAID, Washington DC, 2011; "Preventing violent extremism through promoting inclusive development, tolerance and respect for diversity: A development response to addressing radicalization and violent extremism", UNDP, New York, 2016.

13 Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and grievance in civil war", Policy Research Working Paper 2355, The World Bank, Washington DC, 2000; James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war, *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 97, No. 1, 2003, pp. 75-90.

14 Ahmed Ajil, Politico-ideological violence: Zooming in on grievances, *European journal of criminology,* Vol 19, No. 2, 2022, pp. 304-321.

15 Christopher Cramer, Homo economicus goes to war: methodological individualism, rational choice and the political economy of war, *World Development,* Vol. 30, No. 11, 2002, pp. 1845-1864.

160 billion in foreign aid to the country[16], and yet the radicals eventually winning and taking over the country, attests to this end.

An alternative perspective to the economic argument for violence, identifies and understands the importance of context and institutions ('written' and 'unwritten norms') that define the social cohesion, or give rise to continual tension within each society[17]. This includes religious, political, social and ethnic grievances. In the following subsection, we briefly discuss some of these aspects for the case of Afghanistan.

The case of Afghanistan

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union (USSR) troops from Afghanistan in 1989, their support to the government they left behind in the country diminished over time and was eventually toppled by opposing *Mujahideen* factions who fought them. A fragile coalition government was formed by the Mujahideen factions between 1992 and 1995, who ended up fighting each other. This period is often referred to as the "civil wars" in Afghanistan. It is however a reductionist label obscuring the drivers and outcomes of the conflict in this period which are pertinent to understanding the post-2001 processes.

We note three structural changes that materialized since 1989: (1) the consolidation of ethnic and sectarian differences that tilted the balance of power from the historically dominant group into the hands of other ethnic groups[18], (2) erosion of state institutions, state legitimacy – in its monarchic form – and social or human capital, and (3) the rise of politically-motivated extremist religious ideology with close relations to the Deobandi religious schools in Pakistan[19]. In the chaos of the civil war, the Taliban franchise rose to power in 1996 and captured about 80 percent of the territories, forcing out all rival factions until 2001. Given their close ties with Al-Qaeda and having offered sanctuary to Osama bin Laden, the Taliban were dismantled by the United States shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The post-2001 era is identified with four main stakeholders: (1) the anti-Taliban coalition (often referred to as 'Northern Alliance') who cooperated with the United States in dismantling the Taliban and forming a new transition government; (2) the Taliban who remobilized in a matter of few years after the 2001 US invasion and continued to execute military attacks in the following two decades; (3) the western

16 Omar Joya, Eric Rougier and Saurabh Shome, "Understanding the Drivers of Poverty in Afghanistan", Technical Report, Biruni Institute, 2022.

17 Tiffany Chou, Does development assistance reduce violence? Evidence from Afghanistan, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal,* Vol. 7, No. 2, 2012; Travers Barclay Child, Hearts and minds cannot be bought: Ineffective reconstruction in Afghanistan, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal,* Vol. 9, No. 2, 2014; Jan Rasmus Böhnke and Christoph Zürcher, Aid, minds and hearts: The impact of aid in conflict zones, *Conflict Management and Peace Science,* Vol. 30, No. 5, 2013, pp. 411-432; Eli Berman, Michael Callen, Joseph H. Felter, and Jacob N. Shapiro, Do working men rebel? Insurgency and unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines, *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 55, No. 4, 2011, pp. 496-528.

18 Mujib Rahman Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History,* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.

19 Husain Haqqani, *The ideologies of South Asian jihadi groups*, Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2005.

educated Afghan elite who returned to the country after the US invasion and undertook important roles in the government; and (4) the international coalition led by the US who provided financial and technical support to the newly established administration, both in civilian and security sectors.

The anti-Taliban group of 1990s was a decentralized and fragmented alliance mostly between Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek ethnic groups. Often referred to as 'warlords', they lacked full knowledge of modern statesmanship and governance systems. Their disarmament and demobilization in the post-2001 period without a viable clear strategy for their economic reintegration left them puzzled. Grievances began to rise as they saw a small group of their leaders 'too content with western values and luxury life in Kabul', 'getting too rich', 'losing cohesion, unity and their Islamic vision' or 'made political alliances betraying the core values once they stood for'. This coupled with the high rate of structural unemployment created frustration, distrust and even led some of them them to join the Taliban in 2021.

