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**DELIVERY OF USAID AID TO AFGHANISTAN, 2001-2017**

by

**ABDULLAH BATAINEH**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

2018

MAJOR POLITICAL SCIENCE

Approved By:

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Advisor

Date

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## **PREFACE**

In my experiences as a Social Scientist for the Human Terrain System (HTS) program, I was part of a team that conducted over 100 missions to study local cultures and their needs in Afghanistan. I collected data from interviews on current aid delivery programs and wrote made reports on completed projects to inform future aid programs. There was a direct link between my involvement with HTS and this dissertation, because my employment within the US Army and my months of experience in Afghanistan sparked my aspirations for this dissertation research. The poverty and injustice that I witnessed was paramount to my desire to investigate the billions of dollars of USAID money allocated and to understand where it went. Also, I became involved with many Key Leaders and local Afghan officials. I understood their perspectives in a unique ways, largely due to my studies in political science and the fact that I am a Jordanian-American familiar with the Afghan culture.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AED	Academy for Educational Development
AGEs	Anti Governmental Elements
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
BESST	Building Education Support Systems for Teachers
CAT	Civic Affairs Teams
CBE	Community Based Education
CENTCOM	US Central Command
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CERP	Commanders' Emergency Response Program
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DABS	Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat
FET	Female Engagement Teams
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
HEP	Higher Education Program
HTS	Human Terrain System
HTT	Human Terrain Team
IRB	Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Program
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant

KLEs	Key Leader Engagements
LDC	Least Developed Country
MoE	Afghan Ministry of Education
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEPS	North East Power System
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
NSP	National Solidarity Program
PAC	Public Awareness Campaign
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
PTEC	Power Transmission Expansion and Connectivity Project
SEPS	South Electrical Power System
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SIKA	Stability in Key Areas
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement
TPP	Tarakhil Power Plant
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
UN	United Nations
USAID	US Agency for International Development

## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **Problem Statement**

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has allocated over 100 billion US dollars since 2001 to the development of Afghanistan, and the United States has invested over 700 billion US dollars overall. Yet, Afghanistan is currently foreign aid dependent. There is a breakdown, a problem, in the USAID funding system for Afghanistan, whereas the money allocated is not always utilized for intended purposes. Is there accountability for the management of billions of American dollars?

The aim of this research is to examine specific details of what political and social barriers exist that hinder the effective use of American foreign aid and funding in Afghanistan, specifically aid allocated through USAID. Today Afghanistan remains a LDC, or least developed country, with extensive poverty, limited energy supply, poor infrastructure, and low literacy rates despite extensive spending by USAID, an agency of the US government. Afghanistan continues to be aid dependent for health care, education, civil services, infrastructure, economic development, and training of soldiers. Lack of infrastructure includes basic utilities, such as water and electricity. (Brinkley, 2013 para. 2).

A significant amount of aid to Afghanistan was wasted due to poor governance and mismanagement on all sides. The governance entities involved in aid allocation and aid delivery include Afghan national, regional, provincial, and local governments, and the United States involvement through United States Congress, the Inspector General's Offices (OIG) of USAID, the contractors and sub-contractors, and indirectly, the US Army's

Human Terrain System. Other agencies involved included SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction), the United Nations, and PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams). All these efforts and funding were to alleviate the chaotic economic and living conditions for the people of Afghanistan.

USAID describes its mission as follows: “We partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity”<sup>1</sup>. Their mission is to raise Afghanistan out of extreme poverty and to help alleviate the deficiencies in infrastructure for the nation. Based on modernization theory, if enough money is poured into a less-developed country, development is predicted to occur, and the nation will become economically stable and modern. Human capital theory as part of modernization theory states that education is an investment that benefits people and societies, spearheading the nation out of poverty into modern development (Tilak 2002). Therefore, for the context of this dissertation, aid projects will be considered within the parameters of the education and energy (electricity) sectors.

My experience with the US Army’s Human Terrain System<sup>2</sup> prompted my interest in writing this dissertation on the efficacy of American aid in Afghanistan for several reasons. The first and primary reason was the extreme economic degradation I witnessed during my work there. With so many people suffering, I had to question where the billions

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/mission-vision-values> With the war involvement in Afghanistan the USAID approach to development has been more aligned with the US Army’s winning hearts and minds counterinsurgency strategies. This is how the unique HTS, Human Terrain System, of which I was a part, became indirectly involved with aid. Creating the potential for building schools, bridges, and positive outreach became a joint effort of USAID and the US Army.

<sup>2</sup> The Human Terrain System was a small program, which began in 2005 and ended in 2014. The idea was to train and embed social scientists in US Army platoons while in combat zones to mediate some of the cultural misunderstandings that undermined winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan (and Iraqi) people.

of dollars of US/USAID investment had gone. A secondary reason was my observations of the convoluted and corrupt policies concerning financial transactions within American agencies as well as among Afghan officials. Most disturbingly, I observed that “winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people” became more about excluding their culture, rather than integrating it within aid distribution, often leaving the people without the benefits of the aid that was intended to help them.

This study examines conditions found in Afghanistan through specific research on two aid related projects: energy and education. Topics on foreign aid funding to LDC nations are addressed herein to find barriers to development, contribute to the body of knowledge, and assess possible improvements for Afghanistan.

**Research questions for this study:**

1. What are the barriers or factors preventing the effective delivery of USAID funding in Afghanistan for the project of the Tarakhil Power Plant and in the sphere of education?
2. How are project factors perceived by individual stakeholders, government agencies, government watchdogs, the media, and scholars?
3. If needed, what are some strategies that could improve aid delivery and address any lack of efficiency and efficacy of aid in Afghanistan?

**Conditions in Afghanistan**

To study these questions, we must first understand the general conditions in Afghanistan. Reuters (2014) reports numerous gains made in Afghanistan in recent years: GDP rose from \$4 billion in 2002 to \$20 billion in 2013; access to electricity rose from 6%

in 2002 to 28% in 2013; school enrollment increased from 1 million in 2003 to 8.7 million in 2013; and high school attendance grew from 224,078 in 2004 to 717,015 in 2013. For the 40 million people living in Afghanistan today, life expectancy climbed from 56 to 61 years of age.<sup>3</sup> There was a 5% increase in life expectancy, which still makes life expectancy rather low when compared to other nations. Low life expectancy is expected in a war-torn country, but there were also low birth rates. With out-migration population, growth would be slow to increase. Despite these gains, Donati (2014) stated that reconstruction in Afghanistan was a “development mess.”

After 16 years of US war in Afghanistan, some scholars believe that not only has the US and allies failed at reconstruction, but that Afghanistan is a failed state. According to the Fund for Peace: “The twelve CAST (Conflict Assessment System Tool) indicators, upon which the Fragile States Index is based, cover a wide range of state failure risk elements such as extensive corruption and criminal behavior, inability to collect taxes or otherwise draw on citizen support, large-scale involuntary dislocation of the population, sharp economic decline, group-based inequality, institutionalized persecution or discrimination, severe demographic pressures, brain drain, and environmental decay. States can fail at varying rates through explosion, implosion, erosion, or invasion over different time periods.” For 2017, Afghanistan ranks 9<sup>th</sup> out of 178 countries and scores a 107.3 out of a possible 120 in the Fragile State Index. The trend in Afghanistan from 2006 -2017 has been one of worsening with some minor improvements; the ranking on the

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<sup>3</sup> Donati (2014) From an in-text graphic figure created by J. Pong, Reuters, 12/16/2014.

Fragile State Index is worse now than in 2006<sup>4</sup>. Building a modernized nation where generations have suffered through war is difficult.

Throughout history, invaders of Afghanistan have been defeated, earning the country the nickname “the graveyard of empires” (Huffington Post, August 29, 2017). Indeed, after \$714 billion dollars and 16 years of investment in Afghanistan, most world leaders believe that America cannot win at nation building in Afghanistan and that America cannot beat the Taliban, according to Al Jazeera English. The Taliban have a stronghold in 50 to 80 percent of Afghanistan (The Nation, 2017). They have taken over major cities in almost all the Northern provinces, giving the Taliban back control in these areas.

Violence, criminality, and danger go hand and hand with corruption, especially at the Durand Line<sup>5</sup>, or the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The contested imaginary line is a frontier boundary unrecognized by the Pashtun (including the Taliban) as an official border. With many illegal crossings, the line runs through Pashtun territory and is known for being a hotbed of corruption. The Taliban are predominantly Pashtun<sup>6</sup>, and those operating from Pakistan have centered their leadership against the West (The

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<sup>4</sup> <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/country-data/> Founded in 1956, the Fund for Peace is an independent non-profit 501c3 based in Washington, D. C. and Abuja, Nigeria. Produced annually, the Fragile States Index, ranks 178 countries across 12 indicators of the risks and vulnerabilities.

<sup>5</sup> The Durand Line was established by the British Empire in 1896 and attempted to force Afghans to become either Indian (then the British Raj) or Afghan (then an independent state). The Afghan government has never officially recognized this border. The imaginary Durand Line cut through the Pashtun people's land making today some Pashtuns Pakistani and others Afghan today.

<sup>6</sup> The Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group of Afghanistan and the second largest in Pakistan. Pashtuns speak the Pashto language.



Nation, 2017). Maps indicate the illegal movements of the Taliban along the Durand Line, a frontier boundary unrecognized by the Pashtun (or the Taliban) as an official border.<sup>7</sup>

The United Nations reports that violence increased by 21% in Kabul in 2016 from the previous year. Civilian casualties were at a record high, and it was a precarious time in Afghanistan. Militant attacks increased since the drawdown of American troops, which began with a speech by President Obama in 2011 and ended in December 2014 leaving 9,800 US troops (Institute of the Study of War). From 2010 to 2017, half a billion US dollars was spent to improve intelligence units. However, without a provable matrix and with officers afraid to leave American compounds, it is difficult to know the effectiveness. Reliable information was and still is vague and opaque (Tritton, 2017).

Security is the number one problem inside Afghanistan with corruption being a close second, depending on the perspective. According to Transparency International, Afghanistan ranks 169 out of 176 countries in terms of corruption, and only Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, North Korea, and Somalia ranked as more corrupt in 2016.<sup>8</sup>

Corruption in Afghanistan can be seen in something called the ghost phenomenon. References are made by survey participants in this study about ghost soldiers, ghost schools, and ghost teachers all receiving paychecks or funds from American investments,

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<sup>7</sup> “Map of the Durand Line Cutting Through Pashtun Population”. <http://nation.com.pk/columns/28-Jan-2017/durand-line-saga>, and “Map of Taliban Drug Routes from the Pakistan side of the Durand Line. Afghanistan-Pakistan Drug Transit Routes”, Posted April 30th, 2015, by Naseer Kakar and Niala Mohammad <https://blogs.voanews.com/durand/page/3/>

<sup>8</sup> [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org) Transparency International was established in 1993 and is now in 100 countries. It is a non-partisan in its efforts to end corruption.

but they do not exist. It is money from USAID and the US government that pays these ghost individuals for work that is never done, and the Government of Afghanistan sometimes reports exaggerated numbers of individuals in the workforce (Al Jazeera English, August 1, 2017).

Bribes, false reports, and theft are widespread in Afghanistan. This dissertation research examines and finds support for claims that corruption and security issues prevent American foreign aid dollars from modernizing Afghanistan. Still, more money is being poured into Afghanistan and it remains dependent on American dollars to function. Many scholars and reporters agree that a complete pullout of funding from Afghanistan would create a vacuum for the Taliban to fill, and Afghanistan would disintegrate further into a failed state.

This option is considered unbearable for the people of Afghanistan and the world, who are alert about the possibility of increased terrorist activities. However, other efforts have failed as interactions with the Taliban have proven thus far. They target schools and educated individuals, and undermine those who will not convert to Taliban fundamentalism. The Taliban destroys and controls road access. They are quite savvy when it comes to making money in the opium and illegal drug trade. Peace talks have failed, and Presidents Bush and Obama could not move forward in restraining the insurgents.

In August 2017, President Trump announced that “we are no longer nation building,” and that America is fighting to win (Burki, 2017). Trump stated that America will be with Afghanistan without any conditions “until the end” (PBS News Hour, August 22, 2017). However, with so much corruption and fraud in all facets of the political system

it will be difficult for outsiders to control the Taliban and the violence. There must be a political settlement and agreement, and hopes are pinned on parliamentary elections in 2018 and a presidential election in 2019. Also, the Afghan security forces must be actively involved in any resolution.

A Center for Strategic Studies' recent report claims the United States has done a very poor job of training the Afghan police and military (Patel and Ross, 2007, 10). Once again corruption hinders this effort through waste and inefficient use of money. The corruption is not only in the Afghan arena. Many Americans, mostly contractors, are overpaid and mismatched with jobs. There are also hostilities from some Afghans, who resent the American presence, and some Americans are overtly angry at the Afghans. The high presence of USAID money is one factor that fuels these conflicts.

### **An Overview of US Aid Mechanisms**

USAID is an agency of the federal government led by US Congress and overseen by an Inspector General office. In Afghanistan the reconstruction is overseen by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). The World Bank and USAID boast about their successes. USAID claims to have transformed many communities in Afghanistan with infrastructure, clean water, schools, and health care. They purport that they bring investors to the cities to build businesses and hotels and though there are challenges with the security issues, they give little attention to corruption or fraud.

By 2004, USAID developed plans in the education and energy sectors to build schools, clinics, and infrastructure using all contractors. USAID funding paid contractors for projects, many of which were never completed, were mismanaged, or were done poorly.

There were no routine on-the-ground inspections, no follow-up, or long term maintenance plans in USAID designs. By 2007, with the approaching presidential election in the US, there was a huge push to get large-scale projects operational, such as the Tarakhil Power Plant in Kabul, and the Higher Education Project in 24 colleges and universities around the country. Some saw hope in the tertiary school system as those who go to college can shape the future. The belief was that books and pens were mightier than the Taliban's weapons.

By 2010 both of those projects were documented failures. This study shows that USAID also denied criticisms, such as the major failure of the TPP. The wasted billions of dollars in Afghanistan should be a concern for all parties involved, but particularly those who care about the Afghan people. Their suffering continues every day, while many steal and selfishly contribute to the perpetuation of a broken system. By 2011 USAID was trying to stave off accusations of fraud, waste, and the misappropriation of funds through an increase of evaluations, both internal and external; transparency before the public through online databases; and an effort to prove to the US Congress what projects were productive with successful outcomes for the money allocated.

Even though the Inspector General's office audits projects and SIGAR produces quarterly reports, problems continue. From 2012 to 2016 US Congress debated the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act, giving final approval in 2016. On July 15, 2016, President Obama enacted H.R. 3766 (114<sup>th</sup> Congress): Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 to become Public Law 114-191. This new law directly impacts USAID and increases requirements for transparency and accountability.

Additionally, it is important to provide an overview of the US Army's attempt to rectify cultural and ethnic misunderstandings through the program of Human Terrain Systems (HTS). The disconnect between Western and Afghan worldviews impacts and disrupts aid, and these cultural misunderstandings render much aid wasted. The attempts through the HTS program to bridge the cultural gaps have had mixed results, not necessarily because of its idealized notions, but because of internal corruption and complaints. Also, HTS was not welcomed by all in the US Army partly due to the controversial approach of trying to use anthropologists and partly due to the HTS workers being paid at the pay grade level of officers in the US military.

### **Summary of the Central Research Focus**

The central focus of this study is to find the barriers or factors preventing the effective delivery of USAID funding to Afghanistan. The focus is on two aid projects, or the TPP and education aid in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2017. The study examines official documents, reports, and investigations. They reveal the systems of goal setting and processes of aid delivery. The perspectives of stakeholders reveal the effectiveness of the aid from the recipients' points of view and clarify barriers to the success of the aid, which impacted modernization processes for Afghanistan. Thus, the systematic research to reveal the barriers of effective aid delivery, analysis of the data collected, and subsequent conclusions are the focus of this dissertation.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter One is an Introduction Chapter, which reveals the problem statement, purpose, and focus of the study, along with the three research questions for the dissertation study. The second chapter is a history of

the problem concerning the research questions outlined in Chapter One. Chapter Three reviews the theoretical implications of the study.

Chapter Four presents research data covering two aid sectors in Afghanistan, energy and education aid funding through USAID. This dissertation research utilizes data from official aid reports and audits, academic and media reports, the lived experiences of respondents involved with Afghan aid projects, and HTS research concerning aid projects. Specifically, the qualitative data uses respondents' narratives from individuals who administered and implemented aid, plus those who worked as advisors, interpreters, HTS, and contractors with knowledge concerning energy and education aid projects in Afghanistan. I also include data drawn from participant observation as an HTS social science researcher. Finally, I examine the reports including program audits from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), reports from USAID's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), third party research reports, and the media.

Chapter Five uses multi-level and multi-focus analyses for the data. The end results from analyses of USAID aid funding data will directly address the research questions, and also answer the question, 'Did the Afghan people receive aid benefits as intended?' The results of the inquiry into these questions will be beneficial for scholars, development agencies, policy makers and governmental agencies in the US and Afghanistan. Global implications may be tested by other scholars in future research. Chapter Five includes theoretic parameters to analyze the data, and discusses the results of delivering energy and education aid to Afghanistan. Chapter Six addresses limitations of the study, future

research needed, and the final research question of what can be done to improve aid delivery in Afghanistan? Recommendations given propose strategies that could improve aid delivery dynamics.

## **CHAPTER 2 HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM**

### **History of Aid in Afghanistan**

The motivation to provide aid to Afghanistan was frequently influenced by the desire of external governments to increase political stability in the country, because of a strategic position in the Middle East in relation to other nations (Svensson, 2003, 382). The geo-political position of Afghanistan was also the cause of three wars with Britain called the Anglo-Afghan wars (of 1839–42; 1878–80; and 1919). Through wars and other foreign incursions, several European nations tried to influence Afghanistan through the delivery of aid money.

In this context, the provision of funds from external stakeholders played an increasingly prominent and important part in Afghanistan's economy (Pain and Goodhand, 2002; Rubin, 1995) Afghanistan became what is known as a "rentier" state, or when the major revenues of a nation is derived from the 'rent' of their natural resources to another nation. Funds for resources were paid in foreign aid, and the implication was that external political and economic control would follow. Foreign aid from Europe in the 1960s accounted for more than 40% of the Afghan government's budget, which made it heavily reliant on aid (Rubin, 1995). While the aid facilitated modernization programs in Afghanistan, it came with outside influences from the external stakeholders.

A bifurcation of the social and economic situations occurred in Afghanistan due the influx of this foreign aid. An economically divided society increased the level of inequality between those who lived in the rural areas with subsistence agriculture, and those in the urban areas where much of the aid was focused. The impact of foreign aid facilitated the



emergence of a new elite social structure, and included the funding of higher education for Afghan's top social echelon (Rubin, 1995). The situation became self-sustaining, as those who gained select status from aid benefits, were invariably the same people who were placed in control of government positions.

The Soviet Union entered Afghanistan by force in 1979 to end an Afghan civil war and to annex Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup> The Soviets tried to build Afghanistan into a modern Communist nation-state through aid projects. Afghanistan's receipt of aid from many Western countries came to almost a complete stop in 1979 as a result of the Soviet invasion (Rubin, 2000). Since the United States was embroiled in the Cold War with the Soviets, the US sent military aid to the Afghan resistance fighters, the Mujahedeen or "holy warriors", to fight against the Soviets. However, it could be argued the country did not suffer significantly, as occupation by the Soviet Union resulted in an increase in the level of aid from Soviet sources. Therefore, the alignment of aid with political tug of war was a repeated historical feature, and continued aid provided by the Soviet Union only served to increase Afghanistan's reliance on aid (Rubin, 2000).

The strategic geographical position of Afghanistan, which is next to nuclear armed Pakistan and India, played a role in the Cold War and the post-Cold War too. (Baitenmann, 1990). The Afghan resistance supported the Mujahedeen,<sup>10</sup> which also received support from Pakistan. Several of the refugee camps set up by non-governmental organizations

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<sup>9</sup> Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, Office of the Historian, Department of State. Retrieved August 28, 2017. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/soviet-invasion-afghanistan>

<sup>10</sup> The plural form of mujahid, the term for one engaged in jihad, or a struggle, according to the Quran.

(NGOs) aid agencies in Pakistan were then utilized as a base for mujahidin fighters. Interestingly, the delivery of Western NGO aid for humanitarian purposes mirrored the delivery of arms to resistance groups against the Russians, and the Western programs provided a significant element of support for resistance to the Soviets. Those who were living in refugee camps were required to register with one of seven political parties determined by the Pakistani government. This identification process separated and identified different religious and political Afghan groups, of which some were politically favored over others (Baitenmann, 1990).

From Pakistan, Afghan humanitarian aid from NGOs went to areas controlled by the Mujahedeen through cross-border operations in a semi-covert manner. The aid provisions through NGOs facilitated middlemen, which hid the origins of the funding, reduced transparency, and avoided accountability (Baitenmann, 1990). With this approach, it was unsurprising there were suspicions of many NGOs, and their potential for aiding rebels through cross-border operations (Nicholds and Borton, 1990). Until 1988, the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations were not able to provide aid due to sovereignty issues, but expressed concerns regarding the way that NGO aid was being provided.

Much of Western aid was destined for eastern Afghanistan that was easy to reach as it was near Peshawar, on the Pakistani border.<sup>11</sup> The location facilitated movement of aid that utilized other stakeholders with connections to political parties related to the

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<sup>11</sup> Peshawar was a key city in Pakistan where aid agencies and Afghan rebels congregated.

Mujahedeen. This was a practical necessity as it was the only route through which aid could reach those in need (Nicholds and Borton, 1990; Baitenmann, 1990). This system of secrecy facilitated and even supported the development of political favoritism and corruption (Baitenmann, 1990). Resistance commanders set up checkpoints in order to charge taxes on the aid as it was distributed. Wheat distributed through the NGO aid had "wastage" up to 40%, which was accounted for by local commanders taking "taxes" (Nicholds and Borton, 1990).

These practices exacerbated the problems of dependency, as levels of food production decreased in the area as much as 50% to 60% (Rubin, 2000). Therefore the reliance, supply, and the delivery of aid supported a negative self-sustaining cycle. In order to continue providing aid, many NGOs remained silent on specific issues including the humanitarian atrocities caused by the Mujahedeen, and even discussions on pursuing peace initiatives. The NGOs involved did not tackle these issues to maintain admission and aid delivery (Rubin, 1999, 2000). The Soviets completed their withdrawal in February 1989, following a decision of Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

By 1990, a new collapse of the Afghan state resulted in an increased level of support from the United Nations. Opening up Afghanistan increased aid provided to the entire country, so the previous focus on the eastern part of the country was broken (Donini, Dudley, and Ockwell, 1996). This stage of aid up to 1996 was referred to as the second-generation of aid (Rubin, 2000). The period saw an increased level of efficiency, as different NGOs undertook the provisions of aid in a more coordinated manner. The current pattern of aid was established that placed the official providers of aid as central actors in

Afghan affairs (Rubin, 2000). The Afghan government's influence was relatively limited, and Afghans were relegated to the primary role of recipient rather than partner.

Humanitarian aid efforts to help Afghanistan from the United States started in 1945, but to a lesser degree until 2001 (Svensson, 2003, 388). The United States' involvement in Afghanistan from the years 1979-1992 was largely to support the Mujahedeen rebels against Soviet Union or what William Blum (2004) called the American Jihad in his book *Killing Hope*. With all of the foreign political and economic incursions, Afghanistan's stability suffered. "In the years following, many of the funding nations that provided aid claimed Afghanistan to be a "failed state" and took up roles associated with their government, effectively becoming "surrogate governance" (Surkhe, Strand, and Harpviken, 2002, 20). The Afghan government was highly fragmented, and the internal systems faced challenging conditions from lack of infrastructure. The Afghan government had so many concerns that overall effectiveness of aid delivery was reduced (Surkhe et al., 2002, 2). The aid programs developed mostly small projects, with the exception of mining through the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA). Aid projects supported rural development through the building of roads, helped to support small businesses and community projects, and for the provision of livestock. The aim was to improve the overall economy to reduce the potential for conflict caused by competition for resources (Surkhe et al., 2002, 45).

While this period provided a greater level of successful aid, the Afghan government lacked structure. Large projects were not viable as there was no national governmental support systems in place (Surkhe et al., 2002, 46). Attempts by agencies to provide aid on

a broader scale, such as the utilization of Shuras at a district level, were relatively limited. Aiding local farmers transitioning from drug programs to other arable programs was also ineffective (Surkhe et al., 2002, 48). The weak Afghan government resulted in many types of corrupt venues. An example was the food aid program often resulted in client-lists benefiting from food distribution (Surkhe et al., 2002; Duffield, Leader, and Grossman, 2001).

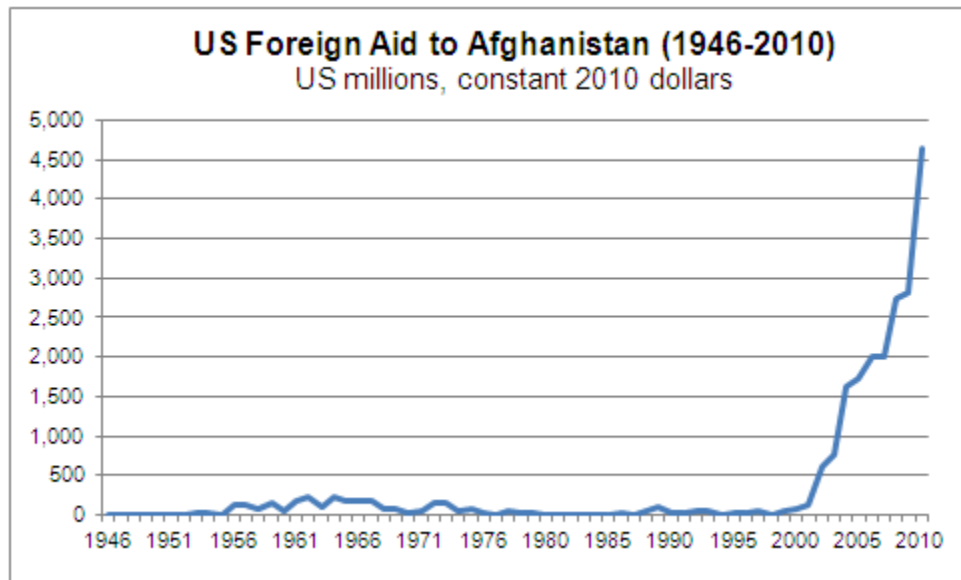
With political fragmentation, the rise of the Taliban was enabled. They were sort of a 'religious police' for the people, and monitored and controlled fundamentalist religious values. The Taliban had many followers, but their values were contradictory to many international aid goals that emphasized modernization. At odds to the Taliban were the treatment and rights of women and the establishment of formal education. During this time, corruption also created difficulties for aid to reach those for whom it was intended (Surkhe et al., 2002, 51).

As the Taliban took charge politically and socially in 1996, foreign concerns increased about hindrance of aid delivery, threats of terrorism, and that more drugs would be produced. Furthermore, Osama bin Laden was living in Afghanistan and working with the Taliban. The Saudi citizen, bin Laden, was deemed a terrorist by the international community. This brought international attention, and the United Nations imposed sanctions during 1999 and 2000. The results of the sanctions reduced aid provided by international aid organizations. At this time, a strategic framework to promote peace was emphasized by both the United Nations and the United States (Duffield et al., 2001, 7). Called the third-

generation of aid, from 1996 to 2001 the emphasis on aid was also accompanied with concern for humanitarian and diplomatic processes.

When the Taliban fell in 2001 and Afghanistan's government changed to have international recognition, once again aid delivery changed too. There was a greater level of international support, especially from major governments. However, the major supplier of aid became the United States (Figure 2.1). By the end of 2014, over \$100 billion from the US had been earmarked for Afghanistan (Brinkley, 2013; BBC News, 2012).

**Figure 2.1 – US Foreign Aid to Afghanistan (1946-2010)**



<http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/afghanistan-big-winner-u-s-foreign-aid/>

### **Reflections on Aid Efforts**

A historical perspective is very important, when examining political influences concerning foreign aid. A review is needed on how different types of significant government structures within Afghanistan influenced levels of aid and methods of delivery with other government aid benefactors. Starting in 1996, the Taliban's shadow government

usurped the rule of law for the Government of Afghanistan, and aid delivery was reduced (World Bank, 2005). Therefore in 2001, aid was part of the US counterinsurgency plan against the Taliban, using an international strategy of aid implementation. This plan utilized aid programs to reduce poverty and improve the material conditions in areas of conflict to reducing the potential for counterinsurgency (US Army/Marine Corps, 2006).

The ‘Winning Hearts and Minds’ counter-insurgency strategy was one of the goals for the US involvement in Afghanistan. Yet, in many instances, “buying into” the American way of doing things was muddled by the top-down development of US strategies, which resulted in inequitable distribution of aid. Contractors and non-Afghans typically received a majority of the funding from top-down planning for large development projects. Additionally, beginning in 2001, USAID funding to Afghanistan typically went to the areas with greatest violence in order to deter the Taliban from gaining control. The result was that the most impoverished districts with the least violence receive less aid, since those districts were less strategic for the US.

Bearce and Tirone (2010) and Boyce (2000) agree that local governance is more likely to support aid programs, when strategic benefits of aid are greater for the recipient country, rather benefits for the donor country. Therefore, if there are significant strategic advantages for the donor country in delivering aid, there may be a higher level of resistance by the recipient government (Bearce and Tirone, 2010). From these conclusions we infer that the less strategic or smaller scale projects would be most likely to gain support, and therefore most likely to be more successful. However, elements that contributed to successes of aid delivery have been highly debated.

Burnside and Dollar (2000, 4) offered that aid benefited governments that implemented "good" economic policies. Svensson (2003, 382) agreed that when indicators supported economic growth, then aid was more likely to be successful. However, these findings were not unilaterally accepted, and research by Boone (1996, 23) and Easterly, Levine and Roodman (2004, 776) found no improvement in the impact of aid in areas with "good" economic policies. Indeed, many examples stemming from aid projects in Afghanistan supported or derailed aid concepts.

The war on terror included humanitarian aid from the beginning for the Afghan people. Basic needs such as electricity were viewed as a primary task for reconstruction efforts led by USAID in Afghanistan, and large top-down projects were implemented for these Afghan aid projects. The Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP), the subject of analysis in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, was designed and built by USAID starting in 2007 to provide electricity for the city of Kabul. However, the diesel power plant cost three times as much as those in Pakistan and the annual operating cost was 280 million US dollars - more than a third of Afghanistan's annual tax revenues. Years later it produced almost no electricity, because of the costs of diesel fuel. "Juma Nawandish, the former deputy minister of energy and water, told a reporter that he wanted to develop the gas fields in northern Afghanistan instead. Nearby lakes and rivers could have provided far cheaper hydropower." (Gall, 2008) However, US projects were planned and funded one year at a time by Congress, which caused fragmented objectives.

The "Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)," signed in May of 2012, outlined the US-Afghanistan relationship through 2024, but funding was still to be approved annually.



The new SPA continued to reveal top-down approaches in Afghanistan. For instance, the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) coalition agreed to fund and support the Afghan security forces, but the SPA did not say how. The US Administration in 2013 asked Congress for funding to continue every year, and the same is true for NATO member states, but there were no guarantees the funding would continue. Yet, the SPA was a step in the right direction as it created a longer time frame than the prior one-to-two years planning strategies for the Afghan war (Keller, 2011).

Frost (2012) asserted that future plans should be definable and achievable with an eye towards long-term success. Furthermore, policymakers needed to apply 'lessons learned' to transition strategies and the future of US operations in the country. Only by addressing these critical shortcomings could such aid strategies have any hopes of success. It was also beneficial to look at how successful aid programs were implemented.

The 2003 National Solidarity Program (NSP) was the largest development program within Afghanistan. It was funded by US dollars and administered by the Afghan government. The NSP process of development was based on intervention that targeted community and village level initiatives (Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov, 2012, 9). Aid delivery went to community development councils located in each village. The councils were elected through a universal vote utilizing equal numbers of both genders (Beath et al., 2012, 10).

The practical application of this development program started with the disbursement of \$200.00 grants for each household. The village could have a maximum level of \$60,000.00 to undertake selected projects (Beath et al., 2012, 11). The projects

were usually based on infrastructure development, such as road building, provisions of clean drinking water, or the building of canals for irrigation. Funds were also utilized to provide teaching and training, including literacy courses. Different levels of the Afghan government supported the projects, which may be a significant factor in the success of more than 29,000 villages benefiting from the aid.

By 2012, the impacts were measurably successful for the 29,000 project villages with costs of nearly \$1 billion (Beath et al., 2012, 15). Research assessed the perceptions of the quality of life for those in the participating villages. The respondents had a more positive view of their potential future and current economic conditions in comparison with villages that did not take part. Depending on the measurements used, such as quality of life and material improvements, the results were between 12% and 17% greater for participating villages (Beath et al., 2012, 15). It was also worth noting the villages displayed a more positive attitude towards the Afghan government and its agencies. Development aid has been highly criticized for not using the labor of local people and appropriate technologies. Schumacher's 1973 *Small is Beautiful*, describes how village based economics refute the Western notion of "bigger is better."

### **USAID's Role in Aid**

President John Kennedy created the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Foreign Assistance Act in 1962 as part of the executive branch, with program and funding approval by the US Congress. The main objective of USAID was the alleviation of poverty throughout the developing world and later within war zones. Under foreign policy guidance from the President, Secretary of State and the

National Security Council, USAID played a key role in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Audits of USAID Afghanistan missions were conducted by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, which was created by Congress in 2008 and began its work in 2009.

In one of SIGAR's reports, *(SIKA) Stability in Key Areas Programs* (July 2013) stated that for 16 months and \$47 million spent USAID had not met essential program objectives during the reporting period, including the four quarters of 2012 and the first quarter of 2013. USAID was accused of delays in contracts and a lack of disbursement of funding to local governments in all four regions. There were problems of misuse of the funds. Although allocated money was distributed to Academy for Educational Development (AED) contractors, much of the money was not applied to projects, which was in violation of United Nations protocols related to corruption. This audit was of interest to this dissertation study because it pointed to instances of corruption and lack of accountability from within USAID's bureaucracy.

USAID has denied any wrong doing and according to the report, "USAID Engagement in Afghanistan, 2014 and Beyond," the agency has accomplished improvements in health, infrastructure, and gender higher education over the past twelve years. "Our partnership with Afghanistan will extend past the 2014 security transition as we seek to work with the Afghan government, private sector, and civil society to end extreme poverty through a focus on agriculture, private sector development, and maintenance of much-needed infrastructure" (USAID, 2014). According to Sandefur (2012) at the Center for Global Development, any off-budget or non-secure aid delivery

problems shifted for the better since the Tokyo agreement of 2012 to keep aid targeted and on budget in Afghanistan.