Former Taliban members, on the other hand, were completely excluded from the political processes and negotiations that led to formation of the interim and transitional governments between 2001 and 2004[20]. Within a matter of few years, the Taliban re-emerged as insurgent groups who aimed to topple the government that was formed after the US invasion. After the conclusion of the Security Transition[21] in 2014, civilian and military casualties significantly increased as result of intensified Taliban insurgency. In order to claim legitimacy and popular support, they complemented their ideological cause with a narrative of fighting an 'illegal occupation by the 'infidels'. Exploiting the religious grievances and anti-foreign sentiments was the essence of their rather successful mobilization strategy.

Given the growing civilian casualties as a result of non-conventional warfare by the Taliban, such as suicide attacks, an understanding gradually emerged that a reconciliation was eventually necessary. Increased frustration of the people of Afghanistan who were the main victims of Taliban's insurgencies, as well as growing fatigue within the international community, paved the way for 'peace negotiations' that primarily took place between the Taliban and the United States. The US-Taliban Doha Agreement signed in February 2020 called for the full withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan which led the Afghan state to collapse and allowing the Taliban to capture the Kabul city in August 2021.

Against this background, we argue that the counter-insurgency strategy adopted by the US and the Afghan government between 2001 and 2021 to curb radicalization and violence failed because it saw violence as having purely an economic cause (i.e., poverty and deprivation) and it did not take into account the very com-

20 Astri Suhrke, "Lessons from Bonn: Victors' Peace?", in: *Incremental Peace in Afghanistan,* Anna Larson and Alexander Ramsbotham (ed.), Accord: Issue 27, Conciliation Resources, London, 2018.

21 Security transition consisted of the transfer of security responsibilities from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), as most of the NATO troops were withdrawn from the country. The transfer of responsibilities was gradually completed over the course of three years, starting in 2011 and concluding in 2014. During this period, NATO troops in Afghanistan were drawn from more than 130,000 troops in June 2011 down to less than 15,000 troops by end-2014.

plex nature of radicalization and violence, i.e. their social, political, historical, and even cognitive dimensions. In the following, we allude to some aspects that are often ignored in the development and conflict literature on Afghanistan. However, this is not an attempt to discuss an exhaustive list of factors.[22]

First, in the post-2001 period in Afghanistan, the 'political order' was being born anew. The historical nostalgia of the then newly returned elite to rule the new Afghanistan was to reverse the recent history, and bring back the King's era of pre-1970s[23]. However, a quick glance of the events happening between the 1970s to 2001 reveal two imminent changes. Domestically, the power relation between ethnic groups – especially between Pashtuns and other ethnicities – changed from a historically *vertical* to a *horizontal* hierarchy as of 1990s[24], which led Pashtun nationalists returning in 2001 to advocate for re-creation of a "nationalist state" that would "offer a formula for accommodating the aspirations of various linguistic and regional groups"[25]. Regionally, the power dynamics had tilted in favor of Pakistan giving them direct access and steer to the leaders of the Islamic movements fighting in Afghanistan. This period is key in re-shaping the historical resistance narrative that has been passed on through generations – a narrative that is embroiled with events such as the Anglo-Afghan wars in the 19th and early 20th centuries, colonial resentments inherited from the Islamic Deobandi school's resistance against the British India in the 19th century, and the Durand border line denial since 1960s. The emergence, development, maturity and points of inflection of the *new narrative of resistance* in Afghanistan has not been carefully explored in the literature, which deserves more scrutiny and research. The wish to reverse history and restore a '*vertical political order'* in Afghanistan dominated key political processes such as elections and economic decisions. This created an antagonism which further polarized the situation, perhaps favoring instability and violence.

Second, the process of intellectual *de-legitimization* of violence and insurgency, on religious and ideological grounds, received very little attention by experts in these two decades. Perhaps the most notable religious institution in the fight against extremism and radicalism was the 'Council of Ulema', which was created to act as a reference point in Afghanistan on religious matters. However, to the best of our knowledge, the Council of Ulema issued a formal legal ruling ('fatwa') condemning the insurgency and declaring suicide attacks as religiously impermissible *only as late as* in 2018.[26] There are several reasons for why the Council of Ulema

22 For a comprehensive literature review see: Paul Fishstein and Andrew Wilder, "Winning hearts and minds? Examining the relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan", Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2012; Lutfi Rahimi, "Afghans' hopes and grievances: An Individual/Community Level Analysis", Policy Paper Series, Biruni Institute, 2021.

23 Mujib Rahman Rahimi, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History,* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017; Nazif Shahrani, *Modern Afghanistan: The impact of 40 years of war*, Indiana University Press, 2018.

24 Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady, The decline of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan, *Asian Survey,* 1995, pp. 621-634.

25 Ashraf Ghani, "The Folly of Quick Action in Afghanistan", in: *Anthropologists in the Public Sphere: Speaking Out on War, Peace, and American Power,* Roberto J. Gonzalez (ed.), University of Texas Press. Austin, 2004, pp. 176.

26 "Council of Ulema: Suicide attacks have no Islamic basis and are impermissible (Title transfer from Farsi)", Deutsche Welle Dari, June 04, 2018. Available at: *https://p.dw.com/p/2yuS1* (accessed on April 30, 2022).

was not effective. Apart from the fact that it lacked a clear strategic thinking, it also failed to create an alternative narrative to that of the Taliban to delegitimize their religious rhetoric or perhaps take control of the narrative of resistance to prevent anti-government grievances rising. Furthermore, evidence shows that the Council of Ulema often found themselves with conflicting loyalties. That is because the majority of the religious scholars in the Council of Ulema (and also broadly in Afghanistan) emerge and study from the same radical referent religious schools, i.e. the Deobandi madrassas in Pakistan, with which the Taliban are closely affiliated[27]. This made it difficult for the Council of Ulema to denounce and strongly take a religious stance against the Taliban who emanated from the fringes of the same sources. Few scholars who dared to speak out against extremism and violence between 2001 and 2021 were assassinated.

Third, the population-centric approach, the so-called *'Winning Hearts & Minds'* doctrine adopted in the '*War on Terror'* in Afghanistan, attempted in vain to achieve legitimacy and bring about effectiveness by engaging in economic development programs[28]. This included the establishment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) within the international security forces[29]. Actual efforts on the ground remained tied to small development projects and failed to produce a comprehensive religious-centric strategy to oppose religious extremism and violence. Instead, the strategy was limited to supporting ad hoc, project-based programs including media campaigns that were brainstormed by 'behind the wall experts' who did not understand the essence of the conflict in Afghanistan. On the contrary, the insurgents were able to communicate their grievances in a very provocative, thoughtful, simple and relatable words that touched the 'hearts' of the uneducated masses, such as: 'Islam is our way of life', 'the western values are incompatible with Islam', 'the West has come to destroy our way of life', or 'we are excluded from any real political participation'.[30]

Fourth, unequal treatment of 'secure' and 'insecure' provinces by the donors and the government gave rise to further challenges, including a rising gradual resentment in peaceful provinces, which increased insurgency. In fact, both security and civilian aid had a higher concentration in highly insecure and in-conflict provinces[31] with the justification that the insurgency had economic reasons. Prior to the

27 Husain Haqqani, *The ideologies of South Asian jihadi groups*, Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2005.

28 Andrew Beath, Fotini Christia, and Ruben Enikolopov, "Winning hearts and minds through development", Policy Research Working Papers 6129, World Bank, Washington DC, 2012; Travers Barclay Child, Hearts and minds cannot be bought: Ineffective reconstruction in Afghanistan, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal,* Vol. 9, No. 2, 2014.

29 Sharon Morris, James Stephenson, Paul Ciminelli, Donald Muncy, Tod Wilson, and Al Nugent, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment", Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction, Washington DC, 2006; Christoff Luehrs, Provincial Reconstruction Teams: A Literature Review, *Prism,* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2009, pp. 95-102.

30 Matt Waldman, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations", Special Report 256, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2010.

31 Omar Joya, Eric Rougier and Saurabh Shome, "Understanding the Drivers of Poverty in Afghanistan", Technical Report, Biruni Insti-

withdrawal of international security forces, which began in 2011, northern provinces of Afghanistan were considered as the cradle for anti-Taliban resistance and remained very peaceful. Preferential treatment of 'insecure' provinces to counter the insurgency did not result in any sustainable solution in the favored regions either. On the contrary, grievances accumulated in secure provinces over time due to perceptions of unequal treatment. There is also well established evidence in economic literature showing that recipients only temporarily alter their behavior to reap the benefits of a monetary program.[32]

Finally, pervasive and rampant corruption in the executive, legislative, and the judiciary system was continuously flagged as one of the primary sources of grievances and primary motives for joining insurgency in all field surveys.[33] This might have been a reason why aid-funded service delivery in Afghanistan had little impact on state legitimacy in the past two decades.[34] The issue of rampant corruption and inefficiencies in the recent *nation building* processes go hand-in-hand, and the experience is not unique to Afghanistan. In fact, evidence shows that corruption is an endemic issue in most developing countries who are also aid-recipients,[35] as was the case in Afghanistan. Understanding these practical difficulties calls for an alternative contextual approach in nation building and institutions that promote peace and stability.

A theory of religious grievance

Grievance as a psychological phenomenon is formed by how an individual *perceives* social attitudes, political processes and economic policies or outcomes as unfair, unjust or oppressive. Grievance is therefore shaped by an individual's own perception of the situation, which might be very different from the factual reality. Since judgements are usually subjective and differ from one person or actor to another (because people use different moral criteria to form their judgements), a political

tute, 2022.