USAID aid money in Afghanistan had some successes, such as projects with the grape farmers, who moved away from opium production due to the 30% higher profits achieved with growing grapes (Constable, 2013, 22). Furthermore, USAID supported education, especially higher education for women (Bakhtar News Agency, 2013, 1). However, while there are some successes, overall goals to alleviate suffering remain elusive. For example, in counteracting the success of the grape farmers referenced above, between 2012 and 2013 there was a 36% increase in opium production, from 154,000 hectares to 209,000 hectares (Afghanistan Opium Survey 2013). Constable (2013) expected that problems may increase if an agreement to move control of aid is realized, with at least 50% of the funding going through the Government of Afghanistan (2013, 22).

The need for accountability for funding is generally recognized, and checks and balances, especially regarding taxpayer money to the tune of millions of dollars, should require accountability at all levels. A chain of accountability is optimal that includes the responsibility of the donors as well as the recipients. The largest projects for USAID are associated with very expensive infrastructure projects such as road building and provision for power. In a chain of responsibility, the NGOs and contractors receiving the aid should answer to USAID, who in turn answers to the US government. The US government has a responsibility to the US taxpayers, whose tax dollars are providing the aid funding (Groves and Hinton, 2013, 25; Scott, McLoughlin, and Marquette, 2009, 510; Wenar, 2006, 2). Furthermore, a system of checks and balances should also apply to Afghan leaders and

stakeholders. A model is needed in advance of project planning and implementation for checks and balances.

*Additional Information on Aid in Afghanistan.*

USAID and the Pentagon aid programs in Afghanistan do not meet the stated mission goals to alleviate poverty. Sandefur (2012) says: “Three points stand out: 1. Violence is lowest in the poorest provinces. 2. Aid is lowest in the poorest provinces. 3. There are huge aid flows to unstable provinces where aid development and impact are questionable.” This shows an evident priority for the US to address the Taliban rather than comprehensive humanitarian aid. In contrast, aid money channeled through the Afghan government — like the much-celebrated National Solidarity Program — is, in principle, much more equitably distributed across provinces and districts. Sandefur (2012) points out aid focus should be on areas where the security and governance situations allows for genuine development, rather than implicitly punishing peaceful districts or wasting projects in insecure areas with unsustainable results.<sup>12</sup> The conclusions of this dissertation align with Sandefur’s early evaluation of aid projects in areas that were unsecure due to Taliban insurgency. Both Sandefur (2012) and the Center for Global Development present clear indications that American development aid is not funneled to the Afghan people that need it most. I concur with these findings from my HTS research and experiences in 2012 in the Helmand Province.

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<sup>12</sup> Sandefur, Justin. 2012. Center for Global Development’s blog. July 10, 2012. Accessed March 1, 2017. <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/16-billion-afghanistan-why-less-money-might-be-good-thing>

Other issues associated with accountability are corrupt practices with the supply-chain stakeholders, both US and Afghan. US contractors (living in the US or Afghanistan) may take bribes to exert influence in the allocation of contracts. Government officials and warlords in Afghanistan may require bribes or payments for aid projects to be implemented (Department of Justice, 2014, 1; Brautigam and Knack, 2004, 258). Who is accountable and what are the criteria? The Army and USAID's use of Agricultural Development Teams (ADT) proceeds with no knowledge about local climate, labor, or soil needs (Keller, 2011). Transparency could improve the status of Afghanistan and reduce ongoing reliance on aid and reveal latent economic systems in place (Draxler, 2014, 39; Fukuyama, 2006, 126). Several authors noted the potential for conflict of interests in provisions of aid in Afghanistan (Scott et al., 2009, 509; Rupp, 2006, 284).

The self-interest focus of the US resides with long-term security to promote Western culture, and to apply controls to an American-model free market economy (Fukuyama, 2006, 4). In modernization processes, mass corruption must be controlled through accountability and transparency for both political and economic processes. Entrenched systems of audits, checks and balances, and safety are vital in the initial stages of modernization.

In the arena of US policy, Ferejohn (1995) states that one of the first considerations in terms of accountability is transparency, especially in the context of the US government. The second aspect is the presence of US elections, so the views and pressure of the electorate may be felt by government (Ferejohn, 1995, 131). How much do the US taxpayers know about aid or how funding is being spent in Afghanistan? Whom do they

believe? USAID typically denies any or all allegations of corruption, even after audits are published, (SIGAR, 2010).

Without accountability, there is little motivation for any form of change, including improvements to efficiency or effectiveness in the implementation of aid. According to Brautigam and Knack (2004), it is established that with a lack of accountability, there is increased potential for corruption. This is not endemic to Afghanistan, but an issue with foreign aid everywhere in LDCs. Research found in fragile states within Sub-Saharan Africa that corruption with foreign aid is a significant issue (Brautigam and Knack, 2004, 258). Others, such as Deaton (2013) believe that it may be an inadequate structure of aid or funding itself that corrupts political processes in impoverished nations.

The weakness of the Government of Afghanistan is reflected in the continued levels of military aid provided by the US in order to support political operations. Allied governments are providing other resources as well, including military support for law enforcement and training. More recently, Angus Deaton claims in his *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth and the Origins of Inequality* (2013), “It is not possible to develop someone else’s country from the outside.” The presence of traditional and informal political systems found within the Afghan government is conducive to corruption through nepotism and networking. Within Afghanistan, the presence of the Tashkeel system remains, which incorporates civil servants chosen through their familial or tribal alliances. In this manner they are not held accountable to the electorate. Due to this complex recruitment and management processes of positions, secrets and corruption are often tightly sealed. The civil service management results in a mismatch between the central government and local

levels for provisions of resources and personnel allocations based on legacy and not on merit or need (Evans, 2004, 38).

### **The Human Terrain System**

As a member of a Human Terrain Team in 2012 and as my experiences are the inspiration for this dissertation, it is important to briefly map out what the Human Terrain System was and what role it played in Afghanistan. The HTS program dealt with cross-cultural meanings and information in a war zone. Their research benefited both sides as it mitigated cultural misunderstandings, which were deadly at times. In one instance, guns fired in salute at a wedding caused the US military to bomb the site, thinking they were insurgents, and 30 people in the wedding party were killed (Guardian, 2002). This incident early on in the Afghan occupation created horrendous outcomes for US policies. To summarize, cross-cultural miscommunication occurs when one ethnicity exhibits a behavior and another ethnicity assumes incorrect meanings, and conflicts may ensue. Within this scenario, dominant ethnicities usually escalate circumstances and have more impact on the results within conflict situations (Schaefer, 2015, 6).

It was recognized there was a cultural knowledge gap between the US military and local cultures, so the idea for the HTS was first proposed by Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson (McFate and Jackson, 2005). In 2007, HTS was launched under the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) as a proof-of-concept, or pilot program (Forte, 2011). Five initial HTS teams were set up for Afghanistan and Iraq, using academic professionals from the social sciences, including anthropology, political science



and other behavioral social sciences (Forte, 2011). The number of HTS teams expanded over the years in Iraq and Afghanistan within each US military command.

The Human Terrain System (HTS) program operated within the US military to provide the military staff and commanders with a better understanding of the culture of the local people through academic research (HTS, 2014). The goal of HTS reports was to inform military commanders of cultural variances. Through the ‘Winning of Hearts and Minds’ policy, military commands were assigned large sums of money to infuse into aid projects at the Commander’s discretion. The funds (called CERP money) aided the PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Teams) to build infrastructure projects, and to work in tandem with aid agencies like USAID. Within their missions, HTS often assessed cultural needs for project planning and evaluated finished aid projects.

The duty of HTS teams was to research the nuances of local Afghan culture and write informative reports with suggestions to mitigate cultural conflicts. The purpose of the cultural research was varied and ranged from finding cultural misunderstandings that impacted the efficacy of aid projects to other cultural actions that created unnecessary violence. Besides the US Army commands, the reports were shared with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), who planned reconstruction projects and issued reports to other aid agencies. USAID aid planning, distribution, and implementation often existed without specific and intricate knowledge of cultural or religious awareness, and an effort was made in both Afghanistan and Iraq to close this gap through the Human Terrain System.

During deployment, HTS researchers interacted with the local people and gained cultural knowledge of ongoing political, economic, social, and physical lifestyles through studies using such mixed methods as interviews, ethnographic studies, observations, surveys, and document studies. They sought to bring the expertise and ethics of academia to gain valid and reliable data.

This expertise drew on academic capabilities in anthropology, among other disciplines. Within the field of anthropology, as in other branches of knowledge, there are over 900 definitions of culture. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Most definitions characterize culture as something that is widely shared by members of a social group and shared in virtue of belonging to that group.” Within the multitude of definitions culture has both human and material variables such as behavior, beliefs, traditions, language, religion, food, literature, art, music, and artifacts (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018). This is not to be confused with ethnicity that entails an all-inclusive identity with both culture, genetics, and other factors. The use of ethnicity replaces the concept of ‘race’, because with new technology racial concepts are proven to be false (Maybury-Lewis, 2001).

Colonel Thomas Roe, the director of the US Army’s Center for Lessons Learned, said in an interview that the troops needed to adopt a more cultural approach to fight effectively in places like Afghanistan. However, this understanding most often took the form of crash courses in “culture” for soldiers during pre-deployment training. Tens of thousands of other civilians have also served in Afghanistan, but one would be hard pressed to identify where increased cultural understanding has become practice (Frost, 2012).

Cultural understanding has not been a high priority in most avenues of US foreign policies; especially in LDCs. Outside administrators did not understand the communities' needs (Baker, 2009). For instance, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan tried to bring Sesame Street characters to Afghan education without understanding the Muslim culture of aversion to reproducing animal or human forms. Furthermore, in an infrastructure without electricity for children to watch TV, the Sesame Street characters were not understood. This demonstrates that in this instance, the State Department was as uninformed as the Army (Keller, 2011).

The academic social science degrees of the HTS personnel enabled navigation within the complicated and complex venues of the realities of culture and ethnicities in Afghanistan and Iraq. They brought new and more complete insights to mitigate cultural misunderstandings, gave voices to those not otherwise heard, and reduced violence on all sides. The HTS program was critical, because one of the biggest obstacles was the cultural differences in the commands' area of deployment. When cultural misunderstandings occurred, resistance and violence could follow. In Afghanistan, the military faced increasing IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices), which also created an urgency to improve cross-cultural communications (HTS, 2014).

However, each military deployment was only for twelve months and then commands were replaced by new units. This was not conducive to successful relationships or projects, because commanders had to accomplish much quickly, and then hand off to the next group. Due to different personalities and agendas of the commanders, the transitions were not always smooth and promises to locals were not kept, which created

new enemies. Frost (2012) stated, “Decisions [were] made in the moment without understanding long term consequences.” Therefore, the HTS program also represented continuity of cultural information from one US Army command to the next.

Unfortunately, HTS was highly criticized by the anthropological academic community. With no on-the-ground research or other than opinion-oriented inquiries within academia, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) arbitrarily decided that social scientists should not conduct social science research in a war zone. They said research ethics could not be maintained. However, members of the HTS teams often reported the opposite, or that their research gave a voice to women and those not otherwise heard. For HTS, academic protocols were to be followed with voluntary permissions, informed choices, and the other ethical guidelines for conducting ethical research when respondents were involved. This was accomplished under different research protocols than the military or even diplomatic inquiries. HTS reports had the potential to save lives of Afghan people, aid workers, and military personnel.

HTS did not directly administer aid to the Afghan people. It did, however, participate in many development or modernization projects to provide information and as a vehicle to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. HTTs (Human Terrain Teams) frequently aligned themselves with PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams), NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and Afghan civil servants. This reduced violence and enhanced cross-cultural understanding to ensure successful aid delivery (especially for women’s needs). By August 2013, there were 14 HTS teams in Afghanistan, but by the end of September 2014 the HTS teams were withdrawn as part of the drawdown strategy.

The HTS teams had previously left Iraq in 2011. The HTS project has since been disbanded and defunded.

## **Conclusions**

The history of aid in Afghanistan shows a long and troubled past through invasion by outsiders and warlords and religious fundamentalists from within. The location of Afghanistan is of critical importance to world powers for trade and resources. However, the poverty in the country is dire, so that those who invaded also tried to modernize through the application of aid funding. Economically, Afghanistan became a rentier state with dependency on outsiders for survival.

The modern stages of aid delivery to Afghanistan divided into three eras *before* 2001. The 1960s-1970s foreign aid projects through the Foreign Assistance Act in 1962 were implemented by USAID involvement with programs approved by US Congress. The Soviet aid projects (1979-1989) sought to make Afghanistan into a modern communist nation, while the US gave covert aid to the Mujahedeen to fight the Soviets. The post-Cold War aid (1990 to 2001) flooded the country with help from the United Nations and international NGOs. The US aid has now continued for another 16 years from 2001-2017. This time aid was deemed for a ‘Winning Hearts and Minds’ campaign connected to fighting the Taliban; all in hopes the Afghan people would favor the side of US. The planning and distribution of aid was implemented by either the US Army or USAID and called the Afghanistan Reconstruction. The efficiency and efficacy of these aid projects for the last 16 years are the topics of this dissertation.

With money flowing into Afghanistan through the US military and USAID, the top down models of aid distribution enabled corruption through the decades. Therefore, those in need were generally not helped as much as expected in relationship to the incoming funds. Part of the problem stemmed from a lack of cultural understanding. The US effort to study the Afghan culture through the HTS program was developed in tandem with the US Army, but with no real efficacy to implement strategic recommendations to either the US Army or USAID. Recently in 2014, HTS was disbanded and dismissed as non-productive and non-important.

### CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The primary research focus of this dissertation is on the efficacy and sustainability of aid administered in Afghanistan to attain modernization. What are factors that motivate modernization according to modernization theory? Western international interests strive to link modernization to democratic ideologies. According to Inglehart and Welzel (2009, 36) the process of modernization of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) advances the conditions necessary for the implementation of democracy. Albeit Western motives for modernization may focus on the installation of democracy within LDCs, the results of this literature review recognize there are many other motives for modernization of LDCs. Essentially, scholars often characterize modernization as a “syndrome of social changes” that is inherently linked to the expanse of industry, including occupational skill development/specialization and urban development. Inglehart and Welzel (2009) also link modernization less evidently to increases in education, improved life expectancy, and economic expansion in LDCs. The link between modernization and human and social capital extends from the belief that investments in these elements can support progress and beneficial change in underdeveloped nations.

Foreign aid agencies like USAID operate to advance modernization and human capital in underdeveloped areas, such as in war-torn Afghanistan<sup>13</sup>. This chapter will examine the relevant literature for the critical topic of how theories of modernization and

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<sup>13</sup> The wars in Afghanistan include the British invasion: (1823 to 1926), the Russian invasion: (1979 to 1989), the Civil war: (1989 to 2001), and the recent war by the United States and her NATO Allies beginning in 2001 to the present day.

human capital apply to USAID's work specifically in Afghanistan. Horowitz, Driskill, and Mendez (2009, 723) noted that a significant amount of academic work has paid attention to the concept of capital formation for modernization. Similarly, Chaudhary (2013, 34) emphasizes the importance of understanding the connection between modernization and any supporting essential skills development, institutions, curriculum, and normative values, which also influence the processes of modernization. Therefore, understanding the social and cultural side of the development of education is essential to create modernization as well as the presence of monetary funds needed for capital developments. Chaudhary (2013) emphasizes the interconnection of funding and understanding the impact of education. Governments and aid sources must know the importance of human capital before they allocate funds.

As this dissertation research is guided by modernization and human capital theories to provide data interpretation, the study will also compare the efficacy of the aid and problems with aid delivery expended for nation building efforts by foreign aid agencies such as USAID in Afghanistan from 2001-2017. Notably, nation building involves both human capital development and development of physical infrastructure, especially where external aid is provided. To inquire into the delivery of aid, the study will investigate projects in two different sectors in Afghanistan. The first concerns the energy sector, with the Tarakhil Power Planet (TPP) as an example, to increase energy production for the development of electricity. The infrastructure project of the TPP in Kabul was funded by US assistance to provide higher levels of energy and electricity nationally. Using modernization theory, this research will examine whether the project was successful or not.



Success for aid projects as outlined in a SIGAR report (SIGAR, 2015) was measured by initial set up attainment, efficacy of outcomes, and sustainability of change.

The next case study in this dissertation will address the role of the aid provided by USAID and other foreign aid agencies for increasing levels of education to facilitate human capital growth and play a major role in creating a modern nation in the future. With respect to human capital theory, the more human capital or the intangible assets and resources that individuals have are thought to have an aggregate impact on changing the culture of traditional societies, and eventually will lead a nation to implement and continue a modern society (Gonzalez, Karoly, Constant, Salem, and Goldman 2008, xvii). As part of modernization theory, human capital explains the ways in which human capabilities and resources are utilized to benefit people and to support the modernization efforts in achieving nation building. While human capabilities and resources are valuable and provide complex benefits for communities and nations, Inglehart and Welzel (2009, 36) and Chaudhary (2013, 34-36) believe the greatest human capital investments are found in education. As a result, human capital theory will be used in this dissertation to examine the issue of education in Afghanistan and to find out whether or not the aid designated for education actually developed beneficial educational attributes in this LDC.

In this chapter, discussions of modernization and human capital theory applications are explained to provide a clear picture of methods for promoting modernization in Afghanistan, an LDC with heavy reliance on foreign aid. Additionally, the research will examine problems with US foreign aid delivery and implementation, the central focus of this dissertation. These theories may contribute to a deeper understanding of the insights

provided by the data in this dissertation. To practically apply these theories, comparisons will be drawn between actual results of USAID projects, and the assumed outcomes of the relevant theories. This will eventually help to answer the questions of success or failures of the efforts of USAID fashioned in Afghanistan for modernization, as evident in the spheres of infrastructure development and education.

### **Modernization Theory**

There are a variety of different ways to define modernization linked to the transformation of societies within social, political, or economic parameters. Earlier definitions saw a linear progression of modernization. Rostow (1960, 4) described modernization as a part of the economic continuum through which most societies progress, moving from traditional conditions to those sparked by the move to mass consumption. He outlined the processes or steps to accomplish modernization and eventually result in a modern society. Rostow (1960, 4) explained that, “It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions, as lying within one of five categories: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption.” According to Huntington (1968, 52), modernization is “a multifaceted process involving changes in all areas of human thought and activity.” Chaudhary (2013, 34) also asserted that modernization is a process of socio-cultural change involving values, norms, culture, institutions and structures.

Since WWII, critical debates over the conceptualization of modernization have taken place, influencing perspectives on this theory. Modernization theory may be traced to the response of Americans to the international setting of the post-Second World War era

(Tipps 1973, 200). The theory emerged from the economic and political conditions of the post-war era, specifically the rise of the US as a superpower, the growth of global communism, and the decolonization of Africa and Asia, leading to the identification of LDCs (Rahman 2017, 2). This viewpoint reflects the relationship between modernization as a theoretical construct and its application to a number of areas influencing the development of LDCs, including political, social, and economic areas. The Cold War climate occurring between 1947 and 1991 placed value on modernization that had not previously been realized on such a large scale. Suddenly, the least-developed world societies were becoming a part of the economic landscape with greater significance. This turned attention to the impact of modernization and its value in creating political stability, economic development and social/cultural change in these countries (Tipps 1973, 100).

Western Europe is an example of the successes related to modernization and its potential for impacting democratic political development in independent nations. Democratic ideals are frequently linked to the process of modernization. Some scholars believe that modernization can favor democracy and eventually result in a freer society, because it enhances the masses' abilities and motivation toward self-rule that applies pressures to the elite (Rostow 1960; Eisenstadt, 1966; Gonzalez et al., 2008; Inglehart and Welzel, 2009). Thus, self-expression or freedom of speech and assembly, rule by law, plus educational attainment can influence the levels of democracy. "The greater the self-expression ability then the more flow toward a stable democracy" (Inglehart and Welzel 2010, 552). "In the decades before 1990, mass emphasis on democracy became increasingly widespread in many authoritarian and agricultural societies, and this

contributed to a subsequent downfall for rule by force” (Inglehart and Welzel 2010, 554). However, researchers, including the later work of Inglehart and Welzel (2010), do not assert that modernization efforts *always* bring about Westernization ideals of democracy, capitalism or Western democratic-socialism. “The most recent wave of democratization [in agrarian nations] does not seem to have been motivated by a desire for greater income equality, as their model holds [a Western model]; it was driven by the fact that a large share of the population gave high priority to freedom itself” (Inglehart and Welzel 2010, 552).

A key aspect of modernization identified by Inglehart and Welzel (2009, 36), as well as Fukuyama (2011, 1), is the belief that modernization creates a cycle of continued cultural transformation that has a self-reinforcing mechanism with clear social and political ramifications. This transformation leads more to nationalism, i.e. a sense of belonging to the larger collective of the nation, and less to traditional allegiances such as tribal or familial connections. This seems to showcase and illustrate a perceived dichotomy between traditional allegiances and nationalism. Western modernization ideals reflect the connection between economic opportunity and participation in mechanisms that support economic growth, including political institutions that can drive the process of democratization (Inglehart and Welzel 2009, 36). Fukuyama (2011, 1) recognized that this view is the commonly held Americanized version of modernization theory that links economic growth, social mobility, political process, and cultural values, but it translates somewhat differently in other countries. The belief that this kind of transformation is self-supporting and occurs as a natural progression of the modernization processes is an overly optimistic assessment generally challenged when assessing its implications for LDCs.

Fukuyama (2011, 1) argued that a belief in modernization naturally supporting a distinct political order in changing societies does not recognize the complex mechanisms at work. Increasing social and economic change can correspond with significant disorder, “characterized by coups, civil wars, upheavals, and political instability” (Fukuyama 2011, 1). He warned to expect resistance to nationalization when trying to modernize societies. Subsequently, modernization, for some including the concept as it was introduced by Huntington (1971, 283) is linked to the concept of dramatic social change. He linked the concept of modernization to social change, a necessary leap in order to address the variety of elements that influence the progression of change within industrializing nations. According to Huntington (1971, 52), modernization is “a multifaceted process involving changes in all areas of human thought and activity.” Therefore, it is critical to understand the history, logic, and presence of a society’s existing cultural norms before any assistance or change can be introduced.

However, the reasoning that modernization leads to democratic political systems is clearly not a given. While many in modernized nations assume that modernization naturally leads to a freer and more prosperous society, Inglehart and Welzel (2010) clarified that many outcomes are possible. According to Inglehart and Welzel (2010, 552) “Industrialization *can* lead to fascism, communism, theocracy, or democracy.” However, they still insisted that modernization can favor democracy and eventually flow into a freer society. Therefore, they found that modernization benefits the trends toward democratic tendencies through greater personal freedoms and justice. However, while modernization

can lead to democracy, they are not precisely linked as history demonstrated in the rise of communism and fascism (Inglehart and Welzel 2010).

The theoretical view of modernization as a Western ideal is only partially supported by the findings in the existing literature. In the 1960s, scholars saw modernization as a Western concept that became a dichotomy between traditional and industrialized societies. Early on, Eisenstadt (1966, 4) defined the term modernization as a process of societal change that traditional societies adopted to develop their nations to imitate the Western model. However, this viewpoint influenced the scope of modernization processes and aided imperialistic models of colonization to change societies from traditional to industrial. The theory and the reality did not match because different traditional societies require different kinds of modernization. Modernization needs to be culturally sensitive and allow developing nations to develop with their own styles and models. Some parts of traditions need to be a part of the foundation of the future. Colonial empires espoused bringing modern ways of life to the underdeveloped world, but instead created more stringent societal divisions and less hope for future democracies.

A cultural issue surrounding modernization theory hinged on debates concerning whether it promoted modern economic stability, or destroyed traditional cultures while promoting Western cultures (Rostow 1960, 4). It became clear that the either/or and polar arguments did not apply across the board. “Modernization theory needed to be revised due to fact that the evolution of societies is not linear and modernization can be reversed due to economic downfall, such as in the Great Depressions in Germany, Italy, Japan, and Spain, and during the 1990s in most Soviet successor states” (Inglehart and Welzel 2010,

553). Therefore, societies individually have external and internal pressures that develop their own time line of change within their cultural norms, which varies greatly between societies. Therefore, these elements can create many different results from the same modernization applications. This conclusion does not dismiss modernization theory as a whole, but examines each instance in consideration of other variables. The factors must be examined one by one and this sets the precedent for evaluating measures of the progression of modernization for different countries.

At the same time, modernization outside the scope of a Western model was examined by other scholars too. Tilak (2002, 23) also concluded that it was location specific or a case-by-case topic. There was no way to stereotype one nation as very similar to another, even among the modern or the LDC nations. He examined the Chinese concept of modernization and concluded that while China industrialized after the rise of communism, it lacked a model of what most deem democratic principles, including freedoms and improvements in living conditions. He related this in terms of the post-WWII successes experienced by Japan, as well as with other Asian nations, including Taiwan and South Korea. These other Asian nations have been viewed as paradigmatic examples of the success of modernization within non-Western cultures. Tilak (2002, 23) used the labels of the Asian Tigers for his case studies, applying strategic approaches to support modernization in these countries versus industrialized change in China.

Many scholars see modernization as an ongoing debate or view it as a feasible plan simply in need of new definitions and understandings. Chaudhary (2013, 35) stated that though in the beginning “modernization referred to a model of an evolutionary transition

from a 'premodern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society", this concept is no longer widespread. Many scholars have dismissed the modernization concept of a progression from premodern to modern for many reasons, including its discounting of the inherent values of traditional ways of life. The word traditional is used in this context as meaning the use of long-standing practices that emphasize the common identity within small groups and/or tribal people (Tilak, 2002; Inglehart and Welzel 2009, 2010; Fukuyama, 2011; Chaudhary, 2013). They saw no problem in placing traditional values within modernization practices as basic values vary more between societies than within them. As a result, these scholars argued that the dichotomy that emerged from suggestions that modernization could only occur in industrial societies external from traditional values and ideals appears less relevant today. Therefore, groups do not always have to be modern to have democracy. Many people in traditional societies want personal freedoms, medical care, education, and economic prosperity. Yet, they also need the communal security and the values of their traditional societies.

Here, it is essential to note the literature shows that variances in modes of economics may focus either toward a traditional society or a modern society with the differences found in an agrarian versus an industrial economy. Another dichotomy between traditional and modern societies may be found within their interactions with nature. Agrarian societies are seen as those where people work in nature through harvesting food by land cultivation and the raising and care of animals, while economically modernization is usually associated with urban and industrial development, which impacts the environment. It has been upheld that some reflections should be made about whether or not



modernization does in fact degrade the environment (Inglehart and Welzel 2010, 553). “Indeed, the... market has created a new class of “green” human rights abuses, [for] peasants and indigenous peoples... in their traditional territories.” Klein (2015, 222) sees capitalism as a relentless growth machine wreaking havoc on the planet, as capitalism's prime directive is economic profit, not human improvement. Due to this, people in more traditional societies must breathe toxic air and suffer from deforestation and land and water deprivation. Natural resources such as wood, water and oil are often processed in modernized societies, and skyscrapers and factories begin to transform the landscape. Environmental problems, such as climate change, are believed to be the result of industrial development and production. However, just because modernization may have negatively impacted the environmental conditions and depleted resources in the past, this does not mean that has to be is a feature of modernization. Redirecting the focus to sustainable modern practices is not only achievable, it also can create new trends for investments. There are no exact formulas for modern economies (Klein, 2015, 222).

Rahman (2017, 1) summarized some modernization methods by saying: “The basic notions and objections attached to the modernization approach are highly debatable.” It is noteworthy that some scholars are in favor of modernization, but believe in totalitarian or fascist political control of the people. Therefore, they see that modernization could be a tool for the regulation of populations (Rahman, 2017; Eisenstadt, 1966). In this case, except for vocational education, a highly educated population would not be optimal in a totalitarian society, as Rahman (2017, 1) purports. Highly educated populations have better critical analysis and problem solving skills, which aids a democratic model. The political

and economic use of modernization can be a dichotomy of motivations based on core beliefs of whether personal freedoms or totalitarian control as being better for the masses. Chaudhary (2013) cited a negative aspect, that modernization may destroy culture by leading to globalization. In this case modern cultural norms and ideas would spread throughout the world via contact and media. Here we can envision a sort of universal culture that serves as a baseline for all, which may not be a good scenario.

Other views on modernization show it may lead to the betterment of conditions and standards of living, and that it allows for the possibility of rule by law instead of rule by force, the former of which leads to more personal freedoms. This is linked to the belief that education is a key component of both modernization and the expansion of opportunities that shape the standard of living. This becomes relevant when researching education projects in Afghanistan, as the Taliban is not in favor of modernization or Western education models.

Most scholars agree that designs of modernization are not so easily administered and prescribed political paths are not that clear-cut for either economics or politics within societies. For instance, if socialism is paired with democracy, there are still personal freedoms, security, and rule by law. Socialist democracy allows for a broader distribution of wealth for the masses, which is more prevalent than within a capitalist democracy. Yet if socialism is paired with totalitarian rule, the political structures will not be democratic, no matter the structure of the economy. Furthermore, under totalitarian rule, even if an external security exists, an internal fear of persecution from rule by force or perhaps a sense of paranoia against other nations may be part of the political climate. North Korea exhibits

this fear of other nations, and so did Al Qaida in Afghanistan, a non-state actor, resulting in the 9/11 attacks. The many possibilities support Tilak's (2002) argues that each case must be evaluated on an individual basis, in the context of the political, cultural, and economic conditions of each society plus their domestic and international influences. At the core of the stated Government of Afghanistan's position on aid in the country were modernization efforts leading to the care for the masses and their security, while encouraging self-improvement resulting in modern democratic policies. Fukuyama (2006, 4) asserts: "the American focus rests on concerns for long-term security to promote American democracy and Western culture, and apply control in regards to nation building and an American-centric free market economy."

Within modernization processes, cultural differences do exist, but they are not overriding within politics or economies. When security is at risk, concepts of modernization are not in the forefront for leaders in their allocation of funds and human resources. "Agrarian societies emphasize religion, national pride, obedience and respect for authority, while industrial societies emphasize secularism, cosmopolitanism, autonomy, and rationality... [Yet] When survival is insecure, it tends to dominate people's life strategies" (Inglehart and Welzel 2010, 554). This is particularly relevant for the research on aid in Afghanistan by underlining what is important to investigate concerning security and the development of modernization efforts and the subsequent impacts on politics, traditional culture, and industry. This begs the question: "Can traditional cultures and modern cultures co-exist with respect and mutual benefit?" We may look for the answers to this debate in such nations as Canada and New Zealand, which are quite modern,

educated, industrialized, and are still multicultural nations. They are not perfect societies, of course, and some still have discrimination within the society, but their standards of living and freedoms for the masses far exceed those, for instance, for individuals who live in China.

Upon closer investigation, there have been practical modernization projects that were culturally successful outside of a political debate (Chaudhary 2013, 38). Chaudhary states that modernization, though a prevalent concept, has not radically changed cultures or destroyed values. By focusing on two major USAID projects in Afghanistan: the TPP plant and the higher education project, this dissertation is able to analyze the dynamics involved. It must be clear within this study what the Government of Afghanistan sought in order to evaluate failures or successes for modernization in education and the building of infrastructure such as the Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP). In order to do this, it is important to provide an understanding of Afghan's expectations compared to the theoretical background of modernization and human capital as an element of defining measures of modernization.

### **Human Capital Theory**

Human capital theory is based on the premise that there are economic gains secured through investment in people (Sweetland 1996, 341). A great deal of literature emphasizes the rebuilding of a suitable infrastructure to support economic development, but less emphasis has been placed on human capital as a necessary force in that process. Human capital theory is a segment of modernization theory. It seeks to theorize about how to build better societies by infusing investment in the education of people within a nation to create

a strong future for all. Human capital refers to the resources humans have to offer their nation, such as knowledge, skills, experience, abilities, intelligence, and talent (Benhabib and Spiegel 1994, 143). More precisely, investing in methods to enhance the skills and knowledge of people has a variety of positive impacts, including improvement of human health and wellness. These investments pay off through increased contributory ability of more people within the social and economic framework of a nation. Subsequently, researchers have evaluated a number of ways in which knowledge and skills are enhanced and have viewed education as a significant measure of investment in human capital (Sweetland 1996, 341).

The theoretical foundations of human capital principles, though, reflect the belief that education can be derived in a number of environments and can include different instructional modalities. Yet for society in general, Chaudhary (2013) revealed that secular and scientific education is critical for modernization, if it is to lead to democracy. The scope and purpose of education becomes important, which includes the place of theocratic education, informal education, and vocational education prevalent in many traditional societies. Sweetland (1996) argued, for example, that education can include formalized instruction through investment in public primary, secondary and post-secondary instruction; informal education that can occur in the home or environment; and on-the-job training. Education is perceived as a positive measure of investment in human capital because it is measurable. Whether discussing a country's investment in public education or a company's investment in their in-house training programs, there is a dollar amount

invested in the process that can be weighed against tangible performance outcomes (Sweetland 1996, 341).

The general finding from this theoretical perspective is that human capital investment increases the economic capabilities of people (Sweetland 1996, 341). Skills and knowledge are measurable but somewhat intangible assets, which are argued to have an aggregate impact on the economic status of communities and nations. Tilak (2002, 7) asserts that investments in the education sector creates a higher return than investments in infrastructure for the purpose of modernization of nations. Furthermore, growth in the education sector is correlated directly to growth in a nation's GDP. The existence of human capital in a nation implicitly or explicitly influences the economic conditions of that nation (Benhabib and Spiegel 1994, 144).

Son (2010, 2) argues that human capital plays a critical role in methods to reduce poverty and improve economic conditions in developing nations. On a smaller scale, investment in human capital improves the opportunities for individuals in the labor market, improves earning potential, and improves labor productivity. From a larger societal perspective, human capital improves the accumulation of effective labor, increases opportunities for large-scale technological innovations, and provides a foundation for sustainable growth. All of these elements are connected to the progression of modernization and reductions in poverty for developing nations (Son 2010, 2).

Bowen (1964) argued that investment in human capital is frequently based on a national productivity perspective, one that deems value in the creation of educational opportunities to expand productivity. Correspondingly, he recognized that "in a market

economy, differences in earnings reflect differences in productivity” (Bowen, 1964, 14). In accordance with this view, Bowen argued the importance of creating a societal impetus for investment in human capital aligned with the desire for social improvements. Once again, this reflects the early bias that modernization and investments in human capital will lead to democracy (Rostow 1960; Eisenstadt 1966; Gonzalez et. al. 2008; Inglehart and Welzel 2009).