32 Philip K. Robins, A comparison of the labor supply findings from the four negative income tax experiments, *Journal of Human Resources*, 1985, pp. 567-582; Orley Ashenfelter and Mark W. Plant, Nonparametric estimates of the labor-supply effects of negative income tax programs, *Journal of Labor Economics,* Vol. 8, No. 1, 1990, pp. S396-S415.

33 Matt Waldman, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations", Special Report 256, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2010; Michael Semple, "Rhetoric, ideology, and organizational structure of the Taliban movement", Peaceworks No. 102, United States Institute of Peace, 2014; Alireza Shomali and Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "On Sadi's Treatise on Advice to the Kings", in: *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft,* Mehrzad Bourojerdi (ed.), Syracuse University Press, 2013, pp. 45-81.

34 Omar Joya and Khaled Payenda, "Effectiveness of Development Assistance in Afghanistan: Lessons from the World Bank Experience", Policy Paper Series, Biruni Institute, 2021.

35 Sean Fleming, "Corruption costs developing countries $1.26 trillion every year-yet half of EMEA think it's acceptable", *World Economic Forum*, December 9, 2019. Available at: *https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/12/corruption-global-problem-statistics-cost/* (accessed March 14, 2023); Elizabeth Dávid-Barrett, Mihály Fazekas, Olli Hellmann, Lili Márk, and Ciara McCorley, Controlling corruption in development aid: New evidence from contract-level data, *Studies in Comparative International Development,* Vol. 55, No. 4, 2020, pp. 481-515.

process or an economic policy – for instance – might be viewed as justified, fair and egalitarian by the government but perceived by some individuals or groups or communities as unfair and discriminatory. Such subjective disparities exist across the spectrum of social, economic, political, ethnic and religious outcomes or processes.

We define religious grievance as a combination of: (i) perceptions of discrimination and political exclusion; and (ii) perceptions of threat to religious sovereignty. According to the field interviews with radical individuals who joined the insurgency in Afghanistan, threat to religious sovereignty has been preceived in two ways: first, presence of foreign troops in a Muslim country is viewed by the radicals as a threat to the religion.[36] Indeed, for radical groups the line between national sovereignty and religious sovereignty is blurry, and therefore the presence of foreign military forces was perceived as a violation of religious sovereignty. By religious sovereignty, we mean the view that religion must be the dominant set of meta-institutions that overrule other formal and informal institutions in the country.

Second, perceptions of the wider society not abiding by religious values are also viewed by the radicals as a threat to religious sovereignty. Surveys indicate that one of the main incentives for individuals joining insurgency has been their perception that the wider society has deviated from the values, codes and standards that these radicals deem moral and essential.[37] The Taliban promoted this perception in communities where they infiltrated to mobilize new fighters and suicide volunteers.[38] Several suicide attackers in Afghanistan who were arrested before they were able to execute their attacks expressed feelings of anxiety that the residents of Kabul, for instance, had abandoned the 'true religion'. This was an important factor for them to join the insurgency in order to uphold those religious values.[39]

The reason why such perceptions lead to grievances is that a radical interpretation of Islamic texts would suggest that a society as a whole must adhere to the Islamic principles and codes of conduct, i.e. the Sharia law.[40] Such political interpre-

36 Matt Waldman, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations", Special Report 256, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2010; Michael Semple, "Rhetoric, ideology, and organizational structure of the Taliban movement", Peaceworks No. 102, United States Institute of Peace, 2014; Alireza Shomali and Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "On Sadi's Treatise on Advice to the Kings", in: *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft,* Mehrzad Bourojerdi (ed.), Syracuse University Press, 2013, pp. 45-81.

37 Matt Waldman, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations", Special Report 256, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2010; Michael Semple, "Rhetoric, ideology, and organizational structure of the Taliban movement", Peaceworks No. 102, United States Institute of Peace, 2014.

38 Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy, "Mobilising to a Victorious Insurgency: Locating Identity, Grievance, and Greed in the Taliban's Strategy", Issue Brief 521, Observer Research Foundation, 2022.

39 Jamshed Habibzada, "Two young men and an adolescent tell their stories on why they wanted to execute suicide attacks" (Title translated from Farsi), *Radio Azadi (Radio Liberty),* January 16, 2015. Available at: *https://da.azadiradio.com/a/26797083.html* (accessed on April 30, 2022).

40 Matt Waldman, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations", Special Report 256, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2010; Bin Bayyah, Shaykh Abdallah and a group of scholars, "Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi", The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (RISSC), September, 2014. Available at: *https://rissc.jo/open-letter-to-al-baghdadi/* (accessed March, 13, 2023).

tation of Islam has been popular with all extremist groups like Al-Qaeda, Islamic State in Iraq & Syria (ISIS), Taliban, Hizb al-Tahrir, Muslim Brotherhood, and Jama'at-e Islami.[41] When such systems of beliefs are promoted in the society, a radical individual's perception that others are not abiding by the religious values leads them to conclude that their moral values are being undermined and threatened. Or, mere presence of non-Muslim forces in the country is perceived as a threat to religious sovereignty. Such perceptions lead to both individual and collective grievances. This is contrary to the notion of 'individualism' that a growing number of moderate Muslims uphold.

Furthermore, evidence also suggests that perceptions of discrimination against Islamic movements and their leaders who were inevitably religious scholars (or *ulema*), as well as their perceived political exclusion have been an important source of collective grievance for radical elements in Afghanistan.[42] This stems from the collective memory and historic experiences of *ulema* being discriminated against and banned from political participation, and systematically persecuted, not only after the 1978 communist revolution but also in the 1960s and 1970s when some of the leading and politically active Afghan religious scholars were forced to flee to Pakistan.[43] Against the backdrop of such historical experiences, contemporary radical groups in Afghanistan perceive discrimination against *Islamic movements* and *ulema* as acts of repression that 'rings a bell'.

Normally, if political institutions function well, individual- or group-level grievances should not accumulate because individuals or groups would have the option to resort to formal political channels to raise their 'voices'.[44] Functioning political institutions give individuals and groups a sense of 'being heard' and 'having a voice' in the society and thus prevent grievances from cumulating. In fact, political institutions are seen as a means to (i) have a 'voice' in political decisions, (ii) pursue one's moral, social and religious 'values' or 'goals' or 'aspirations' in the society, and (iii) lay the necessary conditions for economic institutions to function. As long as political institutions fulfill these functions, they strengthen 'social cohesion' among different social, ethnic and religious groups.

However, when political institutions dysfunction and cannot efficiently fulfill the above expectations, religious grievances soon turn into 'political grievances' particularly in a society where political interpretation of religion is still dominant. Political grievance is feelings of exclusion from the mainstream political process, and a lack or loss of trust in the existing political system.[45] In societies with malfunctioning

41 Gerhard Bowering, *Islamic political thought: An introduction*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

42 Matt Waldman, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations"...

43 Arian Sharifi, "Islamist groups in Afghanistan and the strategic choice of violence"...

44 Charlotte Fiedler, "Unpacking the relationship between political institutions and conflict recurrence", Doctoral Dissertation, University of Essex, 2019.

45 Ahmed Ajil, Politico-ideological violence: Zooming in on grievances, *European Journal of Criminology,* Vol 19, No. 2, 2022, pp. 304-321.

political institutions, resorting to violence remains a set of strategies to express oneself and to pursue one's political aspirations. Hence, elements of both 'grievance' and 'greed' come into play.[46] In Afghanistan, namely with the Taliban, this began with the Bonn political process in 2001 in which the Taliban were left excluded. Subsequently, a centralized and 'winner takes it all' political system was adopted by the government, which exacerbated the political grievances.

In his article that investigates politico-ideological violence from a grievance perspective,[47] asks in his concluding remarks "how does violent action become justified and how are grievances mobilized for justification?" In our view, individuals or groups look for mediums to justify their violent actions. In highly religious societies, 'religion' is often used as a means to justify the acts of violence. This is usually done by distorting and misinterpreting the religious principles and commands.[48] In religious societies, religion can be seen as a set of informal institutions, which enjoys widespread popularity and acceptance among the people. Hence, for radical groups who resort to violence, religion serves as the best vehicle to legitimize their behavior and escape from blameworthiness. Religious discourse becomes the least costly option and the most efficient strategy for radical elements and insurgents to gain popularity. The latter phenomenon has been present in many Muslim societies. In Iraq, for instance, the Baath Party members, who were the former Saddam-era officers and supporters, extended cooperation and support to some of the most extremist groups, i.e. Al-Qaeda and ISIS[49], despite the fact the Baath Party members are known to have been a highly secular party. The main driving force behind their support to ISIS was their grievances and resentments in being politically excluded, discriminated and even prosecuted by the US-backed Iraqi administration. Such grievances led highly secular individuals to become religious extremists. For Baath Party members, religion was therefore the best vehicle to legitimize their use of violence and resort to insurgency.