How are human capital outcomes measured? We can build schools and administer education, but does it lead to practical social betterment over the long term? In the context of human capital development, the examination of human capital is different from physical investments (Horowitz et al., 2009). This is due to knowledge attained as people pass through primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. This is an important differentiation from physical capital, as value is created in the intermediate stages of education. For example, a partially built road goes nowhere, and an unfinished factory does not generate economic growth. Therefore, the process of human capital development may take longer than infrastructure development. For individuals to attain higher skills, it is necessary to ensure they have the prerequisites as a result of the sequential nature of education (Horowitz et al., 2009).

When assessing the measurability of human capital investment, there are two methods: 1) to identify the monetary expenditures that are allocated for human capital education; or 2) to measure the outcomes related to worker productivity. Measures utilized in developing countries to assess human capital investment include the level of literacy demonstrated within the workforce or the years of schooling that individuals have obtained.

The measure of schooling is an especially important evaluative tool in determining investment in human capital. In Afghanistan, for example, there are considerable differences in the average levels of schooling based on human biases. In Afghanistan, females have about a quarter of the years of schooling that males do, a factor that many believe will continue to hinder that country's capacity for modernization (Son 2010, 2-4).

Facilitation of the correct skills and knowledge is needed by each economy to compete in the global environment (Horowitz et al., 2009). Global knowledge of international market economies is invaluable to lead. This aspect of the sequential development may be particularly problematic when an area is not within a timeline of sustained economic growth. Tilak (2002, 3) noted that sustained the economic growth in East Asia facilitated ongoing investment in education. In Afghanistan, with a heavy reliance on aid, it appears that long-term benefits may be gained from increasing the level of support for tertiary education. These skills would facilitate further economic development by enhancing the resources, which are available and needed for modernization. Furthermore, knowledge attained by higher-level academic degrees creates educated leaders, who can think critically and respond productively in times of stress or crises. Such leaders also attain understanding and concern for the welfare of the people through comparative studies of other global systems.

Human capital investment in education is addressed by human capital theory and the belief that understanding the connection between investment in education and the outcomes related to educational attributes can help foster modernization (Chaudhary 2013, 34). The connection between aid delivery strategies and modernization is shaped by the



human capital theory view that investment related to education is essential (Chaudhary 2013, 34).

In this section, human capital theory has been discussed as an idealized form of modernization that requires education, community development, civic organizations, developing individual human assets and investments in the future. However, societies steeped in centuries' old beliefs and traditions may not embrace changes they see as radical when it comes to gender roles, caste systems, and tribal economics and politics. A question develops if the people want change to modern ways or if modernization is being forced? To know these answers researchers must examine the adherence to cultural traditions in a society from its leaders to all levels of their population. Furthermore, the motivations of those introducing modernization efforts must be examined for pre-existing biases.

### **Impact of Cultural Traditions**

Cultural beliefs and traditions play a role in how people within a developing country assess the impacts of modernization. Researchers have realized that significant variations in culture and traditions can influence the progression of modernization and the subsequent development of human capital. Even in societies in which significant differences can be identified in comparison to modernized societies, it is important to recognize the impacts of traditions on the approaches to facilitating a transition to modernity. Traditionalism can be defined as the more extremist, negative reactions to forces of modernity, while tradition is the general reservoir of behavior and symbols of a society. In LDCs, older, "traditional modes or models of politics assert themselves, which impact modernization movements (Eisenstadt 1973, 101-102).

Rostow (1960) identified a significant difference between the development of traditional societies and the embracing of traditionalism. The structure of a traditional society is developed within limited production, based on pre-Newtonian science and technology, and on pre-Newtonian attitudes towards the physical world. Agrarian societies are functional traditional societies that are not stationary, but they lack an integration of technical innovations. Many cultures are rooted in traditional ideals and methods, while also seeking ways to progress in relation to modern cultures. Conversely, traditionalism is the principle by which individuals commit to a kind of ideological perspective, which does not place implicit value in modernism as an approach to cultural and social development (Rostow 1960, 4). Subsequently, research indicates that there is a connection between a culture's relation to progress and its capacity to develop or modernize.

This aligns with the general view that culture has a large impact on motivation found within a society for developing assets and supporting movements to ensure human capital is available to preserve modernization. For example, Confucianism and Buddhism practiced in East Asia emphasize education and instilling a work ethic and self-discipline, which becomes consistent with building human capital. Caring about the welfare of the population, while encouraging self-improvement are key factors. Furthermore, educational planning is critical, as well as the research and planning to match educational opportunities with job markets (Tilak 2002, 1-3). This is currently lacking in many nations, even in Western ones. To build democratic cultures, education investments must be egalitarian, meaning for all ethnicities and both genders. Class structures, divisive religions, and gender inequalities are prohibitive to building human capital; the latter contributes to a stronger

national democratic identity. In other words, concern for all the people in a nation needs to be present to build human capital (Tilak 2002, 1-3).

Indeed, cultural heritage is important for modernization and human capital theories, because as education arises out of the needs of the society, it has a common purpose with modernization. Chaudhary argues that the main function of education is to transmit cultural heritage to the new generations. But in changing society through modernization processes, those in positions of control must use education to also aid in preparing the young for adjustment to future changes. Modernization has been both criticized and celebrated for its capacity to introduce foundational concepts like equality, freedom and humanism, and many other elements that drive social and economic change (Chaudhary 2013, 37). In countries like Afghanistan, lack of public infrastructure or educated individuals capable of supporting technological advancements have led to continued failures in sustaining modernization and supporting market development (Latham 2011, 206). Many believe that this is the result of cultural factors that have influenced the views of modernization and Western ideals. Yet foreign aid to the Government of Afghanistan originating from the Western world continues to focus on instilling principles through the building of security and infrastructure, without examination of cultural values or the need for educational support.

Cultural variables inevitably impact both modernization and the development of human capital necessary for modernization. Even at a very basic level, it is possible to identify significant factors that reduce the capacity for human capital development that are culturally defined (Schultz 1995, 4). One specific factor is the way in which men and

women are valued differently within a culture. Schultz argued that assessing the productive capacity of men and women within an economy can be distorted by cultural perspectives on gender. LDCs may often strive to become knowledgeable societies, while also creating disparities within their population that minimize the contributions that women could make to the knowledge workforce (Gonzalez et al., 2008, xvii).

The female talent pool in many growth markets is increasing, but there continue to be divisions related to the employment of women in positions to improve the capacity of countries to meet critical infrastructure needs. “Deeply entrenched stereotypes make it difficult for Western employers to have a clear view of this new tranche of talent” (Hewlett and Rashid 2011, 8). Well-educated women seeking to create new opportunities for themselves are challenging cultural stereotypes in emerging markets. At the same time, this continues to be an area where developing countries can make strides and develop methods of utilizing their human capital to its fullest potential (Hewlett and Rashid 2011, 33 and 42; Jonsson 2003, 17).

Other cultural factors influence political, social, and cultural change in countries like Afghanistan, especially when discussing the application of approaches to modernization. “A given society's institutional and cultural heritage is remarkably enduring,” according to Inglehart and Welzel (2010, 555). Roy (1990) argued that divisions in the culture between those seeking modernization and the traditionalists have created significant conflict and opposition to Western ideals. Reform measures often focus on methods to break down cultural barriers that negatively impact a country’s capacity for modernization (Gonzalez et al. 2008, xxiv).

It is not modernization (the introduction of technology) that appears to be the oppositional pivotal point in Afghanistan, but the challenges to cultural values. Because modernization brings with it a paradigmatic shift in cultural and social perspectives, the adoption of modernization is continually challenged by the distinct traditionalist perspectives of Afghan culture (Roy 1990, 16). Modernization for LDCs, such as Afghanistan, focuses on economic improvement to lift the people out of poverty. This requires large amounts of resources to direct individuals into skilled jobs, innovation, technology, and enterprise. Energy improvement is considered vital for neighborhoods, governments, and businesses to succeed.

Education is thought of the most valuable method of skill building and training for new technologies and innovation. Although basic education or literacy is important, modernization, especially for Afghanistan, has prioritized tertiary (higher) education. Many colleges and universities already exist in some parts of Afghanistan requiring more of revitalization and restructuring than constructing. Though this assertion is generally accepted when related to the progression of change in countries like Afghanistan, there have been challenges to this premise based on the argument that modernization is linked to Western ideals in culture, technology, education and capitalism. The one mitigating factor that surfaced frequently while I was stationed in Afghanistan is that the cultural differences between Afghans and Americans are vast and sometimes unyielding. This factor is recognized by the US Army, hence the creation of HTS, but acknowledgement of the fact that Western culture and Afghan culture are different is much easier than changing the dynamics to serve both the US and the Afghan objectives in modernization.

Much of Afghan culture is traditional and tribal. The Government of Afghanistan's (GoA) leadership is under the Pashtun ethnicity, which follows Pashtunwali Codes,<sup>14</sup> ancient social, political, and economic codes. These codes are not exclusive to modernization efforts in infrastructure, but may be exclusive for social dynamics within education, due to the status of women under Pashtunwali. Western ideals for modernization include women's role in society according to the human capital theory discussed above. Only 40% of the Afghan population are Pashtun, therefore, there is room for Western modernization in education. However, with the government under Pashtun rule, the GoA may not endorse or enforce educational modernization projects.

Eisenstadt (1966, 4) and Rahman (2017, 2) argue against using the Western models of theory and culture completely. Pre-disposition can be seen in the beliefs of these authors, such as Rahman (2017, 4) who stated he favors a more authoritarian model of modernization found "in the case of China developing their own style of modernity, [which] should be thought of for the betterment of the world as a whole." Rahman argued that Western modernization theories tied modernization and human capital theory to a capitalist class structure. These political and economic theories were generally responsible

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<sup>14</sup> Pashtunwali is an ancient honor code for Pastuns, who make up about 40% of the Afghan ethnic population. It is an influential, informal justice system set up by Codes that are defined by its emphasis on community consensus and local decision-making. By privileging village, tribe, and even family over the state, the Codes depend on active local participation. These rules are based on the honor of men and define the fundamentals of social conduct and conflict resolution. Known as the Pashtunwali Codes, they authorize the community to resolve its own conflicts. The Codes can be complex and cover most areas of life. Found in both rural and urban settings, it is a common Pastun cultural reality. The Taliban are ethnic Pastuns. See Deering, Marissa "The Rules of Pastunwali" 12/22/2011. <http://tyglobalist.org/in-the-magazine/features/the-rules-of-pashtunwali/> Retrieved January 11, 2018

for causing failures in the nations of India, Iraq, and Afghanistan, although he does not provide specifics of when or how. Without careful scholarship, it is easy to conclude that specific political situations influenced outcomes, rather allowing for other possible factors that diminished modernization efforts in the three nations. Eisenstadt and Rahman's attribution of failures of modernization in India, Afghanistan, and Iraq does not include evaluation of other cultural and traditional conditions in these countries. It is this lack of research and cultural understanding that provides a gap in the existing literature, which is needed to address the factors influencing attempts at modernization and change in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, Tilak (2002, 4) examined non-western successes of modernization and human capital building in select Eastern Asian nations. Modernization and specifically human capital building in the East Asian Tiger nations of Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong were compared with Japan and China (Tilak, 2002, 3). He examined the Asian cultural components of hard work, education, and motivation to succeed that supported modernization variables. This perspective contradicts Rahman's (2017) arguments that Western modernization theories tied modernization and human capital theory with a Western capitalist class structure.

Tilak (2002, 3) researched the growth of the East Asian economic developments. He surmised that education was already valued in the Asian nations due to the practice of Confucianism, which demanded education as a goal for the population. Therefore large investments in people to attain education naturally led to economic growth and modernization. Thus, the growth of Asian economies in the nations he studied was tied to

human capital variables, and termed the “East Asian economic miracle”. The education attained was not based on Western education models. However, it was investment in education sectors that also made the difference. The results were an interdependency between the governmental support of education, the rise of human capital, and an increase in economic growth for these governments (Tilak (2002). As noted by Tilak, it is important that the East Asian Tiger nations of South Korea and Taiwan had a 75% increase in economic growth due to human capital investments. In comparison to Africa and the Middle East, their 39% increase for human capital expenditures directly related to their economic growth as well (Tilak, 2002, 1-4).

The commitment of national leaders to support education and its role in socioeconomic and political development is an important determinant of human capital growth. Government investments in human capital are a cornerstone of nation-building and a key factor of economic development. This realization is critically important (Tilak, 2002, 4). Human capital theories link to modernization theories and national development through educational provisions and attainment (Benhabib and Spiegel 1994, 144). Due to previously stated Asian cultural variables toward education appreciation to build human capital, this dissertation will consider the Afghan culture to ascertain the viability of the USAID policy approaches toward modernization and investment in education.

### **Lacuna in the Literature on Modernization in Afghanistan**

According to Rostow (1960, 4), modernization theory often reflects the challenges of modernization and its economic impact on traditional societies. Though modernization may be viewed as a natural extension of the expansion of cultures and societies,



modernization requires an understanding of how thoughts, culture, and social values influence perceptions of change. Chaudhary (2013, 34) maintained that though a seemingly natural progression, modernization involves shifts in a number of different areas, including socio-cultural and institutional changes, among others. Whether modernization works or not is linked to education. Questions arise if Western education is always needed to create modernization. This is important because traditional societies may challenge Western modernization, due to a fear education will deplete traditional values (Tilak 2012, 23). Therefore, cultural perceptions impact education sectors and thus modernization. Tilak (2012) insists that other cultural education systems, such as in the successful Asian nations, may also be congruent with modernization. Aid agencies need to recognize multiple models of education to implement the rise of needed human capital.

Modernization for developing nations outside Western cultures has been difficult at best. Good intentions do not necessarily translate into success. Rostow and others have focused on the Western industrialized nation model of modernization. Rostow's (1960) stages of development have proven to be problematic when applied to non-Western nations. Research, policies, and aid projects have been ethnocentric (focused on the Western ideals or bias) in their attempts at modernization. For nations such as Afghanistan, with large heterogeneous traditional cultural beliefs, the ethnocentric approach of USAID and the US military has been a cause of misunderstandings at best and of conflict at worst.

The existing literature relates a kind of economic and social dilemma: can Afghan society both accept aid from entities like USAID and other foreign aid agencies for modernization and still maintain their traditional cultural perspective, while supporting

human capital development? This goes back to the belief that there are several factors that hinder the effectiveness of aid in Afghanistan, including the presence of cultural norms and values that shape how individuals perceive education for different segments of the population. This dissertation will examine multiple aid reports and gather data from respondents to understand these issues and use the modernization theory literature, discussed above, to explain the results. When assessing capital investment driven by Western aid, it is essential to recognize that there are factors that shape receptivity to external financial influences.

In addition, modernization reflects an impact on economics, political structures, infrastructure, and social values; therefore, the gap that emerges from the existing literature reflects questions about the connection between the delivery of aid, the effectiveness of aid that is delivered, and the cultural and social barriers to the delivery getting to its intended recipients application of aid across populations. Modernization for Afghanistan means an end to extreme poverty and a jump ahead in the economic sectors of energy and education, the two sectors under study here. Modernization would mean Afghans have access to energy for households, neighborhoods, villages, merchant stores, businesses, services, and civil offices. Modernization means the Afghan people would have access to education, technology, and resources for literacy, jobs, innovation, and businesses.

The central focus of the dissertation identifies the goals of the aid given to Afghanistan as a starting point for this research. The overarching questions are: What have been the barriers to modernization? What were the specific sources and amounts of USAID to Afghanistan with regard to education, and energy development? Were cultural and

religious differences considered throughout the planning and implementation processes? What were the outcomes of the specific projects, including the Tarakhil Power Plant, after multiple years and large amounts of dollars spent? In the remaining chapters, I identify information related to these areas primarily reflecting what factors inhibited or enhanced the delivery and application of funding to support educational advancement and energy modernization in Afghanistan.

The belief that educational aid in the form of funding and materials has the potential to contribute significantly to infrastructure improvements supporting modernization for developing nations is rarely disputed. Though Eisenstadt (1966, 4) and Rahman (2017, 2) have opposed Western models applied to countries like Afghanistan, India, and Iran with regard to modernization, Tilak (2012, 7) argues in favor of the importance of integrating educational initiatives to support modernization, maintaining that education provides a foundation for modernization (2012, 23). In developing a strategic approach to the modernization of Afghanistan, it is necessary to determine the specific barriers that exist in the delivery and implementation of aid from USAID. Additionally, the role of the Afghan government must be considered for improving efficacy in the delivery and maintenance of aid projects, such as those earmarked for the energy infrastructure and for the establishment of educational venues. Energy acquisition is a crucial marker for modernization and education is needed for the continuation in building a modern society.

Rahman (2017, 3) recognized that cultural and social factors can contribute to delivery failures or a lack of receptivity to Western aid. In pursuing this focus, it is essential to determine the barriers that exist to the effective delivery of USAID aid in Afghanistan

to the education sector, which leads the impacts of application of aid as a component of the study.

## **Conclusions**

While research supports the assertion of the benefits of investment in human capital as a foundation for modernization (Chaudhary 2013, 34; Rahman 2017, 3), there appears to be a gap in the existing research about the connection between the delivery of aid, and the effectiveness of aid that is successfully delivered. This relates to the need to explore the actual attainment of education that builds human capital and supports modernization. Tilak (2002, 7) argued that educational investments that expand human capital demonstrate a significant return on investment. More specifically, researchers have argued that expansion of educational programming has a direct link with improvements in GDP for developing countries (Benhabib and Spiegel 1994, 144; Tilak 2002, 7). When effective, researchers maintain that investments of foreign aid in developing countries [like Afghanistan] can serve as foundational support for improvements in economic conditions. Son (2010, 2) argued, for example, that developing countries that effectively invest in human capital with the aim of improving literacy are supporting modernization. This speaks specifically to the connection between educational aid and cultural challenges that emerge for Afghanistan.

In summary, this dissertation research utilizes data on USAID's funding of education and a large power plant in Kabul to examine problems with aid delivery in two sectors of the Afghan economy: education and energy. The dissertation places those

findings in the broader theoretical framework of the modernization and human capital theories discussed above.

## CHAPTER 4 DATA COLLECTION

### Questionnaire Methods of Data Collection

With large amount of money and 16 years invested in Afghanistan by the US, there have been multitudes of publications, both scholarly and through the media with attention given to the issue of waste in USAID's work in Afghanistan. Afghanistan remains impoverished and struggling, and my months in Helmand province brought me face-to-face with these conditions.

To make this study manageable, the focus is on two USAID aid funded sectors only: energy and education. This qualitative research study drew on the perceptions of experts and stakeholders that worked in those sectors in Afghanistan. Their perceptions were juxtaposed with those of official reports, including internal and external USAID evaluations, SIGAR audits and investigations, and media and scholarly reports. Three main sources of data inform this dissertation, utilizing the so-called "triangulation approach."<sup>15</sup> The triangulation sources are 1) questionnaires answered by expert respondents and by conducting a Shura or focus group, 2) Official reports from USAID and other related entities, and 3) media reports and my own eyewitness observations of USAID results.

The first part of this chapter examines respondent data from 20 questionnaires and a focus group interview with eight recent Afghan immigrants to add depth to the data. The questionnaire was distributed, with open-ended questions for short answers about energy

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<sup>15</sup> Triangulation means using more than one method to collect data on the same topic. This is a way of assuring the **validity** of **research** in qualitative studies through the use of a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data collection. Retrieved August 28, 2017. [https://www.researchgate.net/triangulation\\_of\\_data\\_in\\_qualitative\\_research](https://www.researchgate.net/triangulation_of_data_in_qualitative_research)

and education aid in Afghanistan. This data collection followed IRB procedures and ethical guidelines as outlined in the respondent informed consent form. (Appendix D)

As one can imagine, it is complex task to carry out interviews for a project such as this dissertation. The questionnaire distribution combined convenience sampling and a "snowballing" method, including the following:

- ✓ Through my Afghan acquaintances and others whom I worked with in Afghanistan, I networked with the target population areas to reach a pool of respondents, with respondent criteria being Afghans or those who have lived and worked in Afghanistan.
- ✓ Over 75 questionnaires were mailed or hand delivered, and in three months 20 were returned.
- ✓ I also created one focus group of recent Afghan immigrants was included, with older males from different backgrounds and locations within Afghanistan.
- ✓ Data were represented in Excel and with descriptive narratives and graphs

The questionnaires (Appendix E) were not surveys that could be measured with quantitative parameters, but rather open-ended questions that allowed each respondent to relay their interpretation. Qualitative research lends itself to descriptive detail, which can be intimidating for those who want to keep their affiliations and experiences hidden. Analysis of the data from this source was organized through the establishment of themes and categories, and with tables to show patterns and trends for clarification (Creswell, 2006, 59; Sangasubana, 2011, 570).

## **Descriptions of Respondents**

The employment profile of the respondents was varied, but all 20 respondents had relevant data concerning the research questions. Furthermore, the data gathered from the questionnaires added context to the data from the organizational reports. Categories of respondents were comprised of different stakeholders and were in three categories. 1) Experts working in the aid industry, who were American-born and worked with the US military, HTS personnel, USAID, contractors, or SIGAR; 2) Respondents who were Afghan-born individuals, who worked as contractors, HTS personnel, cultural experts, and interpreters; and 3) Respondents who were Afghans, who had recently immigrated to the United States that answered questionnaires in a focus group setting. These eight older respondents were farmers, teachers and US military cooks.

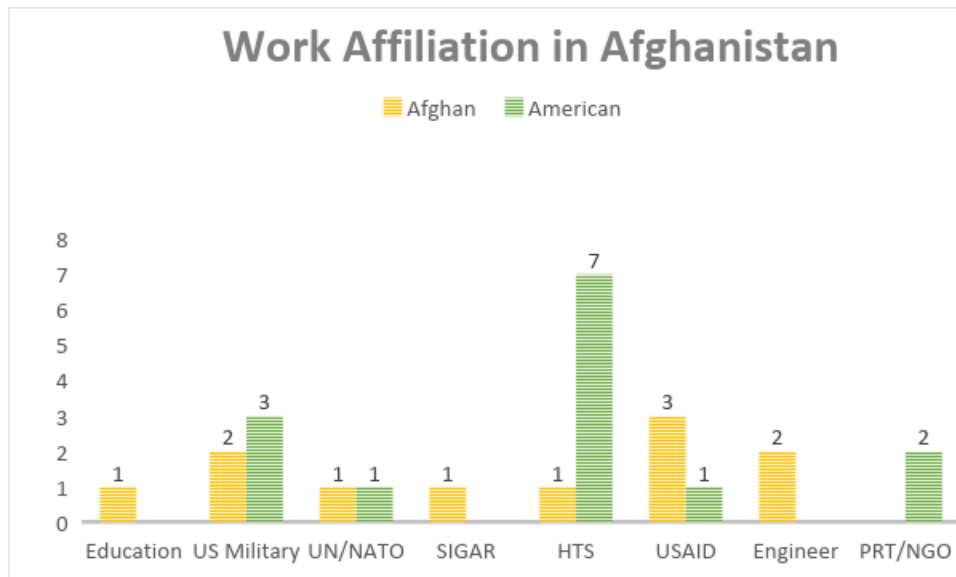
Among the respondents were seven people with work affiliations with the Human Terrain Service that were American born and were the largest affiliation of all. The other affiliations included three Americans and two Afghans with the US Military, three Afghans and one American from USAID, one Afghan and one American from UN/NATO, one Afghan with SIGAR, two Afghan engineers, and one Afghan educational administrator. All those questioned would be considered experts in their field. Most worked either directly or indirectly with aid projects. Most had familiarity with TPP and the education sector in Afghanistan. A few individuals had many years of experience and most had at least several years of working and living in Afghanistan. Most had had food, water, heating, clothing, and transportation provided by either the US Military or indirectly through USAID. Most did not suffer directly from lack of energy or food. No one reported any injuries or suffering



from violence directly from the war beginning in 2001. Although the majority were experts in their fields and some had decades of experience, generally the respondents in this research were not famous or high ranking in their respective fields.

The 20 respondents mostly agreed that their views of Afghanistan had changed after working there and seeing the problems first hand. Most did not have a consistent presence there from 2001 – 2017, but had spent one to three-year periods of living and working in Afghanistan, and then returned to the US. The Afghan born respondents were mostly already living and working in the US at the time of this study or had immigrated to the US years before. Some had repeated trips to Afghanistan, and a few were involved in aid development in other countries. Some, especially the Afghan born respondents, had expertise in multiple languages.

**Figure 4.1: Respondent's Work Affiliation in Afghanistan**



Methods for obtaining data from official aid reports and investigations included data mining specific to USAID's involvement in Afghanistan's reconstruction. Some reports available by USAID focused on the successes without a critique. Reports published from auditors and evaluators in recent years identified problems with the delivery and distribution of aid. Data mining included a thorough and rigorous attempt to find details that illustrated what was proposed or projected to happen versus what was accomplished by USAID funding. Henry et al. (2017, 24) described how qualitative data mining through report findings can help map out a process of determination, such as if A happens then either B or C could happen depending on the conditions.

This data collection chapter consists of several sections. The first section has original qualitative data collected from the target respondents by a questionnaire with 15 questions, plus a focus group meeting. Some of the respondents did not answer all the questions as they felt they had no direct knowledge. The second section focuses on data from USAID and SIGAR reports or reports about USAID by media and scholars revealing methods, spending, and consequences of aid projects. The third section reveals the social science research eyewitness account by the author of this dissertation through working with projects in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

### **Questionnaire Format**

The contribution of the questionnaire data is central to this study by offering primary data. It is original in its content and application to education and energy development in Afghanistan. This original qualitative research study depends on anonymous questionnaires that were completed by experts knowledgeable about the

political and economic impact of American foreign aid in Afghanistan. Each respondent had either professional or personal experience with one or both sectors. The Human Terrain System, although not a foreign aid agency, integrated with USAID's modernization efforts through missions to gain cultural knowledge of local populations and projects that impacted them. Social scientists, such as myself, conducted interviews with Afghan local officials and reconstruction agents, which often include discussions about USAID-funded projects.

The questionnaires were created to answer the research questions through anonymous and relatively quick responses requiring short answers from the respondents. The 75 prospective participants were given three months to return questionnaires. Twenty persons, both male and female, agreed to fill out the questionnaire and return completed questionnaires. The respondents were assigned numbers from one to twenty. Their complete responses are listed in an arbitrary numerical order in Appendix G. Additionally, a focus group was conducted in Michigan with eight recent Afghan immigrants in attendance. The focus group is addressed separately after the questionnaires.

All participants were assured of their anonymity. They were informed of their rights and informed consent forms were signed and collected. Participants were assured that all data that connects them to the study will be destroyed. Questionnaires were collected through postal mail or in person. The study followed all IRB ethical codes for research. The respondents were presented with the purpose of the study, and were informed that questionnaires will be identified with code numbers, not their real names. Participation was voluntary, which allowed a participant to withdraw at any time. It was also explained that

the keys for the codes will be kept in a safety deposit box, and no one except the chief investigator will have access to that data.

The questionnaire was constructed with a series of questions related to specific sectors: education and energy (Appendix E). The first questions focused on the success or failure of the Afghan energy sector in general, and targets one major infrastructure project: the Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP), which was constructed in Kabul and funded by USAID assistance to provide higher levels of electricity regionally. The next series of questions addressed aid for education, provided by USAID. Both sections included the binary questions: was the project successful or not, and whether it was beneficial or not for the nation? The use of binary questions and answers provided insight into individuals' perceptions.

### **Raw Data from the Questionnaires**

This section includes the raw data from the questionnaires to offer first hand insights on the topics of USAID education and energy aid funding in Afghanistan. The complete respondent narratives are located in Appendix G. The following part of the chapter is divided into topics with quotes from the respondents.

#### **Education:**

Many respondents acknowledged that education was critical to improving the conditions in Afghanistan and that USAID contributed heavily to building numerous schools. One spoke of the delight of the parents, students, and teachers when their school was first opened. However, their statements were usually interspersed with despair about

school closings. Some respondents had nothing good to say about the efforts or aid spent on education in Afghanistan.

Respondent # One:

[Education] “will remain weak without foreign intervention and long-term strategies. US and USAID were the main players in building and supplying schools over the last 15 years. They still need school supplies, plus training for administrators and for Afghan officials concerning educational needs.

I helped USAID set up schools and provided assessments for their evaluations. I know that USAID asked the Afghan government for recommendations for provinces that needed schools and learning centers. However, USAID never trusted the Afghans with their information, and they ignored reports and advice. This was a negative and unhealthy relationship that impacted the projects. Teacher salaries were very low, and there was no medical care for sick students. Parents kept students home to work because school was not mandatory. Girl’s schools were implemented for a while, but now they are all empty and *ghost schools*. Foreign aid for education had a bigger impact in cities than in rural areas, where security was not available.”

“Government officials used their power to get educational aid in their favorite areas. Local people complained about officials that took humanitarian aid, whether it was for education or food for poor people. Even in safer areas, school supplies and building materials were stolen.

The US military and International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) should have been more involved to deliver and monitor foreign aid and provide security for aid projects as many aid workers left due to insurgency. Donors and NGOs should have trusted local reports and feedback. Media needed to be improved to provide information for citizens about officials and what was going on in the country. Foreign governments needed to send money to operate the schools as there was none from the Afghan government.”

Respondent #Two:

“In the Arghandab River Valley area, the Taliban used intimidation tactics to close schools. They threatened and carried out harm to children, especially girls. There were two or three Quranic schools for boys in the area. Hundreds of children roamed the streets with nothing to do.

The evaluation of the Adult Literacy program showed that it was a top down solution. The US military decided to distribute the books by enlisting a local branch of the Afghan army... but the books were stored in a local building without any

plans for distribution. There was no coordination between the US military and the Afghans. I worked on an evaluation of the Adult Literacy project for HTS and received pushback from the military. They would not receive a formal written report, but only oral feedback. They said *our goal was to provide feedback to improve the program, not to criticize it*. The US military provided a tent for a school, and the Government of Afghanistan GIROA, (Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) provided teachers, which was a sustainable solution”.

Respondent # Three:

“I provided briefs and sessions to help Afghan teachers (both males and females) in multiple languages. Foreign aid helped education a little at first. This built a lot of schools, especially for females to leave their homes and pursue different types of degrees. USAID especially built schools for females and orphans, but the schools are closed now. Afghanistan still needs educated people so they can better serve their country. I was hopeful when first working there, but after a time that hope decreased by 2016. I witnessed a lot of tragedy and waste... Gender equality and female education could have increased productivity, but it had to come with government support.”

Respondent #Four:

“Foreign aid helped raise the economic and educational level of the average Afghan. The work in Afghanistan was important, but the internal conflicts (tribal and cultural) hampered Western efforts...corruption kept funds from going to intended purposes. Only a few saw impact, and the majority were not impacted. I worked with USAID and they had good intentions and tried to assist Afghan people. Some of their schools appeared to work in large cities, but not in rural communities.”

Respondent #Five:

“I visited the girl’s school in Kabul. Overall, it advanced development and human rights... From visiting the girl’s school in Hazra, I could see there was overall development and human rights were benefited. I am less optimistic than when I started. There were inefficiencies, corruption, and poor data knowledge management... I recommend audits... and investigations.”

Respondent #Six:

“Sustainable benefits of educational aid in Afghanistan were that we helped women learn entrepreneurship skills such as chicken farming and bee keeping... I have conducted research all over the world and the same issues rise on many continents. Corruption from the national government restricted aid trickling down to the local government, and resulted in mistrust by the people... Key Leaders were only interested in their own families.

However, our information on aid was not put into use. Nobody studied the lessons learned from aid work. No one incorporated good practices of how to administer aid. Money was wasted, specifically, in Afghanistan, because: Schools were built with no teachers or staff in the area, and there was a brain drain to Kabul outside of Afghanistan.”

Respondent #Seven:

“USAID built the schools in many villages across the country, but most of the schools closed. Local customs and traditions played a role in stopping children from attending school, especially girls. The Taliban enforced these traditions by threats and even killing people. Negatives of cultural practices, customs, Taliban, corruption from many directions, and the inability of aid agencies to develop long-term educational plans discouraged parents from allowing children to go to school.”

“Education is good for governance and brings prosperity to a country. Education opens horizons for people and brings acceptance of differences and tolerance of others. Good education will bridge the gaps of gender inequality.”

Respondent #Nine:

“I remain quite pessimistic with regards to the future of Afghanistan. The deteriorating security situation, lawlessness and corruption remained at the forefront of many issues.

I discovered that foreign aid did help the education sector in some areas in Afghanistan. The schools in Kabul were more modernized and better equipped to teach students. I had the chance to visit a school that was located next to my work place in Kabul in 2016. The school was in much better condition than the one in Helmand. The classrooms were full of students. I met the principal who explained to me that the USAID made it possible for his school to buy furniture and other essentials required to run the school. The school had a built a food court and play ground. The school was co-ed and males and female students were seen studying together...I would say that foreign aid proved beneficial for most of the major cities in Afghanistan such as the capital, Kabul.

I was invited for the opening of a new school in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2012, which is considered the second largest city of Afghanistan. It was a good experience to witness the completion of a large school and the joy was apparent on the faces of all the teachers and students. The school was built by an American aid agency and it took them several years to build the school. It was closed due to insurgency.

Education in Afghanistan was improved by pouring millions of dollars into projects. The USAID mainly helped Afghanistan in building hundreds of schools

and other educational institutions, even though most were shut down later. It was not unusual to hear about the closing of schools in Afghanistan for several reasons.

In 2015, I visited a school in Nawzad district in Helmand and witnessed that the school was hardly operational with only a few students and teachers present. I was told that the school had been targeted and partially destroyed by insurgents. This “ghost school” as described by an Afghan interpreter was abandoned and remained closed for many years due to the lack of funding. This school was built by an American contractor. The locals were scared to send their children to this school because the abandoned building was housing criminals and homeless people. The roads leading to the school were also considered quite unsafe.”

Respondent #Eleven:

“I provided security in rural areas near schools. Education was weak and not available before 2001, but foreign aid helped to improve the education sector in Afghanistan.

People complained about the outcome. Some parents were not satisfied with the levels of learning.

Schools were built by individuals that came to Afghanistan for one year to leave a mark. Often times, schools were built without proper planning and understanding or appreciation for the political and socio-cultural nuances of the areas. Hence schools were built without meeting the needs of the people. Perhaps if USAID had included Afghan experts to help understand the issues of the projects?

I heard that schools were empty because they were built in the wrong area or too far with bad roads. During the winter, there was no heat or the roads and schools were flooded. I saw many abandoned schools. I reported this to the US Army that schools were closed and teachers never came. Locals complained that teachers were still paid, but would not come because of security. Many schools closed, even if USAID spent millions and millions in some areas. We never trained locals to take over the schools and learn how to do things for themselves.”