Concluding remarks

Political interventions that bring up modern governance systems and democratic ideals must inevitably accept contextual rigidities in the form of unwritten rules that constitute the fabric of communities. Afghanistan, like many other countries, was the late recipient of the democratization wave while religion remained present as a dominant meta-institution. Experience has shown that exclusionary

46 David Keen, Greed and grievance in civil war, *International Affairs,* Vol. 88, No. 4, 2012, pp. 757-777.

47 Ahmed Ajil, Politico-ideological violence: Zooming in on grievances. . .

48 Bin Bayyah, Shaykh Abdallah and a group of scholars, "Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi". . .

49 Liz Sly, "The hidden hand behind the Islamic State militants? Saddam Hussein's", *Washington Post*, April 4, 2015. Available at: *https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-hidden-hand-behind-the-islamic-state-militants-saddam-husseins/2015/04/04/aa97676c-cc32-11e4-8730-4f473416e759_story.html* (accessed March 14, 2023).

political approaches and development narratives to individuals or groups in highly religious societies ultimately lay the ground for its own demise: religious grievance (or perception of it) amalgamate and religion rapidly lend legitimacy to violence. This has been the case in other countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and the likes. The challenges to political intervention are further compounded when the nature of the violence and insurgency is misunderstood and misdefined. In the case of Afghanistan, as discussed, 'economic conflicts' and therefore 'economic solutions' did not suffice to correctly understand the root causes of violence and to address them.

Furthermore, political alienation and exclusion of religious radicals without ideologically dismantling them, as it has been happening lately in some Central Asian countries like Tajikistan, and in some Middle Eastern and North African countries, are ineffective and will further lead to religious grievances, strengthen radical groups' narratives of 'victimhood', and increases the potentials for insurgency in the long-run.

In our view, while addressing the economic sources of grievances as well as containing the military campaigns of radicals by the use of force are important, it is equally and even more important to *internally* challenge and *delegitimize* the religious discourse of radical groups. This can be pursued by investing in the formation of alternative, moderate religious narratives that both enjoy the backing of the traditional, referent religious authorities, and prevent the radicals from (mis-)using the religion to legitimize their acts of violence. For instance, educational and academic engagement with religious institutions can be the most effective approach under such a strategy. Instead of ignoring Islamic educational institutions, investments in moderate schools of Islamic thought such as the Maturidi-Hanafi School[50] which was prominent in Central Asia till late 13th century, can be very effective in the long-run. In such a strategy, religious grievances will be prevented, and insurgency can be more effectively contained. Such a strategy ideologically disarms and demobilizes the radical groups: the very weapon that they have been using to counter political and development interventions must be employed to use against them. With the rise of technology and modern-day information sharing tools, such a strategy should be easy to pursue.

50 Ulrich Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand*, Brill, 2014.

References

Ahady Anwar-ul-Haq, The decline of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan, *Asian Survey,* 1995. https://doi.org/10.2307/2645419

Ajil Ahmed, Politico-ideological violence: Zooming in on grievances, *European journal of criminology,* Vol 19, No. 2, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370819896223

Alesina Alberto and Perotti Roberto, Income distribution, political instability, and investment, *European Economic Review,* Vol. 40, No. 6, 1996. https://doi.org/10.1016/0014-2921(95)00030-5

Ashenfelter Orley, and Plant Mark W., Nonparametric estimates of the labor-supply effects of negative income tax programs, *Journal of Labor Economics,* Vol. 8, No. 1, Part 2, 1990.

Beath Andrew, Christia Fotini, and Enikolopov Ruben, "Winning hearts and minds through development", Policy Research Working Papers 6129, World Bank, Washington DC, 2012.

Berman Eli, Callen Michael, Felter Joseph H., and Shapiro Jacob N., Do working men rebel? Insurgency and unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines, *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 55, No. 4, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002710393920

Bin Bayyah, Shaykh Abdallah and a group of scholars, "Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi", The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (RISSC), September, 2014. Available at: *https://rissc.jo/open-letter-to-al-baghdadi/* (accessed March, 13, 2023).

Böhnke Jan Rasmus and Zürcher Christoph, Aid, minds and hearts: The impact of aid in conflict zones, *Conflict Management and Peace Science,* Vol. 30, No. 5, 2013. https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894213499486

Boucekkine Raouf, Desbordes Rodolphe, and Melindi-Ghidi Paolo, "Social Divisiveness and Conflicts: Grievances Matter!", Working Paper 2019-06, Aix-Marseille School of Economics.

Bowering Gerhard, *Islamic political thought: An introduction*, Princeton University Press, 2015.