Respondent #Twelve:

“I investigated poisonings in a local girl’s school, which NATO also worked on findings. The education outreach appeared to be modest and many schools sat empty. The USAID and the State Department were very involved in assessing education, and efforts for women’s groups. When I worked for HTS, we were integrated with analyzing local impacts on education attendance. The education advances where I worked was served by international troops.

I visited a site for a midwifery program that was funded in part by USAID. It was threatened with broken windows to scare the young students. The other funding



was by the Afghan government and their department of education. The Koreans also funded some educational medical programs. My most vivid memories were at the midwifery school. There were 20 young women undergoing the training. The training material was very good and provided by USAID. Those administering the school were medically trained and we did HTS research regarding the curriculum. I heard the Afghans involved had to leave and are now trying to get to the US

The need for education in Afghanistan was profound and important. Young people have few opportunities and are lost in a modern era. The educated live in central cities and rural areas had no ability to improve or have social progress.”

Respondent #Thirteen:

“Designing aid for energy infrastructure and education was unsustainable because there were no teachers or engineers to maintain the structures and systems. Often, we created programs that looked good on paper, but had no effect or negative effects due to a lack of understanding the systems and culture. Funds did not go where they were supposed to. Determining program objectives was difficult as there were competing narratives from the military, aid agencies, the state, and NGOs.

Many schools were built, but are now abandoned due to lack of security, teachers, and parents’ concerns. Still there were some schools that were still functional. It was my hope that girls in school will become part of the culture.

Training did work for men and women as long as they were separate and respected the culture. There was a radio education program and even a prison literacy program. HTS would gather information from the locals and report to the military. The military would report to USAID, but it was USAID that made final decisions. One program start seemed hopeful that provided women to build solar power panels at home, but I do not know the fate of that one.”

Respondent #Fourteen:

“Ultimately, the aid projects were a waste and time consuming. Locals said that projects only benefited western contractors who received big salaries. All I knew was that schools did not have energy infrastructure. They had no heat in winter, and students did not show up for school because it was too cold. I was involved in building heating systems in some schools, but there was no fuel. Eventually, security was so bad for schools that the weather was not the main concern.”

Respondent #Sixteen:

“Rebuilding Afghanistan was more challenging that earlier expectations. USAID should have built rapport with all parties in Afghanistan to coordinate donations and resources. USAID projects built credibility for the US for many in Afghanistan. The lack of infrastructure in impoverished areas made it difficult to deliver

education. USAID had helped to elevate the standard of living for millions of Afghan citizens, and especially for girls was a big achievement of USAID. If there was heavy Afghan government presence, people flourished with the influx of foreign aid and foreign investments. More Afghan children were going to school than ever before.

However, areas that were infected with heavy insurgents still suffered from lack of education. Children often failed to show up to schools due to lack of security and poverty and the schools built by aid sat empty and created ghost schools. There was a social stigma for women's education. Language was a barrier when curriculum and supplies were in a language from another region. In my opinion, aid should have been given to local villagers to modernize their standards of living and strengthen education efforts and projects, rather than building school buildings that turned into ghost schools."

**Respondent #Seventeen:**

"Afghans were pessimistic about their future. They were a failed state due to lack of education. International donors tried, but their focus was wrong and they did not understand the culture. There was no training of locals to continue any project funded by international donors. This was true worldwide. Money was not the only consideration. Careful planning and accountability was the only way that aid would have worked and we had those lessons from decades of aid implementation. Audits and monitoring were needed for any nation building project.

Understanding the culture and religion was the key to any progress in Afghanistan. It took generations to create slow changes and consistent efforts in education. USAID built many schools that were closed. I had visited the ghost schools to confirm this. The Afghan government did not get involved in education, and there was no money to run the schools, no teachers, insecurity, and no supplies. There were no administrators to coordinate the school efforts. International donors and the Government of Afghanistan should be blamed for not completing the job. There was not enough funds or long-term strategies. Coordination was needed. Locals had zero knowledge about the outside world. If there was a good education system, the nation could have developed. I was responsible for evaluation and assessing projects for educational resources. I issued reports back to my office in Virginia about what needed to be developed and what was suggested."

**Respondent #Eighteen**

"I thought the situation would be better, especially with USAID and other agencies working so hard and saying they would rebuild Afghanistan. It is really a failed state. They could not win this war that has been fought for years and years. They more they tried, the more the people suffered. When the Taliban controlled areas,

it was horrible. There were no schools, good food, no clean water, and women could not leave their homes.

International donors should have built a skilled and educated new generation if they wanted to help Afghanistan. Many people tried to help, but it was all uncoordinated and inefficient. I heard a Canadian company sent a team to Afghanistan to investigate education aid projects to help women and children. They reported on corruption by the Government of Afghanistan, and their lack of commitment to education.

USAID built schools that were not used and I heard of the ghost schools. I spoke to the locals and they talked about they needed food, medicine, and water. Local women would ask me for powdered milk for their infants. This broke my heart. They wanted protection from the Taliban, while we were in the area. They said there would be repercussions. I found there were contradictions between what I had been told by USAID and what the locals said concerning projects. USAID said locals stole supplies and locals said the contractors never delivered them.”

Respondent #Nineteen:

“The ways of culture and religion were enforced by Taliban. Each member of the Taliban was easily replaced by anyone practicing the laws of their religion. Their numbers would always be the same. Someone said you cannot get rid of the Taliban; they are our culture. This meant that they were like a Religious Police. It was Afghan cultural laws that conflicted with Western ideals. Educating the young would change this, but that was not understood by aid agencies or the US either.

Educational aid was not in line with the environment, cultural background, religious preferences, and local needs. The idea was that if given a chance with good security, people would change and want Western ways. This may have been true for a few, but not for many others.

Due to corruption and lack of input by the locals, the schools built were placed to satisfy official’s needs, and not the population. Some schools only had a few students within distance, and many areas had few schools, but large numbers of students. Aid agencies wasted a lot of money on opening ceremonies and decorations. Money went for personal uses, and during construction, there was a feeling of...we can buy expensive tools even for a one-time use.”

### **Energy:**

This section addresses aid money spent on energy infrastructure in Afghanistan with a focus on the Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP) built with USAID money. There is across

the board negativity about the Power Plant, but there are some positive results with solar power units and suggestions for hydro energy sources.

Respondent #One:

“I lived in the area of the TPP. It cost a lot, but did not benefit the local people, due to poor management. Also, the firm who built the TPP did not designate local authorities or teach anyone local how to maintain it. The plant remained closed for months and months, and Afghans joked about the 300 million dollars it cost to build it. Fuel was bought by energy aid from Uzbekistan and Pakistan. But the Taliban controlled the roads, especially at the border, so the fuel could not get through.

There was some productive energy aid for Afghans though installation of small solar power units in urban areas. US firms built these. My family suffered from lack of electricity or fuel to heat and cook. Fuel was expensive even when it was available, which was rare. I could not get gas for a car. People who risked their lives to bring it in from other countries charged double prices. We did not drive for months and we used wood for heating our homes.”

Respondent #Two:

“I was very familiar with the Shorandam Industrial Park between the airport and Kandahar. The main problem was sustainability as the plant required diesel fuel, which the US military provided. It was a short-term remedy for a military solution for energy in a conflict area. It was not a long-term or economically viable solution. The concepts of accountability, evaluation, and long-term sustainability were regulated to a lesser importance as this was a war zone, first and foremost. Generally, the US military was well intentioned and not corrupt, yet poorly informed, untrained for the culture, and the tasks at hand.

There were many other negative examples from aid agencies of which I was aware. Project evaluations and accountability were seldom pursued. This was also true of the USAID projects when I worked for SIGAR.”

Respondent #Three:

“Taking information from people where I worked and locals, all sides agreed that the TPP project was wasteful for not only Afghanistan, but for the American taxpayers. I helped plan energy grids for remote areas, but did not work with the TPP project. Neither foreign aid nor energy production was well planned. Afghanistan is a huge country, and there was no training or skills for administration or services to provide energy.

Energy aid was critical for Afghanistan’s infrastructure. Locals did not have energy for heating or cooking or fuel for their vehicles. There has never been an energy

grid in the nation. Poor people suffered from the government's lack of services. If the government had put in an energy grid, they could have collected money for the electricity or fuel provided to homes for heating or cooking. More energy would have provided jobs and markets in the nation. Many tried to help, including the US and other western agencies, plus Asian efforts from Japan, India, the Gulf States, and Pakistan.

The Afghan government did build some pipelines to schools, and I assisted with that project. We also installed solar powered street lights in Kabul. It took months and months to do as we lacked materials and not enough security. Major problems were lack of security, because corrupt officials, bribes, and shadow governments control many areas.

Other problem with aid was that international donors did not coordinate their efforts. It was a waste of time and money. There was much failure due to this lack of coordination and communication. Also, the locals were not consulted on many projects, and they had good information about issues of sustainability and local needs. Roads built across land should have had permissions of those on the land first, and locals could have been hired for labor, but often they were not. Education for the people about immediate projects would have been helpful. In fact, if there was media to teach people to change certain ways and for improvement, it would have helped."

"My suggestions are these:

- \*Powerful countries should have clear objectives in stopping the fighting.
- \* Hydro power plants would be most productive.
- \* Safe roads would create an economic boom.
- \* All donors should work together to build power grids for cities."

Respondent #Four: "There was primarily corruption and inefficiency in delivering energy.

Western methods may not work in Afghanistan."

Respondent #Seven:

"The TPP project was an example of poor work. Corruption resulted in the project costing 300 million dollars. However, in Kabul there was lighting added after USAID installed hydraulic power on dams. This type of energy should have been for all provinces across the country. Energy was important as it leads to economic development. Currently, people use wood heat their homes and cook.

Afghanistan needed long term strategies and plans. Three dynamics affected all education and energy aid in Afghanistan: 1) Taliban, 2) Waste 3) Corruption from Afghan and US agencies. Unless the people of Afghanistan rejected the Taliban in

their role of reinforcing old ways, and corruption of others, things will not improve. US and other major stakeholders should have played a role for improvement through accountability for illegal and corrupt activities. But leaders of Afghanistan became wealthy and did not heed the suffering of the people. Their close relatives all became wealthy, which hampered the aid programs. Problems are:

- Transit routes for Afghan goods and materials for energy projects do not get through.
- Afghan government officials steal the resources for their personal benefit.
- Security was too bad to administer aid.”

Respondent # Eight:

“The TPP was completed and handed over to the Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan in June of 2010. Afghanistan imported 80% of its energy from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The power lines that supplied the 5 million people of Kabul passes through Salang Pass, which was rough and [inaccessible] terrain. This is not sufficient in winter and the TPP should have filled the gap. It generated electricity on both crude oil and diesel fuel. At a cost of 335 million US dollars, the capacity was 150 megawatts of electricity.

Otherwise, propane fuel could have been imported from Pakistan or Turkmenistan, and cow dung used for heating fuel and cooking. There was some electric power coming from the Naghlow and Sorobi water dams. However, at times there was not enough water to generate electricity from these dams. The war lords, (Mujahedeen) and other factions would cut off electricity to punish other groups.

My personal opinion is that donor counties who gave aid money should have had a system of checks and balances in place and held those people responsible. Aid was channeled through contractors to subcontractors, and the results reduced material and durability tenfold.”

Respondent #Nine:

“My research work covered various sectors including but not limited to health, education, stability, governance and local infrastructure. The aid given to Afghanistan by the western countries did not produce the desired results. The majority of the population was without basic necessities such as electricity and clean water. My first-hand experience led me to believe that the foreseeable future in Afghanistan is quite bleak.

I was able to determine that funding the projects was not the main concern; instead, issues such as waste management and corruption were more widespread. When it came to TPP, it wouldn't be fair to blame the Afghan officials for not using this costly project and keeping it maintained. Afghans never received the proper

training, nor did they hold the basic skills to run and maintain the TPP. According to the locals, the blame should have been shifted towards the Afghan authorities for being involved in corruption and stealing the TPP supplies. But they shouldn't have been held solely responsible for not running a 330 million dollars project effectively. One of the major challenges was to purchase diesel fuel in order to run the TPP. As I know, it was unsafe and costly to transfer diesel from neighboring countries. Most of the roads being controlled by the insurgents made it nearly impossible to transport fuel.

The foreign aid failed to help Afghanistan improve its energy infrastructure...I witnessed that people and businesses struggled due to the shortage of electricity in most of the neighborhoods. Those who were receiving electricity without any shortage were the rich and elite of the society as well as the foreign officials, but not the common people.

I witnessed some progress in regards to the Afghanistan's energy infrastructure in Kabul. When I arrived in Afghanistan in 2009, the load shedding was apparent during the evenings and nights. The situation appeared to improve in Kabul by 2016. According to the locals, the [USAID] foreign contractors helped Afghan utility departments improve the infrastructure of residential and commercial solar power in several cities in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the locals said that the rural areas did not see any changes and the improvements were limited to the capital and other major cities.

In Helmand during the winter of 2015, I witnessed that most homes including the government offices had no basic heating resources. I also witnessed that several medical centers in Kabul had to operate without any heat due to the shortage of fuel.

It is true that insecurity hindered the effective use of aid in improving Afghan energy sector, because the foreign contractors would not jeopardize their lives in conducting projects due to the security issues. The foreign aid agencies needed to effectively cooperate with each other and communicate closely with the Afghan authorities in achieving long term projects.

The Afghan energy sector was also struggling to find skilled technicians in order to effectively execute energy projects. Minister of Labor and Social Affairs urged international donors to provide training workshops for Afghan officials, and he repeatedly reiterated the importance of training before a project can be executed."

Respondent #Ten:

"At first, I thought the war and reconstruction effort was necessary, but now I view it as a waste of time and money. Basically the US never trained local Afghans to

maintain and operate infrastructure. The gap in understanding their religion and culture and negotiating the differences was contentious. We were creating dependence on Western aid and assistance. At the end of the day, Afghans needed to decide what they want. The best outcome I could see was to allow the Taliban to have an autonomous state in the south.”

Respondent #Eleven:

“My confidence in helping to solve problems with the tactics used by the military, foreign aid, the Afghan government, and the private sector decreased. HTS teams provided socio-cultural information, but it went to the army. We needed research to bring in solutions that would work.

Foreign aid benefited the contractors and other private western firms, but not as much for Afghanistan. The Taliban took control of many foreign aid projects after the western agencies left the areas. The Afghan government did not know how to build any education or energy infrastructure and we did not train them.

The TPP was costly and helpless for all sides. Locals talked bad about the project. Some new dams were built using hydraulic power to control water. But the energy sector was ineffective in most areas and locals never talked good about it. They had difficulty in heating their homes or getting cooking fuel. I made reports about energy projects that had been damaged by insurgents.”

Respondent #Thirteen:

“The US State Department built several dams that were never functional, and I imagined other programs had similar fates. If the right people ran the country after the initial round up of the Taliban and not funding the war lords, this country would have been very different. People preferred the Taliban to the war lords.”

Respondent #Fourteen:

“Ultimately, the aid projects were a waste and time consuming. Locals said that projects only benefited western contractors who received big salaries. My company was in charge of TPP. I also worked on several small projects relating to energy, such as installing new energy systems in government buildings. For energy projects, aid was not enough and was wasted because Afghans had no skills or knowledge on how to run energy infrastructure. They had zero knowledge of energy installation and the US firms provided no training due to lack of security, money, and time. Language was an issue when locals were hired to work on menial jobs.

I provided maintenance for TPP for two years. My assessment was that it was a wasted project that cost a lot of money and did not benefit the Afghan people. On my job, security was the main problem most of the time. For months we had to stay



on military bases due to insurgent activities. Getting fuel to the plant was time consuming and costly. Roads were very bad in all areas. “

Respondent #Fifteen:

“We experienced lack of supplies and materials, trained or skilled workers, and insecure areas...the TPP was given as an example of an expensive, but failed project in a speech by an American expert on energy infrastructure... Afghan officials said it was harmed by corruption from many parties. Zero tolerance for corruption and good management should have been the rule.

The US should not have tried to do this without more commitment from other nations. We failed and it made us look bad. It seemed there were no clear strategies or central planning for success. Fragmentation hurt aid efforts. Corruption by local regional officials did more to harm projects than other factors. Locals were very appreciative for anything that helped the villages.”

Respondent #Sixteen:

“The energy sector suffered due to sabotage, corruption, and inefficiencies for power plants and pipelines. USAID invested valuable resources to build the TPP. The primary fuel for operation was diesel fuels, which was often unavailable due to border closings and insurgent attacks. The TPP was unable to provide power for Afghanistan grids. It was to provide backup for emergencies. The US Senate committee on foreign aid has launched multiple investigations into USAID work in Afghanistan.

Foreign aid helped to subsidize fuel for local consumption, and to establish hydropower dams across the country. Building cooperation with local elders and procuring security from tribal leaders increased the success rate of delivering fuel and providing education in the remote areas of Afghanistan. Eighteen percent of Afghanistan had access to uninterrupted supplies as compared to 1% in the year 2000. More funding should have gone towards building more hydro power plants and small-scale dams on rivers for Afghanistan. Foreign aid should have been used to harness the tremendous potential for solar and wind energy in Afghanistan.

Most aid was wasted in providing security for the infrastructure. This was because power plants in Afghanistan relied on expensive fuels for operations. Interruptions in supply chains caused power plants to operate inefficiently, and they sustained costly damages. Pipelines suffered with sabotage and vandalism. Lack of roads and threats of insurgency decreased efficiency too. The biggest challenges were violence and the interruption of supplies at the border with Pakistan, plus lack of roads, railroads, and the absence of a dry port. In winter, some passes were completely cut off for months.”

Respondent #Seventeen:

“I have worked with USAID since 2002 in many nations. I was an aid expert in Afghanistan for 8 years. It was tough to deal with different military and diplomatic personnel with different stakes and backgrounds. Energy was an area that was critical to the nation’s development. The TPP was a failed project, with no sustainability. People were not happy from the beginning because the locals were not consulted, but only the corrupt officials. USAID and SIGAR conducted investigations and produced reports and I helped. The people said they had wanted small generators. They used animal dung for heat and cooking and the children got sick.

Pakistan built a similar plant to the TPP. It did not cost as much and was working well. The people benefited from it. But Pakistan had a strong government system, and the Government of Afghanistan was incapable of running any project. Corruption and bribes blocked the way. People were ignorant of the value of nation building projects and they stole what they could.”

Respondent #Eighteen:

“I attended a Shura where the KLE said that the TPP only helped American companies. Now Afghan people were blamed that it is shut down. The TPP project did not benefit the people, but was built based on American concepts of what to do. How could Afghans maintain something like that with no training? One Afghan official said the USAID never talked about the TPP, because it would hurt the reputation of American contractors.

But the American firms only stuck to their plans and never coordinated with locals. It was dangerous work and some people were afraid to work with me. HTS was there to talk to locals about their perspectives and report back to military commanders. My team evaluated projects completed by USAID and other American companies. I also worked as a coordinator between Americans and Afghans.”

Respondent #Twenty:

“I knew the energy sector in Afghanistan was very weak for years. USAID and other agencies tried hard to help a huge country to improve, but it would take time before Afghanistan could become independent in that area. There were some benefits as hydro power systems were built, along with energy lines placed, and low-cost grid systems in some areas.

The failures in aid delivery for energy infrastructure was first to not coordinate with locals. Western countries lacked knowledge about Afghanistan’s culture, religion, and necessary information that only the locals knew. Instead USAID and their contracted companies dealt with officials only who were corrupt. Most projects

were built within locations of the official's personal areas with low occupation, while thousands went without any needed energy. Westerners did not understand the system of corruption and hierarchies. Officials did not care about those under their care and no communication occurred so they did not know situations.

There was no training for maintenance on installations either, so that when USAID pulled out, the energy infrastructure became useless. I helped to evaluate the TPP as was required by USAID program manager in Afghanistan, regarding its function. When asked during investigations, the contractors or USAID said there was not time or money for this. Afghan locals were out of the picture. USAID funded the TPP, and contracted with Westerners to build and implement the power plant.

The contractors had no contact with locals and no knowledge of the local terrain or seasonal conditions. There should have also been relationships built with energy providers in other connecting nations. They knew what was needed to work with the terrain regarding transition lines and installing new hydro power.

I remember one incident during a bitter winter in Afghanistan with no heat. A man burst into our office and shouted that his family needed heat. We let him in to see that we had no heat in our office either with no blankets to keep warm, and we were part of the energy team. I felt that I contributed to some energy increase as I knew how to maintain equipment and small generators. I helped some coordination between the US contractors and Afghan utilities department. I was also part of a team that implemented hydraulic power generators in towns in the southern and northern parts of Afghanistan. I saw an increase in street lights in Kabul with power from solar panels. What is needed most is training to create skilled technicians.

### **The Shura Focus Group**

This section examined the “Shura” or focus group of eight Afghan males. This “Shura” (consultation) for recent Afghan immigrants at the local community center was held in Detroit, Michigan on Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm. A summary of the focus group discussion is included below.

As participants arrived, they were given a name badge and asked to seat themselves. There were eight Afghan males present. No names were used in this research and the participants were referenced by their professions in Afghanistan. Their ages ranged from

45 to 58. All participants have wives and children, who were born in Afghanistan. Before they started working with the US Army in Afghanistan, four of these participants had *worked on farms* and one, a *retired sergeant* from the military, had worked as a *security guard* for the TPP. Another *administrator* was an Afghan employee, who had worked within the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) in an official capacity. Two of the men were *teachers*.

These participants came from six Afghan provinces: Farmer One (southern region); Farmer Two (southern region); Teacher One (northern region); Teacher Two (southwestern region); Farmer Three (northern region); Farmer Four (southern region); plus one security guard and one administrator (from central Afghanistan).

All of these Afghan citizens worked for US Army or American companies in Afghanistan, so the US government granted them and their family's immigrant visas for security reasons. Farmer One and Four worked in US military facilities in cafeterias. Farmer Two and Three worked as interpreters with International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Teacher One and Two helped the US Army and worked with USAID teams. A security guard worked as a guard for TPP. The Administrator worked at the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE). According to these participants, most of them were still in contact with their relatives and family members in Afghanistan on a daily basis. Some of them still have brothers and sisters or married sons or daughters there.

All ethical considerations were carefully read. Participants were told that they did not have to participate if they did not wish to do so . If they did choose to participate, they did not have to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable answering, and they

could stop the participation at any time. Participants' identities and their locations, ages, genders, occupations, or status of any sort would be protected. The information they gave would be used in a report, but their identities would be protected through using pseudonyms, coding, and positions to identify participants.

### *General Conditions in Afghanistan*

In relating about the living conditions and the situation in general, in Afghanistan, these participants relayed many stories and pointed out that the situation was getting worse and living conditions were unbearable in Afghanistan for many reasons. The Afghan Administrator indicated that the living conditions had been better in the past few years, but not now. He stated that people couldn't afford to buy enough food or drinks because everything was becoming expensive.

Farmer Two mentioned that his family suffered in the winter and he couldn't afford to buy fuel to keep their homes warm. When he had been in Afghanistan, he had three sons and one daughter and all of them had been sick because of the severe winter weather in 2016. Farmer One said that he had to sleep on the American base, because the security situation was dangerous. He added that Taliban militants tracked locals who worked with Americans.

The security guard was also pessimistic about the dangerous situation in Afghanistan. He stated that he and his family had survived an assassination attempt, when he was shopping in a local market in Kabul. He added that insurgents followed him everywhere, and they had tried to lure him with money to work with them and carry out terrorist attacks on foreigners.

Teachers One and Two mentioned that foreign aid agencies were afraid of conducting any projects in remote areas because of Taliban and other terrorist groups. In October 2013, Teacher Two witnessed the killing of a foreign aid manager, who was murdered while he was holding a “Shura” with locals. “Unfortunately, some locals had disclosed the meeting time to insurgents, who killed the informant along with other three Afghan key leaders,” said Teacher Two.

### *Education in Afghanistan*

The school administrator explained that schools opened were often soon closed due to violence and lack of security. Foreign aid money for education was distributed unevenly between major cities and rural areas. In most of the rural areas with high risk, where schools were built, “There is nothing but ghost schools now”, the administrator added.

Teacher Two said that the education sector in Afghanistan was still suffering and that foreign aid had not been effective in improving the Afghan educational infrastructure. As he pointed out, he had taught for almost 17 years in different schools and other educational institutions throughout Afghanistan. According to his experience, Teacher Two stated that foreign aid had helped Afghan education sector a little, but it still needed a great deal of work and funds. He mentioned that he worked in different Afghan provinces, where some schools had no infrastructure components such as classrooms, computer labs, food courts, playing fields, or medical centers. In September 2013, Teacher Two taught students in tents for nine months in Helmand. He added that the US Army and Afghan National Army opened these tents and provided him and his colleagues with limited

schooling supplies. “Most of the students were absent, plus a few of the teachers.” Teacher Two said.

Teacher One added that foreign aid was not beneficial for Afghans, because most of the schools never had any effective tracking system to monitor the performance of teachers and students. “The schooling system was more efficient in the 1960s, and Afghan universities had welcomed German and French scholars at that time,” Teacher One said. He mentioned there had been other challenges that the Afghan education sector faced. “There were not enough schools in remote villages, and there was not any reliable transportation. This made it difficult for Afghan families to send their children to schools, because it was not safe and it was time consuming for both parents and students,” Teacher One said. Other challenges were that most elementary school-aged students did not have access to schools, ineffective communication between local government and provincial government, a shortage of female teachers, and students had to study out of date curricula.

The Administrator, who had worked with Afghanistan’s Ministry of Education, pointed out he observed over the years various conditions with regard to the education sector in Afghanistan. He stated that Afghans had suffered thirty years of violence and wars, and education in Afghanistan would remain weak without foreign help and long-term strategies. The Administrator added that the Afghan education system was very old and needed to be updated with new technology and other global educational standards. The Afghan government would have to do a better job to implement a tracking system for students and staff and protect aid that is earmarked for education. Teacher One commented that some Afghan government officials and teachers stole school supplies and the aid

allocated to education. He added that teachers received small salaries and most of them had more than one job.

Farmer Three stated that education was better than before, but will remain weak without constant foreign funds and better educational policies. Farmer Two added that one of his sons was over 20 years old, and he barely knew how to read or write. He said that schools lacked good teachers, and most of the teachers had never trained or had college degrees. Farmer Four mentioned that the Afghan education sector suffered because there were corrupt Afghan officials and key leaders, who accepted bribes publicly. He said that locals talked negatively about how these powerful Afghan figures built schools in their favorite areas. “There were some teachers who got paid on a monthly basis without working because of the nepotism,” Farmer Four added.

The security guard agreed with that point, and mentioned that the Afghan school system was outdated and that teachers were not capable of teaching, because most of them were working more than one job. His daughter complained to him that insurgents’ activities prevented students from walking back and forth to schools.

### *Energy in Afghanistan*

With regard to the subject of energy, conversations during this Shura demonstrated that the energy sector was also still suffering and not improving, according to the members present. The security guard who lived in Kabul and worked in guarding the TPP mentioned that this project had not been in operation for years and years. He had witnessed Afghan officials involved in stealing some of the plant’s supplies and materials. The Administrator added that TPP was a wasteful project and a big example of how Afghan officials and



American contractors are corrupt. He said that TPP was not worth the money and effort, and he never believed that such a project could cost over 300 million US dollars.

The Administrator lived in Kabul for a long time, and was familiar with the investigations run by SIGAR. He added that Afghan officials had never been honest in talking to Afghan citizens about how USAID was corrupt. “Afghan officials hesitated to tell the truth, because that would hurt the reputation of USAID and could cause the potential loss of projects in the future,” the Administrator stated.

Farmer One indicated that TPP was a completely failed project, and the money would be better used to build small hydraulic power systems. He added that the energy infrastructure is not great as Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS or the Afghan utility agency) had talked about in the news. He said that his son had worked as a interpreter helping the utility company with communications with USAID. His son said that Afghan officials had been forced by USAID not to talk about any negative news publicly, otherwise they would eventually lose the funds.

Teacher Two said that the energy sector was not improving in his town. He indicated that his family spent several years without any electricity or fuel resources. “Afghan officials were corrupt and *informal leaders*, called the shadow government<sup>16</sup>, played a major role in who was getting public services or not,” he stated. He added that

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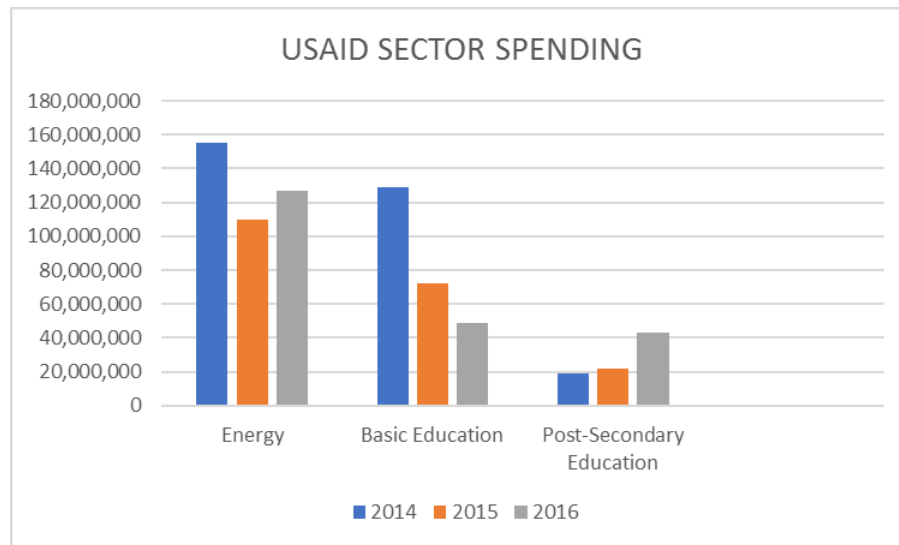
<sup>16</sup> Informal leaders are usually the war lords (the Mujahedeen) or Taliban, and are called the Shadow Government by local Afghans. It has been used for holy men (Imams) or can be local mayors (Mukhtars). They all influence the people in some manner.

people used dry animal dung to heat their homes in the cold weather and that the smoke was unhealthy to breathe.

Teacher One said that the energy sector was struggling with many technical and operational problems such as no regular maintenance for energy plants, interrupted electricity, and unskilled technicians. He added that Afghan locals were still facing other energy related challenges or a lack of funding, theft of materials from power plants, dark streets, unreliable power for pumping water from dams, expensive fuel, and a scarcity of energy resources.

**Data from Official Reports: USAID**

This section contains information from numerous reports from USAID, the media, scholars, and SIGAR concerning both education aid and energy with a focus on the Tarakhil Power Plant.

**Figure 4.2: USAID spending per sector in Afghanistan, 2014-2016**

USAID “Dollars to Results Report”.

<https://results.usaid.gov/results/country/afghanistan>

For the three years documented in the table above, energy is by far the highest funded of the three, the other two being basic education and post-secondary education. Basic education funding decreased over the three-year period between 2014 and 2016, while post-secondary education funding increased, according to the “Dollars to Results” information from USAID.

As explained in the “Notes to Data” file, these are the only years for which such data is available. It is considered a snapshot and represents only what was spent in a fiscal year in different sectors, but the figures showing the numbers of people served by that funding is unavailable. Therefore, information on the outcomes and success of the funding is not available from USAID. In other words, for the purposes of this dissertation study it

cannot be known exactly how the money was spent or the specific results. USAID spending in Afghanistan, especially in the highest category of “Government and Civil Society,” remains secret as much of it is classified.

This quote from the data notes explains it further:

“Due to the nature of foreign assistance programs, it can be difficult to link FY disbursements directly to FY results. There is often a time lag between the disbursement of a dollar and when a result is achieved from that investment. For example, if USAID builds a school, most of the spending takes place in the first several years of the project as construction begins. However, results may not be achieved until years later when the school opens and classes begin. The results shown for each mission are not comprehensive of all achievements through foreign assistance in any given country. Results shown on the website give a snapshot of the type of results achieved by USAID. The website is not a comprehensive reporting tool and should not be considered as such.”<sup>17</sup>

This dissertation study covers from 2001 to 2017. It was not until 2014 that transparency and accountability became part of USAID’s dialogue. USAID’s commitment to transparency is evident in the following statement: “USAID is committed to upholding the values of transparency, open government, participation, and collaboration in tangible ways that benefit the American people.”<sup>18</sup> However, transparency is not easy. Macdonald (2014) states that “One of the common deficiencies of many initial open data portal efforts is that they might provide extensive data files and tools for filtering and visualization, but they don’t necessarily go the “extra mile” by ensuring that data and data context are useful, available, and meaningful.”<sup>19</sup> The data chosen to illustrate education efforts here meant to

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<sup>17</sup> Part of USAID’s open data policy. USAID Data Notes <https://results.usaid.gov/NotesforDataUser.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/progress-data/transparency>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://dennis-mcdonald-58qa.squarespace.com/managing-technology/usaid-evolving-open-data-culture.html>

make meaning out of what was available through raw data. It is not possible at this time to put a dollar amount or cost per individual in any one project, which may be the subject of future studies. .

*Education aid* funding is a large part of USAID funding efforts. The following are the definitions used by USAID for the agency's general funding education missions for education:

**Basic Education:**

“Improve early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education, delivered in formal or non-formal settings. It includes literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills programs for youth and adults.”

**Post-Secondary Education or Higher Education:**

“Improve the quality, contributions and accessibility of higher education. Higher education includes but is not limited to: teaching; training; curricula; degree programs; pedagogy; research; policy analysis and participation in policy development; workforce development; second chance learning opportunities; skills certification programs; community service; extension; applied technology; professional development; exchange programs; institutional linkages; program linkages; institutional governance; financial planning; administration; management; and policy that is developed, conducted, and/or implemented by universities, colleges, community colleges, upper secondary schools, public and private technical and vocational training institutions, public and privately led skills development programs, teacher training colleges and institutes, research institutes, and/or relevant ministries. This program area places a special emphasis on ensuring equitable access to tertiary education and workforce development programs, especially for youth from lower income and marginalized groups including girls and young women and students with disabilities.”<sup>20</sup>

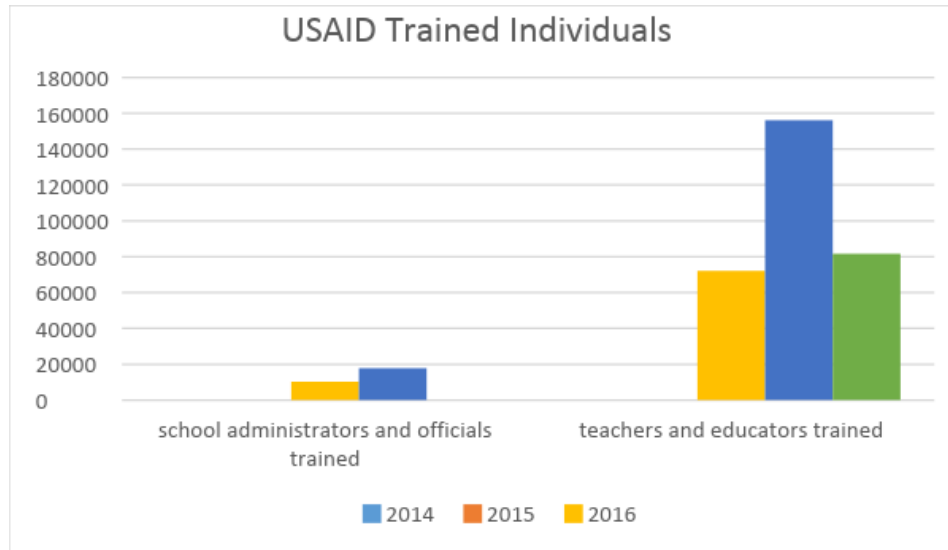
The information displayed graphically here demonstrates that USAID spends different amounts each year and serves different numbers of individuals each year.

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<sup>20</sup> From USAID's online database in the “Notes for Data User” section. Retrieved Oct. 15, 2017. <https://results.usaid.gov/NotesforDataUser.pdf>

Although a grand total of dollars allocated for Basic Education 112 category is obtainable each year (2014 to 2016) the numbers of programs funded through that dollar amount is not stated.

**Figure 4.3: USAID Training numbers in Education 2014-2016**



USAID “Dollars to Results Report”. <https://results.usaid.gov/results/country/afghanistan>

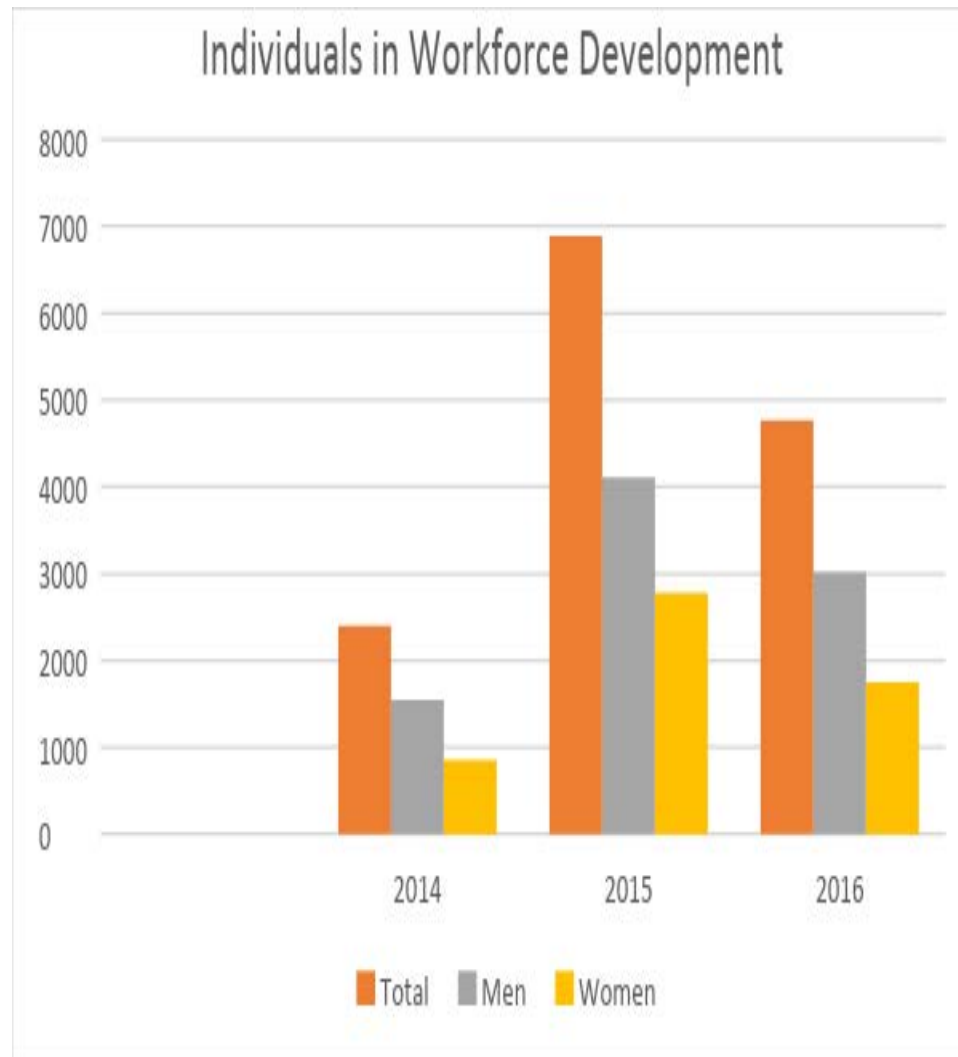
The above table illustrates the numbers of individuals trained in basic education by USAID funding for the years 2014-2016. This category is called Basic Education 112. It includes primary learners who attend schools where books and materials were provided by USAID. The disbursement amounts listed for Basic Education in Afghanistan for 2015 were US dollars \$71,770,663 and US dollars \$49,047,817 in 2016.

There were no school administrators and officials trained in 2016. There were more teachers trained in 2015 than either 2014 or 2015. Yet the education sector funding for USAID was the most for Basic Education in 2014. USAID numbers for training teachers, and school administrators for the years 2014-2016 show variances. In 2014, 10,354

administrators and officials and 72,211 teachers were trained. In 2015, with the largest numbers of the three years, 17,880 administrators and 156,179 teachers were trained. In 2016, there were zero administrators trained and 81,635 teachers.<sup>21</sup> As will be demonstrated in other parts of this dissertation as well by analysis of the reports, education projects tend to be disproportionately focused on administrators, consultants, and officials involved who earn high salaries, whereas the Afghan teachers and school administrators are often given far fewer benefits and compensations. The number of higher education partnerships between the US and Afghanistan's higher education institutions that addressed development needs were five in 2015 and 14 in 2016, respectively. The workforce training program was part of an effort to train adults in public finance management and anti-corruption classes, and was implemented through Afghanistan's Higher Education system.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://results.usaid.gov/results/country/afghanistan?fiscalYear=2016..> Data for all the nations served by USAID are included.

**Figure 4.4: Individuals trained by USAID in workforce development**

USAID “Dollars to Results Report”. <https://results.usaid.gov/results/country/afghanistan>

The number of individuals in workforce development programs influences human capital in Afghanistan. However, the overall numbers are quite low. For the preparation of government officials, USAID data indicated that the number of government officials trained in public financial management in 2016 was 150, and the number of government officials that received anti-corruption training in 2014 was 287. This does indicate an



awareness by USAID of corruption and mismanagement. Another part of this program was to develop civil service employees to be more civic minded in their jobs through training funded by USAID. The number of Afghan people who completed assisted civic education programs in 2014 was 302,548. This data is an indicator of human capital development funded by USAID.

The following USAID reports have been selected because they directly apply to the analysis in this dissertation study. Most of the evaluation reports are publicly available via USAID's Development Clearinghouse.<sup>22</sup> Two reports are on education.

*Education – Basic Education and Teacher Training*

This report is a mid-term evaluation of a large-scale teacher training USAID funded mission called BESST (Building Education Support Systems for Teachers) in Afghanistan. This report reflects on the problems in the implementation of this teacher training program due to many factors, some of which include poor communication with Afghan officials, delays in completing materials, and the existence of materials that do not match the needs of the teachers and students.

*Education - Higher Education and the Academy for Education Development*

The document examined herein is the “Audit of USAID/Afghanistan's higher education project, USAID OIG Audit Report, USAID.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx>.

<sup>23</sup> Office of the Inspector General, Regional Inspector General for Audit. Manila (December 4, 2008, Document ID: PD-ACS-007).

This audit finds serious deficiencies in the implementation of this higher education mission to train faculty in Afghanistan. Problems found within the report include poor communication with Afghan officials and with university officials, delays in programming, and the misreporting of activities. Additionally, this press release relates directly to this mission: “USAID Suspends Academy for Educational Development from Receiving New US Government Awards” issued in December 2010.<sup>24</sup> All aid deliveries were carried out by contractors or third parties. For the BESST education project the mid-term evaluation was carried out by Cheechi Consulting, Inc., who did not conduct the project and was not affiliated with the BESST project. Cheechi is contracted for evaluating and monitoring almost every USAID program associated with the government and/or judicial system, but typically not for projects involving education. Sayara Strategies, also known as Sayara Research and Sayara Media conducts numerous contracts throughout Afghanistan and the world and is affiliated with dozens of donor agencies and governments, including the Afghan government, military, and police.

In the sphere of education, the Academy for Educational Development (AED), a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington D.C., was shut down in 2011 because in part of the \$38-million-dollar Higher Education Project (HEP) shown in this report. The *Inspector General’s Final Audit Report* found egregious oversights in AED’s administration, including a lack of evaluation, poor planning, poor communication, lack of

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<sup>24</sup> USAID Press Office, December 8, 2010. <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/usaidsuspends-academy-educational-development-receiving-new-us>.

sustainability, lack of stability in staffing, mismanagement of funds, not meeting of the criteria for programming, dissatisfied faculty, and overall lack of integrity.

In December 2010, USAID issued the press release “USAID Suspends Academy for Educational Development from Receiving New US Government Awards” for findings from the Inspector General that “reveal evidence of serious corporate misconduct, mismanagement, and a lack of internal controls, and raise serious concerns of corporate integrity.”<sup>25</sup> By June 2011 AED no longer existed and was forced to pay millions in settlements to the US government for mismanagement of funds in projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

#### *Other USAID Data Reports*

The following USAID reports have been selected because they directly apply to the analysis in this dissertation study. Most of the evaluation reports are publicly available via USAID’s Development Clearinghouse.<sup>26</sup> *Two reports are on energy and two are on education.* There is a table (4.1) following the reports revealing the investigation of these four projects and the outcomes.

#### 1) Energy – Tarakhil Power Plant

The Tarakhil power plant is important as a case study of the aid directed at the energy infrastructure sector in Afghanistan. The first report examined is the “Final report from the Office of Inspector General, June 19, 2014,” which includes a memorandum to

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/usaids-suspends-academy-educational-development-receiving-new-us>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx>.

the USAID/Afghanistan Mission Director, William Hammink, from the Afghanistan Acting Country Office Director, Randall Ase. Its central focus is “Review of Sustainability of Operations at Afghanistan’s Tarakhil Power Plant.”<sup>27</sup> This report finds Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS - the Afghan government’s utility agency) as being at fault for not maintaining the power plant and not using expensive equipment. Also, DABS is cited for not making an inventory of supplies. There are many packed containers with equipment and supplies, but no inventory, according to the report.

## 2) Energy - DABS

The second report examined is “Public campaign evaluation: Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat : post campaign survey report, Special Evaluation, Sayara Research,” issued by USAID Mission to Afghanistan.<sup>28</sup> The survey data contained in the report is useful in understanding the importance of electricity in the lives of the urban and rural people of Afghanistan. For many years they have been promised electricity and they still do not have it consistently, even in the large cities. The data indicates that many Afghans need information in order to understand what electricity options could be available in the future. 3) Education – Basic Education and Teacher Training

This report is a mid-term evaluation of a large-scale teacher training USAID funded mission called BESST (Building Education Support Systems for Teachers) in Afghanistan.

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<sup>27</sup> Report No. F-306-14-002-S.

<sup>28</sup> USAID Mission to Afghanistan on 27 January 2015. Document ID: PA-00K-BDG

This report reflects on the problems in the implementation of this teacher training program due to many factors, some of which include poor communication with Afghan officials, delays in completing materials, and the existence of materials that do not match the needs of the teachers and students.

#### 4) Education - Higher Education and the Academy for Education Development

The document examined herein is the “Audit of USAID/Afghanistan's higher education project, USAID OIG Audit Report, USAID,” issued by the Office of the Inspector General, Regional Inspector General for Audit, Manila.<sup>29</sup> This audit is finds serious deficiencies in the implementation of this higher education mission to train faculty in Afghanistan. Problems that the report found include poor communication with Afghan officials and with university officials, delays in programming, and the misreporting of activities. Additionally, this press release relates directly to this mission: *USAID Suspends Academy for Educational Development from Receiving New US Government Awards* issued in December 2010.<sup>30</sup>

Below is a table with the details from the four reports examined below. All four of the projects were funded by USAID. The figures are for monetary amounts in US dollars. (m=millions.)

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<sup>29</sup> December 4, 2008, Document ID: PD-ACS-007.

<sup>30</sup> December 8, 2010, USAID Press Office, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/usaid-suspends-academy-educational-development-receiving-new-us>

**Table 4.1 Investigative Data from the four projects listed above**

Reporting Agency	Type/Date	Title	Sector/Target Population	Keywords	Recommendations	Cost
OIG/Afghanistan	Final Review June 19, 2014	Review of DABS & TPP	Energy/Kabul	Failure No outputs Lack of fuels maintenance, inventory	Re-training Alternative Revised planning	TPP 355 m
Sayara Strategies Cooperative Agreement	Post-Campaign Survey Report January 20, 2015	DABS Survey	Energy/Nation Random Selection	Lack of awareness Stealing electricity Little improvement	More radio, cell phone, rural outreach More education about dangers of illegal electricity	Survey 1.8m
Cheechi Consulting	Mid-Term Evaluation May 25, 2009	BESST Building Education Support Systems for Teachers	Education/Basic Education/Teacher Training Largely rural population	Too many organization s Lack of fair pay Top-heavy Textbooks unfinished	More communication with teachers More fair treatment of teachers Caution with overpaying consultants	BESST 100m

OIG/USAID	Dissatisfacti on						
	Audit	Academy	Education/High	Failure	Need	stable	38m
	Final	for	er	No	staff		
	Report	Education	Education/Facu	sustainability	Need	internal	
	Decemb	Developme	lty Training at 4	No proper	evaluations	&	
	er 4,	nt (AED)	year colleges	planning	reporting		
	2008	Higher	throughout	Lack of	Need plan for		
		Education	nation	communicati	after project		
		Program		on	ends		
		(HEP)					

USAID Office of Investigator General, Washington D.C.,

<https://oig.usaid.gov/auditandspecialbyyear>

### **SIGAR Audit Conclusions**

**Education:** The Office of the Special Inspector General of Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) conducted many audits and investigations concerning USAID's education and energy funding projects. Audit results for education funding showed that USAID had complied with all rules and regulations concerning goals of expended money on projects and the employment of for-profit contractors to accomplish the projects. Any subsequent failures were not due to faulty construction or within parameters of goals for the funding agency. Due diligence was exercised in the pre-construction reports on the number and locations of schools needed. Other considerations of security, weather, roads, and local corruption were out of the scope of control for USAID. For the liability of any

corruption by contractors, SIGAR found several incidents and prosecution followed. Further allegations continued and a response to the SIGAR Inquire letter<sup>31</sup>, from USAID to SIGAR dated June 30, 2015 stated: “the Afghan media reports ...are not accurate,” and “there is no specific evidence or allegation ... that US assistance funds have been misappropriated, and we remain confident that education programs are among our most successful programs in Afghanistan.”

**Energy:** A June 2014 USAID OIG review of the Tarakhil Power Plant found the plant to be severely underused, operating at just 2.2% of installed capacity, which USAID OIG attributed in part to the plant’s high operating cost—particularly the high cost of diesel fuel. In response to the OIG report and the accompanying recommendations, USAID stated that it had either already initiated, or would initiate, remedial measures to help the Afghan government and DABS (the national power utility) operate the plant on a more regular basis. USAID stated that all corrective measures would be implemented no later than December 31, 2014.

*SIGAR Inquiry Letter 15-65-SP: Tarakhil Power Plant*

SIGAR wrote to USAID to inquire about the Afghan government’s willingness and ability to operate the Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP) and to better understand actions undertaken to ensure the sustainability of the plant’s operation and maintenance. USAID replied that TPP was operating, provided energy output figures, and said the plant proved

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<sup>31</sup> SIGAR Inquiry Letter 15-62-SP to USAID: Afghanistan Education Data.



to be a vital component of Afghanistan's northern energy grid. SIGAR's analysis is ongoing.

Allegations concerning the TPP led to initial investigations<sup>32</sup> and audits. The quoted response from USAID states on June 26, 2015, "The agency has, "no indication that the Afghan power utility, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), failed to operate Tarakhil as was alleged in your letter." SIGAR replied that "SIGAR will continue to monitor developments at the Tarakhil Power Plant to see if over time the Afghan government is able to better utilize this significant expenditure of US taxpayer funds."

SIGAR issued a report letter<sup>33</sup> on August 7, 2015, from Donald L. "Larry" Sampler, Assistant Administrator for Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs to USAID, containing the following:

"This letter provides the results of our analysis of the information provided by your office in response to our questions. Unfortunately, despite apparently being a "vital component" of the electrical grid serving Kabul, it appears that that this \$335 million power plant continues to be severely underutilized. In particular, data provided by your office and by Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) show that the Tarakhil Power Plant continues to operate at only a fraction of its power production capacity. As you recall, the USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG) found previously that between July 2010 and December 2013, the plant only produced about 63,000 megawatt hours of power, just 2.2 percent of its production capacity during that period.<sup>2</sup> Our analysis of the more recent data provided by your office shows that the rate of power production has actually declined over time. Specifically, from February 2014 through April 2015, the plant exported just 8,846 megawatt hours of power to the Kabul grid, which is less than one percent of Tarakhil's production capacity during that period.....

In addition to running far below its full capacity, the plant contributes a relatively small amount of electricity to the power grid serving Kabul. From February 2014 through April 2015, the Tarakhil Power Plant produced only 0.34 percent of the total power on the Kabul grid. Figure 1 shows the percentage of

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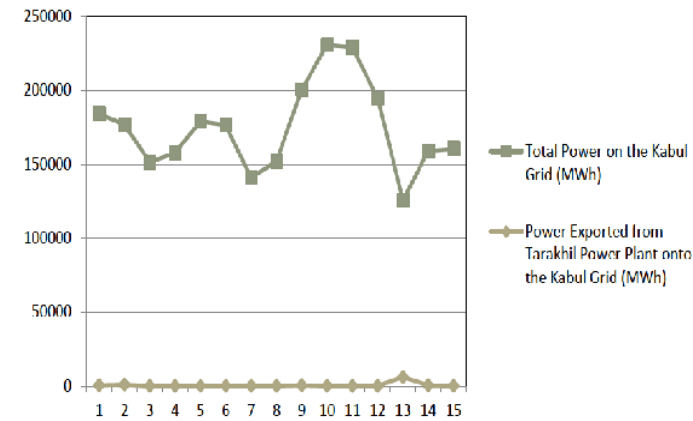
<sup>32</sup> SIGAR Inquiry Letter 15-65-SP to USAID, concerning TPP efficiency.

<sup>33</sup> SIGAR Inquiry Letter 15-80-65=SP.

power on the Kabul grid derived from the Tarakhil power plant compared to the total amount of power on the grid from all sources.

Your response characterized the plant as a “means of providing insurance against disruption of power supplies from Central Asia and as backup during peak demand.” However, that characterization is contradicted by other information obtained by my office. For instance, the USAID contractor hired to evaluate alternative fuel supplies for the power plant stated that, “the TPP (Tarakhil Power Plant) was designed as a base load plant, operating 24 hours/day. 7 days/week, but was being operated to support peak loading only.” USAID OIG also noted that “the plant was also not used regularly... and therefore was not increasing Kabul’s power supply to help reduce its energy deficit... as intended.” and , “the plant is not regularly contributing additional electricity to increase the power supply in the Kabul area as envisioned.” These statements strongly suggest that, rather than “providing insurance against disruption”, the Tarakhil Power Plant was originally intended to provide electrical power to Kabul on a continuous basis.

In fact, according to the USAID, OIG, the use of the Tarakhil Power Plant only on an intermittent basis caused damage to the plant. USAID OIG observed that “operating on an intermittent- rather than a continuous- basis has resulted in more frequent starts and stops- which place greater wear and tear on the engines and electrical components.” This underutilization of the plant has apparently already resulted in the premature failure of equipment, which is expected to raise already high operation and maintenance costs, and could result in a “catastrophic” failure. This information also supports the conclusion that the Tarakhil Power Plant was intended to operate on a continuous basis.”

**Figure 4.5: SIGAR’s findings on TPP output, 8/7/15****Figure 1 - Tarakhil Power Plant Output Compared to the Total Power on the Kabul Grid (5-month period from February 2014 through April 2015)**

Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID and DAUS data

SIGAR Inquiry Letter 15-80-65

**Other Research on USAID Aid to Afghanistan:**

O’Brien (2017) outlines the progress of contracting with other aid agencies to do work in Afghanistan, thus distancing USAID from on the ground involvement and accountability. O’Brien states that while the main purpose of the Afghanistan reconstruction aid had been to stabilize the war-torn nation, the Bush administration had also sought to utilize USAID to advance US security and political objectives. This had presented significant challenges for the Agency, O’Brien argues, and had forced USAID to look to NGOs, such as AED and IRD, in order to implement major programs by awarding cooperative agreements. However, as O’Brien has posited, what is very important is that after awarding these cooperative agreements, USAID failed to participate substantially in the programs.

USAID's consistent disregard for its "operational policy," which is contained in the ADS, contributed to the projects' failure to meet critical objectives and the mismanagement of millions of dollars, the report states. In response to growing pressure from the OIG, SIGAR, Congress, and the media calling for "accountability," USAID had suspended two of its largest implementing partners, in an improper fashion. To prevent these problems in the future, agencies would need to be held to government-wide regulations with the force and effect of law, according to O'Brien's analysis (2017: 23).

In order to find a solution, the O'Brien's work makes a recommendation, which includes amending Title 2 of the US Code of Federal Regulations, in order to better define what it means to be "substantially involved" and to create binding legal requirements on agencies to remain involved during performance. The ultimate goal is to ensure the proper utilization of cooperative agreements by all federal agencies (2017:11).

Corneille (2001)'s work addresses accountability for aid agencies to stakeholders, especially when they are a top down organization. She defines the usages of accountable: "The concept of accountability must be introduced and then described within the context of development." Corneille goes on to explain there are different types of accountability. Professional accountability is a low degree of control and high degrees of discretion. It is a horizontal relationship, because individuals are empowered by the administrator to make decisions. (Corneille, 2001, 2)

Hierarchical relationships are closed and the dynamics create high degrees of control and scrutiny. Performance is based on obedience to expectations of persons or the organization. Finally political accountability comes from external sources with low levels

of direct control. (Corneille 2001, 2) USAID as a government agency is held accountable to the government and citizens. Other multilateral organizations, like the World Bank, answer to their member countries that own and govern them. Other distinctions between national development agencies and multilateral banks is that development agencies follow a direct linkage between governmental foreign policy goals and foreign aid. The multilateral banks do not reflect any government policy in their programs. (Corneille, 2001, 3)

Historical USAID accountability in the past was to its government and the American taxpayers to promote US national interests. (Corneille, 2001, 12) These past criteria guided USAID operations in Afghanistan. However, this narrow connection for accountability was not always viewed by the US Government or USAID as being in compliance with government standards and regulations.

Traditionally, development agencies or aid agencies were top-down and involved strict control and thus were closed systems. However, it should be understood that placing American systems in other societies won't work. "What will work is to address local problems and develop indigenous systems." (Corneille, 2001, 13)) Now agency directives require that aid beneficiaries must be "actively consulted in developing, updating, and monitoring strategic plans, and involved in monitoring performance." Thus there are two major types of stakeholders, or the sponsoring government and the indigenous beneficiaries of the aid. Sustainability of projects depend on both stakeholders, and so all must participate in the process. Participation in projects by indigenous stakeholders will strengthening their commitment, due to involvement also creates new opportunities for

developing nations or LDCs to express their views and influence the programs that affect their lives. Therefore aid programs delivery become accountable to both stakeholders. (Corneille, 2001, 3)

Yet it is unclear on how policy is to proceed. Diane La Voy, former Senior Policy Advisor for Participatory Development at USAID, described the relationship with stakeholders as a statistical Venn diagrams in which USAID tries to “find the biggest amount of overlap – the most honorable and feasible space” between the goals of the agency and its counterparts. (Corneille, 2001, 14) Also how are successes measured? USAID’s operating units were required to prepare a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), a management technique of the private sector. (Corneille, 2001, 15)

Problems arise when performance indicators to measure results do not always capture qualitative values such as empowerment, learning, inclusion, partnership, and ownership. Furthermore, when priorities clash between aid agencies and their stakeholders, it is the agency and their own government they will consider first. Trying to maintain some kind of balance in working with government controls is “almost more challenging than working with the Congress.” (Corneille, 2001, 15)

The indigenous stakeholders must be considered as paramount because the sustainability of the project depends on them. They are the touted reason for the efforts in the first place. Ownership of projects creates change that occurs from the bottom up, and it is these indigenous stakeholders that will benefit or suffer. Their future beliefs may derive from the results of their relationships with USAID as a representative of the US government politically, socially, and economically.

For USAID, the most important stakeholder through accountability is the US government as they have the power to cut funding, and so USAID has to comply with broader agency goals. Therefore, new indigenous partners formally may have less power to influence development programming. (Corneille, 2001, 15)

*Individual Reports on Failures of USAID Projects*

To accomplish education goals in Afghanistan, USAID funded the Academy for Educational Development (AED) in Afghanistan under a cooperative agreement, which was essentially for-profit contractors. The Academy for Educational Development (AED), once a non-profit global development agency with hundreds of millions of dollars in funding, mostly from the US government, was audited in 2009 for its work in education and shortly thereafter controversy ensued (O'Brien 2017). AED had overpaid its executives, did not complete or even implement projects or programs, overcharged USAID, and generally mismanaged funds, and it was dismantled in 2011. In O'Brien's (2017) article the focus is on the culpability of USAID in allegations of fraud, waste, and failure, and AED's mismanagement of over \$ 38 million US dollars is addressed. O'Brien, a lawyer, investigated USAID's responsibility for such waste, fraud, and failure in Afghanistan. Cooperative agreements ask contractors and consultants to follow the protocols of reporting and assessment. When they do not follow procedures, it is difficult to hold them accountable. However in some cases, such as with AED, they can be shut down.

Pratap Chatterjee, a journalist for CorpWatch<sup>34</sup> wrote the following in an article entitled “Black and Veatch's Tarakhil Power Plant: White Elephant in Kabul” (2009): “Two weeks before the August 20 vote, at an opening ceremony for the unfinished plant, Karzai stood beside Karl Eikenberry, the current US ambassador, who told the assembled media: ‘I would ask the citizens of Kabul when you turn on your lights at night, remember that the United States of America stands with you – optimistic of our combined prospects for success, and confident in you and our mission.’ But not much went according to plan. The \$280 million-a-year cost to run the power plant at full capacity was more than a third of total tax revenues for the entire country; the plant would supply electricity to less than two percent of the population; and the plant's cost – already more than \$300 million – was roughly three times that of any similar plant in the region” (Chatterjee, 2009).

### **Media Reports of USAID Projects**

This dissertation examines the details of U.S .government spending in the Afghanistan reconstruction process, and media reports are an important part of that analysis. The media plays a major role in reporting on aid projects, and thus has watchdog status when it comes to government spending. The money spent by USAID in Afghanistan is US taxpayer money. The public has a right to know why there has been so much waste.

Anne Simmons in her article in the *Los Angeles Times*, entitled: “US foreign aid: A waste of money or a boost to world stability? Here are the facts” (May 10, 2017) quotes from the 2014 SIGAR report. Afghanistan is a fragile state, she argues, maybe even a failed

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<sup>34</sup> CorpWatch is a global nonprofit promoter of human rights based in San Francisco.



one. “Perhaps the largest reason is corruption,” James M. Roberts, a research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank that has called for a scaling back of USAID funding, wrote in 2014 “It’s the ‘pre-existing condition’ that keeps many aid recipients from ever recovering. It’s a major obstacle to economic growth” (as quoted in Simmons 2017). Another often quoted statement is the 2014 report from the office of special inspector general, John Sopko, for Afghanistan reconstruction is: “evidence strongly suggests that Afghanistan lacks the capacity — financial, technical, managerial or otherwise — to maintain, support and execute much of what has been built or established during more than a decade of international assistance” (Ibid). How could so much money be spent with so little progress? The media asks this question for the American taxpayer, but it is also the lived experience of myself as an HTS social scientist and the people of Afghanistan.

Aikens in an article in *The New Yorker*, “The Bidding War How a young Afghan military contractor became spectacularly rich” (March 7, 2016) calls the US government’s spending in Afghanistan self-defeating. Self-defeating, but also, it can be added, devastating for the Afghan people. Aikens quotes General Petraeus, who wrote in 2008: “Employ money as a weapons system. Money can be ‘ammunition.’” Aikens continues: “The result was a war waged as much by for-profit companies as by the military. Political debate in Washington has focused on the number of troops deployed in Afghanistan and the losses that they have sustained. To minimize casualties, the military outsourced any task that it could: maintenance, cooking and laundry, overland logistics, even security. Since 2007, there have regularly been more contractors than US forces in Afghanistan;

today, they outnumber them three to one” (Aikens, 2016). From the multiple official audits, investigations and the scholarly and media reports, it becomes clear that the TPP is a failed project. However, the liability for its failure will be addressed in the next chapter through data analysis.

All aid deliveries were carried out by contractors or third-parties and in the case of the DABS energy survey<sup>35</sup>, the survey and the post-survey analysis were carried out by the same contractor. The cost column in the above table indicates the cost of the project itself. In the case of TPP/DABS, the cost of the construction of TPP was \$355 million USD, but reports of \$245 million a year just to purchase diesel fuel to run at capacity exist. TPP has not been operating at capacity. Although DABS took over TPP in 2010, USAID continued to provide aid. DABS has failed to operate the plant above 3% capacity, therefore leaving 97% of its capacity unused.

### **Eyewitness Account by Abdullah Bataineh from HTS Research**

The impact of three decades of conflict have devastated Afghanistan’s physical infrastructures, institutions, and people bringing hardships and traumas to many locals. As the impetus for this dissertation research study, my first-hand experiences working in Helmand Province, Afghanistan for the US Army reveal insights into the people’s experiences.

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<sup>35</sup> “Public campaign evaluation: Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat : post campaign survey report, Special Evaluation, Sayara Research,” (2015) issued by USAID Mission to Afghanistan.

As a Social Scientist, I interviewed dozens of Afghan officials and held several Shuras with locals and their key leaders. During these interviews and meetings, I documented the experiences of those with education and energy aid delivery problems first hand. I saw what a LCD nation like Afghanistan experiences when aid delivery was insufficient. I saw a school built by USAID that was damaged from conflict. There were only a few students, who still continued to come, but I realized that despite the possible danger, the dire look of the building, and the lack of supplies that the students braved all of this for any benefit of education they could receive.

I experienced discomforts from the lack of available energy, while on missions in Afghanistan. I took statements from those who lived with the reality of no available energy, and their descriptions of cold, isolation, and no cooking fuel. I learned that aid delivery from USAID was diverted to the large projects, specifically the TPP, rather than helping with smaller beneficial projects. In Kabul, I heard official statements at a USAID conference addressing questions about the validity of USAID aid on the workings of TPP and the exaggerated benefits of schools built.

From a political science viewpoint, the locals and their leaders often were politically powerless because of the Taliban's stronghold. The Taliban run what is called a shadow government, where they control certain areas and use violence and threats of violence to limit the power of the legitimate government agents.

As part of my duties as a social scientist with the US Army's Human Terrain System, I had the opportunity to interview local Afghans, their key leaders, officials, aid workers, experts, and other military personnel from both US and the Government of

Afghanistan. Below I describe a Shura council meeting (a key leader meeting) at a compound, a visit to a medical clinic, and then I focus on my account of USAID's involvement.

My months in Helmand province, an area of Taliban stronghold, gave me the chance to witness the poverty and injustice first hand. Basic needs were lacking: there was little or no fuel for lighting, cooking, and heating, and limited or no access to education. There was limited food sometimes, and a lack of basic medical supplies. In February 2012, I conducted a 10-day mission in a semi-permissive area of Nowzad district in Helmand province. Face-face field interviews were conducted with a few national government officials. I also held a meeting with a Shura council, consisting of 18 members, to help my team members identify the perception of key tribal leaders about many important social and cultural issues, and to improve relations between locals and the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF).

This ten-day mission was designated in support of II MEF (Marines Expeditionary Forces) and ISAF's efforts to improve their understanding of the population's needs, concerns, and aspirations in Nowzad District. During my documented interviews with key leaders in the Shura meeting, everyone agreed about the top four major issues: *lack of security, a poor educational system, no fuel for cooking and heating, and limited or no access to health care.*

Most complained about how the Taliban and other insurgents made it difficult for the locals to travel or take their children to school. Many of the key leaders stated that lack of security forced many locals to leave the district of Nowzad for other villages or other

provinces. An older man in his late 60s indicated that the Taliban prevented him and his family from traveling outside the district to bring in food and other necessities. He further explained that many people had become dependent on the aid organizations and the US military to provide basic needs. Another local leader, who worked as a security guard in several provinces, revealed the story of an Afghan local soldier and his son, who had been abducted and killed by the Taliban. The insurgents killed them for no reason other than to send a message to military personnel and other government officials to not support or work for the government of Afghanistan, otherwise they would face the same fate as this local soldier and his son. The shadow government influences every aspect of life for the Afghan people in Helmand province, including education.

“A poor educational system” was a common complaint in most of the interviews I conducted with Afghan locals. In Nowzad, an Imam (Holy man) who spoke good Arabic and served for almost 20 years in the province of Helmand, insisted that the Afghan educational system was not only traditional, but also suffered from major challenges. When I asked him about these challenges, the Imam complained that the lack of furnished schools didn’t matter because there was a scarcity of teachers to teach. Most teachers had abandoned the district of Nowzad years previous because of the deteriorating security situation and low wages. The Imam explained that they only had two teachers who can teach all subjects and when they are absent for any reason, the school shuts down. Students lack reading and writing skills and are unmotivated to learn. He said, “We keep sending complaints to the provincial government about the lack of staff, but we rarely get any response.”

I personally had the opportunity to visit a school in Nowzad district during the winter season. The visit was arranged by US marines, who provided a safety guard for the Imam, one interpreter, and me. As we entered the school compound, I thought the school had been shut down because of the quiet and rubbish all over the place. I noticed a big hole in the wall of the main office and most of the windows were broken or without any frames. I asked the Imam about the reasons for such damage. He explained that this school experienced big clashes between the insurgents and the Afghan National Army (ANA) a few months prior. “Unfortunately, the school is only open for a few days during the week, but not that many students attend”, the Imam stated. Besides going against education, the shadow government also controlled the roads and fuel supplies.