Buhaug Halvard, Cederman Lars-Erik, and Gleditsch Kristian Skrede, Square pegs in round holes: Inequalities, grievances, and civil war, *International Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 58, No. 2, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12068

Cederman Lars-Erik, Weidmann Nils B., and Gleditsch Kristian Skrede, Horizontal inequalities and ethnonationalist civil war: A global comparison, *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 105, No. 3, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055411000207

Chevrier Jeremy, "Exploring the connections between poverty, lack of economic opportunity, and violent extremism in Sub-Saharam Africa", USAID, Washington, DC, 2017.

Child Travers Barclay, Hearts and minds cannot be bought: Ineffective reconstruction in Afghanistan, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal,* Vol. 9, No. 2, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.15355/epsj.9.2.43

Chou Tiffany, Does development assistance reduce violence? Evidence from Afghanistan, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal,* Vol. 7, No. 2, 2012. http://dx.doi.org/10.15355/epsj.7.2.5

Collier Paul and Hoeffler Anke, "Greed and grievance in civil war", Policy Research Working Paper 2355, The World Bank, Washington DC, 2000.

Cramer Christopher, Homo economicus goes to war: methodological individualism, rational choice and the political economy of war, *World Development,* Vol. 30, No. 11, 2002. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(02)00120-1

David Keen, Greed and grievance in civil war, *International Affairs,* Vol. 88, No. 4, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01100

Dávid-Barrett Elizabeth, Fazekas Mihály, Hellmann Olli, Márk Lili, and McCorley Ciara, Controlling corruption in development aid: New evidence from contract-level data, *Studies in Comparative International Development,* Vol. 55, No. 4, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-020-09315-4

Davies James C, Toward a theory of revolution, *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 27, No. 1, 1962.

Doosje Bertjan, Moghaddam Fathali M., Kruglanski Arie W., Arjan De Wolf, Mann Liesbeth, and Feddes Allard R., Terrorism, radicalization and de-radicalization, *Current Opinion in Psychology,* Vol. 11, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.06.008

Enders Walter and Hoover Gary A., The nonlinear relationship between terrorism and poverty, *American Economic Review,* Vol. 102, No. 3, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.102.3.267

Enders Walter, Hoover Gary A., and Todd Sandler, The changing nonlinear relationship between income and terrorism, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 60, No. 2, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714535252

Eronen Oskari, PRT models in Afghanistan, *Civilian Crisis Management Studies,* 2008.

Fearon James D. and Laitin David D., Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war, *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 97, No. 1, 2003. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000534

Fiedler Charlotte, "Unpacking the relationship between political institutions and conflict recurrence", Doctoral Dissertation, University of Essex, 2019.

Fishstein Paul and Wilder Andrew, "Winning hearts and minds? Examining the relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan", Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2012.

Fleming Sean, "Corruption costs developing countries $1.26 trillion every

year-yet half of EMEA think it's acceptable", World Economic Forum, December 9, 2019. Available at: *https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/12/corruption-global-problem-statistics-cost/* (accessed March 14, 2023).

Ghani Ashraf, "The Folly of Quick Action in Afghanistan", in: *Anthropologists in the Public Sphere: Speaking Out on War, Peace, and American Power,* Roberto J. Gonzalez (ed.), University of Texas Press. Austin, 2004.

Graff Corinne, "Poverty, Development, and Violent Expremism in Weak States", in: *Confronting poverty: weak States and US national security,* Susan E. Rice, Corinne Graff, and Carlos Pascual (eds.), Brookings Institution Press, 2010.

Grossman Herschell I., A general equilibrium model of insurrections, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 81, No. 4, 1991.

Gurr Ted R., *Why men rebel*, Routledge, 2015.

Habibzada Jamshed, "Two young men and an adolescent tell their stories on why they wanted to execute suicide attacks" (Title translated from Farsi), *Radio Azadi (Radio Liberty),* January 16, 2015. Available at: *https://da.azadiradio.com/a/26797083.html* (accessed on April 30, 2022).

Hafez Mohammed and Mullins Creighton, The radicalization puzzle: A theoretical synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* Vol. 38, No. 11, 2015. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1051375

Haqqani Husain, *The ideologies of South Asian jihadi groups*, Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2005.

Harriet Allan, Glazzard Andrew, Jesperson Sasha Tumu, and Winterbotham Emily Sneha Reddy, "Drivers of violent extremism: Hypotheses and literature review", Royal United Services Institute-London, 2015.

Hirshleifer Jack, The dark side of the force: Western Economic Association International 1993 presidential address, *Economic Inquiry,* Vol. 32, No.1, 1994.

Joya Omar and Payenda Khaled, "Effectiveness of Development Assistance in Afghanistan: Lessons from the World Bank Experience", *Policy Paper Series,* Biruni Institute, 2021.

Joya Omar, Rougier Eric and Shome Saurabh, "Understanding the Drivers of Poverty in Afghanistan", Technical Report, Biruni Institute, 2022.