A major issue addressed during the Shura meeting was the scarcity of fuel for cooking and heating. According to the majority of the Shura council members the lack of fuel is a major challenge in the Nowzad district, which caused continuous suffering for all residents. The Makhtar (local leader) an influential figure in the district, started his speech by asking for forgiveness because of the cold room, where we were holding a large key leader meeting, while draping a blanket over his shoulder. He directed his speech to my team and apologized for meeting us in such a cold room, but “unfortunately, all rooms in this governmental compound have no type of heat,” he said. The Makhtar added that it took him at least 45 minutes to walk to this meeting, because of the unavailability of transportation throughout the district.

During the meeting, I asked others about their mode of transportation. One key leader who had worked as a policeman explained that a local police captain brought him

and another Shura council member there because they were afraid of walking in the district. This retired policeman said that “if insurgents or anyone affiliated with the Taliban observed him walking outside his neighborhood, he would be killed right away.” He added “I served in Helmand for years and I know all bad guys and they know me. These insurgents tried to kidnap my daughter on more than one occasion. They destroyed my shop and killed two of my workmates in the past. I cannot send my kids to school anymore.”

I remember it was about that time that the Chef entered the room and said loudly that the food was ready. Eating Afghan food is a fond memory, one I will never forget because I found it delicious. Everyone seemed to enjoy the rice and lamb meat. “Refusing to eat local food is viewed as an insult,” exclaimed the Makhtar. Afghans are big-hearted people and often invite guests to their homes to share food and smiles. I asked the Pashtu interpreter about the way the food was cooked for this meeting. He explained that Chef cooked the meal in a wood-fired oven. Using the primus stove that uses kerosene can prepare the food quickly for the whole compound, but the chef used the wood oven that day because kerosene was unavailable throughout the district due to the dangerous security situation. The interpreter added that some key leaders were complaining to the US military personnel about the unavailability of fuel for cooking and heating their homes during the harsh cold weather. These key leaders also complained about how some of the government officials were corrupt and were stealing people’s humanitarian aid.

The lack of fuel for heating was also noticeable during our visits to a medical center that was almost empty during noon time on a Wednesday. All rooms were cold except a room for the medical staff, where I noticed two nurses heating their hands around a dusty

kerosene heater. With the help from the interpreter, I asked one of the nurses about her daily activities in the medical center. She revealed very sad stories about the unavailability of medicine and lack of qualified physicians to serve sick people. “I witnessed many kids who died because of the pneumonia and we couldn’t help them due to lack of antibiotics,” she said.

### *Work with USAID*

Three weeks after I arrived in Helmand province, I was called to travel to Kabul to attend a military conference and workshop concerning counterinsurgency and courses related to the new District Stability Framework. During my three-week mission in Kabul, I had the opportunity to attend workshops focused on a variety of topics including USAID’s development projects.

This was my first opportunity to meet with representatives from USAID. The one-week workshop was presented by USAID aimed to educate ISAF military personnel and other contractors about the aid agency’s projects in Afghanistan. USAID’s lecturers were very organized and talked a lot about what the aid agency had achieved during the last ten years. They presented statistics about the number of schools they had built, the millions of students (including girls) attending schools, the number of development projects they had achieved throughout 32 Afghan provinces, and the improvements of public services in different towns and villages.

Questions were allowed throughout the lectures. An Afghan administrator, who worked for the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE), asked USAID’s representative if he had ever visited any school in Afghanistan. The answer was negative. The Afghan



administrator replied by saying that he worked for MoE for almost ten years and worked before as a teacher in different schools for another ten years. His views differed from USAID's. This administrator said that it is true that USAID has built hundreds of schools in all provinces in Afghanistan, but most of these schools were not functioning for different reasons. Some of these schools were abandoned by students and teachers because of security threats from insurgents or lack of funding from the government. The unhealthy economy negatively impacted on the attendance of students and the performance of teachers. Students left the schools to help their family on their farms and teachers worked extra jobs because of the living conditions, which were deplorable. The worst thing was most of the students that were enrolled in schools did not show up, and teachers were taking salaries but not coming to work, he added. He called them ghost schools and ghost teachers.

Another officer with the rank of major in the Afghan Army criticized USAID and its aid projects. He stated that USAID had done a great deal in Afghanistan but, unfortunately, not all projects were functioning anymore because of the unavailability of the funds, or lack of qualified staff to keep maintain them. The major gave an example of how USAID had spent millions of dollars on Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP) and left it to the Afghan government, which had no experience in keeping it working or maintaining it. It was so sad that these millions of dollars had not been spent on other small projects that could benefit residents of Kabul. He added. "I am living in Kabul and I am struggling with heating my home in this severe cold weather. Yesterday, my daughter was sick, and I spent four hours to find anyone to take her to the hospital because I don't have a car, and it is difficult to find a cheap taxi during the night. After I arrived in the hospital, it was over

crowded. Patients and their families were sitting on the cold floors. After I spent five hours waiting, the physician told me that I had to wait longer because they were out of medicine and were waiting for a nonprofit health organization to deliver it.

As he directed his speech to the USAID representative, the major said “Please don’t take me the wrong way, but USAID is selling propaganda and exaggerating a lot when you are saying that you spent billions of dollars on successful development projects. People don’t see that and I am one of them. Our schools are shut down or poorly performing, streets are dangerous to walk on during the day because of the explosions and during night because there are not enough lights. Prices of basic supplies are skyrocketing, hospitals are lacking in staff and medicine, and we do not see things getting better because of USAID. Please go to the hospital and see how families and physicians are struggling to cure their sick people.”

USAID does not typically send officials out into the field. I had the opportunity as an HTS team member to be in the field and participated in about 100 missions in 300 days, where I talked, observed, documented, and disseminated information about the conditions and concerns of the local people, including Afghan government officials at all levels. I think that the problems may stem from a lack of integration of power and control between the shadow government and the legitimate government. Most of the key leaders I met during my ten months in Afghanistan were deeply frustrated and unaware of how to resolve the problems they and their people were facing. And they still face those same problems today. In my opinion, until the shadow government leaders are included in diplomatic meetings with legitimate leaders, Afghanistan will remain devastated.

## Conclusions

The data from the questionnaires, focus group, official reports, and the self-reflections from the experiences of the writer of this dissertation were gathered to reveal the answer to the original research questions about the barriers to funding for Afghanistan's Tarakhil Power Plant and projects to enhance education for modernization in Afghanistan. Other information revealed will be the perceptions of those impacted by the projects, and what strategies could improve aid delivery and efficacy to Afghanistan. These questions are addressed in the next chapter through data analysis, descriptive statistics, and eyewitness accounts. The findings will be informed by the theoretical frameworks of modernization theory and human capital theory.

In summary to reiterate, the exact research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the barriers or factors preventing the effective delivery of USAID funding  
in Afghanistan for the project of the Tarakhil Power Plant and in the sphere of  
education?
2. How are project factors perceived by individual stakeholders, government agencies, government watchdogs, the media, and scholars?
3. If needed, what are some strategies that could improve aid delivery and address any lack of efficiency and efficacy of aid in Afghanistan?

## CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS

“Unfortunately, in the nearly five years I’ve been traveling to Afghanistan, I first witnessed the United States put in way too much, way too fast. More recently, I’ve watched the US remove way too much, way too fast. Policy makers both in Congress and the new Trump Administration should take note of this.”

—Inspector General John Sopko, SIGAR

### **Respondent Coding, Themes, and Descriptive Statistics**

Data analysis categories defined respondent data from the twenty questionnaires, the Shura focus group, the HTS Eyewitness Account, and the USAID Reports and Related Reports. Analyses found meaning in the qualitative data through patterns, frequencies, magnitudes, processes, causes, and consequences (Creswell, 2006, 29). The first measures were coding of the concepts and themes emphasized by the respondents. Then word counts of respondent word choices were accomplished from their narratives to access any cross-cultural subconscious concerns, which were revealed and compared with coded themes.

The coding interpretive technique provided ways to organize and interpret the data. Coding for this research began with transcribing and reading each questionnaire and all the notes made from the focus group. The next step was to organize key concepts into two categories: Energy and Education. Then clusters of themes were derived within each category and common comments linked to those theme clusters. The data sorting from the qualitative research included theme building, as outlined below, based on this clustering. This process was modified from several sources, including exercises in how to write a research paper, and adapted from conceptual mapping found in Ryan Gery and Bernard (2017) and Denzin (1997). The themes were derived from the original data collected for

this dissertation and presented in Chapter 4. The charts of systematic thematic data counts and word counts are located in Appendix F.

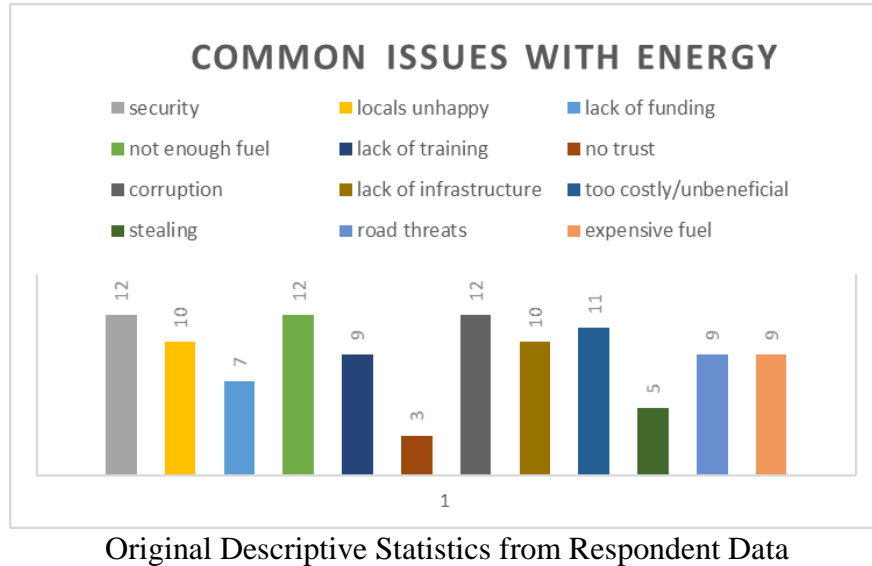
These themes demonstrated related concepts, categories, and key words found in the data. This organization helped to signify what was important in the perceptions of those questioned. First the thematic concepts were sorted as purposeful thoughts shared by respondents. Then a word count for relevant and multiple occurrences were counted to understand underlying thought paradigms (Johnson and Waterfield, 2004, 21). These two types of analyses were important in shaping the analysis for an interpretive approach. The open-ended questionnaire questions allowed respondents to convey their own concepts and make their own interpretations. Some of the respondents answered with more lengthy responses, while others kept answers shorter. Some added information and others did not answer some questions. The majority had familiarity with TPP and had an opinion about aid for education, even if their work did not involve education directly.

**Table 5.1: Thematic Conditions Concerning Energy Projects, and specifically the TPP. Data Obtained through 20 Questionnaires and the Focus Group Interviews. There were no positive themes to record.**

Themes and Conditions	Comments
<b>Insufficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not enough workers, locals not used enough</li> <li>● Lack of understanding for locals and their culture</li> <li>● Poor quality of materials</li> <li>● Unreasonable time tables</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poor safety measures on project</li> <li>● Poor security</li> <li>● No trust between Afghans and non-Afghans</li> <li>● Lack of access to water supply</li> <li>● Low energy production upon completion of project</li> <li>● Not enough fuel for plant, due to cost and security issues</li> <li>● Not enough electrical grid systems</li> <li>● No replacement parts</li> <li>● No waste management or oversight</li> <li>● No system in place for sustainable operations, post-funding and post-construction</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Little or no training for Operational, Mechanical, and Technical Problems with locals during construction</li> <li>● No regular maintenance training</li> <li>● No training in place for sustainable operations post-funding and post-construction</li> <li>● No accountability mechanisms or training for Afghans</li> </ul>
<b>Poor Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Top down implementation of project</li> <li>● Lack of language skills between contractors and workers and locals</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of coordination, communication, and cooperation (USAID, Afghan officials, and local people)</li> <li>● Shadow government (unofficial leaders) not consulted</li> <li>● Hydraulic power more beneficial, plenty of rivers</li> <li>● No Emergency Plan</li> <li>● No communication or coordination with international donors</li> <li>● No media coverage for locals to understand project</li> <li>● NGOs, who could have helped, were left out of communications and partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Corruption and Theft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Corrupt Afghan officials and contractors</li> <li>● No tracking, audit, or accountability system</li> <li>● Shadow government (informal leaders) intrusions</li> <li>● Nepotism</li> <li>● High costs for materials used only one time</li> </ul>

**Figure 5.1: Descriptive Statistical Graph of Energy Themes****Discussion on Energy Themes:**

A common consensus was a lack of energy infrastructure in the rural areas, and except for the wealthy and elite, consistent energy accessibility was not complete in urban areas. Most respondents complained about the lack of fuel for heating and cooking, and about transportation issues as there was no gas available for cars. The TPP project was not operational, or was barely functioning for years. Most respondents simply perceived the 335 million US dollars spent as ineffective and a shameful waste of money and time.

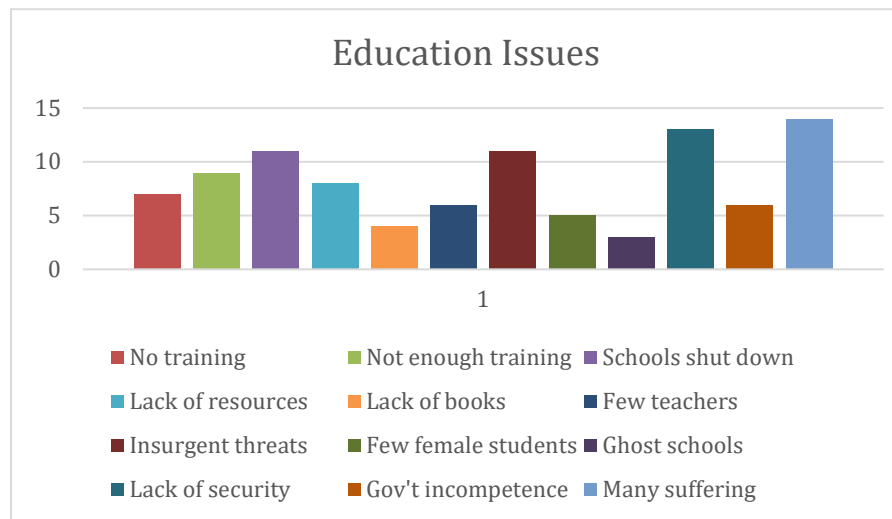


**Table 5.2: Thematic Conditions Concerning Education Funding Efforts. Obtained through 20 Questionnaires and the Focus Group Interviews.**  
*Positive themes are in italics.*

Condition	Comments
<b>Aid Efficacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Education is better with aid, even if results are minimal</i></li> <li>• <i>Education aid focused on female education</i></li> <li>• <i>Vo-tech education highly valuable. Several programs for women to support themselves or help others.</i></li> <li>• <i>Some higher education and training offered in anti-corruption and civil duties. Only a few attended.</i></li> <li>• <i>Other International Donors of Educational Aid was available if coordinated</i></li> <li>• <i>Many schools were built</i></li> <li>• Education aid was not enough nor sustainable</li> <li>• Education is outdated</li> <li>• Education is still sub-standard</li> <li>• NGOs, who could have helped, were left out of communications and partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Bias</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Education is better in large cities</i></li> <li>• Rural areas suffer high illiteracy rates, which contributes to an insurgency</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Support and desire for education by locals was documented</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not enough or poor training for administrators</li> <li>● Not enough or poor training for teachers</li> <li>● Lack of financial, organizational, or public support from GIRoA</li> <li>● Lack of financial, organizational, or public support from religious leaders</li> <li>● Lack of financial, organizational, or public support from local officials</li> <li>● Lack of financial, organizational, or public support from local unofficial leaders</li> <li>● Corruption of contractors and Afghans at all levels</li> <li>● Poor management and planning for logistics</li> <li>● Some girls were not allowed to attend by their parents</li> <li>● No training options for aged youth</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Due to lack of heat, transportation, and teachers, school buildings created by aid funding are empty or used for other purposes. (Ghost schools)</li> <li>● Not enough supplies, textbooks, technology, health care, or food for lunches.</li> <li>● No sports programs or equipment</li> <li>● Teachers were not qualified</li> </ul>

<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>HTS did a good job of cultural integration reports</i></li> <li>• HTS either failed to make reports, or their reports were not accepted. Therefore, HTS was not effective for cultural understandings.</li> <li>• Due to lack of communication and information, parents would not send their children to school</li> <li>• Needed media information, support, and education about education aid projects. Public unaware.</li> <li>• Language barriers with text books</li> <li>• No understanding of the cultural needs in education.</li> <li>• Top down approach is impractical</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Locals are not happy about the lack of security and they want the US to help</i></li> <li>• Due to lack of security, school buildings created from aid are empty or used for other purposes. (Ghost schools)</li> <li>• Taliban and insurgents are threats to roads and schools</li> <li>• Girls were targeted and harmed</li> <li>• Insurgents most active in rural areas</li> <li>• No training options for aged youth, which contributes to insurgency</li> </ul>

**Figure 5.2: Descriptive Statistical Graph of Education Themes**

### Original Descriptive Statistics from Respondent Data Themes

#### Discussion on Education Themes

Overall, there is a consensus among the respondents that although many schools have been built, most in rural areas no longer function as schools. Some are shut down or destroyed; others are used by Afghan military or security, or by insurgents for outposts. Three respondents mentioned ghost schools. Ghost schools were defined by respondents as school building no longer in use. Some continued to get funding for the local province for teachers and supplies, but few or none of these schools actually operated for the intended purpose. This was a form of corruption and criminality that has been hard to control, especially when the local officials were involved. The respondents said that education improved over the last 16 years for many Afghans, but access to schooling for elementary aged students in rural areas remained very difficult, especially as the Taliban increased their strongholds.

Planning and implementation for different types of education program had shortcomings as well. Aged youth had no education to obtain jobs, and the insurgents offered to pay youth a living and support for their families. To combat this, vocational education would have been paramount to building human capital, but the funding went into school buildings that became inoperable instead.

Cultural differences were cited as a problem within education. Female's or girl's inability to attend school, because of the insurgent influences, was viewed as a problem by 50% of the American respondents, but only by 10% of the Afghan respondents. This difference could be attributed to the fact that girl's education is a very divisive issue in Afghanistan, and one that many Americans cannot fully understand within the Afghan cultural context. The respondents were not opposed to female education, but separate educational facilities was suggested as being optimal for their culture.

### **Discussion on Specific Themes: Communication, Security, and Corruption**

**Lack of Communication:** Poor communication and cultural misunderstandings prevented modernization in Afghanistan. This was a common observation claimed by the questionnaire experts. A top down approach to any large-scale development project is vulnerable to criticisms. The lack of cultural understanding created tension among locals and the aid workers. Absence of communication prevented successful projects, and presented negative consequences instead. Most local Afghans were perceived as not liking outsiders coming into their villages and telling them what to do, even if the outsiders brought resources and money. Some respondents heard negative comments by contractors about the Afghan people and their ways. The results were impressions developed by locals

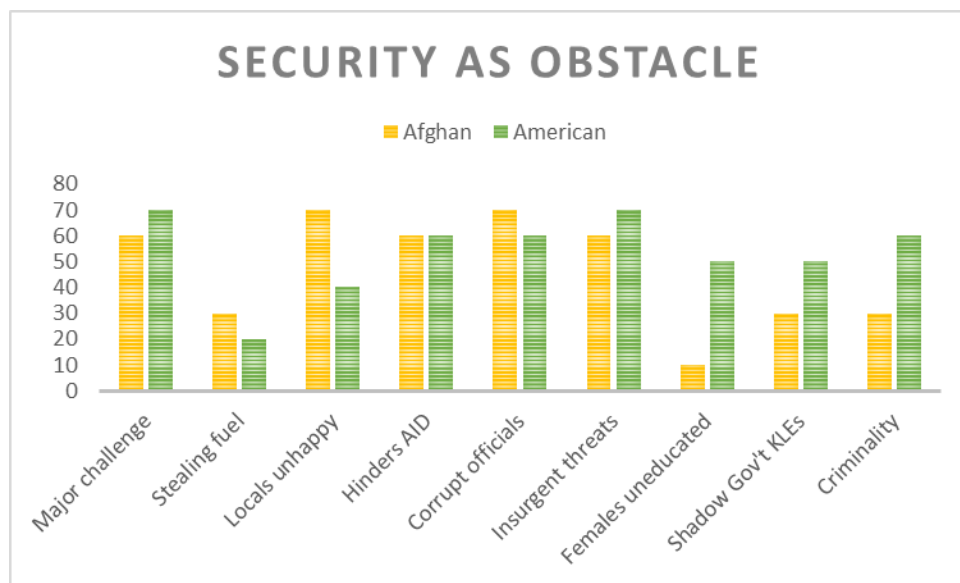
that contractors, particularly those working on the TPP project, did not respect the Afghan people. The respondents noted that it was evident that workers for the US Army and USAID usually do not suffer while in Afghanistan, since their comfort is ensured by the US government.

The USAID project of the Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP) was a failed effort. In a nation so poor that food, medical care, heat, transportation, and electricity are lacking, the large sum to build the TPP seemed an insult. The project itself was plagued with a misguided attempt to work within a foreign country without communication with the people in that country. Language barriers prevented communications and training to operate TPP once the USAID project was complete. This top down approach from USAID for the large-scale development project created a plethora of missteps, plus corruption and ultimately failure.

Discussion of Security Issues: The lack of security, or a war zone that was not stable, furthered hastened the TPP's ultimate failure. The majority of respondents cited issues related to the Taliban or insurgents as paramount to the failure of both energy and educational aid projects. Most questionnaire respondents viewed security as a major obstacle to development, which hindered the implementation of aid projects. In Afghanistan nothing can take place without consideration of the war and violence. The Taliban have increased their strongholds, where the media can barely keep up with the changes since the withdrawal of US troops at the end of 2014. Kabul, once considered safe as the most urban city in the nation, now is the most dangerous. Whole provinces are

becoming under Taliban control. HTS and foreign aid workers complain they cannot go “outside the wire” because of the dangers. The majority viewed insurgent threats to roads, schools, and fuel deliveries as major obstacles to modernization. Most areas surrounding the insurgent controlled roads were unable to have deliveries of supplies or allow children to attend schools.

**Figure 5.3: Descriptive Statistical Graph of Security Themes**



Original Descriptive Statistics from Respondent Data Themes

*Discussion of Corruption:* Most respondents saw the corruption of Afghan officials and USAID contractors as a problem for development, stating that much of the money designated for development never reached the intended recipients. Corruption included theft, bribery, stealing, and other criminal acts. During the planning stages of TPP too many corrupt individuals – on both sides – were motivated by greed and during the different stages of construction and development, some stole fuel and parts and others never got paid.

There were no accountability tools or measures implemented before or during projects. Checks and balances for both sides were not addressed in the planning stages. Transparency-seeking and audit measures were implemented by SIGAR and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), but *after the fact*. The failure of schools, the failed TPP project, and the lack of buy-in by the government at all levels created inroads for insurgency activities. Corruption and lack of security go hand and hand.

### **Other Data Analyses**

*Cross-Cultural Analysis, Word Count Method:* A Word count of the narratives from the 20 respondents and the focus group was accomplished to support the thematic results. This method counts the number of times one or more words in a phrase are used within the narratives and considers them as important or relevant within the reality of the respondents. It provides cross-cultural understanding for sub-conscious meanings. This word count method was used extensively in the field of research in Iraq by HTS researchers for military reports to understand cross-cultural meanings (Kautz, 2017, personal interview). Added to the thematic analysis of the respondent narratives, the word count results can reveal both supporting and conflicting evidence and new realizations.

The word count method is a tool of research within qualitative methods and is explained by Johnson and Waterfield (2004, 21):

“Qualitative research methods are able to explore the complexity of human behavior and generate deeper understanding... Theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research. Techniques are shared among small groups of social scientists and are often impeded by disciplinary or epistemological boundaries. [There are] a dozen techniques that social scientists have used to discover themes in texts. They range from quick word counts to laborious, in-depth, line-by-line scrutiny.”



**Table 5.3: Word Counts from Respondents: 20 Questionnaires and Eight Focus Group Members. Categories: General Phrases, Remarks about TPP, and Remarks about Education**

<b>General Phrases Overall Occurrences</b>	
USAID Positive remarks	19
USAID Negative Remarks	21
Afghanistan is a Failed State	14
<b>Word Count concerning respondents remarks <u>about TPP</u></b>	
<b>Word or Phrases Counted</b>	<b>Number of counted occurrences for all respondents</b>
Failed TPP	18
Hydraulic plants were not used	5
Poor Management	5
Locals Still Need energy	24
Lack of Security	21
Corruption	14
Cultural Misunderstandings	6
Poor Afghan Leadership	12
Poor Afghan/US Contractor Coordination	12
Costs too high	11
No media or public awareness	3

No Trust between cultures	3
NGOs Left out	6
No Water	2
Wasteful	13
No fuel to run TPP	12
No Accountability	5
Other International Donors Ignored	8
<b>Word Count concerning respondent remarks <u>about Education</u></b>	
School	51
Education	64
Ghost schools	8
Shadow Government (Informal Leaders)	3
Training needed for Afghans (Vocational)	8
Corruption/nepotism/stealing	31
Language Barrier	4
Need school supplies	15
Teacher issues, training, absent, not qualified	46
Administrator concerns	3

*Indications of the Word Count:* The overall remarks about USAID seemed consistent among the respondents, or they were appreciative of USAID and recognized their efforts to provide schools and train teachers. Many respondents had positive things to say about USAID and their attempts for education projects. They were impressed that USAID had tried and that the agency had good intentions. Respondents recognized the bureaucratic nature of the organization and lamented that the outcome had not been better. With their insider perceptions, the respondents knew what went wrong, but insisted that ‘if only’ there had been no corruption, good security, and better communications and organization, then the education projects would have been worthwhile. There was a general consensus that Afghanistan needed education for all ages. The negatives comments outnumbered the positive ones about USAID by only a few words, and therefore, it seemed the respondents wanted to say that USAID had at least tried, but failed. Overall, half of the 28 stated firmly that Afghanistan is a failed state. Their concept of a *good* state of living measured up to the indicators of infrastructure and educational characteristic of a modern state.

*Analysis of the Shura Focus Group Responses:* The focus group represented further qualitative research by supporting the questionnaire respondent’s analysis and adding narratives of specific experiences. Lack of security, lack of communication, and lack of education plus corruption affected the respondent’s families and themselves. There was an overarching fear of speaking the truth about the problems with aid delivery. This was a common theme throughout this research for fear that USAID could lose funding, if too

many problems were brought forth as the US Congress monitors what is going on, especially in Afghanistan. However, some aid is better than none.

Points made by the focus group concerned issues of corruption were deeply intertwined in the implementation of aid, and they said that both the Afghan and American sides were guilty of some form of corruption. Why and how the corruption existed and continued to exist was difficult to explain as the relationships differed depending on the project and individuals involved. However, the lack of accountability continued to allow corruption to endure.

It cannot be overlooked that the Americans and USAID were viewed as wealthy from the Afghan perspective. There was a common theme among the respondents that Americans and USAID can afford to lose money through overcharging, theft, or other forms of corruption. Furthermore, there was fear that Afghan officials may have alliances to groups that are anti-American, or they may choose to undermine the aid process for their own political reasons. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) leaders were more likely to promote the alliance with the US, which brought funding and power to their own political position. Whereas local officials at the provincial levels were more likely to have ethnic ties and be wary of large-scale top-down development approaches. Without regulation and monitoring, officials were often free to commit acts of bribery and corruption without being held accountable.

The respondents pointed out that the typical Afghan worker does not make enough money in many situations to make ends meet. If teachers, utility workers, farmers, truck drivers, and health care workers, for example, were paid higher wages then there would be

less of an incentive to become involved in corrupt practices. The Afghan men in the focus group all sought positions with the United States military, even though most of them had other occupations. Instead of becoming corrupt or aligned with the Taliban or other militant forces, they chose to help the Americans. That choice led to sometimes serious ramifications in terms of their security, and some became targets of the Taliban. Eventually this led, at least in part, to their leaving Afghanistan. Many Afghans have left Afghanistan and some of them will never live there again, while others became refugees or displaced.

The respondents felt that with such a long, rather unsuccessful presence that the United States needs to carefully reconsider their strategies. The tension created by wanting to modernize Afghanistan through infrastructure and education projects stands in contrast to what the Taliban want for their people, which is for all foreigners to leave the country.<sup>36</sup> What is happening in Afghanistan today is complex politically, and the Taliban do not want Western influences in their educational and social systems. They are willing to negate all infrastructure and modern amenities if it means they would have more control over all cultural and social lives.

The Shura participants indicated a dislike for corruption and an extreme fear of the Taliban. Yet, each of them benefited directly from higher wages and even eventually a chance at citizenship in America, which only a few Afghans can experience. The majority of Afghans try to live in their homeland despite the contradictions and struggles. Pouring

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<sup>36</sup> Also, the Taliban are ethnically and linguistically connected to parts of the Pashtun population as they are Pashtun. The Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group of Afghanistan and the second largest in Pakistan. Pashtuns speak the Pashto language.

money into Afghanistan was not a sound policy approach, which should lead to evaluation for better disbursements of that aid in the future.

### **Summary of Respondent Themes**

Major concerns for aid funding efficacy in Afghanistan were *poor communications* with local people and a *lack of media for public awareness*, leading to *corruption* on many sides. A *lack of security* during and after funding projects were implemented was prevalent in comments with suggestions hinting of a lack of understanding the insurgent genre in the first place. With a *top down planning modal* for aid projects, there was a lack of support from Afghan officials. This was implemented with a lack of planning for sustainability through training or future funding of projects after the funding agencies left. Furthermore, there was a *lack of supporting resources*, whether they be parts for the TPP project or school supplies and language appropriate textbooks. Finally, the *cultural gap* was considerable, for which any productive efforts by HTS were negated or inefficiently managed at the hiring and implementation stages. The number of times this paragraph uses the word 'lack' is six, but there was not a concern for a lack of money for funding before or during projects. Overall, the United States Agency for Development (USAID) allocated over 100 billion US dollars since 2001 to the development of Afghanistan and the United States invested over 700 billion US dollars.

*Analysis of the Eyewitness Account of the HTS Social Scientist:* The 2012 eyewitness account from the HTS social scientist, who is writing this dissertation, gives an autobiographical account in line with the method of phenomenology. The definition of phenomenology as a method of research is from the Stanford Philosophical

Encyclopedia.<sup>37</sup> “Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object.” This first-person account data is considered in the data for the observations and experiences and application of adding to the research data, and therefore adds to the triangulation of the data.

This eyewitness account revealed data supporting the data already given to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. In a Shura meeting in Afghanistan, my documented interviews with key leaders showed everyone agreed about the top four major issues: *“lack of security, poor educational system, no fuel for cooking and heating, and limited or no access to health care.”*

Furthermore, my months in Helmand province, an area of Taliban stronghold, gave me the chance to witness the poverty and injustice first hand. Basic needs are lacking: *“there is little or no fuel for lighting, cooking, and heating, and limited or no access to education.”* I personally had the opportunity to visit a school in Nowzad district during the winter season. “Poor education system” was a common complaint from most of respondents from the interviews I conducted with Afghan locals. Those experiences are discussed in depth in Chapter 4.

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<sup>37</sup> Stanford Philosophical Encyclopedia. Accessed on-line October 1, 2016.  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>

**Conclusions of the Respondent Data Analysis**

In this analysis, it was demonstrated that the 20 respondents and the eight Afghan Shura members rarely disagreed about the problems or issues involved. Security and corruption were huge barriers to aid delivery. Lack of energy and education for the Afghan people put them in dire situations that affected their health and ability to survive. USAID had many barriers to effective aid delivery in Afghanistan and the presence of ongoing conflict was the top variable. It was almost impossible to build schools, for example, in the middle of a war when the very act of building schools was viewed as an act of war against the Taliban. That is why many of the American-built schools no longer operate as schools or have been destroyed.

According to their mission statement, the aim of USAID is to alleviate poverty. In the next section first-hand reports from USAID, SIGAR, academia, and the media will illustrate how USAID planning and goals were implemented, money spent, and subsequent investigations on their aid funding. It is important to know where the barriers to efficacy in aid delivery exist from the funding agency points of view.

**USAID Report Data Analysis on Education and Energy**

The US Congress appropriated taxpayer funding for USAID, which was created by President Kennedy in 1962 as part of the US executive branch. Its mission included primarily administering US civilian foreign aid. The gist of the following reports explain the relationship USAID had with contracting out the work, the money spent, and why their narrow goals were accomplished, while the larger projects failed.



USAID began to contract out projects from the start of the Afghanistan reconstruction. As early as 2001, Corneille's report called for accountability on aid funding. In 2012, SIGAR began to make inquiries due to complaints and lack of productivity of the aid projects. By 2014, it was apparent that transparency, accountability, and checks and balances were not in place. USAID still maintained the TPP was working as late as 2015.

However, there really was not a model in place for accountability in past aid efforts with USAID or other national aid funding according to several of the questionnaire respondents. Transparency Internationale's website reports that the development of aid projects in African nations and other LDCs *have not included* such measures. This means that *USAID was working within their expected parameters*. Their constant statements claiming goal attainments even when faced with the corruption of the contractors of the Academy for Educational Development (which was shut down in 2011), did not change USAID's modus operandi. *The New Yorker* reported "All aid deliveries were carried out by contractors or third-parties and in the case of the DABS energy survey, the survey and the post-survey analysis [for TPP] were carried out by the same contractor" (Aikens, March 7, 2016).

### **Theoretical Application of the Data**

The first research question, "What are the barriers or factors preventing the effective delivery of USAID funding in Afghanistan in the projects of Tarakhil Power Plant and Education?" The barriers are listed from frequencies within the thematic codes and word counts. They are numerous, yet, careful analysis may reveal certain perspectives..

*Barriers to successful funding for Education in Afghanistan:*

- Lack of security and insurgent threats
- Schools were built, but soon shut down
- Corruption/stealing/nepotism/lack of transparency, accountability, and audits
- Lack of teachers and teacher training
- Lack of resources or supplies, heat, and health needs
- Cultural misunderstandings and language barriers
- Lack of coordination with locals, top down model

*Barriers to successful funding for energy in Afghanistan, with a focus on TPP:*

- Three-way tie for Corruption, Security, and locals not consulted or involved.
- Lack of communication, top down model
- Unbeneficial for the cost, costly to operate
- Lack of training for locals to maintain and run post-construction
- Insurgent threats for transporting fuel on the roads
- Fuel, parts, and supplies unavailable

The list of problems were numerous. Much data were analyzed in this chapter, but application of theories to inform the data within the research questions was needed.

*Modernization and Human Capital Theories Informs the Data:* The second research question was: “How are those factors perceived by individual stakeholders, government agencies, government watchdogs, the media, and scholars?” Concerning those impacted directly by the education and energy aid funding, the obvious sentiments were very negative. However, it was noteworthy that USAID reports and early SIGAR audits stated

that USAID met their original goals. Taking a step back to examine USAID goals, it is evident that their perspective was that of accomplishment. Concerning the two sample projects for energy and education, the USAID goals were to build the TPP and to build schools and train teachers. From the standpoint of this large funding agency, their goals reflected that they were not in the business of nation building, but only funded modernization projects.

The media, academics, and the public were highly critical of the funding agency, USAID, for not being more productive in their designs for the TPP and their visions for education. The ideas of coordination with locals and accountability did not reflect USAID goals until the Transparency Act in 2016 <sup>38</sup> surfaced due to media criticism.

We can look at the definitions of modernization and human capital theories again to clarify points within the data. For modernization, there are a variety of different ways to define projects designed to transform societies within social, political, or economic parameters. Earlier definitions saw a linear progression of modernization. Rostow (1960, 4) said modernization was part of the economic continuum through which most societies progress, moving from traditional conditions to those sparked by the move to mass consumption. This was a “syndrome of social changes” that was inherently linked to the expanse of industry, including occupational skill development/specialization and urban development (Inglehart and Welzel, 2009). Inglehart and Wetzel also link modernization less evidently to increases in education, improved life expectancy, and economic expansion

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<sup>38</sup> H.R. 3766 (114th): Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 to become Public Law 114-191.

in LDCs. The link between modernization and human and social capital extended from the belief that investments in these elements could support progress and benefit change in underdeveloped nations.

Human capital theory is based on the premise that there are economic gains that can be secured through investment in people (Sweetland 1996, 341), which is a segment of modernization theory. It seeks to theorize about how to build better societies by infusing investment in the education of people within a nation to create a strong future for all. Human capital refers to the resources that are embodied within humans, such as knowledge, skills, experience, abilities, intelligence, and talent (Benhabib and Spiegel 1994, 143). Chaudhary (2013, 34) emphasizes the importance of understanding the connection between modernization and any supporting essential skill development, institutions, curriculum, and normative values. Therefore, understanding the social and cultural side of the development of education is essential to create modernization as well as the presence of monetary funds needed for capital developments. Chaudhary (2013, 38) also states that modernization does not radically change cultures or destroy values.

Skills and knowledge are measurable assets, which are argued to have an aggregate impact on the economic status of communities and nations. Tilak (2002,7) asserted that “investments in education (human capital) created a higher return than investments in infrastructure or physical capital projects for the purpose of nation building and modernization.” Son (2010, 2) argues that human capital plays a critical role in methods to reduce poverty and improve economic conditions in developing nations. When assessing the measurability of human capital investment, there are two methods: 1) to identify the

monetary expenditures that are allocated for human capital education; or 2) to measure the outcomes related to worker productivity (Son 2010, 2-4).

How did the modernization and human capital theories enlighten the funding of projects? USAID's goals reflected a partial responsibility to provide funds, which they met. The larger scheme of modernization and human capital building was beyond their focus, and indeed had been the norm with other funding agencies in other LDCs. A few of the respondents voiced that in other LDC locations, the funding of modernization and human capital building had been no more successful than in Afghanistan. Thus a pattern of diffused responsibility emerged in regard to successful modernization and human capital building. It is the US taxpayer that continues to pay for such mismatched aid activities.

## **Conclusions**

The data informed by modernization and human capital theories show that the USAID project goals addressed modernization and human capital, but not to the fruition of the theories. They were mainly concerned with the building of structures and the training of teachers. The first part was accomplished, however, with a top-down model. The evidence seems to indicate a lack of cultural understanding to create well trained teachers within their cultural needs or local technicians for running the TPP. Everything from language barriers to lack of cultural knowledge seemed to prohibit successful teacher and technician training. These elements were not in the budget at all for TPP. They were in the budget for teacher and administrator training, but not successful due to lack of cultural awareness. There were some small successes, for instance with the mid-wife program and

the solar panel installations, but flexibility to examine what worked and what did not work was not built into the USAID planning stages.

This chapter examined all the data results through several methods of analysis. Coding, pile sorting, and word counts were undertaken to find patterns and themes in the respondent data, including the firsthand experience of the eyewitness account. The experience of the eyewitness through working in the HTS program highlighted issues of comprehensive Western model shortcomings for modernization aid delivery. Because the HTS social science research informed Westerners about Afghanistan's culture, HTS should have been in the forefront of strategic planning for Afghanistan reconstruction. However, the program was placed with the military instead, and even then program was underutilized. HTS social scientist common complaints were that their work was ignored as not relevant to military strategies. Many were told to concentrate on tactical military maneuvers only. The difference was that strategic planning is long-range, and tactical planning is getting through each day or each mission, thus only for the short-range.

From the perspective of USAID, they too had only minor strategic planning, and stayed in the realm of tactical planning too. USAID's mission was only focused on building, not maintaining post-construction. USAID expected the remainder of modernization and human capital issues to be handled by the political, social and economic sectors within Afghanistan. The fact that there was no firm culture of individualistic capitalism in Afghanistan was not even considered. I realized that Afghanistan's culture resides in the ancient boundaries of Pashtunwali instead, which is a system of social constraints enveloping the social, political, and economic lives of Afghans.

Indeed, Western cultural concepts are based on individualistic capitalism found in attitudes of 'build it and they will come' and 'not my job'. Sack (1997) warns that most Western or modern projects, scientific research, and business efforts are designed as short range, instead of being long-range. Projects are compartmentalized so that the larger picture is never taken into account. This creates fragmentation and diffusion of responsibility, which is then trundled into a 'future problems' category. Modern bureaucracies, organizations, and institutions concentrate on top down models. These models and the assumptions on which they are premised are where core problems are found within Western aid projects, when dealing with LDC issues. Furthermore, cultural misunderstandings, lack of security, and corruption put a veneer of failure over the majority of aid projects in LDCs within Robert Sack's model (1997).

It was important to know where the barriers to efficacy in aid delivery exist and the perspectives of the stakeholders. It was the perspectives of USAID aid funding efforts and the for-profit contractors that stand out. Therefore the data analyses have revealed there was a major issue of fragmentation and diffusion of responsibility in Western aid models. This will be further explored in the next chapter regarding conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Discussion**

The reconstruction program created in November 2001 by international consensus or the Bonn Agreement<sup>39</sup> for Afghanistan was highly ambitious. Along with a variety of development and modernization for the Government of Afghanistan came tenets of social change, which have triggered relentless tensions (Suhrke 2007). Winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people has proven to be difficult at best. Now, over 16 years later, the conditions in this landlocked nation remain harsh. Foreign aid made some improvements in lives, but the pervasive corruption and problems with aid delivery remain.

The United States' efforts at modernization in Afghanistan are now considered failures by most (Klinger 2016), perhaps because the social and economic indicators remain low overall. Or maybe it is because the war has not yet ended. The United States dollars continued to be disbursed in energy and education sectors in hopes of yielding success. As success is a relative term, USAID and the World Bank celebrate even the most incremental signs of what could be considered improvement. For example, USAID refused to accept that the Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP) was an unsuccessful project. Yet, SIGAR announced in its 2016 report that diesel fuel for the TPP was the wrong choice. It is inappropriate for the region and prevents the 335-million-US dollar power plant from full utilization.

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<sup>39</sup>Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions. . (2001) <http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/afghan-agree.htm>



The respondents to the questionnaires distributed for this research, as well as the Shura participants, often commented on how much they wanted modernization components of electricity, food and shelter, education, heat, good transportation, and medical care. Mostly the elite profited from US modernization efforts, and many other Afghans looked for their own benefits too, but were sorely disappointed. Development is always political and USAID is an apparatus of the US government (UN 2001). The US Congress intended for the funding allocated to USAID for the betterment of the Afghan people to reach them through improved services and resources. They were in a bid to support the local people, which would help in receiving more support from Afghans in fighting the Taliban, according to the rationale.

Chaudhary (2013, 34) also asserted that modernization is a process of socio-cultural change involving values, norms, culture, institutions and structures. The Afghan people, who live in an Islamic republic, are divided and do not know which way to proceed with their culture. The very culture of Afghans is tearing. Respondents acknowledged their fear of the Taliban and told of the atrocities by the Taliban on groups of people and villages. Yet, their reactions are to hide from them. Historically, the only time the Afghan people joined together to resist was through the Mujahedeen to defeat the Russians after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Now, Afghans seem divided on how to deal with the US and the Taliban.

Today in Afghanistan, USAID has decreased the scale of their projects to ones like the small solar energy and community-based literacy programs. President Trump

announced that the future focus of efforts in Afghanistan will now be military<sup>40</sup>. Modernization for the nation seems farther away than ever. As a least developed country and high on the list of failed states, Afghanistan's people live directly with the economic and political circumstances that a failed state entails.

### **Limitations of the Study**

To answer the research questions, this study was limited by space and time as Afghanistan is still in part a war zone. Much first-hand or primary data were available, but not within an immediate timeframe or in close proximity to the location of Afghanistan. The results and conclusions apply to foreign aid directed to the energy sector or specifically the TPP project and funding for education within Afghanistan. Therefore generalizations cannot be made to other locations or their timeframes due to contextual findings. However, the findings of this dissertation can be considered in informing future research questions and studies.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Answering the research questions was fulfilled by research data for this dissertation. However, the data created more questions and future research implications. The initial purpose of the US entering Afghanistan were the 9/11 bombings, and the Taliban's harboring of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan. The data found that one of the major

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<sup>40</sup> Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan, Aug. 21, 2017....  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/...statements/remarks-president-trump-strategy-afghanistan>.

barriers to the success of aid delivery were the Taliban militias and hence the lack of security in certain areas.

The US assumed that aid given to Afghanistan was necessary to end Taliban control through modernization efforts. Yet, what are Afghan views of how the Taliban fit into their religious goals? Afghanistan was a theocracy under the Taliban, but they were overthrown in 2001. We do know that when the US entered Afghanistan and began to combat the Taliban, then urban people often sided with the US. However, they were promised modernization through cash rewards and aid projects. What about the common or rural Afghan people? The ‘winning the hearts and minds of the people’ campaign was intended to reach out to all, but basically only the elite benefited directly as noted by the respondents. The education projects were to help all, but they failed too.

In rural areas, the Taliban continued to control through violence and fear, and especially in areas where the US pulled out. A beneficial research study would focus on Taliban control in tandem with the patterns of Afghan identity. Considering all the Afghan people had known under the Taliban was a theocracy, what percent of Afghans agree with the Taliban ideology or their way of thinking? Do the Afghan people have concerns about whether to oppose them or not? Are there different views according to provinces, urban versus rural, and among Afghan tribes concerning the power of the Taliban?

Justification for such a study is that the ‘winning the hearts and minds of the people’ campaign indicates an agenda to convince the Afghan people to not follow the Taliban. This agenda is played out through millions of dollars of aid within the US Counter-

insurgency effort.<sup>41</sup> A concern of the US is also the violation of human rights by the Taliban. Yet, this is a decision based on US social, economic, and political beliefs. There are no doubts that the Taliban and other affiliated militias violate human rights. However, without a total Afghan buy-in, both urban and rural, the War on Terrorism and winning the hearts and minds of Afghans has not come to fruition. Therefore, future research on topics addressing cultural beliefs and perspectives should transpire before any ideas are formulated for aid for modernization in least developed countries (LDCs).

### **Recommendations**

It is paramount that the developmental goals and aid implementation should include a better understanding of the cultural and political structures of Afghanistan. It is recommended that the HTS program be reconfigured, renamed, and re-implemented under USAID or the US State Department for this purpose. US efforts, which use taxpayer's contributions, are misguided by ignorance of other cultures, ethnic identities, and views of life. Social science academic researchers using scientific methods, ethical guidelines, cultural immersion, and ethnic and cultural relativity methods and procedures can possibly make effective strategic recommendations for the delivery of foreign aid in any LDC. Other measures are needed as well concerning the organizational shortcomings of USAID and any funding agency dealing with LDCs.

Afghanistan urgently needs collaborative efforts amongst stakeholders and not top down models. All recipient and donor governments, USAID, contractors, and local people

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<sup>41</sup> The Counterinsurgency efforts by the US military started in 2001 after 9/11 bombings, and continued up through Aug. 21, 2017 when President Trump announced new military plans for Afghanistan.

should work together to understand project goals, and project implementation should be enhanced by checks and balances. This research found that the top down approach used by USAID and hiring for-profit contractors are dire drawbacks to aid delivery. Top-down, large scale projects do not work because there is a lack of coordination and communication, and there is also a lack of trust. As a least developed country and one of the ten most fragile states in the world, Afghanistan needs to strengthen its local governance to empower the people across the nation. This would do more than the ‘hearts and minds’ campaign. Development requires collaborative efforts among the state, the market, and civil society both from the top (USAID and the Government of Afghanistan) and the bottom (local people and key local leaders). With elections slated for July 2018 in Afghanistan, it would behoove the United States to ensure that fair and equitable elections take place regardless of the obstacles.

If the country were secure, then realization could only happen if USAID creates a sustainable modernization model based on the empowerment of the Afghan people. Strategies for the improvement of development by USAID include more community-based projects, the integration of local knowledge in the planning and implementation of projects, follow-through with long-term sustainability, and an increase of transparency, integrity and ethics. Overall, despite a new law for foreign aid transparency and accountability, USAID has a long way to go before the Afghan people get the most out of the US taxpayers’ investments. Modernization cannot succeed just by USAID money alone.

To achieve greater aid effectiveness in Afghanistan, all actors involved in delivering aid should be held accountable. Based on the data from official reports and

questionnaire respondents, there are large numbers of actors and many challenges, including corruption, bribing, and other fraudulent practices conducted by all parties having a vested interest involved in and /or delivering aid to Afghanistan. Checks and balances are even more critical than transparency. It is understood that secrecy is part of war operations, but that does not exclude checks and balances to prevent corruption on both sides.

The presence of war is detrimental to modernization as well. What is the precedent for trying to modernize a nation in the middle of a war? War attacks and destroys clean water, food and shelter, electricity, access to education and jobs. Fair and equitable elections are difficult to administer in wartime. To end the war, diplomacy may be the answer, if at all possible. It is clear that the Taliban insurgency is becoming increasingly strong. Until the United States and the Taliban can have diplomatic negotiations, it will be difficult, if not impossible to move forward peacefully. Lack of security and the high rate of violence, even in Kabul, prevents modernization from occurring.

To recap, the third research question addressed recommendations, or “What are some strategies that could improve aid delivery and address the lack of efficiency and efficacy in Afghanistan?” The recommendations of this study are listed *in order of importance for implementation*:

- Understand the physical, political, and security environments, and do a security risk assessment for possible negative outcomes in the planning stage. Set up risk assessment guidelines before proceeding with aid planning to enhance success for aid delivery.

- Obtain strong academic data concerning local needs and desires. It is recommended a program such as the HTS be designed, funded, and implemented in the planning stages of aid.
- Plan for more community-based small-scale projects for a better productive return on funding.
- Inform and work with locals at all levels on project designs, implementations, and plans for future sustainability.
- Funding agencies should be involved on the ground for all projects, and reduce the power and scope of using for-profit contractors.
- Aid agencies should plan follow-through and long-term planning for supplies, technology, and training of administrators and workers after the agencies leave.
- Checks and balances and allowable transparency should be implemented for all stakeholders on all projects at all stages.

## **Conclusion**

This dissertation, which focused on problems with USAID aid delivery in Afghanistan further sought to understand if USAID was able to impact modernization in Afghanistan. The data show the answer is overwhelmingly “no” as USAID aid impacts were either small and/or temporary in Afghanistan. Indicators may point to a failed state, although that determination is outside of the scope of this dissertation. The recommendations of this dissertation to facilitate the efficacy and efficiency of aid should, in the author’s view, be followed if the US Congress, USAID, and the US military, wish

to continue their agendas and turn around the 16 years of frustrations and suffering by all stakeholders involved.



## APPENDIX A

## Political Map of Afghanistan



<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/afghanistan.html>

**APPENDIX B**

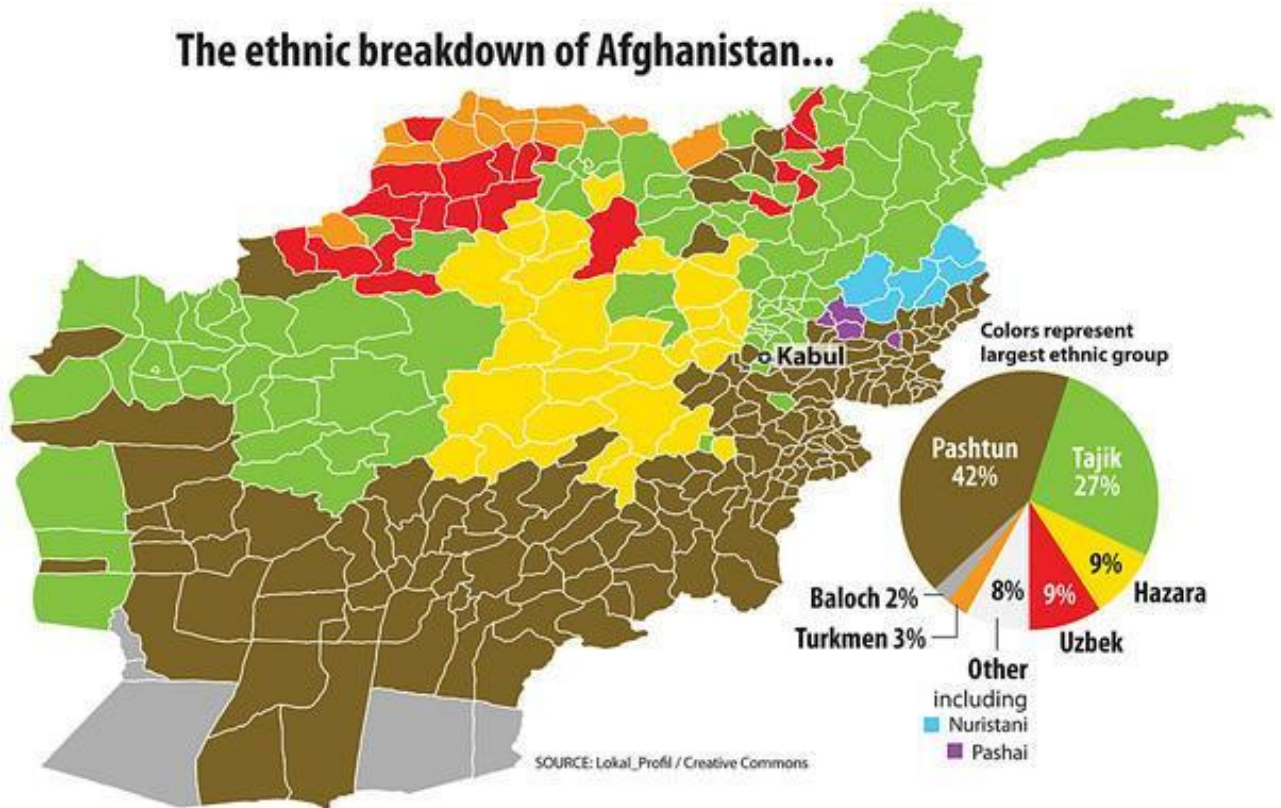
**Photo of Tarakhil Power Plant**



**Photo of Tarakhil Power Plant, from SIGAR report, August 7, 2015**

## APPENDIX C

## Ethnicity in Afghanistan



<https://chellaney.net/2013/03/01/afghanistans-partition-might-be-unpreventable/>  
 Brahma Chellaney, "Afghanistan's partition might be unpreventable" *The National*,  
 March 1, 2013.

**APPENDIX D****Informed Consent Form**

“Delivery of USAID Aid in Afghanistan, 2001-2017.”

**Behavioral Research Informed Consent**

Abdullah Bataineh, Political Science Department

(734)680-0415

**Purpose**

Today Afghanistan continues to be aid dependent for health care, education, civil services, infrastructure, and economic development. A significant amount of aid to Afghanistan may have been wasted due to poor governance and corruption on both sides (Afghan Government and USAID). You are being asked to be in the research study, because you have knowledge about the delivery of foreign aid or you lived or worked in Afghanistan. This study is being conducted at Wayne State University. The estimated number of study participants to be enrolled at Wayne State University and/or the proposed site(s) is about 1 as well as about 30 throughout US

**Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.**

The aim of this research is to examine what political and social barriers exist that hinder the effective use of American foreign aid and funding in Afghanistan. The scope of governance will include Afghan national, regional, provincial, and local governments, and also the United States federal involvement through USAID, the US Army’s HTS, and the practice of using contractors in Afghanistan.

## **Study Procedures**

If you agree to take part in this research study, you may be asked to do one or more of these study activities:

1. Fill out surveys and answer questions.
2. Surveys will be given in a paper format and they will be disseminated through mail or hand delivered. They will contain multiple choices, opinions on a scale of 1 to 5 for true/false, and short answer questions, which will require approximately 30 minutes to complete.
3. You do not have to answer any question you prefer not to answer and you may still remain in the study. Also, you may also choose to opt-out of the study completely at any time. Survey questions will cover the material for the study and personal data will not be collected other than related to involvement with Afghanistan or aid.
4. You will be given a code name or number for the study and no identifying information will be released. As an example, your location or within an aid agency, your occupation, tribe or physical age will not be included in the information. Once the report (dissertation) is accepted, all respondent information will be destroyed. Until that time, the information will be kept on a disc and not on a computer, and then stored in a safety deposit box until the completion of the dissertation.

**Benefits**

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future. This research will be beneficial for scholars, policy makers and different governmental agencies. Additionally, this research study will propose strategies that could improve government structures and address the lack of efficiency and efficacy in delivering aid in Afghanistan. Results may have direct benefit to aid policies and practices in Afghanistan. Results may also be useful in other areas where aid is supporting state (re)building.

**Risks**

There are no known risks to participation in this study.

**Study Costs**

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

**Compensation**

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

**Confidentiality**

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight [e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.] may review your records.

When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

I will use nicknames and positions to identify participants such as Afghan-American living in USA, a former USAID employee, an American expert on aid. Individuals' real names will not be identified and all information will be kept confidential. No one else will have access to the data or code keys. The data will be collected, analyzed, and reported in the aggregated form.

### **Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in the study you can later change your mind and withdraw from the study. You are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time.

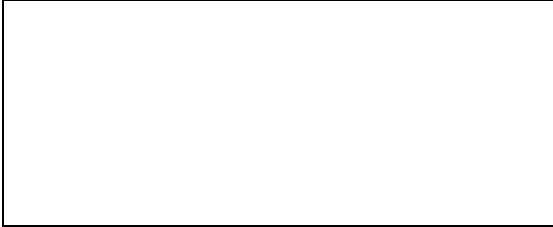
### **Questions**

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Abdullah Bataineh

or one of his research team members at the following phone number, (734) 680-0415. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at (313) 577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

If you choose to take part in this study you may withdraw at any time. You will be given a copy of this consent form.



\*\*Use when participant has had this consent form read to them (i.e., illiterate, legally blind, translated into foreign language).

The PI, co-investigators, and key personnel of WSU associated with the research project:

- WSU's Institutional Review Boards (IRB)
- Authorized members of WSU's workforce who may need to access your information in the performance of their duties. Department of Political Science at WSU (My committee members: Prof. Nadejda K. Marinova; Prof. Alisa Moldavanova; Prof. Sharon Lean; Prof. Vanessa Jill DeGifis.
- Other collaborating academic research institutions, which include: Not Applicable.
- The study Sponsor or representative, including companies it hires to provide study related services, which include: Not Applicable.
- Federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight (e.g., FDA, OHRP, OCR, etc.) may review your records.



This Authorization does not expire. The research team may need to correct it or provide missing information about you even after the study has ended.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Questionnaire Questions**

#### **Energy and Education Development through Aid Questionnaire**

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.

1. What kinds of training have you had and what kind of work have you done in Afghanistan in relation to the energy industry or education development?
2. Over time, how has your opinion changed about your work in Afghanistan?
3. What knowledge do you have of energy infrastructure sources created by foreign aid, such as the Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP)?
4. What knowledge do you have of the impact of foreign aid on the education system in Afghanistan?
5. What were some of the benefits of aid delivered for a) energy infrastructure and b) for education in Afghanistan?
6. What were some of the failures in aid delivery for a) energy infrastructure and b) education in Afghanistan?
7. How do you think the TPP and other energy sources were funded?
8. What was the role of the USAID, US, or HTS workers with the TPP, energy projects, and education projects in Afghanistan, if any?
9. Did you have a direct role with the energy infrastructures like the TPP or in the development of educational sources?
10. Indirectly, did you hear of any evaluations or assessments of energy infrastructure like the TPP or on the creation of education components (i.e. building of schools, funding for school curricula, etc.)?
11. What were some challenges you faced while in Afghanistan with the delivery of energy and the energy infrastructure (in provision of electricity, heat, fuel for cooking)?
12. How did you cope with energy challenges? Can you give examples?
13. What activities did you find most successful in achieving your energy Government of Afghanistan in Afghanistan? Why?
14. Did you have direct involvement with any USAID or HTS funded project? If so, describe in detail your most vivid memories.
15. What else would you like to share about economic, energy infrastructure, or education development and foreign funding in Afghanistan?

## APPENDIX F

### Thematic Coding from Respondents

#### Questionnaire Analysis Findings

For making graphs in Excel based on patterns and repetitions the following was used by counting who said what in their questionnaire answers (the numbers in parentheses represents the number of the questionnaire). For example, four respondents stated that education was outdated.

#### Education

Education is still suffering: (1) (2) (3) (7) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) =14

Education is outdated: (1) (2) (7) (9) =4

Education is better today (20) =1

US funded educational projects (1) (2) (3) (7) (9) (11) (12) (13) (14) (16) (17) (18) (20) = 13

International donors funded projects (1) (3) (9) (10) (13) (14) (16) (17) =8

Aid helped Education in Afghanistan but it is not enough: (1) (2) (3) (9) (11) (14) (15) (16) (17)(18)(20) = 11

Not enough training for schooling boards and administrators (1) (2) (9) (16) (17) (18) =6

A lot of schools and buildings were shut down or were not used for the intended purpose: (1) (7) (9) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) = 11

Schools lack of educational components: (such as buildings, First-aid medical treatment, Food courts, playing fields, heating and cooling rooms) (1) (2) (9) (11) (15) (17) (18) (20) =8

Schools' lack of books and supplies: (1) (9) (17) (18) =4

Schools' lack of qualified teachers: (1) (9) (15) (17) (18) (20) =6

Schools' lack of female teachers: (2) =1

No training for teachers: (1) (3) (9) (15) (17) (18) (20) =7

Taliban and insurgents' threat related to roads and schools: (1) (2) (7) (9) (11) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =11

Females are struggling with attending schools: (1) (2) (7) (9) (13) =5

Big cities are getting more services and projects than rural and remote villages (1) (4) (9) (15) =4

Teachers are not capable (1) (9) (11) (17) (18) =5

No enough teachers and staff (5) (11) (13) =3

Afghan authorities are not capable if run schools and other educational facilities (1) (2) (7) (9) (17) (18) =6

Aged-kids are not access to education (1) (2) (9) =3

Security was a challenge (1) (2) (3) (7) (9) (11) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =13

### **Energy:**

Energy sector is still suffering: (1) (2) (3) (5) (7) (9) (10) (11) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =15

Weak and outdated energy infrastructure (1) (2) (5) (7) (9) (11) (15) (16) (17) (20) =10

US or USAID/US Army funded TPP (1) (2) (3) (7) (8) (9) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =13

International donors funded projects (1) (3) (9) (10) (13) (15) (16) (17) =8

Knowledge about TPP: (1) (3) (7) (8) (9) (10) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =12

TPP was costly (1) (3) (7) (8) (9) (10) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) =11

TPP was not beneficial (1) (3) (7) (8) (9) (10) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) =11

Aid helped energy sector a little: (1) (9) (10) (13) (15) (16) =6

Aid helped the Government of Afghanistan purchasing fuel: (1) =1

Taliban and insurgents' threat related to control roads (7) (8) (9) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =9

Stealing fuel and planets supplies: (1) (7) (15) (16) (17) =5

Not enough training or no qualified technicians (1) (2) (9) (13) (14) (16) (17) (18) (20) =9

Electricity was a challenge (1) (3) (8) (9) (11) (14) (15) (16) (17) =9

Not enough fuel (1) (2) (3) (8) (9) (11) (13) (14) (16) (17) (18) (20) =12

Using woods for cooking or heating homes (1) (3) (8) (9) =4

Expensive fuel for cooking or vehicles (1) (2) (3) (9) (11) (14) (15) (16) (20) =9

Lack of funding (1) (9) (14) (16) (17) (18) (20) =7

Corrupted Afghan officials (1) (2) (3) (6) (7) (9) (13) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =12

Local communities are not happy regarding services (1) (3) (8) (9) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =10

No trust for Afghan officials from contractors (unhealthy relationship) (1) (9) (18) =3

Security was an issue and a challenge (3) (5) (7) (8) (9) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =12

Improving hydro power (3) (7) (8) (9) (15) =5

### **Aid:**

Your opinion changed about your work in Afghanistan Positively =0

Your opinion changed about your work in Afghanistan negatively (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =18

Locals are not happy with security (1) (2) (3) (8) (9) (11) (12) (14) (16) (17) (18) (20) =12

Afghanistan needs accountability tools (7) (8) (10) (15) (17) =5

Aid didn't provide training for Afghan officials (1) (9) (10) (11) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (20) =10

Afghan authorities failed (1) (2) (5) (6) (9) (10) (12) (13) (16) (17) (18) (20) =12

No coordination and cooperation between contractors and Afghans (1) (3) (8) (9) (10) (11) (13) (14) (16) (17) (18) (20) =12

US military and ISAF can help (1) (9) =2

US military and ISAF did poor job (2) =1

NGOs was left out and no communication with them (1) (9) (13) =3

HTS did fair job: (2) =1

HTS did poor job (11) =1

Access to water was a challenge (2) =1

No effective media to educate people about projects (1) (2) (3) (9) (17) (18) =6

Corruption in hindering effective delivery of aid (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (9) (10) (14) (16) (17) (18)(20) =14

Poor management and planning (5) (7) (9) (10) (11) (16) (17) (18) =8

Cultural factor is a hindrance (2) (4) (7) (10) (17) (18) =6

Logistics was a challenge (5) (14) =2

Foreign contractors involved in corruption and got bribes (7) (9) (15) (17) (18) =5

Language barriers for local Afghans (5 languages) (14) (15) =2

## APPENDIX G

### Raw Data from Questionnaire Respondents

**Respondent #1** is a recent Afghan immigrant. He had worked within the Government of Afghanistan in an official capacity.

*Education aid summary:* #1 saw years of various conditions within Afghanistan's education system. He stated that Afghans had "suffered many years for three decades." Education is better than before, but will remain weak without foreign intervention and long-term strategies. US and USAID were the main players in building and supplying schools over the last 15 years. They still need school supplies, plus training for administrators and even for Afghan officials. This respondent stated:

I produced reports on education aid and its effectiveness for the Afghan government. I helped USAID set up schools and provided assessments for their evaluations. I know that USAID asked the Afghan government for recommendations for provinces that needed schools and learning centers. However, USAID never trusted the Afghans with their information, and they ignored our reports and advice. There was no cooperation or coordination between USAID and the Afghan government. This was a negative and unhealthy relationship that impacted the projects. The US military and ISAF should be more involved to deliver and monitor foreign aid and provide security for aid projects. Many aid workers left due to insurgency. Donors and NGOs should trust local reports and feedback. Media needs to be improved to provide information for citizens about officials and what is going on in the country.

"The education system is old and needs to be updated." Teacher salaries are very low. There is no medical care for sick students. Parents keep students home to work because school is not mandatory. Girl's schools were implemented for a while, but now they are all empty and ghost schools. Foreign governments need to send money to operate the schools as there is none from the Afghan government.

Government officials used their power to get educational aid in their favorite areas. Local people complained about local officials that took humanitarian aid, whether it was for education or food for poor people. Even in safer areas, school supplies and building materials were stolen.

Schools that were built were often closed due to insurgency and lack of security. Foreign aid for education had a bigger impact in cities than in rural areas where security was not available. Therefore, education aid was unevenly distributed in Afghanistan because of security and insurgency. In rural areas, where schools were built, there is nothing but ghost schools now. Education aid for areas with very high risk was at '0'.

*Energy aid summary:* I lived in the area of the TPP. It cost a lot, but did not benefit the local people, due to poor management. Also, the firm who built the TPP did not designate local authorities or teach anyone local how to maintain it. The plant remains closed for months and months, and Afghans joke about the 300 million dollars it cost to build it. Fuel was bought by energy aid from Uzbekistan and Pakistan. But the Taliban control the roads now, especially at the border, so the fuel cannot get through.

There was some productive energy aid for Afghans though installation of small solar power units in urban areas. US firms built these. My family suffered from lack of electricity or fuel to heat and cook. Fuel was expensive even when it was available, which was rare. I could not get gas for a car. People who risked their lives to bring it in from other countries charged double prices. We did not drive for months and we used wood for heating our homes.

**Respondent #2:** This respondent was a member of the HTS program, or a federal civilian employee as a social scientist in Afghanistan. The HTS (Human Terrain System) program developed HTT (Human terrain teams) to work with local populations for assessment and evaluation of their needs and to understand their culture in order to assist commanders in their decision-making processes. He had formerly worked as a SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction) inspector.

*Education aid summary:* Locally, the US military built an adult literacy program for Afghans, and my team provided assessment for the local area of Argandab, which recommended a school that was built. I also visited schools around Maar-e-Sharif built by aid from ISAF forces.

Afghans have a high illiteracy rate among adults. To that end, I helped review, design, and print textbooks to be used in a radio program for adult literacy. The idea was the adults would listen to lessons over the radio and follow in their books.

In the Arghandab River Valley area, the Taliban used intimidation tactics to close schools. They threatened and carried out harm to children, especially girls. There were two or three Quranic schools for boys in the area. Hundreds of children roamed the streets with nothing to do. The US military provided a tent for a school, and the Government of Afghanistan (Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) provided teachers, which was a sustainable solution.