Koubi Vally and Böhmelt Tobias, Grievances, economic wealth, and civil conflict, *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 51, No. 1, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313500501

Luehrs Christoff, Provincial Reconstruction Teams: A Literature Review, *Prism,* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2009.

Mesoy Atle, "Poverty and Radicalisation into violent extremism: a causal link", NOREF Expert Analysis, 2013.

Morris Sharon, Stephenson James, Ciminelli Paul, Muncy Donald, Tod Wilson,

and Al Nugent, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment", Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction, Washington, DC, 2006.

Muller Edward N., Income inequality, regime repressiveness, and political violence, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 1985. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095339

Østby Gudrun, Polarization, horizontal inequalities and violent civil conflict, *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 45, No. 2, 2008. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343307087169

Rahimi Lutfi, "Afghans' hopes and grievances: An Individual/Community Level Analysis", Policy Paper Series, Biruni Institute, 2021.

Rahimi Mujib Rahman, *State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History,* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.

Regan Patrick M. and Norton Daniel, Greed, grievance, and mobilization in civil wars, *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 49, No. 3, 2005. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002704273441

Robins Philip K., A comparison of the labor supply findings from the four negative income tax experiments, *Journal of Human Resources*, 1985. https://doi.org/10.2307/145685

Rudolph Ulrich, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand,* Brill, 2014.

Semple Michael, "Rhetoric, ideology, and organizational structure of the Taliban movement", Peaceworks No. 102, United States Institute of Peace, 2014.

Shahrani Nazif, *Modern Afghanistan: The impact of 40 years of war*, Indiana University Press, 2018.

Sharifi Arian, "Islamist groups in Afghanistan and the strategic choice of violence", Peace Brief 216, United States Peace Institute, 2016.

Shivamurthy Aditya Gowdara, "Mobilising to a Victorious Insurgency: Locating Identity, Grievance, and Greed in the Taliban's Strategy", Issue Brief 521, Observer Research Foundation, 2022.

Shomali Alireza and Boroujerdi Mehrzad, "On Sadi's Treatise on Advice to the Kings", in: *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft,* Mehrzad Bourojerdi (ed.), Syracuse University Press, 2013.

Sly Liz, "The hidden hand behind the Islamic State militants? Saddam Hussein's", *Washington Post*, April 4, 2015. Available at: *https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-hidden-hand-behind-the-islamic-state-militants-saddam-hus-seins/2015/04/04/aa97676c-cc32-11e4-8730-4f473416e759_story.html* (accessed March 14, 2023).

Stewart Frances, *Horizontal inequalities and conflict: Understanding group violence in multiethnic societies*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016.

Suhrke Astri, "Lessons from Bonn: Victors' Peace?", in: Incremental *Peace in Afghanistan,* Anna Larson and Alexander Ramsbotham (ed.), Accord: Issue 27, Conciliation Resources, London, 2018.

Waldman Matt, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations", Special Report 256, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2010.

"Council of Ulema: Suicide attacks have no Islamic basis and are impermissible (Title transfer from Farsi)", *Deutsche Welle,* June 04, 2018. Available at: *https://p.dw.com/p/2yuS1* (accessed on April 30, 2022).

"Preventing violent extremism through promoting inclusive development, tolerance and respect for diversity: A development response to addressing radicalization and violent extremism", UNDP, New York, 2016.

"The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice", USAID, Washington DC, 2011.

Омар Џоја, Луфти Рахими

ТЕОРИЈА ВЕРСКИХ УВРЕДА: РАЗУМЕВАЊЕ КОНФЛИКТА У АВГАНИСТАНУ

Сажетак

Током историје, увреде су увек биле важан извор конфликата. У овом раду покушавамо да објаснимо сукоб у Авганистану не као економски сукоб – што је премиса која је доминирала дискурсом у пост-2001. периоду, али која има ограничен утицај на смањивање насиља и спречавања несигурности. Ми предлажемо теорију „верских увреда" за разумевање конфликта у Авганистану која показује како појединци решавају несигурности које се тичу њихових перцепција дискриминације, политичке искључивости, и перцепције претње према верској суверености. Ова теорија објашњава када и зашто се верске увреде претварају у политичке увреде које могу да допринесу конфликту у друштву у којем је политичка интерпретација религије доминантна. Рад завршава дискусијом о томе како радикализам може бити зауздан тако што би се улагало, и заговоравало, за алтернативне умерене дискурсе како би се делегитимизовали радикални наративи који се иначе користе као мобилизацијска стратегија за сукобе.

Кључне речи: политичка економије радикализације, верска увреда, радикализација, конфликти засновани на увредама, конфликт у Авганистану