The evaluation of the Adult Literacy program showed that it was a top down solution. The US military decided to distribute the books by enlisting a local branch of the Afghan army, which was unsuccessful. The books were stored in a local building without any plans for distribution. There was no coordination between the US military and the Afghans. I worked on an evaluation of the Adult Literacy project for HTS and received pushback from the military. They would not receive a formal written report, but only oral feedback. Our goal was to provide feedback to improve the program, not to criticize it.

*Energy aid summary:* As an HTS social scientist, I was skeptical at first that were making a difference in Afghanistan. Since then, I believe we did make a difference for the better in small ways. I sat in on meetings with USAID that planned a sustainable project of street lighting in Kandahar using solar panels. I worked on CERP evaluation for SIGAR earlier before I joined HTS.

I was very familiar with the Shorandam Industrial Park between the airport and Kandahar. It was military funded power plant by CERP (Commander's Emergency Response Program) for their operations and also helped the city of Kandahar. This fund was used at each commander's discretion. USAID built the infrastructure in the park in 2004, and the military built the power plant in 2010

The idea was to provide employment for the locals to stimulate the economy. They hoped that jobs would encourage the farmers to not grow opium. They wanted to grow a business class that had commercial ties and loyalty to a national government. The main problem was sustainability as the plant required diesel fuel, which the US military provided. It was a short-term remedy for a military solution for energy in a conflict area. It was not a long-term or economically viable solution.

My HTT held a focus group to evaluate local people's perceptions of the Shorandam power plant. We also acted as liaisons with tribal people who lived next to the power plant that had heavy Taliban influence. In 2015, the US military cut funding and the Government of Afghanistan said they could not afford to provide the diesel to run it. I found that the US military aid workers were not professional planners for sustainability or in acquiring local input for a needs assessment or a program's cultural acceptance. The concepts of accountability, evaluation, and long-term sustainability were regulated to a lesser importance as this was a war zone, first and foremost. For instance, the Shorandam power plant was not sustainable, but it fulfilled its military purpose from 2011 to 2015, which was an important time in counter-insurgency measures.

My involvement with USAID projects was minimal, but I do remember the failures such a building a refrigerated warehouse to wrong specification, rendering it useless for the purpose. Also, there was a road project that was rejected by locals as it did not take into account the local terrain. There were many other negative examples from all aid agencies of which I was aware. Generally, the US military was well intentioned and not corrupt, yet poorly informed, untrained for the culture, and the tasks at hand. Project evaluations and accountability were seldom pursued. This was also true of the USAID projects when I worked for SIGAR.

The issue was counter-insurgency was the reason for our presence. "Wars are wasteful in general, and counterinsurgency warfare is wasteful in its own way."

**Respondent #3:** As a USAID researcher, the respondent evaluated and assessed development projects for various nations, including Afghanistan. Other qualifications were employment as a liaison between an NGO, American firms, the US military, and the Afghan government. He is a degreed educated Afghan-American.

*Education aid summary:* I provided briefs and sessions to help Afghan teachers (both males and females) in multiple languages. Foreign aid helped education a little at first. This built a lot of schools, especially for females, who could leave their homes and pursue different types of degrees. USAID especially built schools for females and orphans, but now most of them are closed or destroyed. Yet Afghanistan still needs educated people so they can better serve their country.

I was hopeful when first working there, but after a time that hope decreased by 2016. I witnessed a lot of tragedy and waste. I evaluated and assessed development projects for school construction and learning centers across Afghanistan.

My suggestions are these:

\* Gender equality and female education would increase productivity, but it must come with government support.



*Energy aid summary:* Taking information from people with which I worked and locals, all sides agreed that the TPP project was wasteful for not only Afghanistan, but for the American taxpayers. I helped plan energy grids for remote areas, but did not work with the TPP project. Energy issues are many. Neither foreign aid nor energy production is well planned. Afghanistan is a huge country, and there is no training or skills for administration or services to provide energy.

Energy aid is critical for Afghanistan's infrastructure. Locals do not have energy for heating or cooking or fuel for their vehicles. There has never been energy grid in the nation. Poor people suffer from the government's lack of services. If the government had put in an energy grid, they could collect money for the electricity or fuel provided to homes for heating or cooking. More energy would provide jobs and markets in the nation. Many have tried to help, including the US and other western agencies, plus Asian efforts from Japan, India, the Gulf states, and Pakistan.

The Afghan government did build some pipelines to schools, and I assisted with that project. We also installed solar powered street lights in Kabul. It took months and months to do as we lacked materials and not enough security. Major problems are lack of security, because corrupt officials, bribes, and shadow governments control many areas. The HTS teams gathered socio-economic information to support military objectives.

Other problems with aid is that international donors do not coordinate their efforts. It is a waste of time and money. There was much failure due to this lack of coordination and communication. Also, the locals were not consulted on many projects. They have good information about issues of sustainability and local needs. Roads built across land should have permissions of those on the land first, and locals could be hired for labor, but often they are not. Education for the people about immediate project would be helpful. In fact, if there was media to teach people to change certain ways and for improvement, it would help.

My suggestions are these:

- \* Powerful countries should have clear objectives in stopping the fighting.
- \* Hydro power plants would be most productive.
- \* Safe roads would create an economic boom.
- \* All donors should work together to build power grids for cities.

**Respondent #4:** A military-trained person responded to the questionnaire.

*Educational aid summary:* The work in Afghanistan is important, but the internal conflicts (tribal and cultural) hampers Western efforts. Foreign aid helps raise the economic and educational level of the average Afghan. Yet corruption keeps funds from going to intended purposes. Only a few see impact, and the majority are not impacted. I worked with USAID and they had good intentions and tried to assist Afghan people. Some of their schools appeared to work in large cities, but not in rural communities.

*Energy aid summary:* There was primarily corruption and inefficiency in delivering energy. Western methods may not work in Afghanistan.

**Respondent #5:** (Female) Many HTS personnel were eye-witness to aid projects. This respondent comments:

*Education aid summary:* I have visited the girls school in Kabul. Overall, it advances development and human rights. I am less optimistic than when I started. There are inefficiencies, corruption, and poor data knowledge management. I would recommend a SIGAR investigation. From visiting the girl's school in Hazra, I could see there was overall development and human rights were benefited. Yet I also observed inefficiencies, corruption, poor data and knowledge management, and subpar M & E. SIGAR investigations should occur.

**Respondent #6:** (Female) Focusing on issues of female education, this respondent clarifies education issues.

*Education aid summary:* Working with Female Engagement Teams (FET), Civic Affairs Teams (CAT), and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PET) (financed by USAID and the US military) allowed me to understand the needs of teachers and students in Afghanistan. The information was written in reports to request supplies for students and teachers. International Women's day was a very important event. Our goal was to understand female perspectives or the other 50% of the Afghan population. The sustainable benefits of educational aid in Afghanistan were that we helped women learn entrepreneurship skills such as chicken farming and bee keeping.

I have conducted research all over the world and the same issues rise on many continents. Corruption from the national government restricted aid trickling down to the local government, and resulted in mistrust by the people. We had Key Leader Engagements (KLE) where the leaders were only interested in their own families.

Our research in Afghanistan was important because it informed the US military. However, information on aid was not put into use. Nobody studied the lessons learned from aid work all over the world. No one incorporated good practices of how to administer aid. Money was wasted. Specifically, in Afghanistan:

- Schools were built with no teachers or staff in the area.
- There was a brain drain to Kabul or outside of Afghanistan.

**Respondent #7:** This respondent worked as a cultural expert in Afghanistan. He states that hopes were decreased over time, as Afghanistan needs long term strategies and plans. Three dynamics affect all education and energy aid in Afghanistan: 1) Taliban, 2) Waste, 3) Corruption from Afghan and US agencies. Unless the people of Afghanistan reject the Taliban in their role of reinforcing old ways, and corruption of others, things will not improve. US and other major stakeholders have to play a role for improvement by using accountability for illegal and corrupt activities.

*Education aid summary:* What I experienced with education aid was far from improving education in Afghanistan. It is true that 50 years ago Afghanistan had schools, but they were destroyed in a civil war. USAID built the schools again in many villages across the country, but most of the schools closed.

Education is good for governance and brings prosperity to a country. Education opens horizons for people and brings acceptance of differences and tolerance of others. Good education will bridge the gaps of gender inequality.

Local customs and traditions play a role in stopping children from attending school, especially girls. The Taliban enforce these traditions by threats and even killing people. Negatives of cultural practices, customs, Taliban, corruption from many directions, and the inability of aid agencies to develop long-term educational plans discourage parents from allowing children to go to school.

*Energy aid summary:* The TPP project was an example of poor work. Corruption resulted in the project costing 300 million dollars. However, in Kabul there was lighting added after USAID installed hydraulic power on dams. This type of energy should be for all provinces across the country. Energy is important as it leads to economic development. Currently people use wood heat their homes and cook.

But leaders of Afghanistan became wealthy and did not heed the suffering of the people. Their close relative all became wealthy. They hampered the aid programs. Problems are:

- Transit routes bringing Afghan goods and materials for energy projects do not get through.
- Afghan government officials steal the resources for their personal benefit.
- Security was too bad to administer aid.

**Respondent # 8:** The information given by this respondent relates specifically to the TPP and other energy project.

*Energy aid summary:* The TPP was completed and handed over to the Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan in June of 2010. Afghanistan imports 80% of its energy from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The power lines that supply the 5 million people of Kabul passes through Salang Pass, which is rough and unaccusable terrain. It is not sufficient in winter and the TPP should fill the gap. It generates electricity on both crude oil and diesel fuel. At a cost of 335 million US dollars, the capacity is 150 megawatts of electricity.

Otherwise, propane fuel could be imported from Pakistan or Turkmenistan, and cow dung is used for heating fuel and cooking. There was some electric power coming from the Nughlow and Sorobi water dams. However, at times there was not enough water to generate electricity from these dams. The war lords, (Mujahedeen) and other factions would cut off electricity to punish other groups.

My personal opinion is that donor counties who give aid money should have a system of checks and balances in place and hold those people responsible that fail in their projects. Aid is channeled through contractors to subcontractors, and the results reduces material and durability tenfold.

#### **Respondent #9: Subject Matter Expert**

My experience as a SME included working for a Research and Development Company in Afghanistan allowed me to assist the US government officials and military decision makers

on social sciences research methodologies, statistical analysis, and quantitative and qualitative public opinion research.

During my time in Afghanistan, I planned and designed multiple short and long-term projects. One of my major responsibilities was to collect primary data through in person interviews, conduct surveys, and travel to different cities in search of information. I ended up conducting over 300 interviews with the Afghan officials (civilian and military) including the local population while traveling throughout all provinces in Afghanistan. My research work covered various sectors including but not limited to health, education, stability, governance and local infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the aid given to Afghanistan by the western countries did not produce the desired results. I remain quite pessimistic with regards to the future of Afghanistan. The deteriorating security situation, lawlessness and corruption remain at the forefront of many issues in Afghanistan. Majority of the population is without basic necessities such as electricity and clean water. My first-hand experience in Afghanistan has led me to believe that the foreseeable future in Afghanistan looks quite bleak.

Summary of Energy and aid: The overall infrastructure in Afghanistan is extremely weak. I was able to determine that funding the projects was not the main concern; instead, issues such as waste management and corruption were more widespread.

When it comes to TPP, it wouldn't be fair to blame the Afghan officials for not using this very costly project and keeping it maintained. Afghans never received the proper training, nor do they hold the basic skills to run and maintain the TPP. According to the locals, the blame should be shifted towards the Afghan authorities for being involved in corruption and stealing the TPP supplies. But they shouldn't be held solely responsible for not running a 330 million dollars project effectively. One of the major challenges was to purchase diesel fuel in order to run the TPP. As I know, it was unsafe and costly to transfer diesel from neighbouring countries. Most of the roads by being controlled by the insurgents which made it nearly impossible to transport the fuel.

The foreign aid failed to help Afghanistan improve its energy infrastructure. During my deployments, I lived in Kabul for almost two years, and I witnessed that people and businesses were struggling due to the shortage of electricity in most of the neighbourhoods. Those who are receiving electricity without any shortage are the rich and elite of the society as well as the foreign officials, but not the common people.

The energy infrastructure in Afghanistan is improving slowly and it will take Afghanistan many years before we can expect to see any major improvements in the energy sector. I did witness some progress in regards to the Afghanistan's energy infrastructure in Kabul. When I arrived in Afghanistan in 2009, the load shedding was apparent during the evenings and nights. The situation appeared to improve in Kabul by 2016. I think USAID and other international utility companies played a major role in bringing about improvement despite the fact it took a lot of time. According to the locals, the foreign contractors helped Afghan utility departments improve the infrastructure of residential and commercial solar power in several cities in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the locals said that the rural areas did not see any changes and the improvements were limited to the capital and other major cities.

According to some official reports, more than 70% of afghan citizens rely on self-supplied energy sources such as wood, animal dung, and biomass for cooking their food and heating their homes. When I was in Helmand during the winter of 2015, I witnessed that most homes including the government offices had no basic heating resources. I interviewed an Afghan official in Feb 2015 in Nowazad district during the winter and immediately realized that his office did not have heating due to the shortage of fuel. I also witnessed that several medical centers in Kabul had to operate without any heat due to the shortage of fuel.

For nearly thirty years, Afghanistan has been facing serious energy crisis due to the internal conflicts. It is true that insecurity is hindering the effective use of aid in improving Afghan energy sector because the foreign contractors would not jeopardize their lives in conducting projects due to the security issues. The foreign aid agencies need to effectively cooperate with each other and communicate closely with the Afghan authorities in achieving long term projects. This is easy to say but achieving such things will take a lot of effort and continuous funding.

The Afghan energy sector is also struggling to find skilled technicians in order to effectively execute energy projects. During an international conference that was held in Kabul in 2013, Afghan representative from Minister of labor and Social Affairs urged international donors to provide training workshops for Afghan officials. He repeatedly reiterated the importance of training before a project can be executed.

Summary of Education and aid: I visited many schools in Helmand, Kabul, and Mazar-e--Sharif provinces. In 2015, I visited a school in Nawzad district in Helmand and witnessed that the school was hardly operational with only a few students and teachers present. I was told that the school had been targeted and partially destroyed by insurgents. This “ghost school” as described by an Afghan interpreter was abandoned and remained closed for many years due to the lack of funding. We held a meeting with KLEs in that area and discovered that this school was built by an American contractor. The locals were scared to send their children to this school because the abandoned building as it had become, was housing criminals and homeless people. The roads leading to the school were also considered quite unsafe. We were told that this school was also used by the Afghan security forces for a period of time.

I discovered that foreign aid did help the education sector in some areas in Afghanistan, but certainly not in all areas. The schools in Kabul were more modernized and better equipped to teach students throughout the year. I had the chance to visit a school that was located next to my work place in Kabul in 2016. The school was in much better condition than the one in Helmand. The classrooms were full of students. I met the principal who explained to me that the US AID made it possible for his school to buy furniture and other essentials required to run the school. The school had a built in food court and play ground. The school was co-ed and males and female students were seen studying together.

I would say that foreign aid proved beneficial for most of the major cities in Afghanistan such as the capital, Kabul. On the other hand, the foreign aid failed to bring much improvement to the education sector in rural areas. Aside from uneven distribution of aid, transportation remained a major challenge for many students and parents, and most

did not have a vehicle that would transport them to the school that were sometimes located miles away.

Education in Afghanistan was improved by pouring millions of dollars into projects. The USAID mainly helped Afghanistan in building hundreds of schools and other educational institutions, even though most were shut down later. It is not unusual to hear about the closing of schools in Afghanistan for several reasons. I was invited for the opening of a new school in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2012, which is considered the second largest city of Afghanistan. It was a good experience to witness the completion of a large school and the joy was apparent on the faces of all the teachers and students. The school was built by an American aid agency and it took them several years to build the school. It is unfortunate that the school was shut down some years later due to the deteriorating security situation. It was reported few months ago (Apr 22, 2017) that Mazar-e-Sharif experienced a deadly attack by the Taliban insurgents that killed and wounded over one hundred Afghan soldiers on a military base. That gives us an insight as to how quickly the situation in Afghanistan can change with one terrorist attack.

The education sector has faced many challenges that led to the failing of many educational projects in Afghanistan. The education sector today in Afghanistan continues to suffer.

**Respondent #10:** This respondent was a US military person. He states that the war took on a life of its own. At first, I thought the war and reconstruction effort as necessary, but now I view it as a waste of time and money. Basically the US never bothered to train local Afghans to maintain and operate infrastructure. The gap in understanding their religion and culture and negotiating the differences is contentious. We are creating dependence on Western aid and assistance. At the end of the day, Afghans need to decide what they want. The best outcome I can see is to allow the Taliban to have their own autonomous state in the south.

**Respondent #11:** This respondent provided security for aid projects, both energy and school security.

I worked in Afghanistan for two years. My confidence in helping to solve problems with the tactics used by the military, foreign aid, the Afghan government, and the private sector decreased. HTS teams provided socio-cultural information, but it went to the army. Also the HTS teams varied through their research abilities. I worked with one team that achieved much success in helping to provide local perspectives. Some teams provided low quality work or bickered, and work by other teams were not used or respected by the military. We needed research to bring in solutions that would work.

Foreign aid benefited the contractors and other private western firms, but not as much for Afghanistan. The Taliban took control of many foreign aid projects after the western agencies left the areas. The Afghan government does not know how to build any education or energy infrastructure and we did not train them how.

*Education aid summary:* I provided security in rural areas near schools. Education was weak and not available before 2001, but foreign aid helped to improve the education

sector in Afghanistan. It could be better as people complained about the outcome. Some parents were not satisfied with the levels of learning.

Schools were built by individuals that came to Afghanistan for one year to leave a mark. Often times schools were built without proper planning and understanding or appreciation for the political and socio-cultural nuances of the areas. Hence schools were built without meeting the needs of the people. Perhaps if USAID had included Afghan experts to help understand the issues of the projects.

I heard that schools were empty because they were built in the wrong area or too far with bad roads. During the winter, there was no heat or the roads and schools were flooded.

I saw many abandoned schools. I reported this to the US Army that schools were closed and teachers never came. Locals complained that teachers were still paid, but would not come because of security. Many schools closed, even if USAID spent millions and millions in some areas. We never trained locals to take over the schools and learn how to do things for themselves.

*Energy aid summary:* TPP was costly and helpless for all sides. Locals talked bad about the project. Somme new dams were built using hydraulic power to control water. But the energy sector is ineffective in most areas and locals never talked good about it. They had difficulty in heating their homes or getting cooking fuel. I made reports to Army commanders about energy projects that had been damaged by insurgents.

**Respondent #12:** (Female) This military person trained for work in civil units and also as a combat advisor. The respondent also worked for the HTS effort.

*Education aid summary:* I investigated poisonings in a local girl's school, which NATO also worked on findings. The education outreach by the US did appear to be modest and many schools sat empty.

The USAID and the State Department were very involved in assessing education, and efforts for women's groups. When I worked for HTS, we were integrated with analyzing local impacts on education attendance. The education advances where I worked was served by international troops.

I visited a site for a midwifery program that was funded in part by USAID. It was threatened with broken windows to scare the young students. The other funding was by the Afghan government and their department of education. The program was seeking additional funds. The Koreans also funded some educational medical programs.

My most vivid memories were here at the midwifery school. There were 20 young women undergoing the training. The training material was very good and provided by USAID. Those administering the school were medically trained and we did HTS research regarding the curriculum. I heard the Afghans involved had to leave and are now trying to get to the US

The need for education in Afghanistan is profound and important. Young people have few opportunities and are lost in a modern era. The educated live in central cities and rural areas have no ability to improve or have social progress.

**Respondent #13:** (Female) Coming from a US military background, this respondent saw a lack of coordination between aid agencies. Designing aid for energy infrastructure and education was unsustainable because there were no teachers or engineers to maintain the structures and systems.

Often, we created programs that looked good on paper, but had no effect or negative effects due to a lack of understanding the systems and culture. Funds did not go where they were supposed to. Determining program objectives was difficult as there were competing narratives from the military, aid agencies, the state, and NGOs.

*Education aid summary:* Many schools were built, but are now abandoned due to lack of security, teachers, and parents' concerns. Still there are some schools that are still functional. It is my hope that girls in school will become part of the culture.

Training did work for men and women as long as they were separate and respected the culture. There was a radio education program and even a prison literacy program. HTS would gather information from the locals and report to the military. The military would report to USAID, but it was USAID that made final decisions on where to build schools. One program start seemed hopeful that provided women to build solar power panels at home, but I do not know the fate of that one.

*Energy aid summary:* The US State Department built several dams that were never functional, and I imagine other programs had similar fates. If the right people ran the country after the initial round up of the Taliban and not funding the war lords, this country would be very different. People preferred the Taliban to the war lords.

**Respondent #14:** As a contractor attached to USAID, this respondent had firsthand knowledge of aid projects. This contractor had also worked with the Afghan government in energy. Locals said that projects only benefited western contractors who received big salaries. Ultimately, the contractor said that the aid projects were a waste and time consuming.

*Education aid summary:* All I know is that schools did not have energy infrastructure. They had no heat in winter. Students did not show up for school because it was too cold. I was involved in building heating systems in some schools, but there was no fuel. Even the government buildings were short on fuel and called the US Army to receive fuel for heat. Eventually, security was so bad for schools that the weather was not the main concern.

*Energy aid summary:* My company was in charge of TPP. I also worked on several small projects relating to energy, such as installing new energy systems in government buildings. For energy projects, aid was not enough and was wasted because Afghans had no skills or knowledge on how to run energy infrastructure. They had 0 knowledge of energy installation and the US firms provided no training due to lack of security, money, and time. Language was an issue when locals were hired to work on menial jobs.

As I said, I provided maintenance for TPP for two years. My assessment is that it was a wasted project that cost a lot of money and did not benefit the Afghan people.



On my job, security was the main problem most of the time. For months we had to stay on military bases due to insurgent activities. Getting fuel to the plant was time consuming and costly. Roads were very bad in all areas.

**Respondent #15:** This respondent is a USAID Civil Engineer. He supervised teams to install energy in Afghanistan.

*Education aid summary:* Education should be the number one priority for all parties concerned.

*Energy aid summary:* We experienced lack of supplies and materials, trained or skilled workers, and insecure areas. I did not work on the TPP, but it was given as an example of an expensive but failed project in a speech by an American expert on energy infrastructure. He explained it had been investigated by SIGAR. Afghan officials told me that it was harmed by corruption from many parties. Zero tolerance for corruption and bad management should be the rule.

The US should not have tried to do this without more commitment from other nations. We failed and it made us look bad. It seemed there were no clear strategies or central planning for success. Fragmentation hurt aid efforts. Corruptions by local regional officials did more to harm projects than other factors. Locals were very appreciative for anything that helped the villages.

**Respondent #16:** This respondent was in the shura held for Afghans in America.

He said that rebuilding Afghanistan was more challenging than earlier expectations. USAID should have built rapport with all parties in Afghanistan to coordinate donations and resources. USAID projects built credibility for the US for many in Afghanistan. New roads and a railroad is necessary to build infrastructure for energy or education in Afghanistan.

*Education aid summary:* The lack of infrastructure in impoverished areas made it difficult to get resources to deliver education. USAID has helped to elevate the standard of living for millions of Afghan citizens, and especially for girls is a big achievement of USAID. If there is heavy Afghan government presence, people flourish with the influx of foreign aid and foreign investments. More Afghan children are going to school than ever before.

Areas that are infected with heavy insurgents still suffer from lack of education. Children often fail to show up to schools due to lack of security and poverty and the schools built by aid set empty to create ghost schools. There is a social stigma for women's education. Language is a barrier when curriculum and supplies are in a language from another region.

In my opinion, aid should be given to local villagers to modernize their standards of living and strengthen education efforts and projects, rather than building school buildings that turn into ghost schools.

*Energy aid summary:* The energy sector suffered due to sabotage, corruption, and inefficiencies for power plants and pipelines. USAID invested valuable resources to build the TPP. The primary fuel for operation was diesel fuels, which was often unavailable due

to border closings and insurgent attacks. The TPP is unable to provide power for Afghanistan grids. Now it is to provide backup for emergencies. The US Senate committee on foreign aid have launched multiple investigations into UASID work in Afghanistan.

Foreign helped to subsidize fuel for local consumption, and to establish hydropower dams across the country. Building cooperation with local elders and procuring security from tribal leaders increases the success rate of delivering fuel and providing education in the remote areas of Afghanistan. Eighteen percent of Afghanistan has access to uninterrupted supplies as compared to 1% in the year 2000. More funding should go towards building more hydro power plants and small-scale dams on rivers for Afghanistan. Foreign aid should be used to harness the tremendous potential for solar and wind energy in Afghanistan.

Most aid is wasted in providing security for the infrastructure and workers that help the struggling sectors of Afghan economy. This is because power plants in Afghanistan rely on expensive fuels for operations. Interruptions in supply chains causes power plants to operate inefficiently, and they sustain costly damages. Pipelines suffer with sabotage and vandalism. Lack of roads and threats of insurgency decrease efficiency too. The biggest challenges are violence and the interruption of supplies at the border with Pakistan, plus lack of roads, railroads, and the absence of a dry port. In winter, some passes are completely cut off for months.

**Respondent #17:** A long time USAID worker reports on Afghanistan.

I have worked with UAID since 2002 in many nations. I have coordinated with aid agencies and hundreds of NGOs around the world. I evaluated the living conditions of people in developing nations and each area was different.

I was an aid expert in Afghanistan for 8 years. I coordinated with the U.S Army, ISAF, and other international donors. It was tough to deal with different military and diplomatic personnel with different stakes and backgrounds.

Afghanistan is a war-torn country and will be for good, because uneducated people run the government. There has never been any training to lead people or run official offices. There were no jobs available for local people except for with the government or their military. Children die in large numbers due to lack of food and illnesses. Yet they are kind and generous people and will give guests any food they have.

Afghans are pessimistic about their future. They are a failed state due to lack of education. International donors tried, but their focus was wrong and they did not understand the culture. There was no training of locals to continue any project funded by international donors. This is true worldwide. Money is not the only consideration. Careful planning and accountability is the only way that aid would work and we have those lessons from decades of aid implementation. Audits and monitoring are needed for any nation building project.

The announcement by President Trump has shocked when they heard that no one will help them. The only reason that the US will be there now will be to kill the Taliban. Weapons will not increase the people's help. The Taliban have nothing to lose as they are so poor and this is their territory. The people will pay a heavy price.

*Education aid summary:* Understanding the culture and religion is the key to any progress in Afghanistan. It takes generations to create a slow change, and consistent efforts in education. USAID built many schools that are now closed. I have visited the ghost schools to confirm this. The Afghan government did not get involved in education, and there was no money to run the schools, no teachers, insecurity, and no supplies. There were no administrators to coordinate the school efforts. International donors and the Government of Afghanistan should be blamed for not completing the job. There is not enough funds or long term strategies. Coordination is needed. Locals have 0 knowledge about the outside world. If there was a good education system, the nation could develop.

I was responsible for evaluation and assessing projects for educational resources. I issued reports back to my office in Virginia about what needed to be developed and what was suggested by the US Army.

*Energy aid summary:* Energy is another area that is critical to the nation's development. The TPP was a failed project, with no sustainability. People were not happy from the beginning because the locals were not consulted, but only the corrupt officials. USAID and SIGAR conducted investigations and produced reports and I helped. The people said they had wanted small generators. Now they use animal dung for heat and cooking and the children get sick.

Pakistan built a similar plant to the TPP. It did not cost as much and is working well. The people benefit from it. But Pakistan has a strong government system, and the Government of Afghanistan is incapable of running any project. Corruption and bribes block the way. People are ignorant of the value of nation building projects and they steal what they can. I met HTS teams talking to local people and they even held shuras.

**Respondent #18:** A USAID worker filled out this questionnaire. He is retired military.

I thought the situation would be better, especially with USAID and other agencies working so hard and saying they would rebuild Afghanistan. It is really a failed state. The situation will be worse if the ISAF go after the Taliban. They cannot win this war that has been fought for years and years. They more they try, the more the people will suffer. When the Taliban control areas, it is horrible. There are no schools, good food, no clean water, and women cannot leave their homes.

*Education aid summary:* International donors should build a skilled and educated new generation if they want to help Afghanistan. Many people tried to help, but it is all uncoordinated and inefficient. I heard a Canadian company sent a team to Afghanistan to investigate education aid projects to help women and children. They reported on corruption by the Government of Afghanistan, and were not happy at the Afghan officials and their lack of commitment to education.

USAID built schools that were not used and I heard of the ghost schools. I spoke to the locals and they talked about they needed food, medicine, and water. Local women would ask me for powdered milk for their infants. This broke my heart. They wanted protection from the Taliban while we were in the area. They said there would be repercussions. I found there were contradictions between what I had been told by USAID

and what the locals said concerning projects. USAID said locals stole supplies and locals said the contractors never delivered them.

*Energy aid summary:* I attended a Shura where the KLE said that the TPP only helped American companies. Now Afghan people are blamed that it is shut down. The TPP project did not benefit the people, but was built based on American concepts of what to do. How can Afghans maintain something like that with no training? One Afghan official said the USAID never talked about the TPP because it would hurt the reputation of American contractors.

There had no nation building projects during Taliban rule. But the American firms only stuck to their plans and never coordinated with locals. It was dangerous work and some people were afraid to work with me. HTS was there to talk to locals about their perspectives and report back to military commanders. My team evaluated projects completed by USAID and other American companies. I also worked as a coordinator between Americans and Afghans.

**Respondent #19:** The respondent voiced the same opinions on energy and education as the others, but with an insight on the gaps in understanding between Western aid and Afghanistan's social networks, culture, and religion. "The ways of culture and religion are enforced by Taliban." There is only Taliban religious and cultural enforcement through strict religious law. Each member of the Taliban is easily replaced by anyone practicing the laws of their religion. Their numbers will always be the same. Someone said you cannot get rid of the Taliban, they are our culture. This meant that they were like a Religious Police. It was Afghan cultural laws that conflicted with Western ideals. Educating the young would change this, but that was not understood by aid agencies or the US either.

*Education aid summary:* Educational aid was not in line with the environment, cultural background, religious preferences, and local needs. The idea was that if given a chance with good security, people would change and want Western ways. This may have been true for a few, but not for many others.

Due to corruption and lack of input by the locals, the schools built were placed to satisfy official's needs, and not the population. Some schools only had a few students within distance, and many areas had few schools, but large numbers of students. Aid agencies wasted a lot of money on opening ceremonies and decorations. Money went for personal uses, and during construction, there was a feeling of...we can buy expensive tools even for a one-time use.

**Respondent #20:** This respondent was employed in the energy section of USAID, with previous experience with the energy issues and department in Afghanistan. He has a total of 19 years' experience in this field.

*Energy aid summary:* I knew the energy sector in Afghanistan was very weak for years. USAID and other agencies tried hard to help a huge country to improve, but it would take time before Afghanistan could become independent in that area. There were some

benefits as hydro power systems were built, along with energy lines placed, and low-cost grid systems in some areas.

The failures in aid delivery for energy infrastructure was first to not coordinate with locals. Western countries lack knowledge about Afghanistan's culture, religion, and necessary information that only the locals know. Instead USAID and their contracted companies dealt with officials only who were corrupt. Most projects were built within locations of the official's personal areas with low occupation, while thousands went without any needed energy. Westerners do not understand the system of corruption and hierarchies. Officials do not care about those under their care and no communication occurs so they do not know what the situation.

There was no training for maintenance on installations either, so that when USAID pulled out, the energy infrastructure became useless. I helped to evaluate the TPP as was required by USAID program manager in Afghanistan, regarding its function. When asked during investigations, the contractors or USAID said there was not time or money for this. Afghan locals were out of the picture. USAID funded the TPP, and contracted with Westerners to build and implement the power plant.

The contractors had no contact with locals. The contractor had no knowledge of the local terrain or seasonal conditions. There should have also been relationships built with energy providers in other connecting nations. They knew what was needed to work with the terrain regarding transition lines and installing new hydro power.

I remember one incident during a bitter winter in Afghanistan with no heat. A man burst into our office and shouted that his family needed heat. We let him in to see that we had no heat in our office either with no blankets to keep warm, and we were part of the energy team. I feel that I contributed to some energy increase as I knew how to maintain equipment and small generators. I helped some coordination between the US contractors and Afghan utilities department. I was also part of a team that implemented hydraulic power generators in towns in the southern and northern parts of Afghanistan. I did see street lights in Kabul with power from solar panels.

What is needed most is training to create skilled technicians.

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**ABSTRACT****DELIVERY OF USAID AID IN AFGHANISTAN, 2001-2017**

by

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Afghanistan is currently foreign aid dependent. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has allocated over 100 billion US dollars since 2001 for the development and modernization of Afghanistan. The United States has invested over 700 billion US dollars overall. There is a breakdown or a problem in USAID funding for Afghanistan, whereas not all the money allocated was utilized for intended purposes. Today Afghanistan remains a LDC, a least developed country, with extensive poverty, limited energy, poor infrastructure, and low literacy rates despite USAID and US spending and aid projects.

This study examines examples of disconnects or the breakdown between funding and the fruition of intended modernization goals for Afghanistan. This qualitative dissertation utilizes primary reports from funding agencies including USAID, audits of projects, and formal inquiries. Additionally, the study utilizes respondent data completed by a diverse group of Afghan-born and American-born trained experts offering key information. These 28 individuals have insight into the political and economic impact of

USAID funding in Afghanistan, focusing on examples in the energy and education sectors. The energy-sector case study is of the 335 million-dollar Tarakhil Power Plant (TPP), a project funded by USAID, but considered a failure. The dissertation also includes a case study on the education sector in Afghanistan. I incorporate my own eyewitness accounts from serving as a social scientist for 8 months in 2011-2012 with the US Army's Human Terrain System (HTS) in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Therefore, the final analysis triangulates data drawing on: 1) USAID and SIGAR official reports; 2) original qualitative research data from respondents; 3) HTS observations, and 4) media and academic reports.

The theoretical framework for the improvement of a nation, or nation building, relies on modernization and human capital theories. The analyses of the data within modernization and human capital theories to form conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions will show a combination of a lack of communications, accountability, security risks, systemic corruption, and misguided planning and implementation. Top-down planning for development projects, like the Tarakhil Power Point and educational aid, did not succeed.

(Key Words: USAID, Afghanistan, foreign aid, modernization, human capital, security, corruption, energy, education)

**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

Abdullah Bataineh has a B.A. in History with a focus on Arabic, Islamic and Western Studies, and Political Science from Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan. His Master's degree in Political Science is from Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, USA. Mr. Bataineh is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science (Major: Urban Politics; Minors: Public Policy and Public Administration) at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan USA.

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